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Peace as a Global Public Good

Bjørn Møller
Conceptual Clarification

The questions whether peace and/or stability can be labelled public goods, and what the implications may be of so doing, form the theme of the present article. I shall not elaborate on the general theory of public goods, but merely point to a few terminological problems.

Public Goods and Evils

The term “public goods” refers to goods which are characterised by being available to all, i.e. to all members of a particular system such as a national or an international society. As nobody can be deprived of the right and the opportunities to benefit from the public good, there is no direct linkage between the availability of these benefits, i.e. the production of the public good, and the consumption of it. This gives all members an incentive to “cheat” in terms of production, i.e. for “free-riding”—a well-known phenomenon from, e.g., alliances.

It may, however, make a difference whether the system in question is universal or merely forms part of a larger system. In the former case there is nothing beyond the system as such, which is thus closed, whereas all subsystems are open and corresponding with the rest of the system. The “public goods” enjoyed by the white minority in apartheid South Africa—including the privileges derived from skin colour enjoyed by all whites regardless of their attitude to the regime—were thus not genuine public goods, but rather “club goods” enjoyed by the “members” at the expense of the rest of society. The same might even be said about many of the public goods of the developed world, which some argue accrue from the exploitation of the Third World. This does not necessarily imply that it never makes sense to talk of public goods at the level of a (regional...
or other) sub-system, but should merely serve as a caveat about the inherent limitations of the concept.

Confusion may also arise with regard to the second half of the concept, i.e. that of goods. First of all, there is no universal unanimity about what counts as goods, e.g. whether freedom is a good or rather a license for amorality. Secondly, there is no unanimity about the appropriate rank-ordering of good, e.g. about whether to prioritise “honour” (in itself a controversial concept) over prosperity. Thirdly, “goods” can not merely be defined in positive terms, but also negatively, i.e. as an absence of “bads” or evils—just as health may be defined as an absence of disease and peace as an absence of war (vide infra). Public goods may thus be tantamount to either the absence of “public evils” (e.g. war, genocide, pollution or climatic changes) or to a general absence of such “individual evils” as HIV-AIDS, to which the same rule applies, i.e. that an actor cannot escape them by his own devices.

As we shall see below, the concepts of peace, security and stability are just as ambiguous as that of public goods. Before proceeding to this, however, a brief account of the views about global public goods held by the various theories of international relations seems in order.

**IR Theories on Public Goods**

Within IR (international relations) theory the various schools or “paradigms” have different views on the problematique of public goods.

Liberalism (previously known as idealism) holds a generally optimistic view on the problem, thereby exposing itself to the critique (on the part of “realists”) for being utopian. As the production of a public good (e.g. peace) will benefit all, it will also take place, either because decision-makers will be persuaded of the need to do so, or almost automatically, e.g. by means of Adam Smith’s “invisible hand”, working through the market mechanisms.

Every individual ... generally, indeed, neither intends to promote the public interest, nor knows how much he is promoting it. By preferring the support of domestic to that of foreign industry he intends only his own security; and by directing that industry in such a manner as its produce may be of the greatest value, he intends only his own gain, and he is in this, as in many other cases, led by an invisible hand to promote an end which was no part of his intention.

As a means to ensure the good will of decision-makers, some liberalists have envisioned a global democracy of sorts, basing themselves on the belief that if only decisions are taken democratically they will automatically reflect the real interests of the majority which will invariably be to maximise the public good.
Realism has all along been considerably more pessimistic about the possibilities of thus maximising common interests, ever since Jean-Jacques Rousseau wrote his critique of Abbé de Saint-Pierre’s blueprint for an eternal peace. If one presupposes rational and utility-maximising actors, these will all be trapped in what is often called dilemmas, but might rather be labelled paradoxes. This is the case of Rousseau’s famous “stag hunt” and of Kenneth Waltz’s “tyranny of small decisions”, producing what others have called the “tragedy of the commons”, just as it is the case of the classical “security dilemma” (vide infra). If everybody traces private goods the result may well be the production of public evils such as over-grazing or war, simply because the system and its rules makes this inevitable.

The fact that the liberal and realist perspectives are logical opposites does not rule out combinations or syntheses uniting elements of both, as we have seen in the so-called “neo-neo debate”. This debate within “mainstream IR” between neorealists and liberalists (now labelled “neoliberal institutionalists”) has mainly revolved around the saliency of absolute and relative gains of cooperation, e.g. over the production of public goods. Neoliberals have emphasised the importance of absolute gains as a sufficient propellant for cooperation, whereas neorealists have focused on the risks entailed by ignoring relative gains. Even when cooperation is mutually advantageous it may tilt the balance of power between the parties cooperating if the relationship is more beneficial to one than the other.

Neoliberalists have typically acknowledged that this may be the case (e.g. in relationships such as that between East and West during the Cold War) while maintaining that such relations are the exception rather than the rule. Between by far the majority of the world’s countries, war is simply inconceivable and the significance of relative gains thus negligible. This is not merely the case with so-called “security communities” (such as that of the Nordic countries or perhaps the entire European Union), where war has become inconceivable. It also applies to countries which have so little to do with each other that it strains the imagination to envision a war between them. Denmark and Uruguay may be a case in point.

The fact that the difference between the neoliberal and neorealist positions is thus merely one of degrees and estimated probabilities rather than of absolutes, this debate may be approaching (or already have produced) a synthesis. A similar and related synthesis between neorealists and neoliberal is found in the theories of “cooperation among adversaries”, which highlight the fact that by far the majority of relations between states represent blends of shared and opposing interests. All opponents thus collaborate to a certain extent, and opting for the right strategy may render such collaboration even more likely.
There even seems to be a direct and positive correlation between the planning perspective and the feasibility of cooperation. The longer the “shadow of the future”, the greater importance the two parties will attach to the continuous collaboration and by implication the absolute gains (including the public goods) which this may produce, in comparison to the relative gains which they might be able to “cash in” in the “last round”. If the possibility of such a last round before the final battle is not assessed as high a far-reaching cooperation may well turn out to be the rational choice.\footnote{21}

To the same category of theories might be counted that of “common security”,\footnote{22} which appeared in the 1980s. It was partly intended as an escape route from the so-called security dilemma by way of a defensive restructuring of the armed forces.\footnote{23} A state’s security will normally (i.e. if pursued through an arms buildup) entail a reduction in the security of its respective opponents, who are therefore likely to respond with a countervailing arms build-up, thus landing both sides in a situation of lesser security than before—a clear “public evil”. By devising strategies and force structures which maximise the defensive while minimising offensive strength, however, it might be possible to achieve security without doing so at the other side’s expense—and two opponents could thus simultaneously improve their national security.

Certain IR analysts, including realists such as Robert Gilpin,\footnote{24} have highlighted the fact that special rules seem to apply to the largest members of a system. For them there may actually be a direct correlation between consumption and production of public goods simply because their share of total production is so large that it has noticeable implications for what is available for consumption. Hence, the very largest members not only have the leverage to punish free-riding, but also an obvious incentive to do so and achieve a fair distribution of the production. This has made various IR scholars point to hegemony (a concept of Greek origins, but usually associated with the political thinking of Antonio Gramsci)\footnote{25} as the solution to the public goods problem.\footnote{26} The preconditions for such hegemony were to a certain extent present within the two opposing alliances during the Cold War, just as they were within the international monetary system as long as the US dollar remained the universal reserve currency.\footnote{27} The preconditions of hegemony may also be present on a regional or subregional level where one state often surpasses all the rest in terms of the relevant elements of power, as seems to be the case of South Africa in Southern Africa and of Nigeria in West Africa.\footnote{28}

Regime theories may be combined with such “hegemonic stability” theories. They emphasise how the regulation of international relations is in the self-interest of all states, inter alia because they reduce transaction costs and other “negative externalities”, thereby allowing for mutually advantageous
cooperation and promoting the production of public goods.\textsuperscript{29} Such regime theories are easily compatible with hegemony theories, simply because it seems a reasonable assumption that the “regime entrepreneurs” (also called “drivers”) are typically great powers acting in their own interest, but thereby also promoting the common good, by adopting and enforcing the sets of norms and rules constituting the regime.\textsuperscript{30}

The so-called “English School” has all along been located somewhere between liberalism and realism, but quite close to regime theory. Its unifying theme has been the notion of “international society”, i.e. the conception of the world as a society, constituted as such by a modicum of shared values and norms—even though this society remains anarchical, i.e. without any supranational authority comparable to the state in national societies.\textsuperscript{31} While the “solidarists” within this school resemble liberalist with their emphasis on international law and justice, its “pluralists” are closer to the views of realists with their emphasis on the sovereign rights of states, i.e. “order”.\textsuperscript{32} The basic tenets of the English School are easily compatible with theories of public goods, if only because the “order” of the anarchical society described by Hedley Bull constitutes a public good.

\textbf{Are Peace and Stability Public Goods?}

Before proceeding with the analysis of whether or how peace and stability may be viewed as public goods, the concepts need to be defined which is more controversial than one might assume.

The Norwegian peace researcher Johan Galtung distinguishes between “positive” and “negative peace”, of which the latter refers to a simple absence of “direct violence” (e.g. war) whereas the former is more comprehensive and diffuse. Positive peace may be defined as an absence of not merely direct violence, but also “structural violence”, in turn defined as a “relative deprivation” of values.\textsuperscript{33} In the latter sense, peace is thus incompatible with, for instance, oppression, extreme inequality, etc. This does, however, make the concept almost all-encompassing, thus detracting from its analytical value. In the following I shall therefore focus on negative peace in the narrow sense of an absence of wars and other major conflicts.

From this analytical point of departure it soon becomes obvious that peace thus understood does not imply stability in a wider sense. On the contrary, the absence of open war may even presuppose a profound instability such as that represented by an almost even balance of power.\textsuperscript{34} It is even possible to argue that peace is built on instability, as was indeed the official policy of the United States and NATO throughout the Cold War, where the philosophy was that it was exactly the unpredictability of the military balance which secured the peace. If the adversary, e.g. the USSR could not known for sure the exact location of
the nuclear threshold, any aggressive step would entail a risk of nuclear war, which in turn would deter aggression and thus ensure peace. A higher nuclear threshold (e.g. as a consequence of a no-first-use strategy for the nukes) might, on the one hand, improve stability by making an inadvertent nuclear less likely, but this might, on the other hand, actually endanger the peace.

If peace is an unconditional good, stability is thus not necessarily a good to be pursued in all cases. Nor is it self-evident—the positive connotations of the concept notwithstanding—that stability is a good at all, as the concept signifies a preservation of a status quo which is not automatically beneficial to all parties. Stability may thus (just as negative peace) be opposed to the demand for justice, e.g. in the sense of “distributive justice”, which also entails a reduction of inequalities, at least with regard to options. As mentioned above, inequality was a central element in Galtung’s concept of structural violence, which means that its elimination or reduction is a precondition of his “positive peace”. On the other hand, its abolition may occasionally require the use of direct violence, i.e. a breach of the negative peace. The victims of structural violence may thus have the right to (or at least feel entitled to) resort to direct violence, i.e. to violate the negative peace in order to secure positive peace by removing structural violence. We have seen this in a long chain of revolutions, beginning with the American and French revolutions in the 18th Century and continuing in modern wars of liberation—some of which have even seen a resort to means which some would label terrorism.

It is thus far from self-evident that negative peace in the narrow sense is necessarily a good, much less a public good. To thus deny that peace is an unconditional good may appear heretical as the concept has at least as positive connotations as “stability”. On the other hand, only radical principled pacifists would deny that certain wars may be just and good, hence that certain types of peace may be bad. If the UK had not declared war on Germany in 1939, the Nazis might perhaps have undertaken the Holocaust with impunity as well as have conquered most of Europe, including Denmark—which would surely have been a most unappealing negative peace. It must also be acknowledged that a war is always, in a certain sense, caused by the defender who always has the option of simply surrendering without resistance, thus avoiding a war—as Denmark did on the 9th of April 1940. Most would agree that wars thus “started” by the defender are not automatically “evil”.

Peace is, furthermore, eminently divides, and not even the so-called world wars have included the entire world. In all known wars, there have been neutral parties, either as a consequence of a deliberate policy of neutralism, or simply because the states in question happened to be outside the area of war and did not make the deliberate decision to nevertheless become involved.
Finally, there may be a rather direct link between production and consumption of security and peace. Indeed, this is the reason why most states field a defence force and/or join alliances, i.e. in order to deter attacks from other states. Alliance membership automatically entails a certain contribution to the production of the common good, as the very membership is tantamount to choosing sides, thereby running the risk of becoming involved in a war of which a state might otherwise stay aloof. On top of that normally comes, for obvious reasons, some pressure from the other alliance members to make a military contribution to the joint defence or deterrence.

War as a public evil
All the above qualifications notwithstanding, there can be no disputing that wars are generally phenomena deserving the label “public evils” in the sense of evils afflicting everyone, either directly or indirectly—in the latter case either because of the side-effects of an actual war or of the preparations for a possible war. However, wars do differ also in this respect.

Types of War
In the following we shall proceed from a (perhaps excessively) simple categorisation of wars into pre-modern, modern, nuclear and “wars of the third kind”—a classification which builds on history, but nevertheless is not strictly historical as pre-modern wars may also occur in this day and age.

Pre-modern Wars
Medieval and even earlier wars were typically waged by a wide range of actors, including the monarchy, the church, feudal lords, etc.—in most cases mainly by means of professionals, i.e. mercenaries.

For this reasons as well as because of the scarcity of means to rent and/or arm and equip armies inter alia because of inadequate capacity to tax the population) wars were usually rather limited, the opposing armies manoeuvring rather than fighting and often doing so in order to avoid encountering the adversary than to force him into battle. When actual fighting nevertheless took place, it was almost exclusively directed against the soldiers of the respective opponent. Of course there were civilian victims and suffering in such wars, e.g. in the form of looting and sporadic violence, including rape, by the soldiers, but these effects were rather limited and far from indivisible as they could be escaped from. However, in parallel with the growth of populations it became more difficult to flee (at least permanently) which invested the effects of war with a public evil character. As argued by Jeffrey Herbst, however, this trend was largely confined to Europe, whereas escape remained an option in most of Africa because of its low population density.
On top of these direct consequences came side-effects such as an easier spread of infectious diseases by marauding armies, and often a reduction in the harvest yields and a heavier taxation for the financing of the war—but even these consequences tended to be rather moderate.

**Modern Wars**

Certain changes took place in this system during the Renaissance as a result of the “military revolution” of the 16\(^{th}\) and 17\(^{th}\) centuries, inter alia related to a strengthening of the state. This entailed an improved taxation capacity which allowed for larger and standing armies, a growing arms production, etc. Even though this made wars more of a burden on the civilian population (creating a larger public evil), the real transition to modern wars only occurred with the combination of the French and the industrial revolutions by the end of the 18\(^{th}\) Century.

The industrial revolution made it possible to equip mass armies, and the French Revolution allowed for mobilising such armies through universal conscription (“levée en masse”). Conscription might be seen as representing the norm (which gradually spread to the rest of Europe) that the state should represent the people (the principle of people’s sovereignty), whose duty is therefore was to contribute to the defence of the state. National defence was thus defined as a public good, as were to a certain extent even wars of aggression which were also supposed to serve the interests of the state and, *ipsa facto*, also of the people. When war, as formulated by Clausewitz, was conceived of as a “continuation of politics by other means”, and when politics was to by determined by (or at least on behalf of) the people, then the spoils of war were to be seen as public goods for the society in question—which did not, of course, rule out abuse on the part of incumbent governments who merely had to claim that their political goals served the common good.

The costs of war, on the other hand, became a public evil, both because of the civic duty to serve in the military and the more effective taxation, not least intended to finance wars. Another public evil appeared as a consequence of the emergence of mass armies, which not only made wars more destructive but also made it harder to escape from them. The culmination of modern wars was the two world wars of the 20\(^{th}\) Century, both of which represented unprecedented public evils. Whereas the casualties in the first were mainly military (but usually conscripted citizens), in the second they were mostly civilian—partly as a result of the massive aerial bombardment of major cities, intended to defeat the respective opponent by indirect means, i.e. by inflicting harm on his civilian society.
Nuclear War and Deterrence

The culmination of these aerial bombardments of civilian targets were, of course, the two nuclear bombs used by the USA against the Japanese cities Hiroshima and Nagasaki in August 1945, which heralded a new era. As most were soon to realise, nuclear weapons and war could henceforth (as formulated by Bernard Brodie) only serve to prevent war, since the gap between means and ends had become too unbridgeable for war to remain rational in the sense of something that could be waged with gain.

Nuclear war thus came to be seen as an obvious public evil, and the more so the more became know about the indirect and long-term side-effects of nuclear weapons such as long-term radioactive contamination. In the 1980s research findings were published according to which even a medium-sized nuclear war (i.e. one in which neither side used its entire arsenal) might effect climatic changes (the so-called “nuclear winter”) which would make the Earth largely uninhabitable by humans and other vertebrate species. To this unquestionable public “super-evil” were added other side-effects such as radio-active contamination as a result of atmospheric nuclear tests (until the entry into force of the Limited Test Ban Treaty of 1963) as well as, of course, the economic costs of the nuclear arms race.

It may nevertheless be disputed that nuclear deterrence as such was a public evil. No nuclear weapons were ever used, and the upkeep of the nuclear arsenals may still have been cheaper than it would have been to deter the respective opponent by means of conventional forces. An argument can also be made to the effect that nuclear deterrence was the main reason for “the long peace” experienced by Europe, which was undoubtedly a collective good of sorts as it did not merely include the members of the two alliances, but also neutral states. It would, however, be a logical fallacy to deduce from the fact that deterrence did not fail to its having been required in the first place. As pointed out by John Mueller and others, many alternative explanations of the long peace recommend themselves.

On the other hand, it is impossible to disprove that nuclear weapons were a major cause pf the long peace. It seems plausible (albeit impossible to prove) that nuclear weapons have had a general deterrent effect, i.e. that one side’s nuclear weapons have not merely deterred the respective other from a nuclear attack, but that the “existential deterrence” (a term coined by McGeorge Bundy) worked at all levels. Precisely because the arsenals and their deployment were designed to safeguard the ability to retaliate under all circumstances, they entailed a certain risk of being triggered by mistake—e.g. as a result of a misinterpretation of warning indicators, because of a technical error, or via a “Dr. Strangelove scenario”, starting with a human error and then producing a
crisis spinning out of control. However, exactly these risks and their potentially apocalyptical consequences gave both sides to the confrontation a very strong incentive to step very gently in their interaction with the other.

It is thus worth noting that (as far as is known) not a single shot was ever fired between the two superpowers during the entire Cold War, and very few between their respective allies. Wars were, however, fought by the two blocs “by proxy” in the 3rd World. Here each side typically supported its side in wars, be they between states or between rebel movements and states aligned with the respective opponent. These proxy wars were undoubtedly public evils for the civilian population in the countries where they were fought, but they still do not quite satisfy the criteria of global public evils, as they were presumably beneficial for the “backers”, who were also able to escape the consequences.

“Wars of the 3rd Kind”
After the end of the Cold War (1989/91) other forms of war have attracted attention which have been labelled “new wars” (Mary Kaldor), “uncivil wars” (Donald Snow) or “wars of the third kind” (Kalevi Holsti).

They are wars like those we have witnessed in the Balkans (e.g. in Bosnia and Kosovo) as well as in Africa (e.g. in Liberia, Sierra Leone and the so-called Democratic Republic of Congo, DRC), but which resemble previous wars such as those in Lebanon or Afghanistan following the Soviet withdrawal. These wars have typically involved actors other than those appearing in the modern wars mentioned above—both a larger number so that they could not be understood as bipolar, and other actors than states. Many have even been fought in the absence of organised non-state actors such as guerrilla movements and have presented a complex picture of government forces and militias (including child soldiers), warlords, bandits, etc.

These actors have, moreover, rarely have clearly defined political goals, so that the wars cannot be understood as any “continuation of politics by other means”. Either war has been fought over control of resources such as minerals or timber—or war itself has become a form of life, a trade and a business for those involved, who have therefore not really fought for anything, but rather continued the war for its own sake and for the sake of the ideal conditions which the state of war had created for all sorts of murky, but profitable, business ventures.

Such wars almost exclusively harm the civilian population who are, moreover, not “merely” collateral casualties, but often the direct target of warfare. Sometimes the purpose is simply to expel the civilian population in order to gain unhindered control over a piece of territory. In certain ethnically and/or religiously motivated wars, it is even waged against the civilian population as
the embodiment of values which are deemed by the combatants as incompatible with their own, or against the antithetical ethnic identity itself. War may thus assume the form of veritable genocides as in Rwanda and/or it may feature forms of “combat” such as organised rape, intended to “contaminate” the nation being fought, as it happened extensively in Bosnia.

All too often, alas, all of the above motives are combined. Such “wars of the third kind” are indisputable evils, often of massive proportions, such as the war in the DRC with an estimated casualty toll of more than three million, almost exclusively civilians. They also meet the criteria of public evils, as they inflict harm indiscriminately and because the victims cannot escape the consequences. Their prevention will therefore represent a public good.

Even though these wars of the third kind are (“by nature”) intrastate wars, many become internationalised, i.e. transformed into what might be called “transnational wars” which typically involve neighbouring states as secondary actors. On the other hand the frequency of “real” international wars has been decreasing (or at least remained at a very low level), as is apparent from Table 1. Some of the wars which are here counted as international (e.g. in the Balkans) are even wars of secession which have merely been labelled international as a consequence of a (more or less unanimous, but almost always arbitrary) international recognition of the secessionist parts, whereas other wars of secession have been categorised as intra-state, either because the secessionist movements have not achieved international recognition or because they have lost (or perhaps not yet won) the war in question, as is, for instance, the case of the war in southern Sudan.

<table>
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<th>Table 1: Armed Conflicts 1989-2002</th>
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A few of the international wars belong to the classical type, which was (to some extent, at least) the case of the war between Ethiopia and Eritrea from 1998 to 2000, whereas others are more appropriately called “interventions”. Most of these have even—at least by those undertaking them—been referred to as “humanitarian”, i.e. as motivated by humanitarian concerns.

We shall revisit these humanitarian interventions below. Suffice it therefore at this stage to indicate that to the extent that these interventions are really humanitarian (or at least predominantly humanitarian, as most wars can have a host of different motives) they may be said to be military actions for the creation of public goods. Whether they deserve this label also depends on whether they
succeed in actually mitigating the humanitarian problems in question, and whether the costs of doing so (e.g. measured in terms of human lives) compare favourably with the gains. There is no automatic correspondence between humanitarian motives and consequences, and it is perfectly conceivable that interventions spurred by humanitarian concerns may exacerbate the humanitarian problems—or indeed that interventions undertaken for other reasons may lead to a clear improvement of the humanitarian situation. Whereas the US (but UN-authorised) intervention in Somalia probably belongs to the former category, Vietnam’s intervention in Cambodia may belong to the latter, as it removed from power one of the most genocidal regimes the world has ever known.\footnote{72}

**Indirect evils**

Many of the above-mentioned wars have wide-ranging side-effects, almost all of which deserve the label of public evils. One of the most prominent side-effects of wars is flows of refugees, often massive and usually going to immediate neighbours, as illustrated by the statistics for the Horn of Africa in Table 2.

| Table 2: Refugee Flows in the Horn of Africa\footnote{73} (thousands, only included if the number exceeded 5,000 in at least one year) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Djibouti | Ethiopia | - | 0.0 | 18.0 | 18.0 | 18.0 | 8.0 | 3.0 | 1.5 | 1.6 | 0.1 |
| Eritrea | Sudan | 502.6 | 424.5 | 419.3 | 282.8 | 328.3 | 315.0 | 342.3 | 342.1 | 367.7 | 324.5 |
| Ethiopia | Sudan | 200.9 | 173.2 | 160.6 | 48.1 | 51.5 | 44.3 | 35.6 | 35.4 | 34.1 | 16.1 |
| Somalia | Djibouti | 20.0 | 17.7 | 20.6 | 21.3 | 23.0 | 21.5 | 21.6 | 21.6 | 21.7 | 21.7 |
| Somalia | Ethiopia | 406.1 | 228.1 | 269.7 | 305.4 | 287.8 | 249.2 | 195.3 | 180.9 | 121.1 | 67.1 |
| Sudan | Ethiopia | 25.6 | 44.4 | 51.8 | 61.1 | 75.7 | 56.9 | 58.6 | 70.3 | 71.7 | 80.9 |

This table does not, however, distinguish between war refugees and people fleeing for other reasons, e.g. because of natural disasters or famine. Even the latter may, however, well be indirect war refugees, as wars often have detrimental environmental consequences and hamper agricultural production, thus jeopardising food security.\footnote{74}

On top of these indirect effects come the expenses incurred by upholding a certain level of armaments, and the negative effects of this on the national economy, not least for developing countries. Even though some have claimed that an arms build-up in “backward” countries may contribute to modernisation,\footnote{75} most analysts today agree that the opposite is normally the case, i.e. that an arms build-up comes at the expense of economical and social development.\footnote{76} As these negative side-effects typically affect the entire economy, they represent clear public evils.

For industrialised countries the same applies, even though there is often a certain “spin-off” from investments in military high technology, especially as far as
research and development (R&D) are concerned—to which effect the internet and the GPS (global positioning system) may testify. However, this gross effect of large R&D investments should rightly be compared with the hypothetical effects of a comparable investment in civilian R&D, which most analysts agree would be larger, inter alia because concerns for national security often require that military research remains classified, which hampers spin-off. In this sense, military expenditures represent unproductive “waste”, and even more so for the large majority of countries that rely on imports for almost all their military equipment, thus not benefitting from spin-off effects at all. Concerns for national security may, however, make such “waste” indispensable.

Other indirect costs derive from the losses incurred by the collaboration with neighbouring countries (or others) that does not take place because of wars or the preparations for war. These so-called “opportunity costs”, likewise, have indiscriminate effects, thus representing public evils. Even though it is complicated (and inevitably counterfactual) to calculate the hypothetical gains from a trade with others that does not take place because of the presumed risk of war, they may well be considerable, at least when affecting (as in the East-West conflict) developed countries with a large foreign trade, at least with the potential for this.

Trade, Democracy and Peace
We may even be dealing with a vicious circle here, as foreign trade and the resultant interdependency between states have been credited by many (especially liberalists) with having a war prevention effect. If the fear of war curtails trade it will thus eliminate some of the inhibitions against war, thus making it more likely.

Almost all wars also have detrimental effects politically, e.g. with regard to human rights. At the very least, the freedom of expression is usually limited in warring countries or countries experiencing acute fears of war, to which are often added internments of (allegedly) potential traitors and “fifth columnists”— inter alia because many issues, about which debate and expressions of dissent would otherwise be entirely legitimate become “securitised” (i.e. transformed into issues of national security) which may be (ab)used to justify “extraordinary measures” such as limitations on civil rights.

In this field as well we may be encountering a vicious circle, because wars and preparations for them thus tends to weaken or even destroy democracy, thereby removing what the same liberalists regard as an important obstacle to war. This theory of the “democratic peace” (dating back to Immanuel Kant) comes in three varieties, which may be labelled monadic, dyadic and systemic, the latter appearing in both a weak and a strong version.
• The monadic version has it that democratic states are simply more peaceful than non-democracies, inter alia because decisions about going to war will be taken by the entire population, i.e. by those who would be most affected by the consequences of war. However plausible this thesis may appear, there are is no statistical evidence to support it, at least as far as international wars are concerned, which are just as often started by democracies as by non-democracies. On the other hand, there is strong empirical support for the thesis that democracy may prevent intra-state conflicts, or rather make the resort to violent means in such conflicts less likely.  

• According to the (much more prominent) dyadic version, democratic states are very reluctant to go to war against each other, inter alia because they understand each other better due to the more transparent mode of decision-making. Even though it is often claimed that there is strong empirical evidence to support this thesis, the evidence is actually much more ambiguous in fact the theory may be either trivial or dubious. Either it rests on a solid empirical foundation, the relevance of which is questionable (as with the numerous analyses based on the behaviour of the Greek city states during the Pelloponesian War in the 5th Century BC), or it rests on a rather narrow empirical basis of obvious relevance, i.e. stable modern democracies, of which there have been quite few. If the empirical basis is extended to include partial democracies such as the German Empire prior to the First World War in 1914, or Serbia prior to the Kosovo War of 1999, too many exceptions to the general rule appear (in the sense of democracies actually going to war against each other) for the theory to remain unfalsified. If the criteria are tightened for what to count as democracies, the result not only becomes a too narrow empirical basis on which to base a theory. This small population of stable democracies also consists of states which have numerous other reasons not to go to war with each other, making it impossible to determine what role democracy may play.

• According to what we may call the “weak systemic version”, it is simply possible to generalise or extrapolate from the dyadic to the global level, i.e. that of the system. Considering that the world may be viewed as consisting of dyads of states (Denmark-Norway, France-Uzbekistan, Uruguay-Malawi, etc), the total likelihood of war may presumably be reduced by making as many states (and by implication dyads) as possible democratic. This variant may, however, be criticised for being reductionist, as quite different dynamics and rules may apply at the systemic and the dyadic level—just as a book is not necessarily well-written, just because all words are spelled correctly and the grammar of each sentence is correct.

• The strong version of the systemic variant of the democratic peace theory claims that war may be prevented by means of democracy at the systemic level, i.e. some form of global or cosmopolitan democracy, terms which are
hard to define and undoubtedly even harder to realise. Does global
democracy mean that all states should have the same influence, or that all
citizens should? The logical implications of the former would be that China
with its 1.3 billion inhabitants should only have the same influence as, say,
Denmark with around five million, whereas the latter would mean that China
should have four times as much power as the United States and 250 times as
much as Denmark. A combination of the two may also be possible, e.g. in a
bicameral system in which one chamber represents the states and the other
the peoples. But is it likely that the West would relinquish power to the
extent implied by such a system? And does global democracy not presuppose
that all the component parts, i.e. the states, are democratic, as it surely cannot
be taken for granted that government of non-democracies always speak and
vote on behalf of their citizens.

Peace as a Public Good: The “Peace Dividend”
If peace is a public evil it almost logically follows that peace must be a public
good, either for the individual state or for world society as a whole. In this sense,
the public goods aspects of peace are sometimes referred to as the “peace
dividend”. Even though this dividend may assume many different forms,
most attention has been given to its economic aspects.

War and the preparations for war simply cost money which may be saved in the
case of peace, making preparations for war superfluous or, at least, less urgent. How this
peace dividend may be “cashed in” via arms reduction or disarmament,
however, is more complicated, just as measuring the peace dividend is difficult.
Apart from what is measurable, of course, non-economic benefits of expending
societal resources on something useful also need to be considered.

It is certainly possible to approach these matters from a macro-economic
perspective, taking national account figures of defence expenditures as the point
of departure and combining this with the multiplier to assess the indirect
consequences. As far as the salary part of defence expenditures is concerned,
it will have to take into account the rate of employment, determining whether
former military staff can be employed in the civilian sectors of the economy or
whether they will end up on the dole or in early retirement; the difference
between former salaries and future pensions or unemployment benefits (as well
as potential “golden handshakes”); the share of income and consumer taxes of
this difference; the savings and import rates of disposable income; and the
demand implications of the anticipated decline in income for the affected
personnel.
As far as the remaining costs are concerned, the import rate is an important factor, especially for countries such as Denmark which have only a very limited indigenous production, but where co-production agreements may, on the other hand, have to be factored into the calculation, likewise taking account the multiplier effects.\textsuperscript{92} Even though no calculus shall be attempted here, a reasonable assumption is that the net effect of gross savings on the defence budget will be much smaller net gains, at least in the short term. It also matters whether the dividend is simply saved, e.g. by reducing the public debt or lowering taxes,\textsuperscript{93} or whether it is recycled and if so to what.\textsuperscript{94}

All this is further complicated if an attempt is made (as has been done)\textsuperscript{95} to calculate the macro-economic effects of global reductions of military expenditures, as this will depend on which countries stand for how large shares of total reductions, how the reductions are subdivided into salaries, weapons purchases and other expenses; what the import rates are for the respective countries, both for arms purchases and for consumer goods; what the tax rates are; how the saved funds are spent, etc. Unfortunately, however, global military expenditures do not seem to decline. Rather, after an initial decline following the end of the Cold War they seem to be rising again as shown in Table 3, which does not even take the most recent (and very substantial) rise in the US defence budget into account.

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<td>10</td>
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<tr>
<td>N-America</td>
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<td>344</td>
<td>324</td>
<td>306</td>
<td>304</td>
<td>298</td>
<td>299</td>
<td>310</td>
<td>313</td>
<td>344</td>
</tr>
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<td>C-America</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>S-America</td>
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<td>20</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>22</td>
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<tr>
<td>Asia</td>
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<td>Middle East</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>World</td>
<td>762</td>
<td>740</td>
<td>707</td>
<td>691</td>
<td>696</td>
<td>690</td>
<td>696</td>
<td>723</td>
<td>741</td>
<td>784</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If we apply a combined micro-economic and sociological perspective to the elusive peace dividend, further complications arise, as there is far from perfect substitution, neither with regard to productive capacity nor to personnel. Hence, plants which see their orders for military equipment decline cannot necessarily convert into civilian production, the numerous studies of such plant-level conversion notwithstanding.\textsuperscript{97} Nor are all military personnel directly employable in the civilian sector. In countries with general conscription a large part of this problem is, of course, statistical, as they have the option of shrinking their armed forces simply by refraining from conscripting part of an age cohort or by shortening the term of service. This simply entails that there will be more young people to share the available jobs. In other countries, the problems are more
concrete, as it is here a matter of dismissing employees who may or may not be retrained for other jobs which may or may not be available.\textsuperscript{98}

In the aforementioned “wars of the third kind” this is often a very acute problem. If a peace is signed after a protracted civil war a large part of both government forces and former insurgents need to be disarmed and demobilised. It the former soldiers and/or guerrillas are not provided with alternative employment and integrated into civilian society, experience shows that they will often resort to arms again, either through a renewed rebellion or in criminal activities, thereby benefiting from their skills in the use of weapons. Considering that societies such as these are often in a desperate economic situation caused by a protracted armed conflict, there is usually a need for foreign aid for such “DDR&R”-programmes (for disarmament, demobilisation, repatriation and reintegration).\textsuperscript{99} A successfully implemented DDR&R-programme would warrant the label of a public good as it may be a precondition for preventing a conflict from flaring up again which may easily affect an entire region.

\textbf{The Provision of Peace as a Public Good}

In principle there are many ways to create the public good, not least by limiting the public evil represented by wars and preparations for them. It stands to reason that different types of measures will be called for to prevent different kinds of wars, to bring different forms of raging armed conflicts to a halt and thus to make the preparations for them superfluous. There are no instruments or strategies of universal applicability but rather a need for a well-stuffed “tool box” and a broad panoply of strategies and skills. Likewise, the involvement of a wide variety of categories of actors may prove relevant.

The scope of the present article does not allow for anything like an exhaustive account of these issues, and will thus confine itself to a categorisation of actors, strategies and instruments. Needless to say, these are closely linked, as instruments must be selected according to what is attempted, i.e. the strategy, which in turn is determined by the actors on the basis of their identities, interests and goals.

\textit{Actors: Identities, Interests and Goals}

The most obvious actors involved in the provision of global public goods are, of course, international organisations which are almost “born” in order to produce public goods or reduce public evils. Relevant distinctions here are geographical ones between global, regional, subregional and other organisations; and functional ones between, on the one hand, organisations created in order to manage problems of peace and security and, on the other hand, organisation which may either make indirect contributions towards these ends or which
become involved almost by accident. Table 4 enumerates some of the most important international organisations that have already played such roles.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Created for peace</th>
<th>Created for other ends</th>
<th>Both peace and other ends</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Global</td>
<td>Regional/subregional</td>
<td>Others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UN (Security Council and Secretariat)</td>
<td>OSCE</td>
<td>NATO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UN organisations (UNHCR etc.) World Bank, WTO</td>
<td>ASEAN, ECOWAS, IGAD</td>
<td>Commonwealth, G-8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EU, OAS, OAU/AU, ARF, SADC, CIS</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>


A standing debate within IR theory is whether international organisations are independent or, at least, autonomous actors with their own identities and interests or mere instruments for the interests of the states comprising their membership. This controversy is closely related to the aforementioned one between neorealists and neoliberal institutionalists, where the former represent the first point of view and the latter the second. The answer to these question may well be either/or, as some organisations, even though they may have been created by great powers as their instruments, may gradually develop their own identities and play partly independent roles, at least in areas which none of the stronger member states regard as “vital issues”. They may thus gradually build capacities (provided by member states) for independent action.

Another category of potential actors are the states which are, however, also parts of the problem. A useful distinction may be between states which are directly involved and others. Most of the following considerations, however, also apply to the parties to the above-mentioned wars of the third kind, i.e. to both states and rebel movements if only the latter are relatively organised.

Even though the states involved have, on the one hand (usually, albeit not always) an interest in avoiding war, they have an equally obvious interest in not losing it, should it nevertheless occur, and these two sets of considerations may well point in opposite directions. The latter interest may call for an arms build-up before the war as well as for an escalation after it has begun, which may well make the very outbreak of war more likely and increase the destructiveness of the ensuing war. It is thus highly significant how the two sets of interests are prioritised.
Some analysts have, for instance, claimed to have identified a radical change of priorities in the USSR around 1983/84, based on a reassessment of the chances of avoiding war as better than previously assumed. This made it less urgent to guard against losing and generated an interest in disarmament and international cooperation, i.e. in the provision of public goods. In conformity with this amended set of priorities, the Soviet leadership around Gorbachev thus suddenly took the debate on “global problems” (e.g. related to the environment) seriously and accepted a share of responsibility for their solution, which it had previously refused.

The reverse may, of course, also be true, i.e. that a party to a conflict comes to realise that it cannot win, which gives it an obvious incentive to bring the conflict to a halt on the best obtainable terms, often couched in terms of a truce and a subsequent peace treaty. It is even possible that both sides may reach such a conclusion simultaneously, but unfortunately this does not automatically lead to peace. Sometimes a continuation of the war may still appear to decision-makers as the lesser evil, as they would otherwise have to justify the “sunk costs” which the war has already brought about, both economically and in terms of human lives. Moreover, the very state of war can have its attractions, and decision-makers may further be concerned about their international reputation, which may be decisive for their position of power in the longer run. A state which has to surrender almost invites attacks in the future or to have its vital interests infringed upon by others at a later stage, at least unless it allows itself to be protected by others, as was the case of post-war Germany and Japan.

Sooner or later, however, what William Zartmann has aptly called a “hurting stalemate” usually develops, i.e. a situation where both sides realise that neither one can prevail, but where this stalemate also hurts, which gives both sides an incentives to sue for peace. The same may be the case in a cold war such as the East-West conflict where the arms race imposed burdens on both sides, but especially on the USSR as the weaker side, which it was unable to shoulder in the long run.

External powers may also play a role in such conflicts, either between states or between states and rebel movements. In some cases they may be affected by the conflict (e.g. as host countries for war refugees), providing them with a clear self-interest in bringing the conflict to a halt. In other situations, their international role may almost demand involvement. A global or regional hegemony that does not interfere in a serious conflict within its sphere of influence risks loosing part of its acceptance as hegemony. Finally, there are certainly states (to which Denmark has traditionally belonged) which simply take their international (legal or moral) obligations seriously.

100
101
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Besides states and international organisations (consisting of states), non-state actors can occasionally play a role. These may be subdivided into various categories, depending on their character, identity and ambitions, i.e. their self-defined roles. In Table 5 such a categorisation of some important actors has been attempted, but it should be noted some actors combine different roles.

**Table 5: Non-State Actors (examples)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Character</th>
<th>NGOs</th>
<th>Firms</th>
<th>Others</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Policy-making, information</td>
<td>Peace movements, ICG, AI</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Humanitarian</td>
<td>MSF, ICRC,</td>
<td></td>
<td>Churches</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mediation</td>
<td>SCG</td>
<td></td>
<td>PMC</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other</td>
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**Legend:** NGO: Non-Governmental Organisation; ICG: International Crisis Group, MSF: Médecins sans Frontiers, ICRC: International Committee of the Red Cross, SCG: Search for Common Ground; PMCs: Private Military Companies

**FIG. 1: CONFLICT MANAGEMENT STRATEGY**

The figure describes the ideal picture of rational decision-making, whereas reality is often much more diffuse. Rather than optimising the effort, decision-makers frequently need to “satisfy” (as administration theory has it, as an alternative to optimising) i.e. to opt for the first reasonably satisfactory solution—also because decisions have to be made urgently and often not in the “right” order. If a country has become engaged in one conflict in one country
this may often exclude its becoming involved in a conflict elsewhere, even if the latter is more serious and important.

**Strategies, Methods and Instruments**

The above (categories of) actors have widely diverging identities, interests and objectives, which is, inter alia, manifested in different strategies, which all amount to specifying goals in terms of subordinate objectives and allocating means to these goals and objectives.

As illustrated in Figure 1 actors are faced with a number of questions in these respects, not least because they usually have to prioritise their activities, inter alia in order to maximise public goods. This obviously means that it would be irrational to expend resources on tasks which are insoluble if this comes at the expense of some that would be soluble.

We may also categorise the relevant measures by their timing, e.g. in relation to a conflict cycle as illustrated in Figure 2.  

![Fig. 2: The Conflict Cycle](image)

Ideally, of course, a conflict should be prevented—even though this a rather misleading term, as conflict (in the sense of competition and clarification of divergent interests) is not something to avoid. What should be avoided, however, is the resort to violent and destructive forms of conflict behaviour. A useful distinction is between “structural” and “operational” prevention, the latter referring to the resolution of latent conflicts such as dramatic inequalities,
rank imbalances, etc.,\textsuperscript{107} i.e. the removal of the basic causes of conflict. As far as developing countries are concerned, development aid may be used as a means to this end, as many donors have indeed come to realise.\textsuperscript{108} The codification of rules may also contribute to structural prevention, both as far as general rules (e.g. in international law) and more concrete ones (such as arms control agreements) are concerned.\textsuperscript{109}

Operational conflict prevention is about preventing an immediately impending conflict outbreak, and here most attention has been devoted to the need for early warning as a background for preventative action. Unfortunately, both are hampered by serious complications.

As far as early warning is concerned, the requisite data are often missing. Even if data are available, even the best ones lend themselves to divergent interpretations.\textsuperscript{110} Moreover, even if the relevant decision-makers reach the conclusion that a conflict is impending, they will have to make sure that they will be able to subsequently substantiate this assessment. This will, ironically, become the more difficult the most successful potential preventative initiatives will be. If they succeed 100 percent, the result will be that nothing happens, and it will be very difficult to prove what would have occurred in the absence of the preventative measure.

This may not be an insurmountable problem as long as merely “soft” instruments are employed such as support for civil society organisations, mediation efforts and the like, but it will be a serious obstacle to more “muscular” measures such as economic sanctions\textsuperscript{111} or (even more so) military intervention. Considering that “old-fashioned” economic sanctions typically hurt the innocent the most, recent years have seen a growing interest in the development of “smart” sanctions which specifically affect the guilty ones, typically state leaders.\textsuperscript{112} If panoply of such smart sanctions is available, preventative actions will be far less problematic to undertake.

When a conflict has erupted in violent struggle (be that in the form of an international or a civil war) soft instruments will often be ineffective. There may, however, still remain some scope for mediation initiatives, just as sanctions may be imposed on one or both parties to an armed conflict, usually in the form of an arms embargo. Even though it will now be easier to justify some form of engagement (as the problem is now obvious) the costs of interference by military means have also risen. In a civil war situation it will often require the deployment of armed forces mandated to enforce a truce, which may often entail actual combat operations and may cost lives. In the case of non-vital interests such as civil wars in foreign countries, most countries (and not least democracies) have a very low tolerance for casualties.
The situation is somewhat different once a conflict has peaked, either because of war fatigue or simply because the stocks of ammunition have been depleted. Now a truce can often be negotiated (perhaps with the involvement of “third parties” in the role as mediators) and peacekeeping forces may be deployed to monitor its observance. While this is fairly unproblematic in international wars and “traditional” civil wars between two well-organised parties it is far more complicated in the wars of the third kind described above. Usually, not all parties sign the agreed truce, and there is rarely a generally accepted line of demarcation between the parties, which might be monitored and patrolled by peacekeeping forces.

If the peace or truce is successfully kept this breathing space may be exploited for actual conflict resolution initiatives (sometimes referred to as “post-conflict peace-building”) in order to prevent the conflict from flaring up again upon the departure of the peacekeepers. A central element in such conflict resolution will be dealing with the underlying causes of the conflict, making conflict resolution almost identical with the aforementioned structural conflict prevention, yet with the significant difference that it takes place after a violent conflict and therefore does not suffer from the same justification problems as prevention. Many different measures may recommend themselves for conflict resolution, including political reforms ensuring some power-sharing, economic measures to reduce inequalities such as land reforms, etc.

**Conclusion**

There are thus numerous ways of preventing, managing and resolving violent conflicts, all with a view to reducing the public evil represented by war and thereby promoting peace as a public good.
Notes

1 This is an English version of Bjørn Møller’s contribution to an article authored jointly with Erik André Andersen on “Fred og stabilitet som globale offentlige goeder”, forthcoming in a book published by the Danish Institute for Human Rights.


This is described in Rousseau, Jean-Jacques: Discours sur l'origine et les fondements de l'inégalité parmi les hommes, quoted from http://un2sg4.unige.ch/athena/rousseau/jjr_ineg.html#seconde partie: “Voilà comment les hommes purent insensiblement acquérir quelque idée grossière des engagements mutuels, et de l'avantage de les remplir, mais seulement autant que pouvait l'exiger l'intérêt présent et sensible; car la prêvoyance n'était rien pour eux, et loin de s'occuper d'un avenir éloigné, ils ne songeaient pas même au lendemain. S'agissait-il de prendre un cerf, chacun sentait bien qu'il devait pour cela garder fidèlement son poste; mais si un lièvre venait à passer à la portée de l'un d'eux, il ne faut pas douter qu'il ne le poursuivît sans scrupule, et qu'ayant atteint sa proie il ne s'eût fort peu de faire manquer la leur à ses compagnons. See also Waltz, Kenneth N.: Man, the State and War. A Theoretical Analysis (New York: Columbia University Press, 1959), pp. 167-169; and Doyle: op. cit. (note 7), s 137-160.


Glenn Snyder labelled this “the alliance security dilemma”, i.e. the choice between “entrapment” and “abandonment”. See his “The Security Dilemma in Alliance Politics”, World Politics, vol. 36, no. 4 (1984), pp. 461-495.


The formulation in art. 107 of the 1793 constitution of revolutionare France was “Le force générale de la République est composé du peuple entier”. See Godéchot, Jacques (ed.): Les


Brodie, Bernard (ed.): The Absolute Weapon (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1946), p. 76: “Thus far the chief purpose of a military establishment has been to win wars. From now on its chief purpose must be to avert them. It can have no other useful purpose”.


74 One of the few attempt at a quantification of such effects is Cramma, Michael (red.): *The True Cost of Conflict* (London: Earthscan Publications, 1994), which contains case studies on East Timor, Iraq, Kashmir, Mozambique, Peru, Sudan and the former Yugoslavia.


See note 7 above.


This is, for instance, the proposed option in Weidenbaum, Murray: *Small Wars, Big Defense. Paying for the Military after the Cold War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992).

34

See, for instance, Smith, Ron P.: “The International Peace Dividend”, in Gleditsch & al. (eds.): op. cit. (note 76), pp. 351-357; Ba youmi, Taim m, Daviel Hewitt & Steven Symansky: “Global Disarmament and Developing Countries: A MULTIMOD Simulation”, *ibid.*, pp. 491-520.


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