ONE

The Modern State

Rise and Decline of Civic Militarism

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In the January 2020 crisis between the United States and Iran, President Donald Trump took to his favorite medium, Twitter, to warn that "if Iran strikes any Americans, or American assets, we have . . . targeted 52 Iranian sites . . . some at a very high level & important to Iran & the Iranian culture, and those targets, and Iran itself, WILL BE HIT VERY FAST AND VERY HARD."[1] Pentagon officials swiftly walked back the threat, saying that "the laws of armed conflict" ruled out attacking cultural sites.[2] It was not the first time President Trump had threatened aggressive measures with the promise of inflicting decisive and quick victory on an adversary. In 2017, he threatened North Korea with "a rain of ruin from the air, the likes of which has never been seen on this earth."[3]

Although Trump has found the allure of the prospect of massive force and quick victory, the modern-day laws of wars have insinuated themselves as a veto player. And so it is that the United States has not actually "won" a war since World War II despite spending more on its military than the next nine countries combined. The changes are all for the good, since civilians have become more protected during wartime than they were during the strategic bombing campaigns of the 1940s, when indiscriminate bombing killed hundreds of thousands of civilians in Germany and Japan. In the Korean War, Army commander Matthew Ridgway observed that "Americans are not inclined by temperament to fight limited wars. As in the boxing ring, they want nothing less than a knockout. What red-blooded American could oppose so shining a concept as victory? It would be like standing up for sin against virtue."[4]

Today, limited war is the norm. However, since states in the West are still uncomfortable with even this, leaders have reconciled the limited appetite for limited wars by shrouding the appearance of war altogether. One way they have done that is by limiting the sacrifice in both blood and treasure—by moving away from conscription and war taxes and removing the visible signs of war. In so doing, they have also moved away from "civic militarism," in which a democracy draws in all of the resources available to it in the service of victory,[5] with the public offering a check on the longevity of conflict precisely because of its investment in it.

This chapter focuses on the relationship between the public's fiscal sacrifice in war and the conduct of that conflict. Using Charles Tilly's focus on extraction and the development of the state as a point of departure,[6] it suggests an endogenous relationship between the cost of war, the institutional shape of the state, and the war's outcome. It examines the rise of the extractive state to its peak period from about 1850 to 1950, and then traces its decline. Taken together, this suggests that the notion of civic militarism, far from being a permanent feature of Western states, was more of an anomaly. Victor Davis Hanson's notion of free peoples fighting wars by consensus takes the form of a quid pro quo starting in the nineteenth century, before it seemingly dissipates in the following century.[7] During the period when civic militarism manifested itself, countries such as the United States sought to impose pace on war through large-scale and close-ended wars to advance desired outcomes. The decline of civic militarism may mean fewer large-scale wars, but also less civic engagement with conflict and a correspondingly diminished political ability to control the pace of wars.

To make these points, the chapter is organized according to three periods of war and state development. The first section considers the early history of war finance (c. 1200–1850) and details the most crucial developments for understanding what followed. In this early period, technological limits to extraction increasingly forced sovereigns to resort to debt to finance their military ventures. In other words, it was militarism without the civic underpinnings.

The second section considers the period between about 1850 and 1950 when the extractive state took center stage. Large-scale war meant large-scale revenue needs and large-scale commitment from domestic audiences. The extraction-coercion cycle referred to a dynamic in which a more powerful central state could coerce more revenue from the public; this in turn made it even more powerful, creating a link between the military and political development of the state.[8] Although—or possibly *because*—extraction was coercive, the public whose resources were central to warfighting also took on a restraining function with respect to war, leading to the most visible manifestation of civic militarism.

That period, however, ultimately gave way to contemporary developments. The onset of limited war triggered limited appetite for what was perceived as unnecessary public sacrifice, which in turn created incentives for leaders to limit fiscal extraction. In this way the civic militarism apparent in the previous period unraveled.

The focus in this chapter is on the United States as a Western state that has been involved in and indeed led numerous large and small-scale wars, making it a worthy case study for understanding the relationship between war and the state. Examining state development in the context of extraction, we conclude that both the early state and the late state could be characterized as militaristic, and that civic militarism occurred during a comparatively brief interlude between them.

War and State Development

The Western way of war and state-making is unidirectional: war creates resource needs, which leads to extraction, which strengthens the central institutions of the state. Although scholars have observed variations in that relationship, for example, depending on whether the war is intrastate, interstate, or global,[9] the prospect of variation over time has not been given serious consideration.[10] And yet the nature of that longer-term relationship is important because of the impact and role of the public in a democracy as determined by its degree of sacrifice in the service of conflict. Since extraction—in other words, taxation—exerts pressures on the public, leaders who have turned to such fiscal coercion have provided accountability, whether through increased suffrage or veterans' benefits after the war,[11] or through responsiveness to public preferences in terms of the duration and conduct of the conflict itself. Conversely, the absence of extraction would mean no such reciprocal need to provide accountability.

Despite the typical characterization of a fairly simple relationship in which war creates revenue needs that give rise to extraction, its evolution has been far less linear. One view suggests that in earlier periods of conflict, revenue needs were limited by the nature of conflict and rudimentary technological innovation. Instead of relying on costly innovation, infantry units emphasized drill and de-emphasized battlefield heroics. Military units were, in a sense, "commodified" in that forces could be quickly raised and readily deployed so long as the soldiers were trained. As Hanson observes, militaries are ultimately a matter of economics, with states trying to achieve the most military power for the least cost.[12] Infantry was far more efficient than cavalry, especially once the emergence of gunpowder allowed shooters to eviscerate horses.

Cicero famously noted that "the sinews of war are infinite money." Money is never infinite, of course, and it certainly was more finite without significant extraction from the populace. Conquest and tribute—the protection money that a conquered land would pay to the conqueror—could only go so far; self-sustaining warfare required domestic revenue. Early states did engage in some degree of taxation but primarily indirect taxes such as on tea, salt, and linens.[13] As Gerald Harriss remarks, "although the [British] Crown was actively exploiting its feudal and traditional taxes, and was extending them to meet the requirements of new military demands, none of these taxes adequately met its needs."[14] The limits to money therefore meant limits to war and militarism more broadly.

Another consequence was increasingly large piles of debt, which led to inefficiency, insofar as a dependence on credit meant servicing the debt through interest payments. The costs of war, as Geoffrey Parker notes, continued to mount dramatically without a concomitant rise in extraction.[15] By the end of the American War of Independence, 66 percent of total tax revenues went toward servicing the debt. As debt increased, buying on credit became harder and more expensive. Yet the government had to generate additional revenues, which it did from additional indirect taxes such as customs, excise, or stamp duties.[16]

Debt and indirect duties, however, did not meaningfully engage the public. Writing around the time of high British debt in the eighteenth century, Adam Smith noted: "In great empires the people who live in the capital, and in the provinces remote from the scene of action, feel, many of them scarce any inconveniency from the war; but enjoy, at their ease, the amusement of reading in the newspapers the exploits of their own fleets and armies."[17] He advocated more visible costs of war—taxes rather than simply debt—to give people an incentive to want peace. Otherwise, the public would be "commonly dissatisfied with the return of peace, which puts an end to their amusement." Public amusement is the antithesis of civic militarism, an apathy directly challenging the picture of citizen killers who ruthlessly killed and won wars.

Yet some early antecedents of public buy-in emerged. The poll tax in

Europe was as brutally simple as it was ancient; hearth-tax equivalents, similarly, were common and had their own long history; land taxes were a routine tool in the hands of even pre-modern courts. However, increases in the "extensive" margin (that is, new taxes being enacted or brand new entrants added to the tax net) only occur at a glacial pace and are usually spurred by costly wars. States created parliaments to help collect these very taxes with some degree of consent.

Nonetheless, even these financing tools were inadequate in paying for war. Even the *de jure* elegance of poll taxes and hearth taxes often were in practice *de facto* "sub-national taxes"—taxes simply collected by cities, say, within a territory. By the time of the Early Modern era, Western states were usually characterized by rising costs, rising debts, and the resort to militarism on credit. Limits to money meant that, as David Parrott concludes, "the problem was above all of inadequate financial resources to pay or supply the armies . . . this served only to reveal the inherent technological and bureaucratic weaknesses of early modern states confronted with the burden of supporting armies 200–300,000 strong."[18] Financial technologies such as remittance banking, bonds, and currency exchanges emerged to finance involvement in conflict, but it took until the eighteenth century for central banks and bonds to emerge as viable sovereign financing tools, and whether expensive or cheap, debt had now "accelerated" into a situation of being ubiquitous, sophisticated, and crucial to war financing, yet ultimately limiting in terms of the militaristic reach.

The Rise of the Extractive State

Max Boot has written that the wars "celebrated in countless books, movies, and documentaries" are typically large-scale wars like World War II, total wars in which the country invested all of its blood and treasure and an unconditional enemy surrender was achieved. Those, he notes, are the "American way of war"—the reliance on advanced technology and commitment from the public to achieve total victory. It turns out that such wars are more the exception than the norm, even in American history; in the first part of the 1800s the United States engaged in dozens of small-scale military ventures, sometimes for debt repayment, sometimes to stabilize insurrections, at other times to protect American citizens or property.[19] These small wars were in the backdrop of the political landscape for decades, and the public would have been forgiven for not knowing that the US had carried out another incursion against the American Indians, or even a marine landing in North Africa (the Barbary Wars).

Yet as technology changed, the scale and costs of war grew, bringing an increasing need for extraction as an efficient and indeed equitable—since taxation could be done progressively as a function of economic means—way to finance conflict. The great utility of an income tax was that the government could now extract the fruits of most production in the society. Earlier forms of taxation were either greatly regressive (such as sales taxes) or susceptible to evasion (like most extant forms of direct taxation).

This section describes how these revenue needs produced the first income tax in the Civil War, steeply progressive tax rates in both world wars, and a nod in the same direction at the outset of the Korean War. With its fiscal resources invested in the conflict, the public scrutinized the conduct of these wars in ways that percolated to the leadership and imposed a particular pace on the war. As Bruce Bueno de Mesquita shows, the decision to tax a democratic body meant that the state needed to be more selective, to wage wars where the odds of victory were higher and the speed of victory was swifter, in order to provide the public good of security for the state and its populace.[20] In fact this period produced the empirical finding that democracies picked their wars and fought harder during them, consequently winning in the vast majority of cases.[21]

This finding is consistent with the civic militarism and triumphalism outlined by Hanson. He cites "the idea of a free citizenry voting to craft the conditions of its own military service through consensual government."[22] Indeed, the reciprocal nature of foisting the burdens of war onto the backs of a democratic citizenry through extraction while providing compensation by way of greater liberalism and rights in the wake of war, in a system enabling democratic voting for the leaders who made decisions about war and peace, appeared to be a recipe for fighting harder and more successfully, if sometimes over-zealously.

A significant enabler of this cycle was the move from indirect to direct taxes. As the name suggests, indirect taxes are applied to the sale of items. Direct taxes are those that individuals pay directly to the government, the most obvious of these being the income tax. An indirect tax, though a small percentage of each item, can add up in ways that have prompted revolts, including the one that started the American Revolution as well as the later Whiskey Rebellion in the 1790s. Direct taxes are far more visible, in part because the amounts add up far more quickly but also because they cannot be shifted to others—for example by opting out of buying tea, whiskey, luxury goods, or whatever other item is being taxed.

The British were the first to successfully implement an income tax, in preparation for the Napoleonic Wars. During the government of William

Pitt the Younger at the dawn of the nineteenth century, the tax brought in a respectable amount of revenue. Only incomes above £60 were taxed, starting at a mere 1/120th of taxable income; this rate progressively increased to 10 percent for incomes above £200. Self-disclosure of incomes was only required at the tax commissioner's discretion. After a brief period of wavering between imposition and suspension, the tax had become a permanent feature of British society by 1842, under the prime ministership of Robert Peel. It must be noted that most individuals were exempt, as only wealthier households were taxed, a feature of the system throughout the West at the time.[23] War taxes were seen as efficient and equitable, as William Gladstone put it in his role as Chancellor: "an engine of gigantic power for great national purposes."[24] With the coming of the Second Industrial Revolution in the later nineteenth century, both the amount of wealth and the ease with which wealth could be identified, assessed, and extracted had all increased markedly. Factories—the mainstay of industrialization in the West—established consistent payroll records; accounting practices that were developed for private entities would then serve for government auditors and tax commissions. Income taxes become a significant and necessary tool that was already widespread by the time of the two world wars. (Indeed, World War I would force the British government to increase its top rates from 8 to 50 percent.)

In the United States too, one of the key features of the period between the Civil War and the Vietnam War is the significant increase of extraction in wartime via an increasingly bureaucratized state, redistribution of wealth through war, and a tendency to maintain the wartime tax levels in the postwar period. Bureaucracies developed during wartime to collect and implement the taxes remained in place in peacetime, creating a so-called "ratchet effect" linking spending and institutions.[25]

One of the notable features of the Civil War is that the North resorted to direct taxes relatively early on, legislating the first American income tax in 1861. This provided confidence to the financial community, including those providing loans, with regard to the government's solvency. Property taxes were direct taxes, which were at that time a violation of the US Constitution. However, since an income tax did not tax property, it could technically be considered indirect and thus not subject to constitutional prohibitions. The first income tax was 3 percent on incomes over $800, which in fact excluded many wage earners. The Revenue Act of 1862 was also progressive but included more citizens in its net; it exempted the first $600 and became steeper as income increased. This was further reinforced by the 1864 Internal Revenue Act. The Union created a national banking system and a revenue service to collect these taxes. By contrast, the Confederacy relied far more on printing money and debt, creating enormous levels of inflation—9,000 percent by the end of the war—that eroded the value of its currency and financial solvency.[26]

The two world wars followed a similar extractive strategy to that of the Union in the Civil War. In their research on progressive taxation in World War I, Kenneth Scheve and David Stasavage show the independent effect of mass warfare in creating the conditions for the fair distribution of war's burdens, contrasting tax rates for non-participants with the far more progressive rates of the participants. Underlying these differences were changing public attitudes about taxation driven by mass mobilization, and in particular the war-driven sense of fairness—that the conscription of men should produce the conscription of wealth at the upper end of the economic ladder.[27]

As noted above, one of the virtues of the massive extraction in the world wars was that it connected the public to the conduct of the war. Even in the context of a war where the stakes were seen as existential, World War II tax proposals received considerable scrutiny. Although it seems an unlikely place to uncover evidence for the scrutiny and accountability-inducing effects of war taxes—since by all accounts it was a war with overwhelming support from the populace—archival material from the Roosevelt administration reveals folder after folder of letters to President Roosevelt about the 1943 proposal for a pay-as-you-go withholding tax. Vitriolic letters, fan mail, talking points from the Treasury Secretary to Roosevelt: to read the archival material is to read a fiscal epiphany, one infused with partisan and class politics. One of the first materials in the tax policy binder was a 1935 Confidential Report to President Roosevelt, which delves into great detail in deriding the "wealth-destroying taxation." The near-hyperbole continues throughout the report. One passage suggests that taxes are tantamount to telling people "don't produce" even though "the nation starves for credit." The report describes taxation as like a burning barn that "prevents the enjoyment of life." It then goes into great actuarial detail about the amount of credit destroyed by taxation, also referred to as "national fakery, posing as a benefaction." Only by modifying the tax structure can the US "effect the economic emancipation of the nation." That the rates would rise to 79 percent by 1937, from 63 percent in the year the report was written, suggests that the report's admonitions went unheeded.

As this correspondence suggests, even in the context of existential war the debate on war taxes produced massive outrage and claims of class warfare, despite all the efforts of the political elites who had given considerable thought both to the framing of the tax itself and to the withholding. After months of debate, the House Ways and Means Committee concluded that calling the tax a "war tax" would elicit a sense of patriotic sacrifice. "Victory tax" was an even more "euphonious name." At almost every turn, the president had to answer to his own party, the opposition, labor, churches, and corporations about the nature of the tax and decisions about war. And while the causal connection with the pace of war is difficult to pin down, it is clear that the political costs of extraction were not trivial and at least created incentives for decisive victory, as open-ended extraction would have been politically untenable.

Beyond accountability, the increase in extraction led to greater liberalization, something of a quid pro quo between the sacrifices and the societal advances, marking a rise of civic militarism in the United States. The Civil War, for example, produced an enormous expansion of veterans' benefits that ultimately spilled over into broader investment for the elderly, the working class, and families.[28] To be sure, these wars also periodically produced illiberal outcomes—for example, the suspension of habeas corpus in the Civil War and limits to free speech—but by and large liberalism increased in the wake of war: voting rights for African Americans after the Civil War and for women after World War I. As Paul Starr concludes, "liberal democracies fought and won wars, which led to further democratization, which helped to protect individual liberties once the war emergencies ended."[29]

The cycle of extraction, mass mobilization, and liberalism produced an uncomfortable tension. The liberal community had disdain for war and affection for progress. The military community's business is war, including a willingness to fight and win large-scale conflicts. How might these competing values be reconciled? Through progressive taxation, which would distribute the costs of war equitably, through decisive victory, which would end war quickly and produce public goods for the populace, and through the delivery of liberal rights, which would come in war's wake.

The cycles of ever-expanding liberalism, however, were not inevitable. More recent wars have moved away from extraction and severed the link between the public and the conduct of conflict, thereby eroding the notion of civic militarism, constraints imposed on war, and efficient paths to democratic victory in war.

Status Quo Ante: Militarism without Civic Grounding

Civic militarism has now all but disappeared in the West. Large-scale wars that required large amounts of soldiers, money, and in turn bargaining with the population for resources[30] no longer occur, whether because the advent of nuclear weapons created prohibitively high costs of war or because the "better angels of our nature" have been able to emerge.[31] The total number of war fatalities plunged in the second half of the twentieth century, a positive development, but with those declines came changes in the relationship between the state, its society, and the conduct of war.

The move away from borrowing has its contemporary foundations in the Korean War. While the United States actually financed 100 percent of the war's costs with taxes, more than any other war in its history, closer inspection reveals a different story that illustrates the state's shift from extraction.[32] As long as the country felt the Korean War was like World War II, it supported extraction. Indeed, in August 1950, a Gallup survey found that 70 percent of Americans were willing to pay more taxes to finance military operations. The polling institute reported that it had "rarely . . . in its 15 years of measuring public opinion found such heavy majorities expressing a willingness to pay more taxes for any public purpose."[33]

Relatively quickly, however, a quite different type of conflict emerged: limited war with limited stakes, no declaration of war, and no clear strategic goals, yet indefinite commitment to the use of force in Korea. President Harry Truman's efforts to engage in continued extraction through additional war taxes were quickly rebuffed once the reality of this limited war set in. Public support for either a war tax or indeed the war itself crumbled, and one member of Congress noted that "*barring a war*," any revenue proposals "will be very coldly received. . . . I am more convinced than ever that we have imposed all of the additional individual and corporate taxes our economy should bear."[34] However, Truman had studiously avoided calling the conflict a war, and therefore withdrew the proposals for war taxes from further consideration.

A similar problem occurred with regard to Vietnam, but this time President Lyndon Johnson had internalized the lessons of the recent past. Adlai Stevenson, not Harry Truman, had been the Democratic presidential nominee in 1952 because the Korean War had resulted in stalemate and taxes had tainted Truman's re-election prospects. Johnson therefore eschewed the prospect of taxes for as long as he could, aiming to avoid the trappings of war that might draw scrutiny to his Great Society programs. He engaged in gradual escalation rather than all-out mobilization. By 1966 the country had 300,000 troops in the country without technically being on a war footing, thereby avoiding the war taxes that would attract scrutiny of the conflict. Johnson admitted: "I don't know much about economics, but I do know Congress. And I can get the Great Society through right now—this is a golden time. We've got a good Congress and I'm the right President and I can do it. But if I talk about the cost of the war, the Great Society won't go through."[35]

Johnson's reluctance to impose a war tax was warranted. The public was decidedly opposed to such a tax, in large part because it did not have a sense of any existential stakes. The policy of gradual escalation and the blurred line between war and peace had muddled the terms of the debate. In May 1967 almost as many Americans (48 percent) said they did not have a "clear idea" what the war was about as those who did (49 percent). Only a minority (41 percent) thought that the war in Vietnam "may prevent World War III."[36] The public never felt about Vietnam as it had about World War II, when there were real concerns about Germany "ruling the world" and Japan "ruling Asia," as Gallup polls put it at that time. No Gallup poll over Vietnam ever probed whether the public expected the war to bring freedom to the Asian continent or result in a dramatic setback for communism.[37] In short, even if support for the conflict started at reasonably high levels, there was never any sense of the high existential stakes associated with World War II.

Thus introducing a war tax would be risky. Insofar as it would take the form of legislation, Congress would have to engage in debate, which would call into question the need for resources, which would be reported in the newspapers and alert the public, which could then push back. Johnson invoked his legislative adversary, House Chairman of the Ways and Means Committee Wilbur Mills, who favored a balanced budget to be achieved through spending cuts rather than tax increases. The president emphasized the implications for his prized social programs: "Old Wilbur Mills will sit down there and he'll thank me kindly and send me back my Great Society, and then he'll tell me that they'll be glad to spend whatever we need for the war."[38] Thus, despite the urging of Johnson's economic advisers, he resisted meaningful war taxes until the 10 percent surcharge in 1968. The case for Johnson's failure was overdetermined, but it is clear that war taxes were an important issue that coalesced and crystalized opposition to the war, alongside the questionable progress and growing casualty figures. The 1968 surcharge was the last time that an American president would institute a war tax, and for good reason politically.

Developments since the Korean War and Vietnam War confirm that, contrary to Hanson's assertion above that the connection between citizens and war in a republic is a consistent feature across time, there has been a distinct decline in civic militarism. The public has an antipathy toward total war, and its growing sensitivity to casualties and costs has meant that leaders themselves shy away from soliciting those sacrifices in blood and treasure. Inevitably this limits the type of wars that countries in the West are able to fight. They keep conflicts at the level of "police action," as in the Korean War, or engage in "gradual escalation" to avoid political debate about war. Yet as long as they cannot significantly escalate these wars—because they lack both the extractive resources of earlier periods and domestic political will—they are also unable to achieve relatively rapid and decisive victories.

Emblematic of the shift away from extraction and civic militarism—and pointing to the consequences of that shift—is the effort of legislators to impose a war tax for the Afghanistan surge in late 2009, as the war entered its ninth year and became one of the longest and costliest wars in American history. The proposed legislation would have charged a surtax on individual incomes. As its legislative sponsors, Representatives David Obey (D-WI), John Murtha (D-PA), and John Larson (D-CT) argued, "the only people who've paid any price for our military involvement in Iraq and Afghanistan are our military families . . . we believe if this war is to be fought, it's only fair that everyone share the burden. That's why we are offering legislation to impose a surtax."[39] Obey explained that "we're just trying to keep in the forefront what the financial costs are," while Representative Barney Frank (D-MA) added that "it's important for people to understand how these wars are adding to our deficits."[40]

In response to this proposal, lawmakers on both sides of the House voiced their opposition, ostensibly on the grounds that they were protecting constituents. As Representative Jerry Lewis (R-CA) suggested, Americans were "already being taxed to death."[41] Democrats other than the legislative sponsors were scarcely more supportive, hoping to avoid what they implied was a politically toxic proposal.[42] Facing such bipartisan opposition, the proposal languished despite scant direct evidence that constituents held the views that their representatives attributed to them. Moreover, debate about a war tax was so perfunctory that questions regarding that potential opposition went unexamined. What is interesting here is that, whereas previous warfare had strongly affected civilian populaces at home, governments now seek to shield civilians almost entirely from its impacts.

In both the most recent wars, Afghanistan and Iraq, the prospect of war taxes has been concentrated largely in anti-war coalitions on the left but shunned by the mainstream of both parties. The most recent proposal for a war tax came from former Democratic presidential contender Beto O'Rourke, seeking to differentiate himself in a crowded primary field. His proposal would have had households with incomes greater than $200,000 pay $1,000 a year, while those with less than $3,000 would pay $25, with the revenues going toward veterans' health care. The subtext of the proposal was distinctly antiwar: if individuals understood the cost of wars, maybe they would turn against them. Yet the very feature that would give the war tax teeth—visibility—is exactly what makes it antipathetic to political elites and therefore unlikely. However, even the occasion for discussion about wars—how we pay for them and their unending nature—appeared to be a departure from the recent past. After all, doing nothing about the policy is tantamount to doing something, by allowing the absence of opposition to enable ongoing conflict.

The lessons from recent wars are instructive. The publics of Western democracies rarely pay directly for the cost of war in the form of war taxes that in the past became lightning rods for political engagement with elected officials and their policies. Fareed Zakaria's notion of "illiberal democracy" is useful here:[43] state actors in the West (policymakers, bureaucrats, and leaders) can make use of debt financing to be free from close civilian scrutiny. Zakaria's phrase was actually targeting non-Western democracies, but some aspects of that label at least may be increasingly applicable to established Western democracies. Wars since 9/11 have expanded temporally and geographically with little accountability; they do so in part because perpetuation and expansion incur few political costs.

Yet legislators now seem even more wary than they were over seventy-five years ago to tax Americans to pay for the fight. The same policy that would create a more equitable and financially sound form of finance would also invite political scrutiny. The state is at a stage now where it is paradoxically both strong and weak: technological advances have made war financing hurdles a thing of the past; yet galvanizing the public to achieve the potential for large-scale extraction is risky and attempts are muted. If the primary goal of Congress is reelection, then demurring from periodic proposals for a war tax is no doubt wise. If the goal is good public policy, however, then the visibility of taxes, despite the unwelcome controversy it invites, will operate fruitfully in the service of democratic accountability.

Conclusion

As this historical analysis has shown, it was financing that not only set the West apart from the rest, but also resulted in large-scale, deadlier, if more efficient wars. By the time of the modern era, states in the West could raise more money and armies than states elsewhere. It is telling that the Japanese—who were humiliated by Commodore Perry's forceful dismantling of their isolationist policy of *Sakoku*—were able to defeat Russia by 1905 after adopting "Western" types of war finance. Yet we also know that it is financing that allows for states to sustain (if barely) large-scale armies. As Parker writes of the enormous wealth of Amsterdam coupled with the good credit of the United Provinces in the seventeenth century, "This combination enabled the Dutch to raise an army and go on fighting, whatever the cost, until they got their own way."[44] Financing, then, is an integral part of determining the length and magnitude of certain wars. It affects the type of wars that countries fight, the way they fight them, and the speed and decisiveness with which they are able to do so.

A second major implication of this analysis is that the turn to extraction, even if largely an aberration rather than the norm, did have the restraining effect of linking government decisions and the costs of war to society's probing. The decline of extraction has produced a decline in the public investment and scrutiny that helped create a check both on the wars the United States and others opted to wage and on the determination with which they fought. It is not surprising that the recent wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, where extraction was consciously shunned, have been the longest in American history. Without the constant reminders that come from fiscal sacrifice, the public is increasingly disconnected from wars, imposing few pressures on leaders to bring them to a rapid and decisive end.

Third, and more generally, the history of war finance offers insights about the arc of civic militarism in the West. Hanson has suggested its continuity from ancient Greece to the present, emphasizing the sense of societal cohesion and liberal notion of "free men fighting wars by consensus" as aspects of Western society. The history of extraction suggests that states in the West may look like sleeping giants: technological barriers to extraction have been largely removed; but leaders cannot whip up the sentiment for sacrifice among the public. Indeed, as Sarah Kreps argues, we may have hit an upper limit in terms of citizens' willingness to sacrifice their own incomes to pay for (war) taxes.[45]

Yet at the same time, through the mechanism of debt financing, states have been able to circumvent democratic accountability for militarized foreign policy strategies. What results is a paradox. The Western state is powerful in theory, capable of raising enormous revenues to fight and win decisively, but it is weak in practice, unable to galvanize the public to accept higher levels of extraction in return for either additional rights or the simple yet essential public good of state security. Instead, leaders have sought to reduce the visible costs of war, circumvent limits on mobilization, and loosen decision-making constraints. If this analysis is any indication, the recent past of long, open-ended, yet less lethal wars is therefore likely to be a prologue, foreshadowing the distinct likelihood of future, prolonged war.

NOTES

1. Donald J. Trump @realDonaldTrump, www.twitter.com/realDonaldTrump/status/1213593975732527112, January 4, 2020.

2. Peter Baker and Maggie Haberman, "Pentagon Rules Out Striking Iranian Cultural Sites, Contradicting Trump," *New York Times*, January 7, 2020.

3. Bruce Cumings, "Americans Once Carpet Bombed North Korea. It's Time to Remember that Past," *The Guardian*, August 13, 2017.

4. Matthew B. Ridgway, *The Korean War* (Harmondsworth, UK: Penguin Books, 1967).

5. Victor Davis Hanson, *Carnage and Culture: Landmark Battles in the Rise to Western Power* (New York: Doubleday, 2001).

6. Charles Tilly, *Coercion, Capital, and European States, AD 990–1992* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1990).

7. Hanson, *Carnage and Culture,* p. 366.

8. Miguel Angel Centeno, "Blood and Debt: War and Taxation in Nineteenth-Century Latin America," *American Journal of Sociology*, vol. 102, no. 6 (May 1997), pp. 1565–1605; at p. 1566.

9. Cameron Thies and David Sobek, "War, Economic Development, and Political Development in the Contemporary International System," *International Studies Quarterly*, vol. 54, no. 1 (March 2010), pp. 267–87.

10. One exception is that of Sarah Kreps, whose *Taxing Wars* (Oxford University Press, 2018) points to the changes within the American experience over time.

11. Paul Starr, "Dodging a Bullet: Democracy's Gains in Modern War," in *In War's Wake: International Conflict and the Fate of Liberal Democracy*, edited by Ronald R. Krebs and Elizabeth Kier (Cambridge University Press, 2010).

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