WHAT PRICE PEACE? ON THE DIALECTICAL RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CIVILIZATION AND WAR

Brett Bowden

Abstract

It is generally understood that that there is a direct correlation between civilized society and a propensity for cooperation and peace over confrontation and violent conflict, both in domestic affairs and in international relations. Under the influence of democratic and liberal theories of perpetual peace, this leads to the assumption that the spread of civilization around the globe will hasten the cause of international order and world peace. This article challenges that orthodoxy on the back of a misunderstanding about the nature of the relationship between civilization and war. Turning the generally accepted "civilization equals peace" equation on its head, this article demonstrates a dramatically different relationship between civilizing processes and war, or civilization and war.

Introduction

In his Farewell Address to the United States Congress on April 19, 1951, General Douglas MacArthur quoted his own remarks on the occasion of Japan's surrender on the battleship USS Missouri on September 2, 1945, stating: "Men since the beginning of time have sought peace. Various methods through the ages have been attempted to devise an international process to prevent or settle disputes between nations. From the very start workable methods were found in so far as individual citizens were concerned, but the mechanics of an instrumentality of larger international scope have never been successful. Military alliances, balances of power, Leagues of Nations, all in turn failed, leaving the only path to be by way of the crucible of war." He went on to argue that with the advent of nuclear weapons, the "utter destructiveness of war now blocks out this alternative. We have had our last chance. If we will not devise some greater and more equitable system, Armageddon will be at our door." For MacArthur, the ever-present threat of the scourge of war could largely be attributed to humankind's fundamental moral shortcomings. In order to rid the world of war, he argued that there was an urgent and desperate need for wholesale "spiritual recrudescence and improvement of human character that will synchronize with our almost matchless advances in science, art, literature, and all material and cultural developments of the past 2,000 years. It must be of the spirit if we are to save the flesh."

At roughly the same point in history, Hans Morgenthau (1967; 372) wrote in *Politics among Nations* that "two world wars within a generation and the potentialities of

nuclear warfare have made the establishment of international order and the preservation of international peace the paramount concern of Western civilization." In fact, not only was order and peace the concern of Western nations, the "preservation of peace has become the prime concern of all nations" (Morgenthau, 1967: 22). Acknowledging that this is not just a recent realization, he added that "war has always been abhorred as a scourge," which is why so many leading thinkers of every generation have turned their intellectual prowess to ridding the world of war. Morgenthau notes (1967: 373), for instance, that "Erasmus in the Sixteenth century, Sully, Éméric Crucé, Hugo Grotius, and William Penn in the seventeenth, and Abbé de Saint-Pierre, Rousseau, Bentham, and Kant in the eighteenth were the great intellectual forerunners of the practical attempts undertaken in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries to solve the problems of international order and peace." He went on to argue that the "moral root" underpinning these various "attempts to establish a stable and peaceful international order is to be found in the increase in the humaneness and civilized character of human relations which the last centuries have witnessed in the Western world." This humaneness and civilized behavior was in turn motivated by the realization that the human cost of war is inimical to the "philosophy of the Enlightenment and the political theory of liberalism [which] postulated respect for human life and the promotion of human welfare." Morgenthau (1967: 374) further explained that a key "intellectual factor" behind this development was the "rise of the commercial classes first to social and then to political importance. With them rose to prominence the commercial and scientific spirit which dreaded war and international anarchy as irrational disturbances of the calculable operations of the market." In short, Morgenthau was making the point that the cost of war was increasingly thought to be too high not only in respect to the loss of human lives, but also in terms of commercial losses and broader economic devastation.

The kind of spiritual or moral arousal we are talking about here is effectively the wider adoption of what might best be characterized as Enlightenment values, principles, and institutions. These emerging liberal values and associated democratic procedures and institutions were increasingly thought of as underpinning and sustaining the ever more orderly and peaceful relations among the states of civilized Western international society. This general line of thinking has been around for some time, with the central argument being that there is a direct correlation between civilized society and a propensity for peacefulness, both in domestic affairs and in international relations. Such thinking can be seen, for instance, in Friedrich von Schiller's (1972: 327) statement of the late eighteenth century in which he observed that the civilized "European society of states seems transformed into a great family; its members may have their feuds, but no longer do they tear each other limb from limb." The American legal scholar, Alpheus Henry Snow, captured the orderly nature of such a society in the early nineteenth century when partially quoting the French publicist, Antoine Rougier: "Those States which recognize themselves as obligated to fulfill the functions which are necessary to the existence of all organized society, by maintaining order and justice under a regular government and securing the human rights of their inhabitants 'form a community or society, anciently

called the Community of Christian States, now the community of civilized States'"
(Snow, 1921: 315-316).

The orderly and peaceful community of civilized states described by Schiller and
Snow is what Hedley Bull (1995: 13; Bull and Watson, 1984: 1) would later refer to as an
international society or "group of states (or, more generally, a group of independent
political communities) which not merely form a system, in the sense that the behaviour of
each is a necessary factor in the calculations of others, but also have established by
dialogue and consent common rules and institutions for the conduct of their relations, and
recognize their common interest in maintaining these arrangements." As Andrew
Linklater explains (2010: 167), societies of states are the "arenas in which states have
explored the prospects for [global] civilizing processes," and which make possible
"arrangements that enable humans to live together without killing, injuring, demeaning
and in other ways harming each other over and over again." In establishing an orderly
society of this kind, Bull (1966: 51-73) saw no real need for socio-cultural recognition or
compatibility, instead arguing that a pluralist international society merely requires that its
member states are sovereign and willing to engage in diplomacy. This is in contrast with
Martin Wight's (1966: 89-131) solidarist conception in which Christian civilization, and
Western values more generally, are the bedrock of order and peace among an
international society of states.

With the territorial advances of the conquering nations of Europe from the late
fifteenth century and the subsequent extension of the European states system established
by the Peace of Westphalia of 1648, by the time of the post-colonial mid-twentieth
century, Bull's (1984: 117-26) pluralist conception of international society was
increasingly identified as universal in scope. Yet it is the expansion of a more solidarist
conception of international society underpinned by the values and institutions associated
with the Enlightenment and Western civilization – liberal-democratic governance, human
rights and the rule of law, free market economics, and the efficacies of science and
technology – that is thought of as most likely to bring about peace among nations and
world peace more generally. As Antoine-Nicolas de Condorcet (see Febvre, 1973: 257,
note 118) described the situation in the late eighteenth century, the "more civilization
spreads throughout the earth the more we shall see war and conquest disappear together
with slavery and want." To put it slightly differently, it is widely thought that the spread
and take-up of what we might now classify as Western-style liberal-democratic
civilization (including a market economy) will ultimately bring about an end to war and
depravation and lead to the extension of peace and prosperity across the globe (see
Lipson, 1964; Shivakumar, 2005).

While this might sound to many like a reasonable and even admirable aspiration,
in this article I question whether world peace on such a basis is actually attainable. I raise
this question on the back of a widespread misunderstanding about the nature of civilizing
processes and, in particular, the nature of the relationship between civilization and war.
As noted, it has long been held that there is a direct correlation between civilized society,
or the state of civilization, and a propensity for cooperation and peace over confrontation
and violent conflict. In this article, however, I turn this equation on its head and

demonstrate a dramatically different relationship between civilizing processes and war, or civilization and war. Before I get to that, however, in the next section of this article I begin by outlining and summarizing the case for civilization as a path to peace.

Civilization and Peace

As outlined above, and as is reiterated by Michael Howard (2000: 2), the "peace invented by the thinkers of the Enlightenment, an international order in which war plays no part, had been a common enough aspiration for visionaries throughout history." But it was "only during the past two hundred years" – identified in the next section as two of the most bloody and violent centuries in human history – that world peace "has been regarded by political leaders as a practicable or indeed desirable goal" (Howard, 2000: 2). It was during this period that the prize of peace, or "the visualization of a social order from which war had been abolished," shifted from the realm of "millennial divine intervention that would persuade the lion to lie down with lamb," to the "forethought of rational human beings who had taken matters in to their own hands" (Howard, 2000: 6). The rationale and driving force behind this hands-on approach to world peace is deeply influenced by Immanuel Kant's idea of "perpetual peace" among an international society of republican or liberal-democratic states, or an *ius cosmopoliticum*. In short, there remains a widely held belief that liberal-democracy and a market economy represent the best way to govern any given society. Just as significantly, there is an equally widely held view that liberal-democratic polities do not fight one another. And as liberal-democracy is considered to be a governing principle that is both applicable and desired universally, it is argued that the wider democracy spreads, the greater the chances of realizing a peaceful world order (see Sen, 1999; Doyle, 1983a; 1983b; 1986; Kacowicz, 1995; cf. Bowden, 2004).

This schema for international order and peace is referred to by some as the "democratic syllogism" (Fukuyama, 1999) or the "Kantian Tripod" (Russett, Oneal & Davis, 1998). Liberal or democratic peace theory, the first and most significant proposition of the syllogism, is claimed to be one of the few "non-trivial" assertions that political scientists can make regarding the realm of international relations. For instance, based on a survey of wars over the past two centuries, Jack Levy (1988: 662) contends that, "marginal deviations" aside, "democratic states have never fought on opposite sides" in wars involving great powers. This leads him to argue that the "absence of war between democracies comes as close as anything we have to an empirical law in international relations." (The firmness of this law is questionable given that the parameters of what Levy (1988: 662, note 14) accepts as a democratic or liberal regime, between which he does not distinguish, are particularly wide. That is, democracies incorporate "1) regular elections and the free participation of opposition parties, 2) at least ten percent of the adult population being able to vote for, 3) a parliament that either control[s] or share[s] parity with the executive branch.") Similarly, Bruce Russett (1990: 123) suggests that democratic peace theory constitutes "one of the strongest nontrivial and nontautological generalizations that can be made about international relations." John

Rawls (1999:54) also thinks that the liberal-democratic peace "hypothesis is correct;" as such, it "underwrites" his "basic idea" in *The Law of Peoples* which "is to follow Kant's lead as sketched by him in *Perpetual Peace*" in order to come up with an international system that makes possible a pacific federation or peaceful "realistic utopia" (Rawls, 1999: 10).

The second element of the syllogism is the correlation between democracy and economic development: democracy is said to be the best form of government for promoting economic development; and the best means of promoting or maintaining a stable democracy is via sustained economic growth (Fukuyama, 1999: 18). The third and final part of the syllogism relates to advancing the cause of peace through the ties of commerce and economic interdependence. In this respect, the democratic syllogism has much in common with Norbert Elias's (1994: 288, 445-48) account of the civilizing of domestic societies when he writes of "the [expanding] web of human relationships" and "the lengthening of the chains of social action and interdependence," such that "more and more people must attune their conduct to that of others." Liberal/democratic peace theory extrapolates these same basic principles to the global arena, arguing that states with a complex web of interdependent relations of trade and foreign investment, and which are also constrained in the range of actions at their disposal in their international relations by domestic popular public opinion, are more likely to seek peaceful mediation, negotiation, or compromise over the costly resort to the use of violent force.

Similar to the point made by MacArthur in his address to the Congress, Elias (1988: 181) was explicitly referring to the elimination of violence from domestic society, noting elsewhere that the "pacification and civilization of people living within a state has progressed." He went on to state that "a strange fault line runs through our civilization," resulting in a "very sharp distinction between the standard of civilized behaviour and experience in domestic as distinct from international relations." When it comes to relations among people within a state, the recourse to violence "is taboo and, wherever possible, punished" (at least in the public sphere, if not so much in the private sphere or prison system, see or instance Foucault, 1975). In respect to international relations, however, "a different standard prevails," whereby virtually every large and powerful "state continuously prepares for acts of violence against other states." In the event that "such acts of violence are carried out, those who carry them out are held in high esteem. They are often praised and rewarded." Elias concludes that if "the reduction of mutual physical danger or increased pacification is considered a decisive criterion for determining the degree of civilization, then humankind can be said to have reached a higher level of civilization within domestic affairs than on the international plane." Similarly, as Linklater (2010: 164) further explains, "attachments to 'survival units' that stand in the way of identification with other persons *qua* humans have not weakened significantly, raising the question of how far transnational solidarities can develop in the absence of a worldwide monopoly power." These conclusions help to explain the increasingly hands-on approach in recent centuries to inculcating civilization around the globe in the hope that it will hasten the cause of international order and peace.

At around the same time that Kant was outlining his case for peace, Condorcet (1955: 194) similarly sketched a vision for the future of humankind that is marked by egalitarianism and a harmonious perpetual peace, both domestically and globally, amongst the "brotherhood of nations." He looked forward to a time when "nations will learn that they cannot conquer other nations without losing their own liberty," a time when "permanent confederations" ensure both independence and security as "mercantile prejudices" evaporate. What Condorcet envisioned was a time "when at last the nations come to agree on the principles of politics and morality." He thought that then, and only then, "nothing will remain to encourage or even arouse the fury of war." The principles of politics and morality that Condorcet thought of as most agreeable and universally applicable are quintessentially liberal principles, for his *Sketch* is described as an "expression of the ideals and hopes of that age: its humanitarianism; its cosmopolitanism; its belief in the power of reason and in the innate goodness of human nature; and above all, its faith in progress" (Schapiro, 1963: 260). Despite the claims of thinkers such as Condorcet and Thomas Paine (see Walker, 2000), Martha Nussbaum (1997: 3; cf. Berlin, 1996) asserts that "Kant, more influentially than any other Enlightenment thinker, defended a politics based on reason rather than patriotism or group sentiment, a politics that was truly universal rather than communitarian." As to whether this is an accurate characterization is open to question, nevertheless, it is not unreasonable to assert that Kant, referred to by Howard (2000: 31; see also Rousseau, 1991; Bentham, 1939) as the inventor of a peace that was "more than a mere pious aspiration," remains the intellectual reference point for much subsequent thinking and theorizing about the possibilities of democratic peace.

The end that Kant envisaged humanity progressing toward is one that very much resembles the ideal of "Perpetual Peace." In the *Idea for a Universal History* (1963a: 16), he writes that the "highest purpose of Nature" is realizable only in a "society with the greatest freedom" under a "perfectly just civic constitution" – a republican constitution. This is reemphasized in *Perpetual Peace* where Kant (1963b: 93-94) states that the "only constitution which derives from the idea of the original compact, and on which all juridical legislation of a people must be based, is the republican." It is based on the "principles of the freedom of the members of a society (as men);" the "principles of dependence of all upon a single common legislation (as subjects);" and "by the law of their equality (as citizens)." The "only question now," for Kant (1963b: 94-95), is: Is the republican constitution "also the one which can lead to perpetual peace?" He affirms that indeed, the "republican constitution, besides the purity of its origin … also gives a favorable prospect for the desired consequence, i.e., perpetual peace." The "reason is this: if the consent of the citizens is required in order to decide that war should be declared (and in this constitution it cannot but be the case), nothing is more natural than that they would be very cautious in commencing such a poor game, decreeing themselves all the calamities of war." Moreover, peace between republican states is assured because "In a league of nations, even the smallest state could expect security and justice, not from its own power and by its own decrees, but only from this great league of nations (*Foedus Amphictyonum*), from a united power acting according to decisions reached under the

laws of their united will." Kant adds that "however fantastical this idea may seem, and it was laughed at" as such "by Abbé de St. Pierre and by Rousseau, perhaps because they believed it was too near to realization," states are ultimately compelled "to give up their brutish freedom and to seek quiet and security under a lawful constitution" (Kant, 1963a: 19). In essence, then, Kant held that the spread of the republican form of government, the extension of trading relations between republican states, and the observation of international law amongst them, were the most likely means of securing an orderly and peaceful international society. The further these civilizing conditions spread, the greater the likelihood and reach of an increasingly peaceful world order, or what Kant (1963a: 23) called "a universal cosmopolitan condition, which Nature has as her ultimate purpose."

The prospect for world peace, or what Lars-Erik Cederman (2001: 16-17) terms Kantian "interdemocratic peace," is in part based on Kant's assertion that republican or democratically elected leaders are required "to take their peoples' pacific preferences into consideration before going to war." But more than that, Cederman argues that for Kant, the "effect of democracy is not limited to this simple cost-benefit mechanism;" rather, Kant "sees no reason why the upward spread of norms has to stop at the democratic state's borders." As Cederman puts it, once the "pathway of normative progress is opened, the rule of law will creep into interstate relations;" which obviates or at least reduces the tendency to resort to threats and or violent confrontation. In this regard, Kant is an important source of the liberal internationalist argument that the nature of politics practised at the domestic level is a key determining factor of the manner in which states conduct politics at the international level (see Moravcsik, 1997; Boutos-Ghali, 1992; Evans, 1993; Barnett, 1997). In Kant's (1963c: 151) terms, if there is "more charity and less strife" in the "body politic," then "eventually this will also extend to nations in their external relations toward one another up to the realization of the cosmopolitan society." Furthermore, just as the "antagonism" among men in society, or what Kant (1963a: 15) calls their "unsocial sociability" is, "in the end, the cause of a lawful order among men," Bruce Buchan (2002: 414) makes the similar point that, "for Kant, the mutually antagonistic relations between states in the international state of nature would thrust the civilizing process onto the global stage."

In respect to the civilizing properties of commerce and economic interdependence, these enterprises have long been seen as essential components of a peaceful, interconnected world. For instance, around the time of Christ, Philo of Alexandria argued that commerce was an expression of the "natural desire to maintain a social relationship," while the first-century historian, Lucius Annaeus Florus, claimed: "If you destroy commerce, you sunder the alliance which binds together the human race" (see Pagden, 2000: 8). Similarly, Montesquieu (1949: 316) argued in *The Spirit of the Laws* that commerce "unites nations" and "Peace is the natural effect of trade. Two nations who traffic with each other become reciprocally dependent." Moreover, "Commerce," he adds, "is a cure for the most destructive [of] prejudices … Let us not be astonished, then, if our manners are now less savage than formerly." More recently, David Ricardo (1891: 114) has argued that "Under a system of perfectly free commerce" between nations, the "pursuit of individual advantage is admirably connected with the universal good of the

whole." Thus, "it diffuses general benefit, and binds together by one common tie of interest and intercourse, the universal society of nations throughout the civilized world."

For Kant (1963b: 114), the link between commerce and peace is explained in terms of the "spirit of commerce" being "incompatible with war," and "sooner or later" just such a spirit "gains the upper hand in every state." Why? Because despite other uncertainties, "the power of money is perhaps the most dependable of all the powers (means) included under the state power." Therefore, given that commerce is thought to be beneficial to all contracting parties, in the name of continuing economic prosperity, "states see themselves forced, without any moral urge, to promote honorable peace and by mediation to prevent war wherever it threatens to break out." The link between commerce, democracy, and peace has more recently been outlined in terms of pacific "democratic values" arising from the "norms of contract that are endemic in developed market economies" (Mousseau, 2000: 475-507). But as is highlighted below, civilized democracies are not necessarily inherently peaceful. And as I have noted elsewhere as a counterpoint to the argument that commerce promotes interdependence and therefore reduces the likelihood of recourse to war, Franciscus de Vitoria (1964) used infractions of their supposed legitimate right to trade as a justification for the Spanish waging war against the Amerindians of the New World (see Bowden, 2009: esp. chaps. 6 & 7). More recently, critics of a range of wars, including the Gulf Wars, and the war on terror more generally, have characterized them as a perpetuation of expansive imperialism motivated as much by profit as principle (e.g. Harvey, 2003).

Clearly, peace has not broken out all over the world just yet, but the general aim remains the development and expansion of an international society of reasonably uniform, liberal-democratic states that co-operate and combine to give rise to a civilized, globalized, liberal, cosmopolitan world order (Mozaffari, 2001). Liberal/democratic peace theory has become so influential in the pursuit of just such a world order that it drives decision-making in foreign and domestic policies and international public policy making more generally (e.g. Rice, 2005). Its influence beyond the realms of academic theorizing, for instance, can be seen in *An Agenda for Peace*, where then United Nations Secretary-General, Boutros Boutros-Ghali (1992: 47), stressed that "Democracy at all levels is essential to attain peace for a new era of prosperity and justice." (Significantly, democracy promotion has been a stated principle of successive US administrations: in 1982 President Ronald Reagan announced before the British Parliament "a global campaign for democratic development" (*NYT*, 1982). This policy carried over into the administration of George Bush Snr (see Russett, 1993: 127-29), was restated by Bill Clinton (*NYT*, 1992; State of the Union, 1994) in 1992 during campaigning and again once elected, was subsequently promoted by the administration of George W. Bush in Afghanistan, Iraq, and the wider Middle East, and is largely carried on by the Obama administration.) Given that the twentieth century was described by Freedom House as "Democracy's Century" (Freedom House, 1999), and taking into account the rate of the spread of democracy, explicitly following Kantian thinking, Michael Doyle (1983b: 352) has estimated that "global peace should be anticipated, at the earliest, in 2113." But as is explained in the next section, the twentieth century was also the bloodiest, most violent,

and war-plagued century in human history, which raises the all-important questions: Is this just the violent civilizing storm that we are required to endure before the liberal/democratic peace can set in? Or does it suggest an altogether different conclusion: that no matter how much we might desire it and seek it out, the nature of global civilizing processes dictate that world peace will remain as elusive as ever.

Civilization and War

Instinct would suggest that the more civilized we have become over time, or the further we have progressed from a brutish state of nature, surely the violent and bloody realities of armed conflict become ever more abhorrent and objectionable and are to be avoided at almost any cost. Indeed, this is one of the key lessons we take from Thomas Hobbes (1985: 186-88; see also Lorenz, 1966; Keeley, 1997) about the uncertainties and brevity of life in a state of nature where every man is an enemy to every man, and while not necessarily constantly at war with all others, is at least prepared for it. Jean-Jacques Rousseau, on the other hand, claimed that the state of nature was the playground of the noble savage who by and large lived in a state of harmony with his fellow beings and the natural world more generally. It was only with the coming of civilization that the Garden of Eden was disturbed by war and the other ills associated with civilized modernity. As Rousseau (1997: 161) eloquently put it, "The first man who, having enclosed a piece of ground, to who it occurred to say *this is mine*, and found people sufficiently simple to believe him, was the true founder of civil society. How many crimes, wars, murders, how many miseries and horrors," he adds, would humankind "have been spared by him who, pulling up the stakes or filling in the ditch, had cried out to his kind: Beware of listening to this impostor; You are lost if you forget that the fruits are everyone's and the Earth no one's." With these vastly different perspectives in mind, having studied in depth the origins and evolution of war among humans across two million years – effectively the entire span of human civilization, and then some, depending on your definition of human – Azar Gat (2006: 663) argues in *War in Human Civilization* that of the two, "Hobbes was much closer to the truth."

This conclusion fits rather nicely with assumptions about the spread of civilization underpinning an ever more orderly and peaceful civilized international society in which the resort to armed conflict is becoming increasingly rare. But is the association between civilization and war really a straightforward inverse linear relationship or is there more to it than that? The suggestion that civilization and war share a common heritage; that "the cradle of civilization is also war's cradle," would seem to indicate that there is something more complex going on (Meistrich, 2005: 85). As Ira Meistrich explains (1985: 85), "War requires the kind of mass resources and organization that only civilization can provide, and so the fertile ground from which men harvested civilization's first fruits also nurtured the dragon-tooth seeds of warfare." Harry Holbert Turney-High (1971: 23) makes a similar point in *Primitive War*, that the "war complex fits with the rest of the pattern of social organization." The importance of organization and social cohesion to war-making is emphasized by J. S. Mill (1962: 122) in his contention that in "savage

communities each person shifts for himself; except in war (and even then very imperfectly) we seldom see any joint operations carried on by the union of many." According to Mill, the uncivilized are "incapable of acting in concert," and nowhere is the capacity for co-operation more important than in times of war: "Look even at war, the most serious business of a barbarous people; see what a figure rude nations, or semi-civilized and enslaved nations, have made against civilized ones, from Marathon downwards. Why? Because discipline is more powerful than numbers, and discipline, that is, perfect co-operation, is an attribute of civilization." Buried in this account is the possibility that some of the supposedly less civilized peoples of our world are inefficient and ineffective war-makers because they are less accustomed to it due to an inherent peacefulness and aversion to war and armed conflict, just as Rousseau suggested.

According to arguments such as Mill's, it is only civilized societies that have the organizational capacity and professional stratification to be efficient and effective war-makers. As Arnold Toynbee (1951: viii) explains, "the possibility of waging war pre-supposes a minimum of technique and organization and surplus wealth beyond what is needed for bare subsistence." At the same time, somewhat curiously, it is thought that war-making is the all-important grit around which the pearl of civilization grows and acquires its luster. The anthropologist Robert R. Marrett (1920: 36), for instance, claimed in the early twentieth century that it "is a commonplace of anthropology that at a certain stage of evolution – the half-way stage, so to speak – war is a prime civilizing agency." Quincy Wright (1965: 98-99) draws some similar conclusions in his expansive *A Study of War*, arguing that "Primitive warfare was an important factor in developing civilization. It cultivated the virtues of courage, loyalty, and obedience; it created solid groups and a method for enlarging the area of these groups, all of which were indispensable to the creation of the civilizations which followed." Based on his own studies, along with his analysis of Wright's (1965) data and further studies and analysis by Tom Broch and Johan Galtung (1966), William Eckhardt (1975: 55-62) argues that "anthropological evidence" points to the fact "that primitive warfare was a function of human development more than human instinct or human nature." He further argues, it "was only after we settled down to farming and herding that the land became of importance to us and, therefore, something worth fighting for" (Eckhardt, 1990: 9). In much the same way that Hobbes explains the process and outcomes of socially contracted civilized society, Eckhardt (1990: 10-11) points out how the "agricultural revolution made available a surplus of food, which carried humans beyond the subsistence level of making a living to the point where the surplus could be used to pay some to govern others, and to engage in art, religion, and writing, and to engage in war in order to expand the benefits of civilization to others, or to get others to help pay for the process of civilization, or to defend oneself from those who might be tempted to take a short cut to civilization."

This suggests an entirely different relationship between civilization (or civilizing processes) and war to the argument that there is a direct correlation between civilized society and a propensity for peacefulness. To the contrary, it is claimed that "the more civilized people become, the more warlike we might expect them to be" (Eckhardt, 1990: 15). To put it slightly differently, Wright (1965: 100) contends that "out of the warlike

peoples rose civilization, while the peaceful collectors and hunters were driven to the ends of the earth." For instance, Adam Smith (1869: 296-7) noted that whereas in "ancient times, the opulent and civilized found it difficult to defend themselves against the poor and barbarous nations. In modern times, the poor and barbarous nations find it difficult to defend themselves against the opulent and civilized." He continued, in "modern war the great expense of firearms gives an evident advantage to the nation which can best afford the expense; and, consequently, to an opulent and civilized, over a poor and barbarous nation." Smith (1869: 297) ominously adds that the "invention of firearms, an invention which at first sight appears to be so pernicious, is certainly favourable, both to the permanency and to the extension of civilization."

Wright (1965: 99) makes the further point that as "primitive society developed toward civilization, war began to take on a different character. Civilization was both an effect and a cause of warlikeness" (1965: 99). Defining war as "armed conflict between groups of people organized and trained and paid for killing and wounding and capturing each other, involving one or more governments, and causing some minimum number of deaths," which is not often agreed upon, Eckhardt (1990: 10, 9) makes a similar case "that warfare really came into its own only after the emergence of civilization some 5,000 years ago." Following Wright, Eckhardt (1990: 14) concludes that in essence, "war and civilization, whichever came first, promoted each other in a positive feedback loop, so that the more of one, the more of the other; and the less of one, the less of the other." This simultaneously civilized yet vicious circle forms the basis of Eckhardt's (1990: 9-11) "dialectical, evolutionary theory of warfare" in which "more developed societies engaged in more warfare." Moreover, as Eckhardt colorfully puts it, "civilized peoples took to war like ducks take to water, judging by their artistic and historical records," with "wars serving as both midwives and undertakers in the rise and fall of civilizations in the course of history."

Evidence to support this general thesis comes in the form of statistical data concerning war-related deaths. On the basis of his monumental study, which included detailed analysis of 278 wars from 1480 to 1941 and a further 30 "hostilities" from 1945 to 1964, Wright (1965: 246-47) contends that "at least 10 per cent of deaths in modern civilization can be attributed directly or indirectly to war." Furthermore, in respect to the general "loss of human life … the trend of war has been toward greater cost, both absolutely and relative to population." Based on his own extensive studies and the work of others, Eckhardt (1990: 15) believes this is a particularly conservative estimate, arguing that if we accept "that war is some function of civilization, then civilization is responsible for one-third of 20th century deaths." In his study of war-related deaths since 3,000 BCE, where war is defined as "any armed conflict, involving at least one government, and causing at least 1,000 civilian and military deaths per year," Eckhardt (1991: 437) calculates that there have been at least 150 million war-related deaths during the period. Of these 150 million war-related deaths across fifty centuries, around 96 percent of all deaths have occurred in the past five centuries, with the twentieth century alone accounting for more than 73 percent of the total death toll. The nineteenth century accounts for around 12.8 percent of all deaths while the seventeenth and eighteenth

centuries combined are responsible for about 8.7 percent. The sixteenth century is the only other century to account for more than one percent of deaths, and then only just (Eckhardt, 1991: 438-39; Eckhardt, 1992: 220-77). It is estimated that during the first eight decades of the bloody twentieth century, wars were responsible for the premature deaths of around 88 million people, or about 1.4 to 1.5 percent of the total population who lived during the period (Westing, 1982: 263).

Recalling that the twentieth century is characterized as "democracy's century," while the nineteenth and twentieth centuries are praised as home to "attempts to establish a stable and peaceful international order" based on "the increase in the humaneness and civilized character of human relations," (Morgenthau, 1967: 374), these war death statistics paint a rather different picture. If we slightly expand the definitional parameters to include lives deliberately taken for politically motivated purposes, Zbigniew Brzezinski (1995; see also Rummel, 1994) calculates that the twentieth century, or the "century of megadeath" as he alternatively calls it, witnessed somewhere between 167 and 175 million killings. To date, the first decade or so of the twenty-first century has seen somewhere between three and five million war- or conflict-related deaths (primarily in Afghanistan, Iraq, the Darfur region of Sudan, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo; see http://necrometrics.com/20c1m.htm; http://www.iraqbodycount.org/; http://icasualties.org/oef/). A key question here is: Will the twentieth century be an aberration in terms of war-related deaths, or is it the perpetuation of a trend toward ever-increasing war deaths? Who in 1910 might have predicted such a violent and bloody outcome in the twentieth century? The next ninety years will go some way toward telling the tale.

On the basis of his study, Eckhardt (1991: 439-40) writes that "we may conclude that war-related deaths have been increasing over the past 50 centuries." He adds that "population growth alone could not explain the increase in war deaths over these 50 centuries," because "war-related deaths were increasing significantly faster than population growth." Furthermore, the "increase in war deaths over these centuries could not be explained solely by the increasing frequency of wars, since war deaths were increasing faster than war frequencies." In essence, as "a general rule, deaths per population and deaths per war both increased" rather dramatically in the four centuries leading up to alarming peaks in the twentieth century. If we were to follow the argument that the more civilized societies become the more averse they are to war, then we might expect the war-related death toll to be higher in the supposedly less civilized regions of the world. However, in line with the counter-arguments set out above, while only about one-half of all wars and major battles have taken place on European soil since 3,000 BCE, when it comes to the modern era, Europe accounts for around 65 percent of all war-related deaths (Eckhardt, 1991: 441). Particularly since the age of Enlightenment, it is industrialized modern Europe, the beacon of liberal civilization and the birthplace of democracy, that is the most violent and bloody of times and places in human history.

In his essay "On War" of 1777, James Boswell (1951: 35) wrote, "How long war will continue to be practised, we have no means of conjecturing." To which he added, "Civilization, which it might have been expected would have abolished it, has only

refined its savage rudeness. The irrationality remains, though we have learnt *insanire certa ratione modoque*, to have a method in our madness." Indeed, rather than civilization and all its trappings representing the antidote to or the antithesis of war, it would seem that civilization and war go hand in hand; mechanized industrial civilization in particular seems to be particularly adept and efficient in the art of war-making. As Eckhardt has put it, "war and civilization go and grow together." A more pressing point raised by Eckhardt (1990: 15) is, "So far as civilization gives birth to war or, at least, promotes its use, and so far as war eventually destroys its creator or promoter, then civilization is self-destructive, a process that obstructs its own progress." A similar point is made by Toynbee (1951: vii-viii), who, in his extensive studies of civilizations across history, has concluded that while "War may actually have been a child of Civilization," in the long run, the child has not been particularly kind to its creator, for "War has proved to have been the proximate cause of the breakdown of every civilization which is known for certain to have broken down." This in effect brings us full circle in the relationship between civilization and war: war-making gives rise to civilization, which in turn promotes more bloody and efficient war-making, which in turn brings about the demise of civilization (or civilizations). At first glance, hopes of perpetual peace among an international society of civilized states do not seem to fit very well into the equation.

Toynbee, Sorokin, Wright, and Eckhardt (1990: 12; see also Toynbee & Ikeda, 2007; Sorokin, 2002) more or less all identify the problem of the close link between civilization and war in terms of civilization's inability "to respond to the ethical challenge of altruism vs. egoism." As Eckhardt (1990: 22) summarizes, Toynbee, Sorokin, and Wright came to the similar conclusion that "war and civilization were motivated by a sense of superiority and self-righteousness, which rationalized and justified the destructiveness of their behaviour." Moreover, the "self-destructiveness of these behaviours was completely concealed by the self-deception of self-centeredness and self-righteousness so characteristic of civilized peoples, who tend to believe in their innate superiority to others and especially primitive peoples." Nowhere is this more evident than in the violent European civilizing missions that evolved into full-blown colonialism (see Bowden, 2009). Eckhardt (1990: 22-23) ultimately poses the question: "Can we have civilization without war?" His answer is an "unequivocal 'Yes'," so long as we can overcome the "authoritarian, egoistic, and compulsive nature of civilization as its war-making essence." In this he is in agreement with Toynbee, Sorokin, and Wright in calling for "an ethical solution to the problem of self-destruction." All agreed that "we can prevent war by restructuring civilization so that our human relations are more egalitarian, altruistic, and compassionate." This call to alms as opposed to arms has much in common with General MacArthur's urging in his Farewell Address to Congress outlined above; and as explored further below, it has much in common with a recent plea in the pages of this journal by His Holiness the Dalai Lama (2002).

Conclusion

Michael Howard (2000: 1) begins his short book, *The Invention of Peace*, with a quote from the jurist Sir Henry Maine: "War appears to be as old as mankind, but peace is a modern invention." Howard goes on to make the point that "there is little to suggest that he was wrong. Archaeological, anthropological, as well as all surviving documentary evidence indicates that war, armed conflict between organized political groups, has been the universal norm in human history." While it might well be that war has been a constant companion to humankind throughout history, the evidence seems to suggest that it is only with the coming of civilization, especially industrialized civilization, that human societies have become particularly efficient and effective war-makers. As MacArthur and Morgenthau highlight, with greater efficiency and lethality in waging war, and particularly following the development of such destructive technologies as nuclear weapons, so too the greater the urgency in the quest for peace. In the aftermath of the bloody and ruinous wars that marred the first half of the century, Howard (2000: 91-92) observes that come "the last decade of the twentieth century the liberal inheritors of the Enlightenment seemed once again poised to establish peace. The prospects now seemed brighter than ever." But perhaps Abbé de Saint-Pierre and Rousseau were right to laugh, for world peace remains as elusive as ever. "Within a decade, the general mood had turned sour, and the new millennium was to be greeted with apprehension rather than hope." And this was even before the extremist terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001 and the subsequent wars in Afghanistan and Iraq that threaten to drag on for the best part of a decade.

Another distinguished historian, Oswald Spengler (1967: 205), offers an even more pessimistic outlook on the prospects for world peace:

The question whether world peace will ever be possible can only be answered by someone familiar with world history. To be familiar with world history means, however, to know human beings as they have been and always will be. There is a vast difference, which most people will never comprehend, between viewing future history as it will be and viewing it as one might like it to be. Peace is a desire, war is a fact; and history has never paid heed to human desires and ideals.

Spengler's pessimism does not necessarily mean that world peace is an impossible or improbable dream. While archaeological, anthropological, and documentary evidence might point to the fact that war between political communities is a constant throughout history, not all peoples have been fighting each other all of the time. That is to say that war is not necessarily an overpowering part of human nature, for the record also shows that there has been cooperation and peace between political communities throughout history. As yet, however, there has not been peace among all of the peoples all at the same time – that is, world peace. Nevertheless, given the costs of war to all parties and by

virtually any measure, at the very least, world peace remains an admirable and necessary aspiration.

Condorcet's (see Febvre, 1973: 257, note 118) suggestion, then, that the "more civilization spreads throughout the earth the more we shall see war and conquest disappear together with slavery and want" has proven to be off the mark in terms of bringing about an end to war and delivering peace. On the contrary, the spread of civilization – particularly through European imperial expansion – has to a certain extent gone hand in hand with conquest and war (Bowden, 2009). Thus, the pursuit of a peaceful world order among an international society of states built around the values and principles of Enlightenment civilization has thus far proven largely counterproductive. While a number of thinkers and statesmen throughout the years have expressed sentiments to the effect that peace is more than the just the absence of war, the absence of war would be a good start. Yet even Kant (1963a: 21) seemed to have some doubts as to whether humankind is capable of the kind of moral awakening that is required in order to rid the world of war, stating: "To a high degree we are, through art and science, *cultured*. We are *civilized* – perhaps too much for our own good – in all sorts of social grace and decorum. But to consider ourselves as having reached *morality* – for that, much is lacking." He went on to make the point that "So long as states waste their forces in vain and violent self-expansion," then "nothing in the way of a moral order is to be expected."

I want to suggest that a good part of the problem may well be the very way in which we conceive of civilization and progress, which for so long now has been predominantly about the social, political, and material dimensions of civilization at the expense of its ethical and other-regarding dimensions (Bowden, 2004b; 2011). In respect to the general progress of humankind and our civilization, Ruth Macklin (1977: 370) suggests that it "is wholly uncontroversial to hold that technological progress has taken place; largely uncontroversial to claim that intellectual and theoretical progress has occurred; somewhat controversial to say aesthetic or artistic progress has taken place; and highly controversial to assert that moral progress has occurred." The issue of moral progress appears to lie at the heart of the major challenges to civilization and peace outlined above. In contrast to the socio-political dimensions of civilization which have been emphasized at the expense of the moral and ethical, Albert Schweitzer's (1947: viii) account of civilization is considerably more accommodating. He writes, "Civilization, put quite simply, consists in our giving ourselves, as human beings, to the effort to attain the perfecting of the human race and the actualization of progress of every sort in the circumstances of humanity and of the objective world." This giving of ourselves is as much an attitude or frame of mind as it is a political, material, or cultural expression of civilization, for it necessarily "involves a double disposition: firstly, we must be prepared to act affirmatively toward the world and life; secondly, we must become ethical." For Schweitzer (1967: 20), the "essential nature of civilization does not lie in its material achievements, but in the fact that individuals keep in mind the ideals of the perfecting of man, and the improvement of the social and political conditions of peoples, and of mankind as a whole." To put it slightly differently, "Civilization originates when men become inspired by a strong and clear determination to attain progress, and consecrate

themselves, as a result of this determination, to the service of life and the world" (Schweitzer, 1947: ix). This call for service to life and the world is at the heart of Schweitzer's philosophy of civilization, which in effect is also his account of ethics; it is what he referred to as the idea of Reverence for Life (*Ehrfurcht vor dem Leben*) (Schweitzer, 1967: 212-44; see also Cicovacki, 2007). Reverence for Life requires of us a "world-view" that is other-regarding and extends a right to life and an ethic of "responsibility without limits towards all that lives" (Schweitzer, 1967: 215).

In a similar fashion, the Dalai Lama (2002) wrote in a recent issue of this journal that "universal responsibility ... is the best foundation for world peace." As he explains, in the globalized, interdependent twenty-first century, "considering the interests of others is clearly the best form of self-interest." Moreover, "despite the rapid advances made by civilization in this century, the most immediate cause of our present dilemma is our undue emphasis on material development alone" (see also Bowden, 2011). Perhaps things would be different if more people adopted the view of Rousseau's (1997: 161) skeptic of material civilization who, wary of false promises, called to his fellows: "You are lost if you forget that the fruits are everyone's and the Earth no one's." The Dalai Lama (2002) also highlights that "war and the large military establishments are the greatest sources of violence in the world," urging us to "think carefully about the reality of war." As Wright (1965: 98) noted, "warfare was an important factor in developing civilization. It cultivated the virtues of courage, loyalty, and obedience; it created solid groups and a method for enlarging the area of these groups, all of which were indispensable to the creation of the civilizations which followed." Military service and war-making continue to be valorized and are widely thought of as making men and women of the "right stuff". But as the Dalai Lama reminds us, while many of us have come to regard war "as exciting and glamorous," on the contrary, "war is neither glamorous nor attractive. It is monstrous. Its very nature is one of tragedy and suffering."

The account of the nature of the relationship between civilization and war outlined herein not only confronts our assumptions about the secure and comfortable space many of us thought we occupied as rusted-on life members of civilized society; it also has significant implications and poses some serious questions to notions of a liberal or democratic peace, and peace and conflict studies more generally. While some might claim them to be so, liberal-democracies are not necessarily inherently peaceful. Even the claim that they are peaceful among themselves is contentious; it depends a good deal on rather vague definitions of both democracy and war (see Brown, et al., 1996). And while the twentieth century might have witnessed the steady spread of democracy, the values and principles of liberalism were not necessarily taken up along with it. If we are relying on peace to break out around the world on the back of shared liberal values, then we could be in for a very long wait. As Doyle (1986: 1151) acknowledges, despite their claimed pacificity toward their own kind, liberal states "are also prone to make war" on non-liberal states. And when they do, as Levy (1998: 659) concedes, liberal-democracies tend to "adopt a crusading spirit and often fight particularly destructive wars," turning "conflicts of interest into moral crusades." As such, contrary to Morgenthau's (1967: 374) account, the "philosophy of the Enlightenment and the political theory of liberalism" are

not inimical to war, nor have they respected human life and served the cause of human welfare quite to the extent that he claims (see for instance, Dillon & Reid, 2009).

In the very first issue of this journal, the late John W. Burton (1996) wrote of "civilizations in crisis." My concern here and elsewhere (Bowden, 2011) is the possibility of civilization in crisis. As I have sought to explain further elsewhere (Bowden, 2007; 2010), to date, war, savagery, and the savagery of war are virtually impossible to disentangle from the march of civilization: war-making gives rise to civilization, which in turn promotes more efficient war-making, which in turn potentially brings about the demise of civilization. In the course of traversing this vicious circle, civilization has proven to be hell bent on expunging that which is not civilized, or that which is deemed a threat to civilization; hence the war in Afghanistan, war in Iraq, the war on terror more generally, war on drugs, war on poverty. Surely there is a lesson or two in here somewhere. In regard to the relationship between civilization and war, Eckhardt (1990: 9) poignantly notes, "We can learn a lot about war through the study of civilization. We can learn a lot about civilization through the study of war." While this seems to be the case, if there is to be a brighter future for civilization, then it need not necessarily follow that war and civilization go hand in hand. If civilization was more about altruism and compassion, as people famous for their association with both war and peace have urged, and less about progress, modernization, and growth at almost any expense, then we might find ourselves and our world in a considerably more peaceful state than has been for so long now.

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