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ANTHROPOLOGY AND WAR: THEORY, POLITICS, ETHICS

R. Brian Ferguson

In public meetings and in print, anthropologists are calling for greater disciplinary efforts to reduce the risk of war. The question is, how to do it? Lists of *potential* contributions have remained depressingly consistent for over twenty years (Bunzel and Parsons 1964; Commission on the Study of Peace 1983: 1:1; 1984:2:1; Nettleship 1975), yet it is difficult to see any practical results from these programatic statements. This chapter discusses some areas where anthropology can make a contribution now, and identifies other potential contributions which have not been emphasized in the past.

A major problem in anthropological efforts to date has been the gulf between those working on theories to explain nonstate warfare and those trying to apply an anthropological perspective to contemporary war. For the most part, the two are separate groups, so that insights offered by the applied group are often questionable in terms of contemporary theory. This raises the question: Why should we expect others to listen to an anthropological opinion if we ourselves do not seek understanding from anthropological theory?

The literature on nonstate or tribal war has grown substantially in recent years (Ferguson 1984a), although anthropological theory on war has been difficult to fathom because of the diversity and apparent contradiction of findings. Polemics aside, genuine contradictions are exceptional. Most of the solid generalizations found in the literature can be synthesized to form a general framework of explanation which does justice to the complexity of the phenomena of war. Elsewhere

THE ANTHROPOLOGY OF WAR & PEACE

Perspectives on the Nuclear Age

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Bergin & Garvey Publishers, Inc.
Massachusetts

First published in 1989 by
Bergin & Garvey Publishers, Inc.
670 Amherst Road
Granby, Massachusetts 01033

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9 987654321

Printed in the United States of America

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

The anthropology of war & peace: perspectives on the nuclear age/
Paul R. Turner. David Pitt [editors] & contributors.
p. cm.
Bibliography: p.
Includes index.
ISBN 0–89789–142–2 (alk. paper) : $44.95
ISBN 0–89789–143–0 (alk. paper) pbk : $18.95
1. War and society. 2. International relations and culture.
3. Nuclear disarmament. I. Turner, Paul R., 1929– . II. Pitt,
David C. III. Title: The anthropology of war & peace.
U21.5.C65 1989
303.6'6—dc19 89-6925
CIP

(Ferguson 1986) I review that literature and develop a synthetic model. The plan of this chapter is to first summarize that model and then discuss its relevancy to contemporary war, both in its own direct implications and in what it indicates about various applied efforts.

The model is based mainly on data about nonstate societies. States are considered only as an endpoint to that evolutionary continuum. To attempt to analyze modern war with this model would require much work and many modifications and extensions of theory. The goal here is more modest: to show that the general features of the model seem relevant to contemporary conflicts and that this apparent relevancy suggests guidelines for future research.

The model is materialist in orientation, involving three premises. First, that the demographic characteristics of a society, its technology, and its pattern of extracting and processing resources from the natural environment ("infrastructure") shape the society's social, economic, and political organization ("structure"), and that both infrastructure and structure shape the ideological superstructure of the society. The relationship between these analytic levels is thought of as a nested hierarchy of progressively more limiting constraints. The more basic factors establish the general outlines or possibilities of a war system. Other factors operate within those limits, progressively narrowing possibilities towards a very limited range of actually possible patterns. Within this deterministic framework, there remains a significant role for individual variation and choice. Further, the model asserts that beliefs and attitudes, although largely derivative, are still an essential part of the functioning of war systems. This opens the possibility that ideas developed by anthropologists may have an impact "in the real world," provided they take into account the more basic constraints shaping contemporary war.

The second premise concerns the motivation of those who decide on war. It begins with the proposition that humans will attempt to maintain or enhance the existing level of the resources available to them, of the costs involved in obtaining these resources, and of the security of these and other basic living conditions. Since warfare typically endangers some or all of these, the decision to fight will occur when decision makers perceive material benefits which outweigh the expectable costs—wars will occur when decision makers believe it serves their material interests. This premise directs attention to the interests and actions of those who decide military policy and, in doing so, breaks out of a functionalist perspective in which social patterns are explained by their contribution to the maintenance of whole social systems. It does not suggest a "psychologistic approach," since the structure of leadership, interests, and options are all determined by social processes. And while this does contradict views that wars result

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from "aggressive instincts" or cultural values glorifying violence, it does not imply that war is always deliberate. War *may* occur by deliberate plan, or it may be an unplanned and unwanted last resort made inescapable by the consequences of previous self-interested decisions. Even in the latter situation, however, the impact on their material circumstances will remain a paramount concern for decision makers.

The third and final premise is that war can act as a mechanism of selection, eliminating societies which do not make adjustment for living with an existing pattern of warfare. The selection impact of war can be studied in relation to changes within as well as among societies. This premise is needed primarily for understanding processes of evolutionary convergence.

In the summary of the model which follows, I will stick with the format used in Ferguson (1986): first discussing the general significance and interrelation of all factors, mainly as found in relatively egalitarian societies, and then discussing the overall impact of historical and evolutionary developments on these patterns.

Beginning with infrastructural conditions, the model reaffirms that a change in the balance of a population to its available critical resources can create conflicts both within and between groups which can lead to war. However, depending on circumstances, these conflicts may be resolvable through non-violent means such as movement, trade, or modifications in production. Also, when resource scarcity does generate war, there will be variation in the specificity of conflicts thus created, depending on whether the conflict is one of general competition among several essentially similar groups, or one where two particular groups are locked into a direct conflict of interests. A range of possibilities exists, and the less specific the conflict, the more lattitude there is for the influence of structural factors in shaping it.

Besides generating some conflicts, infrastructural factors largely determine gross military potential. Technology, population characteristics, and the basic pattern of production all limit the tactics which can be used and, consequently, the strategies which can be considered and the type of war which can be waged.

Structural patterns are conveniently divided into three categories: kinship, economics, and politics. Kinship provides much of the structure of life in tribal societies. Its relevance to war is shown in a very strong cross-cultural correlation of postmarital residence patterns with major variations of war. Basically, patrilocality is associated with local (or "internal") war, matrilocality with long distance (or "external") war. The connection is that the two residence patterns involve different possibilities for mobilizing male combat teams. In this materialist model, the residence patterns are the derived variables, primarily determined by the nature of existing resource scarcities and related con-

flicts, combined with the exigencies of material production. Other major features of kinship systems likewise are reflected in the organization of military forces, and marriage and other kin ties are important in establishing and using alliances with other groups. The military significance of kin patterns declines with increasing societal centralization and complexity, however, and so kinship is of negligible importance for later discussions.

Economic systems, the societal and intersocietal organization of production, exchange, and consumption, operate within multiple infrastructural constraints. Nevertheless, economic relations have their own logics which have crucial effects in war. In contrast to kinship, these become more significant as evolutionary complexity increases.

Distribution and consumption patterns affect resource scarcity. Production and distribution patterns affect the possibility of intensification as a nonmilitary alternative response to diminishing resource availability. Labor needs can impel a pattern of raiding for captives. Variations in military conduct are expectable depending on whether the economic system allows for individual social mobility via military feats, for releasing large numbers of men from production tasks for part of a year, for creating a specialized warrior group, and for the production of a transportable surplus to support military campaigns.

Distribution networks, often accompanying kinship ties, define communities of interest which are reflected in groupings for war. External exchange is a key part of making alliances, with intergroup redistribution systems meriting special attention in this regard. Existing trade patterns often structure regional military alliances and can strongly affect readiness to fight over local issues. But war also affects trade patterns, leading to situations of unequal exchange or tribute. Sometimes trade can alleviate pressures associated with local resource scarcities and so reduce pressure for war. In other circumstances, control of trade networks is itself the principal objective in war.

Political organization in relatively egalitarian societies is based on patterns of kinship and economics, and the major features of both are reflected in politics. Different social categories of people have different inputs to the process of decision making. Leaders typically are adult males, and as a group or as individuals they may have their own special interests regarding war. However, adult males in leadership roles are responsive to their own subdivisions of closely related kin. For such an internally divided group to arrive at a decision to go to war often requires the use of considerable skills of conflict resolution and consensus management, and this fact creates a significant role for individual variations in leadership ability in the processes leading to war or peace.

Both structural and individual factors likewise affect the forging

of actual politico-military alliances out of the potential alliances created by links of kinship and trade. As ephemeral as alliances may be, they give some structure to the constant flux of intergroup relations. They are necessary for survival and success in war, and all military options must be evaluated in terms of their likely impact on alliance patterns. These patterns, combined with existing differences in the military strength of groups, comprise an intersocietal system which has a crucial role in shaping processes of conflict.

As with economics, war has a reciprocal effect on politics. Authority patterns commonly are more defined within combat groups than in normal daily life, even though serious war threats often lead to a temporary augmentation of general leadership in routine activities. War is an important element in the evolution of more permanent social hierarchy and centralization both within and between autonomous groups, although the exact nature of its role remains controversial.

War is not a result of infrastructural and structural factors alone. Psychological patterns must also be considered. For one, the material rationality premise of this model obviously must operate within existing informational limits. Uncertainty, creating a "prisoner's dilemma" type of situation in a context of high military tension, can lead to pre-emptive attacks even though all parties may prefer peace.

Other emic patterns, apart from and sometimes contrary to a strict material calculus, also impinge on the practice of war. These take various forms. A general cognitive orientation may make war seem inevitable. Religious beliefs may sacralize fighting. Traditions may define situations where the use of force is expected. Value systems may confer prestige on warriors. Typical personality types may tend toward belligerence.

Any of these cultural patterns can make it more likely that people in a conflict situation will opt for war, in effect lowering the threshold for violence. But in the model argued here, they explain much less of the variance in military behavior than calculation of material interests, and are unlikely to lead to extensive fighting in the absence of such interests. Rather, they act as psychological reinforcement, bolstering the resolve of those who must fight. Given the potential costs to warriors, such reinforcement may be indispensible. Whether these "warlike" beliefs and attitudes are initially generated by design or by selection, when war is a likelihood, they will actively be fostered by childhood enculturation and adult peer pressure. And when war involves a different mix of costs and benefits for those who decide military policy and others, including those who must do the fighting, leaders expectably will manipulate these intangible incentives to further group support of their decisions.

The preceeding discussions sketched the significance of various

factors involved in generating and shaping war complexes and patterns. To apply this model to actual cases also requires attention to two additional perspectives, historical and evolutionary.

In Ferguson (1986), the significance of history is argued in terms of the effects of Western contact, since most of the existing historical information on non-state warfare comes from contact situations. The consequences of contact typically include major changes in every aspect of warfare previously discussed. Failure to appreciate this has led to many misunderstandings about supposedly pristine war patterns. But history is always happening, everywhere. The contingencies of history generate actions and modifications of war systems which should always be investigated. Conversely, existing historical conditions will determine what impact any innovation will have. The uncritical lumping of data on warfare from different time periods can be an error fatal to analysis. (For an illustration of how an historical approach can be combined with a theoretical orientation similar to the one outlined here, see Ferguson [1984b]).

Sociocultural evolution involves increases in political centralization, structural inequality, productive intensification, and societal complexity, all of which have major consequences for war. These changes are felt at every point along the evolutionary continuum, but they are most obvious with the emergence of stratification and states.

It has long been recognized that the growth of centralized territorial administration leads to a decline in the significance of kinship structures in shaping military groups. Another general change is a relative decline in the significance of infrastructural sources of conflict. Things like an absolute reduction in critical natural resources certainly can still lead to war in states. But the increasing productivity and complexity of economic systems which is part of evolution tends to shield populations from natural scarcities, at the same time that it generates new structural demands and conflicts which can lead to war even without population pressure.

Another consequence of increasing economic complexity, accompanied as it is by increased structural inequality, is that one's material well-being is determined more by placement in the societal structure, rather than by overall balances of population to resources. The stakes involved in any conflict situation will be determined by structural position, as will the probable costs and benefits of actual war. A decision-making elite and the majority of a population may have parallel interests in a particular military policy, but their interests may also be divergent or flatly contradictory. A major source of divergent or contradictory interests is that members of an elite enjoy many benefits by virtue of their structural position, and so have a great interest in preserving that structure and their positions within it against any political

threat. In many different ways, this can lead to "political wars," which do no more for the majority than waste their lives.

Such wars can occur because leaders in states can compel people to fight. The ultimately coercive nature of military recruitment in states is perhaps the most fundamental distinction separating state from more egalitarian patterns of war. Pure coercion, however, is a relatively inefficient and costly means of securing obedience to leaders' decisions. It is far better, for an elite, to rule by encouraging social structures which fragment resistance, and by fostering an ideology which portrays the objectives of the elite as representing the interests of all in society, a proposition which the elite may believe themselves.

Evolution affects military capabilities, and so the kinds of wars that are fought. States and near-states go to war with armies whose discipline, tactical sophistication, logistical support structures, and sometimes technology give them great advantages in combat against less evolved societies. Power imbalances of this sort mean that strategic goals are often achieved without the necessity of actual violence. With state armies, wars of conquest become a regular possibility. This expansionist potential gives new significance to war as a mechanism of selection. War can lead to the spread of state organization throughout a region of interaction, and to convergent trends in the internal organization of states opposed in war. One important trend, although its generality remains to be established, is toward the development of a distinctive military complex which comes to demand and receive larger shares of society's resources.

The model that has been outlined here was not developed to explain contemporary warfare. Nevertheless, it does have some direct relevance to understanding contemporary situations in that the model, and other considerations, contradict widely held beliefs that war is a "natural" part of the human condition. During an earlier arms race, Stewart (1964: 431) commented on the generality of such beliefs, and how they make war seem inevitable. Others recently have made similar observations (Falk and Kim 1980: 10–11; Tishkov 1983). My own informal investigation (casual conversations with nonanthropologists) confirms these observations and adds another disturbing element: that many, probably most, people base these beliefs on what they *think* are the findings of anthropology, that "primitive people fight for no reason." A great many people think that the message of anthropology is that humanity is doomed to war.

One version of the inevitability belief is that wars occur because humans are innately aggressive. As described elsewhere (Ferguson 1984a: 8–12), this proposition has been so thoroughly discredited that it is difficult to find serious researchers who still assert it. It is not an element in the model presented here. Besides its lack of scientific

credibility, the proposition flies in the face of common sense. If war is the result of an aggressive instinct, why is it that societies with war need elaborate social reinforcement to make men fight? True, humans are known to inflict and even enjoy inflicting almost unimaginable violence on other humans. Yet humans are also known to adopt a pacifism so strict that it suppresses even mild expressions of anger. If this suggests any genetic program, it can only be a program *to learn* attitudes towards violence, without any particular predisposition.

Another version is that war is a natural form of expression for politically autonomous groups. This Hobbesian view is discussed and criticized elsewhere (Bennett Ross 1980; Ferguson 1984a: 19–21; 1986). Supporting the Hobbesian view is the corollary belief that war is universal, found in all societies. But there are societies without war (Fabbro 1980). In fact, the claim for universality can only be advanced by relying on several dubious procedures: letting one cultural subdivision with war represent a broader cultural grouping which includes some groups without war; letting war at any point in time count, and disregarding what may be much more typical periods of peace; and when these fail, falling back on the untestable assertion that a peaceful people might have had war before the Westerners arrived. Even if we focus on societies where warfare is an undisputed occurrence, periods of active warfare involving a given group usually are relatively brief. The vast majority of humans, living or dead, have spent most of their lives at peace. So one can agree with Hobbes that politically autonomous groups have the potential for war, but this tells us nothing about why real war occurs. Contrary to the Hobbesian image, peace is the normal human condition.

A third version is that war is the inevitable consequence of population growing until people are forced to fight over life-sustaining resources. (For a recent assertion of this premise as a base for a broad theoretical formulation, see Schmookler [1984: 20]). The model presented here contradicts this Malthusian view. Yes, population growth and pressure on critical resources can and often does lead to war. But there is no inevitability in this linkage even in "simple" societies, and with evolution, the significance in war of absolute scarcities fades in importance. The model suggests that the causes of war in modern complex societies will most commonly be found in economic and political relations. (For an anthropological refutation of a Malthusian explanation of one particular modern war, see Durham 1979).

The danger in the public perception that war is inevitable is that it may sap people's resistance to war. The model described here indicates that war is not destined, it is caused. Understanding the processes which lead to war creates the possibility that they can be redirected toward peace.

Serious investigators of contemporary conflicts do not need to be told this. Still, the model may be useful for peace research in that it provides something which is called for in several recent reviews of that literature (Eberwein 1981: 31; Falk and Kim 1980: 4; Gantzel 1981: 40; Singer 1981:3): a theoretical structure which encompasses and integrates the diversity of phenomena involved in war. The model also suggests resolutions of existing divisions within peace research. One division is whether war is "caused" or "chosen" (Beer 1981: 12–13). It is both. Another division is whether the genesis of war is to be sought in the authority structure of particular sovereign groups, or in the system of international relations (Falk and Kim 1980: 459, 531). Again, the model indicates that both are crucial.

But does this model really seem applicable to the circumstances of modern war? And if so, what does it suggest about applied anthropological research? These questions are addressed in the following section. Descriptions of current areas of more applied anthropological research are based on Foster and Rubinstein (1986), Givens and Nettleship (1976), and Nettleship et al. (1975); on research and conference topics described in many articles in the newsletters of The Commission on the Study of Peace and Anthropologists for Human Survival; and on my own participation in several conferences, sessions, and discussions on the issue.

Anthropological research and commentary regarding contemporary global militarism stands in an inverse relationship to the causal priorities of the model. There is a lot of work on superstructural factors, a little on structural patterns, and almost nothing regarding the infrastructure. Nevertheless, the importance of infrastructure in understanding modern war is obvious.

Hydrogen bombs and intercontinental missiles, and all their associated technologies, are part of our infrastructure. To that should be added all of the direct military ramifications of conventional weapons technology, national population characteristics, the distribution of critical resources, and geography, plus the role of infrastructural factors in shaping national and international economic systems. Further, the sudden insecurity of Western oil suplies markedly aggravated world military tensions after the mid-1970s (Tucker 1980: 246–7; Timberlake and Tinker 1984).

Infrastructural factors explain much of the qualitative difference between world military patterns of 1986 and, say, 1812. They also bear much of the responsibility for the broad outlines of contemporary world tensions. However, their responsibility for these tensions is also clearly limited, and infrastructural factors seem of limited importance in explaining most short-run variations in conflicts, which is what the model predicts. On this basis, anthropological neglect of infrastructural inputs

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to contemporary tensions is perhaps understandable. Besides, it is not readily apparent how anthropologists could offer a distinctive perspective on these inputs, with the very important exception of being able to describe the living conditions of Third World poor, which has been and will continue to be an important indirect factor in international tensions.

Anthropologists have done more work on structural aspects of contemporary war. Three lines of approach stand out. One is to focus on mechanisms of conflict resolution in tribal societies. This is an area where there actually has been a serious effort to apply lessons learned through the study of nonstate warfare to modern contexts (Koch 1974). The reasoning is that both "tribals" and "moderns" have to cope with similar problems of anarchistic intergroup relations, so lessons from the former might offer solutions for the latter.

Unfortunately, there are several problems with this approach. One is that this notion has been around at least twenty years (Bunzel and Parsons 1964: 430), and it has already received consideration by peace researchers who question the practical relevance of mechanisms from small-scale societies applied to present international relations (Falk and Kim 1980: 162). A second problem is that schemes for nonviolent conflict resolution, even those developed by peace researchers based on the study of contemporary industrial societies, face apparently insurmountable obstacles to implementation. (Compare proposals and projections in Beer [1979] with the course of events since the mid-1970s.) Even the Trilateral Commission, whose members certainly have clout, has failed to institutionalize its vision of an efficiently regulated world (see Sklar 1980). A third problem is that the focus on formal institutions of conflict resolution may distract attention from the most general reason why serious conflicts are resolved with minimal violence in nonstate societies—that the majority of people wish to avoid the costs of war. And *this*, I will argue later, is a lesson with practical contemporary relevance.

A second type of structural research is to engage in participant observation within a group somehow involved in war. The groups range from policy decision makers to members of armed forces to peasant villages supporting guerrillas. (One kind of group, war protesters, is discussed again below.) This type of work involves attention to both group organization and ideology, in varying mixtures. It can produce very useful information, but does entail certain complications.

By chosing to work with groups directly involved in processes of conflict, the anthropologist risks becoming a part of the conflict. The information produced may be used to further the interests of particular parties, so those who want to do this kind of work should consider, before starting, who is likely to use the data generated, and for what.

Participant observation in small groups also raises all the theoretical and methodological issues involved in the study of local communities or work groups within larger complex societies. To avoid the errors of early community studies, research should be built around the fact that these groups are part of larger systems, and that the latter determine many of the group's internal characteristics. If both of these concerns are attended to, one big contribution would be to explore characteristics of component subgroups of the military-industrial complex, since that complex as a whole does seem to bear much of the responsibility for military buildups (Rosen 1973a; Stubbing 1985).

Anthropologists could also study how parts of the military-industrial complex fit together, which indicates a third way anthropology can contribute to understanding contemporary world conflict—by helping explain the structures and dynamics of larger social systems. It is these, according to the model, which should be the major source of conflicts leading to war in complex societies. Their amenability to holistic study and their relation to internal and external warfare have been shown in transdisciplinary work on Central America, as reported in the journal, *Latin American Perspectives*, and publications of the North American Congress on Latin America (NACLA) (see also Durham 1979; Wolf 1973). Anthropological work on a higher level of organization, the nature of global interactions (e.g., Leeds 1975; Wolf 1982; Worsley 1984), even if not focused specifically on war, can help to rectify a relevant problem identified by Galtung (1980: 412): that the nature of imperialism has been obscured because analysis of its effects is fragmented into traditional academic specializations.

By far the most common anthropological approach to modern militarism is to examine its psychological bases. Specific interests vary widely. Anthropologists discuss the impact of nationalism, racism, and ethnocentrism; of values and orientations which encourage obedience or prestige seeking within the military; of psychopathologies which lead to violent responses to situations; and of ignorance which leads one nation to misperceive how an adversary state works, and to misunderstand the messages it sends. Perhaps the most common theme is that war is somehow the result of a negative image of the enemy.

Similar approaches have been used extensively in discussions of tribal war patterns, although they have not led to significant verifiable cross-cultural generalizations, and certainly not to any viable general explanation of war. In the model described above, these superstructural attributes are treated as largely derived correlates of existing conflicts. Nevertheless, a focus on psychological characteristics does fit well with a very extensive literature in peace research (Jervis 1980).

In regard to modern war Falk and Kim (1980: 230) argue that for this type of research to be productive, it should be "sharply focused

on the role of 'war makers'," i.e., those who decide on policy. A well-known study on decisions to go to war indicates that more obvious factors of pride and prejudice have little importance (Abel 1941). The decisions are made through careful weighing of costs and benefits, although the ability to make such calculations can be diminished by stress-related effects of crises (Holsti 1980). More subtle cultural assumptions and attitudes, however, become apparent in any perusal of writings about international policy, and these reflect perceived options in crisis situations and in long-term strategizing.

What is not clear is the real significance of these often elaborate beliefs. Are they in themselves the generators of action, or is it more a case of ideological rationalization of actions intended to serve the interests of the powerful? The fact that preconceptions truly are believed in policy circles is inconclusive, since both cognitive dissonance and the processes of bureaucracy would result in belief of mandated policy. The model presented earlier points to ideological rationalization, as do the well-developed theories of imperialism (Kurth 1974: 12), the military-industrial complex (Rosen 1973b: 3), and most Marxist analyses.

This question suggests research topics for those who would study the beliefs of policy elites. Besides describing their beliefs, research should investigate why policy makers hold them, including the sources of ideas and mechanisms promoting ideological conformity. An even more important issue is to ascertain the consequences of ideology. Do the preconceptions actually make a major difference in how diplomatic and military personnel discharge their duties, or is that effectively constrained by bureaucratic, policy, and situational dictates?

Research into war-related beliefs of the national majority entails other issues. First, it must not be assumed, as some have, that majority beliefs push the nation toward war. In the current cold war, United States public opinion favoring increased defense spending took its big leap in 1979 and 1980, after the defense spending buildup had already begun. That increase in public support proved short lived, dropping to a minority position in 1982, and turning sharply negative in 1983. A negative balance of opinion regarding increases in defense spending has been the rule since the mid-60s. United States public opinion is also solidly against the nuclear arms race and against most possibilities of foreign intervention (Benson 1982; Ferguson and Rogers 1986: 25–32; Kriesberg and Klein 1980; Simon 1980; Yankelovich and Doble 1984). A recent poll of United States public opinion found that 53 percent thinks the United States would actually be safer if it stopped trying to halt the spread of communism to other countries (only 22 percent disagreed) (Yankelovich and Doble 1984: 44). Those who would direct United States military strategy recognize and lament the fact that the

public tends to support military involvement only when they perceive an obvious threat to the United States (Kriesberg and Klein 1980: 104; Tucker 1980: 262–65 [see Stein 1980]). If there is a basic United States majority attitude toward military buildups, it is against them. Yet the current buildup goes on.

If prowar attitudes in the general public are to be studied, the model presented earlier suggests that a good place to begin is with the propaganda system. The material rationality premise is limited by the availability of information. In modern states, most people have no direct source of information about foreign affairs. Most information made available is controlled by established institutions. In all states, these expectably will reflect the interests and perceptions of the powerful.

The importance of propaganda is axiomatic when considering popular opinion in the Soviet Union, but it also applies in the United States. Here, various government agencies control and manipulate the information they make public (Fulbright 1970; Halloran 1986; *The Pentagon Papers*; the magazine *Covert Action*). Private corporations spend about two billion dollars each year to present their views on the world and to fund congenial research (Ferguson and Rogers 1986: 127–30). Entertainment media and advertisements serve up a steady diet of militaristic fare. Establishment news media reproduce the policy elite's view of military situations (NACLA 1983; Stone 1971). "Responsible" academics accept the positions of different segments of the policy elite as defining legitimate research and debate (Chomsky 1982: chs. 2, 4; Ravenal 1979: 83–86; Tucker 1984: 29). Much of the increased support for defense spending in the late 1970s can be attributed to the efforts of groups like the Committee on the Present Danger to convince the public that the United States had fallen dangerously behind the Soviets in military preparedness (Stubbing 1985: 851–52; Wolfe 1979: 25–27; Wolfe and Sanders 1979: 59–60; Kriesberg and Klein 1980: 105). Even though the case for Soviet superiority has been thoroughly debunked (Aspin 1978; Ferguson and Rogers 1986: 141–42; Holzman 1980; Posen and Van Evera 1983: 37–39), the myth has been kept very much alive.

An even more clear illustration of the significance of propaganda is found in the current Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI), a.k.a. "Star Wars." The public is often told that the goal of the SDI is to make nuclear weapons "impotent and obsolete," to create an impenetrable shield which would protect the United States from Soviet missiles. But the objective of the SDI is less to protect the United States population from incoming missiles, than it is to protect the United States' strategic ICBMs, and so to weaken Soviet first-strike capabilities (Bundy et al. 1984: 269; Clarke 1985: 166–69). At the same time, the United States is increasing its own first-strike and other nuclear capabilities via development and deployment of MX, Trident II, and Midgetman (Posen

and Van Evera 1983: 24–28). Rather than making nuclear weapons obsolete, it seems that United States military planners are acting on recommendations to prepare to "fight and win" a nuclear war (e.g. Gray and Payne 1980); or at least, to regain a sufficient strategic advantage to allow it to return to the previous policy of credibly threatening to use tactical nuclear weapons against Soviet armies, a threat which previously had been the capstone of containment (Ellsberg 1981: v–vi; McNamara 1983; Record 1984: 13–22). It is very doubtful that public support would be forthcoming for a policy so stated—far better to speak of abolishing nuclear war and dazzle imaginations with talk of particle beams and laser stations. But if the SDI is "Star Wars," its planners have been "seduced by the dark side of the Force."

So propaganda does seem an important topic for understanding public attitudes. Anthropologists could study how propaganda works at every stage of the process, by attention to the people and organizations that make or present information on foreign affairs, by content analysis of the messages being transmitted, and by looking at how the information is received and perceived by the public.

Some would say that consideration of these matters is mixing politics and science. It is true that focusing on propaganda has political implications. But so does ignoring it. To ignore the possibility that the powerful use propaganda to generate support for policies which serve their interests is to risk portraying cause (a militaristic government policy) for effect (popular support for militarism). Further, since anthropologists are as exposed to propaganda as anyone else, to ignore these issues is to run the additional risk that propaganda assumptions will be incorporated into and so reproduced in their work. To study popular attitudes without attention to the propaganda system is to risk becoming part of that system. That is not just politics, it is also bad science.

In the recent upsurge of interest in war and peace, many anthropologists have expressed interest in going beyond research. They want to use the knowledge and skills already available in a direct way, "to get involved." This sense of urgency certainly seems appropriate in 1986. Activism is inherently political, more directly engaged in actual political processes than the research efforts already discussed. Consideration of the political implications of different types of action therefore seems appropriate. The following section considers two alternative paths toward relevancy, a policy route and a protest route.

THE POLICY ROUTE

A common theme at recent conferences on war is: How can anthropologists become more involved in formulating government policy?

Opportunities to influence policy should always be given serious consideration and evaluated on an individual case basis. Nevertheless, there is reason to question this route as a general direction for those wishing to promote peace.

Policy is the result of political struggle. Anthropologists brought in as advisors or low-level functionaries will have no power, and often little understanding of the policy-making process. As Sahlins (1967: 75) observed in regard to an earlier episode, when social scientists thought they could reform war-related policy, "[T]he quixotic scholar enters the agreement in the belief that knowledge breeds power; his military counterpart in the assurance that power breeds knowledge." Academic opinion is brought in according to its utility in furthering established policy aims. A "good" academic is a technocrat, who does practical, problem-solving work, not the "value oriented" scholar who questions basic policy premises (Chomsky 1982: 89). (See Paige [1977] on the impossibility of a truly value-neutral evaluation of policy assumptions.)

Even if an independent-minded anthropologist gets a foot in the door, major obstacles remain if the goal is to change policy makers' views on the world. Social psychologists have established the (not surprising) fact that influencing basic assumptions behind policy is very difficult and likely to happen only over long periods (Jervis 1980: 466–74). Meanwhile, the anthropologist would be exposed to the social and institutional pressures of the policy machine. The more likely result is that the system will change the anthropologist, rather than the reverse (see Coser 1956: 27–29). "Realism" may come to mean working within the established limits of policy. "Promoting peace" may be equated with reinforcing the status quo.

Another political concern is the company one keeps. From a governmental view, the ethnographic and other information anthropologists produce may be considered "intelligence." The CIA has publicly assumed the responsibility of seeking out scholars with unorthodox and challenging interpretations of world issues (Engelberg 1986). Even if a scholar purposely avoids the intelligence agencies, it may be impossible to refuse to cooperate with them if employed, say, on an embassy staff. Given the history of these agencies, this raises many political and moral issues. It also evokes the specter of disaster for the profession of anthropology.

These are not hypothetical issues. Their reality is shown in the history of Project Camelot (Horowitz 1967). "Camelot" was the code name for a program of "insurgency prophylaxis" developed in 1964 by the Department of Defense (DOD). Social scientists, including anthropologists, were recruited to study the causes of insurgency around the world. The participants saw themselves as reformers, but as a group

they lacked any clear conception of their role or goals, and their work in practice was shaped by their employer, the DOD. Project Camelot was terminated in 1965, killed by the scandal it caused in Chile and by political infighting in Washington. One of its legacies was to cast a pall of suspicion on anthropological fieldworkers around the world (Sahlins 1967: 73).

Another disturbing illustration of a military application of anthropological insights comes from the 1986 United States bombing of Tripoli. According to investigative reporter Seymour Hersh, the plan included bombing Qaddafi's family quarters because several senior CIA officers "claimed that in Bedouin culture Qaddafi would be diminished as a leader if he could not protect his home" (1987).

THE PROTEST ROUTE

An alternative to seeking acceptance by policy makers is to protest. This also is an attempt to shape policy but by pressure from the outside. Two complementary types of work are possible. One is to engage in participant observation or other study of peace organizations (Peattie 1986; Thompson and Smith 1981). Analytic skills could be applied to practical problems. What works? What should be avoided? What type of actions exert the most leverage? During the Vietnam War, many Americans who opposed the war were also opposed to the peace demonstrators (Simon 1980: 23–24). Why?

As argued in the earlier discussion of structurally oriented research, study of smaller groups should be combined with exploration of their place in the larger system. That applies here. A case illustrating the need is provided by the recent Nuclear Freeze Movement. It had spectacular success in promoting mass demonstrations in 1983 and then practically disappeared. The causes of this sudden rise and fall are not all clear, but one important factor is the capitalization of the freeze position by a segment of the elite, whose influence tended to depoliticize the issue, leaving it susceptible to co-optation by supporters of the strategic modernization policy called "Build Down" (Ferguson and Rogers 1986: 226–32).

The other kind of protest work involves developing a counter to the ideology that promotes war. First, we can show how and why the interests of the powerful may differ from the interests of the majority. The point is not that the two are necessarily opposed in any given case, but that they can easily be opposed. Because of this, any claims about the necessity of military action when no direct threat to the United States is apparent should be given close and skeptical scrutiny. Second,

we can show how the goals of the powerful are promoted as being in the interests of all. Here the emphasis should be on the character and mechanisms of propaganda. Peace activists will never have the resources to keep abreast of every new wrinkle in ideology, but the general power of propaganda would be reduced if it were more readily recognized as such. Ideally, the counterideological message could reinforce and be spread by active peace organizations.

The protest route offers several advantages. First, the ideas of potentially divergent interests in war, of ideological manipulations by the elite, and of resistance by the societal majority as a way of avoiding war, are all direct extensions of the theoretical model.

Second, the basic idea in the approach is to bring democratic process to bear in determining military strategies. It represents the extension of a basic American value—democratic rule—to an area where it has previously been excluded (Medvedev and Medvedev 1981: 18–19; Posen and Van Evera 1983: 44–45; Thompson 1981: 38–39).

Third, there appears to be a social base responsive to this message. Public opinion polls show both a widespread distrust of political, military, and business leaders and a conviction that government is run by "a few big interests" (Crozier et al. 1975: 76–85; Ferguson and Rogers 1986: 18; Ladd 1976/77). Within the general population, people of lower socioeconomic status show systematically greater opposition to the use of United States troops abroad (Benson 1982: 594–95). These data suggest that many people would respond positively to the proposition:

> *If we hope to understand anything about the foreign policy of any state, it is a good idea to begin by investigating the domestic social structure: Who sets foreign policy? What interests do these people represent? What is the domestic source of their power? It is a reasonable surmise that the policy that evolves will reflect the special interests of those who design it. (Chomsky 1982: 86)*

In a sense, all this does is articulate what people already suspect. By giving the suspicion form and substance, it becomes a basis for action.

Fourth, we do not have to start from scratch in developing an audience for this message. We can begin with the very important audience we already have—our college students of military service age.

Fifth, public skepticism does act as an inhibitor of militaristic policies even now (Roberts 1986), which is why militarists put so much effort into propaganda. If public opinion were more informed, focused, and resistant to manipulation, its influence would be far greater. This in turn would slow military spending and encourage real efforts toward nuclear arms reductions. Public skepticism also has the direct effect of retarding unilateral United States military action. Military plans are based on possibilities and expectations, and the likelihood of popular

support or opposition is very definitely included in their equations, often under the label of "Vietnam syndrome" (Tucker 1980: 269).

Sixth, this is one approach which can be applied to both East and West. A key concern for Soviet tacticians is the political reliability of Warsaw Pact armies. This is thought to be quite low, especially for offensive war (Herspring and Volgyes 1980). Currently, this is being compounded by clear signs that the antimilitarist, antinuclear sentiments of Western Europe are spreading in Eastern Europe (English 1984; Kamm 1986; Kaufman 1987). And while there seems little prospect of a similar development anytime soon within the Soviet Union itself (Medvedev and Medvedev 1981), top Soviet military officials have publicly worried that pacifist sentiments were sapping youth's willingness to fight (Strode and Strode 1983: 96–100). One recent study of the Soviet politico-military system suggests that perhaps the only way we can influence it is through a dialogue between peoples on the legitimacy of state militarism (Holloway 1981: 103).

In conclusion, anthropology does have a distinctive contribution to make towards promoting peace. The model outlined in the first half of this chapter seems applicable in its general form to contemporary war, and it suggests that much more research could be done. Besides the model, the mainstream of anthropology has been invoked in the references to other relevant areas of anthropological research, in the emphases on participant observation and a holistic perspective, and in the endorsement of a course of activism which involves articulating the interests and views of those who are normally excluded from policy circles.

In seeking to increase the influence of national majorities, the goal is to restrict the independent authority of those who at present make policy. The policies they have developed have lowered, step by step, the threshold of nuclear war to a point where they may be unable to avert it in a crisis (Cimbala 1986; Ford 1985; McNamara 1983). These policies have evolved in pursuit of the same type of strategic advantages always sought through military strength. Each incremental elaboration has had the backing of powerful interests and elaborate planning. But the end result is insane, the ultimate irrationality, a system which could end the world we know. No segment of the policy elite can control this whole system. Each merely acts within it. That is why it has become imperative that national majorities control their policy elites.

States usually do not work that way. Usually, rulers set policy, and the masses carry it out. But we live in a new situation—new because in the United States and Western Europe existing political structures allow the possibility of an increase in real democratic rule. And new because the danger we all face is greater than any in history. In the past, war has eliminated specific societies which did not adjust to their

military environment. Today the possibility of selection remains, but it is against the whole species, and to avoid being eliminated we must learn how *not* to use military force. War has become far too important a matter to be left to our leaders.