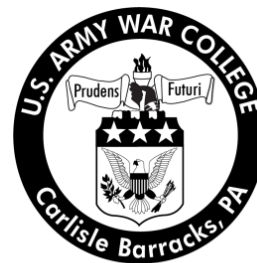


## Maslow, Needs, and War

by

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United States Army War College  
Class of 2012

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# USAWC STRATEGY RESEARCH PROJECT

## **MASLOW, NEEDS, AND WAR**

by

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## **ABSTRACT**

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In our current thinking on war, we rely on political leaders to define the character of war and provide military-achievable goals. In many cases, not understanding the background to these goals can lead to tragedy. Understanding where these goals come from, particularly the needs of the society they serve will help military professionals achieve the goals. Maslow's hierarchy of needs is a well known framework , which helps understanding of personal behaviors and, as recent research has posited, social behaviors as well. More recent researchers have posited societies exhibit a similar hierarchy. This paper proposes a hierarchy of needs for a society that mirror's Maslow's individual hierarchy and draws lessons for warfare from that new hierarchy.



## MASLOW, NEEDS, AND WAR

We accept as a given in most military circles that war is an extension of political goals. Clausewitz's famous comment, "War is not merely an act of policy but a true political instrument, a continuation of political intercourse, carried on with other means"<sup>1</sup> defines what many in the West see as the nature of war. However, accepting the political nature of war without further detailed thought about *where* the political goals come from can lead military leaders to become detached from the political nature of the goals themselves. An agent (nations, supra-national entities, or groups) can fight and win wars by correctly understanding its political objectives and those of its opponent. Understanding an opponent's objectives implies understanding the societal needs embodied within them. Further, understanding those needs provides key estimates of ferocity and price inherent in the wartime pursuit of those goals. The same understanding leads us to estimate the price an enemy is willing to pay to prevent attainment of our goals. Is the enemy willing to pay a higher price than we are in the struggle over an objective? The answer to this question is the key to beginning, continuing, and ending a conflict. In this paper, I assert there is a definable taxonomy of needs that political leaders attempt to resolve as a primary driver of their goals. Attaining or sustaining these goals drives the nation's or groups--agent's--calculus about war and violence. Similarly, an estimate of a proposed action's effect on the opponent's hierarchy of needs can help understand their likely reaction to the policy.

Where the nation's or society's goals come from--and how dear they are--define the political nature of war. These are significant questions in political theory, which realists, liberals, and other groups struggle to answer. A starting point for the question

can be found in Fisher and Ury's *Getting to Yes*, with the concept, "the most powerful interests are basic human needs."<sup>2</sup> They go on to assert, "What is true for individual's remains equally true for groups and nations."<sup>3</sup> Abraham H. Maslow did groundbreaking work on a hierarchy of needs; he identified five successive levels of needs and articulated how they interacted to motivate personal actions.<sup>4</sup> These levels provide an excellent place to begin examining societal needs and their ability to motivate political actions. Maslow's work particularly focused on individuals but, as noted by Fisher and Ury, correlations can be drawn to the society composed of those individuals and a similar set of five needs levels can be developed for societies. Maslow's hierarchy of needs explains that an individual strives to meet these goals, but must do so in successive order. In other words, an individual cannot worry about self-actualizing while worrying about his or her next meal.<sup>5</sup> The parallel is true of societies as well--a society cannot focus on becoming a global leader without first meeting the survival needs of its citizens.

Applying Maslow's theories to broader societies is not new; in 1984, M.J. Sirgy explored a society's level of satisfaction by applying Maslow's hierarchy. Sirgy correlated Maslow's theory of individual needs to the society that they live within. He drew the point a society has a similar set of needs in a similar hierarchy. In essence, societies have needs that must be met and these needs are drawn from a desire to improve quality of life.<sup>6</sup> Although Sirgy drew this conclusion as it relates to mass marketing and consumerism, he provided a valid starting point for categorizing a society's needs and how societal behavior is influenced. As Sirgy discussed, the needs can be classified as lower-order needs that must be met (physical, security, and the

like) and higher needs that a man desires to be met. These desired needs begin with self-esteem issues but ultimately lead to self-actualization, or the perfection of capability. These needs tend to be values-based needs.

Examining Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs and considering the root logic leads to a societal equivalent for a variety of agents. An understanding of an agent's needs is a key way gain an understanding of their political aims. Key questions can be addressed: What defines the political goals of an agent? For which goals is an agent willing to fight? How fierce will the agent fight over a particular political goal? What costs are the combatants willing to pay to achieve their goals? These simple questions speak to the character of war and understanding the needs hierarchy leads us to answering them.

The below figure applies the needs hierarchy, described by Maslow, to nation, states, and groups for further consideration in answering these questions. The successive paragraphs examine each level in detail and provide the rationalization of transferring the personal need to the societal level.

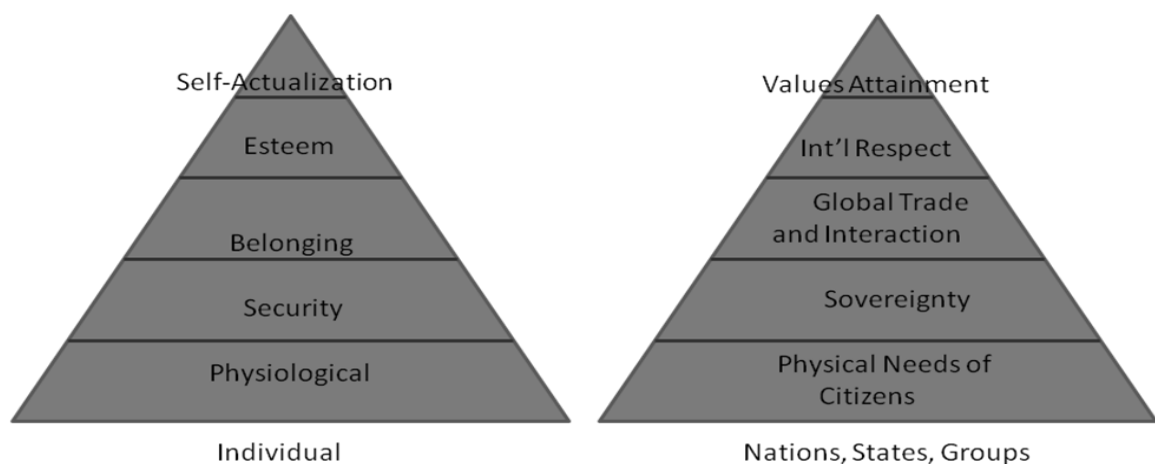


Figure 1:

## Physiological Needs

The first of Maslow's needs to be satisfied are the *physiological or biological needs*.<sup>7</sup> Maslow described these as the physical requirements for life such as food, water, and air. When these physiological needs are not met, they dominate all other needs.<sup>8</sup> Without satisfying basic survival needs, humans cannot move towards satisfying other needs. At the societal level, it is easy to translate this fact into the imperative for governments to provide the basics of life in their societies or watch their societies devolve into smaller and competing groups.

States who no longer provide basic living needs are known as "failed states." An example is the willingness of the Somali populace to follow almost anyone who can provide food support. The current famine, and the inability of Al-Shabab (or any other authority) to procure and provide food supplies from the international community, have driven the populace away from these threatening gangsters and into the arms of anyone who can provide food. The physical imperatives of survival overrode the potential "safety" issues of ignoring Al-Shabab.<sup>9</sup>

## Safety Needs

After physiological needs, come *safety needs*. Maslow characterized these as security, stability, protection, freedom from fear, freedom from chaos, a need for order, law, and stability.<sup>10</sup> These represent man's innate desire for shelter and order. Maslow again states these needs can drive behavior if not met. In a similar fashion to physiological needs, a failure of safety drives all behavior except those to satisfy physiological requirements.<sup>11</sup> Maslow goes so far as to suggest these needs dominate the future philosophy and values of the individual.<sup>12</sup> He said people who can eat and breathe tend to center their lives on security and protection.

This concept is mirrored in nations and groups. Nations act to maintain sovereignty as their central focus. Exhibition of the safety need in nations, alliances and non-state actors could take a variety of forms but each focuses on the ability of the agent to be self-deterministic. Formal alliances composed of strong nation states act collectively to maintain sovereignty of all; think NATO, the UN, or ASEAN. Alternatively, smaller groups attach themselves to strong nations to survive. In some cases, non-state actors provide valuable aid in such a way that nations do not consider their presence a threat to their own sovereignty; think Doctors without Borders or some religious charities.

Terrorist groups or other non-nation state actors with violent agendas, exhibit safety needs in their organizational makeup. They may develop cellular structures to prevent capture of a single cell from crippling the organization. Alternatively, they could ensure survival of their ideology using modern telecommunications networks rather than focusing on purely physical survival. In both cases, the terrorist group acts to ensure its survival as a sovereign group or idea.

This drive for security and safety is the defining characteristic of most states, ancient or modern. As far back as the Peloponnesian war, the city-states of ancient Greece organized defensive alliances, the Delian League and the Peloponnesian League, to protect fellow league members.<sup>13</sup> Violations of sovereignty are often the cause of war, or at least the pretext for the war. Examples of the violations which inspired war include the United States and Pearl Harbor in modern times and the punitive raids to "civilize" Gaul by Ancient Rome.

Security and protection needs can dominate a nation or agent to the exclusion of even basic physiological needs. Totalitarian regimes throughout history allowed their populations to suffer while they concentrated power internally to preserve the security of the ruling class. Examples included Lenin's and Stalin's Soviet Union, North Korea's Kim Il Sung, or the more recent Saddam Hussein in Iraq. While these examples also sought satisfaction of higher needs, their security needs dominated their behavior and political goals.

### Belongingness Needs

The third level of needs, after physiological and safety needs, are *belongingness needs*.<sup>14</sup> Maslow defined these as a hunger for affectionate relationships, for a place in the family or group. Individuals strive to eliminate loneliness, rejection and ostracism. Maslow noted to be effective these relationships must be two-way; the individual must receive, as well as give, affection in a relationship.<sup>15</sup>

Again, this personal need translates directly to the national level. Nations who have safeguarded their sovereignty and provided their basic survival needs begin to expand their interests. Witness the birth of trade, exchange of ambassadors, membership in regional defense leagues, the United Nations, and other supra-national organizations. A nation's membership in these international organizations validates them. An example is Turkey's decades long quest to join the European Union.<sup>16</sup> The expansion of NATO to the former Soviet bloc in Eastern Europe simultaneously accomplished both security and belonging needs of the former Warsaw pact nations.<sup>17</sup>

The desire for belonging is also evident in seeking "validation" for many nations' actions. United Nations approval enabled the vast coalition that drove Iraq out of Kuwait in the first Gulf War. In fact, the resolutions in late November of 1990 requested

member states to provide all appropriate support. This mandate was seen as critical to the success in building the coalition.<sup>18</sup> Likewise, national actions without the validation of a multi-national organization are seen as less legitimate and enjoy less support, such as the US invasion of Iraq in 2003, where very few principal allies joined the "coalition of the willing."<sup>19</sup>

Nations who do not participate or abide by multi-national rule sets are labeled "pariahs." North Korea's and Iran's failure to comply with the International Atomic Energy Agency inspection regimen and apparent pursuit of nuclear weapons earned them a negative worldview. Likewise, apartheid-era South Africa endured years of the ostracism because of its failure to comply with "Western" standards for personal freedoms, opportunity, and the rule of law.

There are differences of opinion regarding the importance of this level. A significant body of research puts forward that some societies are more "collective" in their makeup. In particular, some assert that individuals in these societies would place belonging to their collective group, family, city, region, religion or nation as potentially more important than their physiological or safety needs.<sup>20</sup> While this belief may be true at the individual level, there is no easy correlation for this phenomenon to the nation, or states or groups. Nations, states and groups must first ensure their survival to fulfill their destiny as they see it. An individual's failure to survive, on the other hand, does not mean the failure of his or her entire social order. While potentially a tragedy, the passing of an individual does not generally permanently disrupt nation-states. Some leader-centered groups however could be potentially affected by deaths of key leaders; Al-Qaeda and Osama Bin Laden for example.

## Esteem Needs

The fourth level of human motivation according to Maslow includes the *esteem needs*. Maslow broadly categorized these needs in two areas of action. The first set includes needs for achievement, competence, strength, independence and freedom. The second set includes desire for reputation and prestige. Achieving these needs leads an individual to self-confidence and adequacy, while failing to achieve leads to inferiority and feelings of helplessness.<sup>21</sup>

Esteem needs are more difficult to see directly in nations or non-state actors. At the individual level, once people belong to groups, they have a strong desire to excel in their group. Whether at work, or in a family, the individual desires the respect of the group. In this context, nations act similarly. Having a peer's respect because of their strengths and national characteristics, as well as their independence, is a strong driver for a nation's actions.

Certainly, nations act in a manner to demonstrate their strengths and to gain prestige. Many nations send peacekeeping forces to the United Nations to gain respect and as a marker on the international poker table to show that they are a "player" in the international system. Similarly, nations attempting to join NATO have supported the ISAF mission in Afghanistan as proof of their readiness and commitment to the alliance. Georgia's contributions to ISAF are a ready example.<sup>22</sup>

Likewise, a loss of prestige can damage a nation's or group's international standing. Going back to the U.S. failure to seek multi-lateral validation of its 2003 Iraq invasion, some said the subsequent loss of prestige had a profound impact on the U.S. ability to exert its influence. For example, Chester Crocker, an assistant secretary of state for Africa under President Reagan, said the war on terrorism inflamed suspicions

of U.S. motives, forced Washington to look the other way when its counterterrorism allies engage in bad behavior, and led to an over-focus on the Middle East.<sup>23</sup> In essence, U.S. ability to influence, a key component of its soft power, declined because of its actions which lacked the validation of the community of nations.

Belonging needs, and their mitigating impacts, are limited by the choices of the particular actors. Groups and nations will choose to "belong" with some nations and not others, so actions which might alienate one group will encourage belonging with others. The point is these needs are values and perspective dependent and considering their impact requires a thorough understanding of the actor's perspective in acting upon them.

### Self-Actualization Needs

Finally, Maslow stated individuals seek *self-actualization* as their final motivation. While a complicated concept at its core, Maslow defines it with the phrase "What a man *can* be, he *must* be. He must be true to his own nature."<sup>24</sup> Self-actualization embodies the drive that even with material, relationship, and professional success, some individuals are still driven to do more or perhaps do something completely different. They yearn for a completeness found in fulfilling their ultimate potential; however, they have personally defined their potential.

Like the other higher-order needs, this one is hard to translate to a nation-state equivalent. Consider what character and culture mean in a nation or group, and one begins to see what a group might consider its ultimate potential. Understanding in general terms what characteristics define a nation or group are key to what it promotes, and thus what it strives to obtain. These general characteristics show an agent's values and what behaviors it prefers. These lead to a description of national character. This

expression of character shows in the causes a nation or group pursues above those it considers critical to its survival. In essence, past behavior predicts future values in the continuity of culture within a group. Applying Maslow's 5th need, nations seek to further their values and national culture as their expression of their potential.

One good example of this national expression of potential can be seen in the United States after World War II. America saw-- continues to see--itself as the guarantor of liberty, the shining light on the hill, the ultimate example of possibility. John F. Kennedy's inaugural speech expresses this American idea, "Let every nation know, whether it wishes us well or ill, that we shall pay any price, bear any burden, meet any hardship, support any friend, oppose any foe to assure the survival and the success of liberty."<sup>25</sup> Twenty years later, Ronald Reagan offered, "In a world wracked by hatred, economic crisis, and political tension, America remains mankind's best hope."<sup>26</sup> Throughout its history, the United States has seen itself as responsible to its own values of democracy and used its power to support democracy. To be clear, the US is not alone in this sense of responsibility to values. In its own way, The Soviet Union's support of "Wars of Liberation" and assorted revolutionary movements corresponded to their desired national identity as the source of a global Marxist spring which would flood the world.

There is an important lesson regarding the pursuit of values. Consider how the United States, in contravention of its values, used its power to support repressive regimes who supported its national interests. The U.S. was the primary supporter of Iran throughout the 1950s, 60s, and 70s; providing key military, economic, and diplomatic assistance to a brutally autocratic regime. America supported a nation

inimical to its values, but critical to lower level needs of security. Iran played an important role in containing Soviet expansion into the mid-East and was a crucial supplier of oil.<sup>27</sup> Nation's or groups might engage in rhetoric or actual employment of national power in support of their values, but can contradict these on behalf of lower level needs. This dichotomy does not invalidate the hierarchy, but it points out when threatened, an agent's vital or survival interests will overcome its values. In fact, this scenario validates Maslow's theories about progression along the hierarchy. The U.S. espoused democratic values, a higher order need, but it empowered a non-democratic regime in support of its safety and security needs, a lower order need.

#### Implications for a Theory of War

Of particular interest to the theory of war and the basis of the political goals espoused by Clausewitz (broadly accepted in the West and forming the basis for most of our political discourse on war) are five axioms which correlate warfare, interests, political goals, and needs.

- War is a political act committed to further the needs attainment of a group.
- War is characterized by varying levels of violence depending on the severity of those needs.
- War exists in a continuum of interrelations amongst groups, nations, and supra-national entities.
- War ends when leaders believe the costs of attaining the original aims of the conflict are outweighed by the costs to continue to pursue them.
- Validation of a particular action can be estimated by understanding relative placement on the needs pyramid.

Together, these axioms assert war is a rational act entered into by agents to meet their needs. Further, they assert war's bloodshed, ferocity, and severity can be estimated by clearly understanding the opponent's views on a particular issue.

A timely example demonstrates each of these axioms. Analyzing Iran's current standoff with the West provides a way to examine the needs hierarchy for the two principal agents, Iran and the U.S., and the implications of those needs hierarchies on the two agent's political and military goals.

The first axiom states war is a political act committed to further the aims of a group. Clausewitz is easily identified with this claim,<sup>28</sup> but other war theorists have concurred. Dr. Colin S. Gray wrote, "Military force is not an anachronism; it is and will long remain an essential element of policy."<sup>29</sup> Dr. Gray confirms both the utility of military force and its place as a political instrument. Beyond these statements, a historical test is appropriate. Certainly, politics are at play in the Peloponnesian War. Thucydides tells us that Athens was presented with an opportunity for war because of its relationship with Corcyra.<sup>30</sup> Athens took the opportunity due to its political goal which was a desire to preserve their strategic advantage of maritime supremacy. Likewise, he states Sparta accepted the opportunity for war due to its "fear" of rising Athenian power.<sup>31</sup> Sparta went to war due to its fear it would lose the ability to express its national goals in the face of rising Athenian power, a political goal.

Fast forward 2,500 years and we see a broad spectrum of political drivers as key players in every conflict of the last century. World War I was fought, in part, to preserve the balance of power. World War II was in principal a struggle against fascism and aggression. The clash of political ideologies in the limited wars of the Cold War era is a

further case of political goals leading to conflict. In sum, a political objective could be defined as the expression of a national, supra-national, or group desired end-state. While some conflicts might rise to total brutality (the Rwanda Hutu-Tutsi massacres); the initiating agent has some "goal" in mind at the outset of hostilities, i.e. its political end-state. The initiating agent chose to accomplish its goal(s) via direct violence. Alternatively, the implementation strategy provoked an intentional or unintentional violent response. In either case, war resulted from the actions of an initiating agent attempting to further its progress towards its political goal.

Turning to the Iranian case study, there is no doubt both the U.S. and Iran are pursuing political objectives. Any U.S. military strikes, in addition to other aspects of the U.S. hard and soft power, intended to deny Iranian nuclear ambitions would have specific political purposes. President Obama was blunt in his State of the Union address in 2012, "Let there be no doubt: America is determined to prevent Iran from getting a nuclear weapon, and I will take no options off the table to achieve that goal."<sup>32</sup> However, consider the political infrastructure of Iran and their goals in obtaining nuclear weapons. Iran is a nation of 75 million people, 70% of whom live in urban areas.<sup>33</sup> Iran has become a sophisticated, urban, political-savvy nation. Since the revolution in 1979, some scholars have noted the rise of the Iranian military, particularly the Revolutionary Guards as a political force. "The Islamic Republic is increasingly a military autocracy cloaked in clerical garb," is how one major think tank characterized Iran.<sup>34</sup> Urbanization and militarization of Iranian politics are key drivers in the political goals Iran sets for its leaders.

The second axiom speaks to the violence of war. Wars can vary from limited to total in their violence. Limits to war's violence come from many sources including fear of escalation, a lack of public support, or a desire to limit collateral damage,. Most importantly, limits come from the value of the goal which initiated the warfare. The second axiom follows from this logic; the severity of desired aims will dictate the ferocity of violence in the conflict.

Based on the earlier understanding of needs and their prioritization, there is a correlation to the violence in war and a society's view of its place on the adaption of Maslow's hierarchy. A combatant's view of a political objective's ability to enhance or sustain his place in the hierarchy provides a "placeholder" for how dear the political objective is, and thus its relative value. This relative value establishes an initial level of acceptable violence. Small changes to the perceived place on the hierarchy could lead to limited violence. More important in this case is the negative example, which is a combatant's ferocity in warfare, will be higher to prevent a significant decline, or promote a significant rise, in its place on the hierarchy. A combatant will fight immensely more fiercely to preserve its security, or perhaps its sovereignty, than it would to support (or export) its values, or its self-esteem or actualization needs.

So, what are the implications? Agents with their basic needs met, will establish political goals to further their higher-level needs. An opponent's ferocity can be estimated through an understanding of the extent to which a political objective could affect its place on its own hierarchy. This could explain Al Qaeda's willingness to use wanton violence against the United States, and the reluctance of the United States to respond with similar wanton violence. The United States has been hurt and its borders

violated, but faces no overwhelming threat to its existence, and is therefore driven by higher order needs. The war on global extremism is a war of choice, not a war of need. Conversely, America's stated policy-- as interpreted by Al Qaeda--promotes an existential threat to Islamic extremism. The U.S. is working to expand democracy, a value-based need, while Al Qaeda is fighting for the survival of its ideology, its way of life, as well as its physical survival. This distinction is key to understanding the two combatants' different views on the acceptability of mass violence in the current conflict. This distinction also helps explain the combatant's different views on the requirements to minimize, or seek, civilian casualties.

Consider U.S. responses to a pre-nuclear and a post-nuclear armed Iran. America desires to gain an advantage over Iran before they establish a nuclear deterrent. Attaining a nuclear capability would give Iran the ability to seriously threaten U.S interests and existentially threaten key allies in the Mideast and Europe (Israel, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, etc). Safety and security needs would move to the foreground and influence our political goals. How we would handle those safety and security needs is debatable. Almost certainly, the U.S. would respond in kind if attacked with a nuclear weapon and its level of ferocity and unwillingness accept wanton violence would peak. However, before such an attack occurred, U.S. options would vary from cold-war style deterrence to a pre-emptive defensive strike.

This debate is ongoing now; Uri Friedman of *Foreign Policy's* Passport blog points to the breadth of disagreement. Citing a Pew Institute survey, he says, "58 percent of respondents said it was more important to prevent Iran from developing nuclear weapons, even if that meant taking military action." While later, he cites a CNN

poll from November of 2011, stating more than six in 10 respondents selected "economic and diplomatic efforts" -- not "military action right now" -- as the best U.S. policy toward Iran's nuclear program.<sup>35</sup> Accepting and executing one of these options would be drawn, in part, from the perceived threat to the U.S.'s national sovereignty.

Consider the issue from the Iranian perspective. It has been a decade since Iran was labeled as part of the "Axis of Evil." U.S. vilification of the Iranian government while simultaneously invading two of its neighbors certainly caused safety and security concerns in Iran. Experts at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace go so far as to claim Iranian overtures were "shot down" by the Bush Administration who saw the Iranian regime as "on its way out."<sup>36</sup> At the same time, another member of the Axis of Evil, North Korea, developed and tested a nuclear weapon and the rhetoric of "what to do" about North Korea changed. The Iranian political establishment, influenced by its military, clearly saw a way to preserve its current system. Its pursuit of a nuclear weapon is perfectly rational in a system where the two principal belligerents have such little trust. The Iranians see possession of a nuclear weapon as critical to their sovereignty and would thus fight to preserve their ability to develop the capability.

In sum, the second axiom states varying levels of violence are tied to a combatant's sense of the desired objectives. Objectives enabling security or safety will be fought for with a higher degree of ferocity than those, which enable, or protect, values-based objectives. Further, from integrating the first and second axioms, these objectives are derived from the political expression of a society's physical or values-based needs.

The third axiom states war is part of a continuum of relations between groups, nations, and supra-national entities. This concept of a continuum of relations is important to the theory of needs and war, as it places the political objective in context. War does not happen in a vacuum. Sparta did not wake up one day and declare war on Athens, nor did Napoleon's conflicts occur of their own accord. Each grew from diplomatic and economic relations and competitions to military actions, some more quickly than others did. Agents exercise these relations as the natural outcome of a similarity of cultures, economic based interactions, geographic proximity or a common religion.

In today's economy, agents regularly transfer too many goods and services to enable isolationists. Neighboring states connect and are inter-related in many more ways than previously seen. Can a neighbor or a non-state actor threaten? Absolutely, but the previous preoccupation with physical acquisition of land assets, and their wealth, will no longer be as predominant in the 21st century. Agents will engage in a variety of contacts with others as part of either a predetermined set of choices, or as part of the chaos of international relations. Globalization precludes agents from sustaining themselves indefinitely without contact. Interrelations amongst agents take many forms, war is but one of them.

This concept is core to the Iranian example being considered. The current U.S.-led efforts to curtail Iranian nuclear ambitions revolve around economic and diplomatic isolation. Again from President Obama's 2012 State of the Union address, "...through the power of our diplomacy, a world that was once divided about how to deal with Iran's nuclear program now stands as one...its leaders are faced with crippling sanctions."<sup>37</sup>

Similarly, Iran reacted to diplomatic pressure by cutting off oil to France and the United Kingdom, attempting to use its limited economic power to alter behaviors.<sup>38</sup> The continuum of inter-agent relations shows here in the resolve on both sides to continue to pursue their political objectives via other means should these diplomatic or economic efforts fail.

Again, it is of value to explore the synergy of the first three axioms. As noted above, the integration of the first and second axioms stated wartime objectives are the political expression of a society striving to satisfy its physical or values-based needs. Adding the third axiom, these needs-based objectives become wartime objectives when they are not achievable in another way along the continuum of inter-agent relations.

The fourth axiom puts a limit on the wartime price an agent is willing to pay to achieve its goals. Clausewitz states, "The smaller the penalty you demand from your opponent, the less you can expect him to try and deny it to you; the smaller the effort he makes, the less you need make yourself."<sup>39</sup> Implicit in this statement is when the effort expended grows larger than the objective sought is worth belligerents should seek peace. While true, price is not easy to determine. The synthesis of the first three axioms provides a starting point. If a wartime goal relates to societal needs, those needs influence the price. Specifically, similarly to earlier discussion on violence, it is easy to find examples where agents, threatened with dissolution, display a willingness to pay a much higher price in the continuum of relations, up to and including war.

The United States edged close to total war in its defense of Western Democracy in World War II. The costs borne by the U.S in this war were incredibly high. The U.S. directed its entire economy to national purposes. The U.S. suffered hundreds of

thousands of deaths and millions of casualties. Conversely, with its limited objectives in Vietnam, the U.S. did not completely mobilize its economy and was not prepared to accept the casualty levels seen in World War II. In this simple example, the fourth axiom is seen in action. Limited war objectives, those more values-based, do not enable one to accept the higher price tag of objectives to secure sovereignty.

Consider Iran and the ostracism it currently endures the growing "price" it has paid over the past decade. The Congressional Research Service reported in February 2012 the impact of sanctions on Iran, "...has already begun to reduce Iran's oil sales and might reduce them by as much as 40% (1 million barrels per day reduction out of 2.5 million barrels per day of sales)."<sup>40</sup> Due to economic sanctions, many international firms now view Iran as "radioactive", driving them "to exit the Iranian market even if doing so is not required by any sanctions."<sup>41</sup> Examples include carmakers Toyota, Daimler, and Kia agreeing to cease sales to Iran, and the Danish shipping company Maersk committing to withdraw its ships from Iran's three largest ports. In total, these actions will cripple Iran's economy. Yet the government persists because it sees the success of its nuclear program as central to its security and, according to the hierarchy, satisfying those needs precedes the "belonginess needs" of the global economy. The tipping point for the Iranian government could only come if/when Iran has trouble meeting the lower order needs of its populace.

Adding this factor to our previous synthesis of axioms one through three provides additional insights to the theory of war. An agent's need-based objectives become wartime objectives when they are not achievable in another way along the continuum of inter-agent relations. Agents pursue their objectives with a level of violence, and a

willingness to accept casualties, commensurate with the perceived threat to the agent's security or sovereignty.

Finally, the fifth axiom states the acceptance of a particular action can be gauged based on its implications to the needs pyramid. While rather obvious, it is worth stating explicitly. An agent will accept actions that raise a society's standing-- real or perceived--on its needs hierarchy, and oppose those actions that lower its standing. A simple example is the recent trauma in Europe over austerity measures. Societies have broadly resisted attempts to trim social benefits, the effect of which would lower their quality of life and standard of living. In Spain, Greece, Ireland, and Italy we have certainly seen massive protests and in some cases riots.<sup>42</sup> The other side is the view of societies who were being asked to support bailouts for these troubled societies.

German, Dutch, and other European nations had massive protests, believing those societies "deserved" to fall to a lower standard of living because their actions had driven them there.<sup>43</sup> They also certainly harbored resentment over the potential impact to their own standard of living, and placement on the needs hierarchy, the bailouts would entail.

This argument is a regular feature of American foreign policy. Politicians from both sides have regularly taken shots at America's foreign aid account. Deriding funding spent overseas as funding taken away from American citizens. Defenders of this type of spending typically describe the benefits of expansion of trade access, reduction of a potential threat, or other similar "higher" benefit to American society. The implicit argument is the U.S. is spending a dime to get a dollar's benefit.

The fifth axiom says actors can estimate the willingness of other actors, or even their internal populace, to countenance actions by understanding potential impacts to

attainment of needs. In the Iran case, the U.S. and its world allies understand the profound economic impact sanctions will have on the Iranian populace and depend on Iran's inability to meet the basic needs of its populace as the driver for a change in political behavior. On the U.S. side, Bloomberg financial estimates oil will top \$110 per barrel, its highest point in two years, partially because of the Iranian sanctions.<sup>44</sup> To keep this from driving the U.S. economy down, and preserve domestic support, the U.S. has turned to Saudi Arabia to provide a stabilizing influence on the global oil markets.<sup>45</sup> The U.S. government estimated the impact on both the domestic and Iranian populace, and took appropriate mitigating actions, while planning its response to Iran.

Add this understanding to the previous synthesis of the axioms for a final modification of the impact of needs on warfare. An agent's need-based objectives become wartime objectives when they are not achievable in another way along the continuum of inter-agent relations. Further, agents pursue these objectives with a level of violence, and a willingness to accept casualties, commensurate with the perceived threat to the agent's security or sovereignty. Finally, the society's willingness to accept, or sustain, a course of action directly correlates to how the action affects the actor's attainment or sustainment of needs.

### The Future and Implications for Warfare

An agent can fight and win war by correctly applying these concepts to its foreign relationships. These statements on war's origin, ferocity, and end state have two significant implications for the future of war. First, emerging societies, still meeting the physical needs and expectations of their people, will be more aggressive than established societies. Accepting that established societies are more able to meet their needs through diplomatic or economic policies, it follows that the less developed

societies will be less able to meet their needs as effectively as desired or wanted. To emerging societies, global economics is a zero sum game. There are winners and losers. In this case, if agents are unable to meet the needs of their people through "non-violent" channels, they will feel forced to use violence to meet these needs.

Second, societies still meeting their lower level needs will have success in achieving their objectives using violence against societies working on values-based needs. If violence is not the normal condition in secure societies, then members of those societies will become less familiar with exercising violence. Lower-level societies will have an innately higher acceptance for violence coupled with an innately more intense need to accomplish their lower-level goals. Together, these two facts will "tire" more advanced societies, who will look for alternatives to resolve the situation. An important caveat is when a higher-level society feels its security is threatened, and then it will respond with massive, society-changing violence. It has far more to lose along the needs scale and will fight accordingly. However, a low-level of violence, which never approaches this point, could be a very successful, long-term strategy for the have-nots.

Is the future therefore dominated by this constant struggle between haves and have-nots? The answer is a qualified yes. Societies and peoples seek to improve for themselves and their offspring. Resource limitations will drive competitions, those competitions, if unchecked, could eventually lead to violence, and some form of war.

In summary, war is a political act. The effective attainment of wartime objectives rests on understanding the needs behind the objectives. To produce and execute effective military strategies, it is not enough to know whom to attack. Military leaders must understand why the attack is necessary, what limitations are placed on the attack,

how the attack fits the larger scheme of political relations, and what price is too high to pay. Examining the needs hierarchy of both sides in a conflict begins to address these issues and can lead to better strategies.

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, ed and trans. Michael Howard and Peter Paret. (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1989), 87

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<sup>3</sup> Ibid, 49.

<sup>4</sup> Abraham H. Maslow, *Motivation and Personality, Second Edition*. (New York: Harper and Row, 1970), 35-58.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid, 97.

<sup>6</sup> M.J. Sirgy, "Quality-of-Life in Maslow's Theory: Progressive Satisfaction of a Hierarchy of Needs," *The American Journal of Economics and Sociology* 45, no. 3 (July 1986): 329.

<sup>7</sup> Maslow, *Motivation and Personality, Second Edition*, 35.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid, 36.

<sup>9</sup> Farouk Chothia, "Could Somali famine deal a fatal blow to Al-Shabab?" 9 Aug 2011, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-14373264>

<sup>10</sup> Maslow, *Motivation and Personality, Second Edition*, 39.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid, 39.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid, 39.

<sup>13</sup> Robert B. Strasser, ed., *The Landmark Thucydides: A Comprehensive Guide to the Peloponnesian War*. (New York: The Free Press, 1996), 22, 49.

<sup>14</sup> Maslow, *Motivation and Personality, Second Edition*, 43.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid, 45.

<sup>16</sup> Unattributed by Reuters News, "Turkey's Babacan: euro crisis not dampened desire to join EU," December 6, 2011, <http://www.reuters.com/article/2011/12/06/turkey-eu-idUSL3E7N60PH20111206>

<sup>17</sup> Numerous citations but can generally summed up by Ginte Damusis, Lithuanian Head of Mission to NATO, interviewed by NATO Public Affairs on 16 Jan 2004, transcript at <http://www.nato.int/docu/speech/2004/s040116b.htm> in which Ms. Damusis is quoted as saying "I think our first expectation is that this is a full legitimization of our return to the European and transatlantic family of nations" and "And last, but not least, I would say that with the word NATO one associates stability and security."

<sup>18</sup> UN Resolution 678 (1990), November 29, 1990, <http://www.worldpress.org/specials/iraq/unscr678.htm>

<sup>19</sup> Steve Schifferes, "U.S. names coalition of the willing," March 18, 2003 (London: BBC News), <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/americas/2862343.stm>

<sup>20</sup> Kathy Wachter, "Rethinking Maslow's Needs," *Journal of Family and Consumer Sciences*, (April 2003): 68.

<sup>21</sup> Maslow, *Motivation and Personality, Second Edition*, 45-46.

<sup>22</sup> Jim Garamone, "NATO Approves Intermediate Headquarters for Afghanistan," August 14, 2009 (Washington DC: American Forces Press Service), <http://www.defense.gov/news/newsarticle.aspx?id=55489>

<sup>23</sup> Warren P. Strobel, "Iraq war's cost: Loss of U.S. power, prestige, influence," March 15, 2008, <http://www.mcclatchydc.com/2008/03/15/30413/iraq-wars-cost-loss-of-us-power.html>

<sup>24</sup> Maslow, *Motivation and Personality, Second Edition*, 46.

<sup>25</sup> John F. Kennedy, "Inauguration Speech," January 20, 1961, <http://www.jfklibrary.org/Asset-Viewer/BqXIEM9F4024ntFI7SVAjA.aspx>

<sup>26</sup> Ronald Reagan, "Alfred M. Landon Lecture Series on Public Issues at Kansas State University," September 9, 1982, <http://www.reaganfoundation.org/reagan-quotes.aspx>

<sup>27</sup> Pages 1-19 cover background and details of support to the Shah. Doug MacEachin and Janne E. Nolan, "Iran: Intelligence Failure or Policy Statement?" Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Institute for the Study of Diplomacy, November 1, 2004, [http://www12.georgetown.edu/sfs/isd/Iran\\_WG\\_Report.pdf](http://www12.georgetown.edu/sfs/isd/Iran_WG_Report.pdf)

<sup>28</sup> Ibid, 87.

<sup>29</sup> Colin S. Gray, "Hard Power and Soft Power: The Utility of Military Force as an Instrument of Policy in the 21st Century," April 8, 2011, linked from The Strategic Studies Institute Home Page at "Publications and Analysis," <http://www.strategicstudiesinstitute.army.mil/pubs/> (accessed Sep 14, 2011), 47.

<sup>30</sup> Robert B. Strasser, ed., *The Landmark Thucydides: A Comprehensive Guide to the Peloponnesian War*. (New York: The Free Press, 1996), 28.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid, 49.

<sup>32</sup> President Barack Obama, "State of the Union Address," January 24, 2012 (Washington D.C.: The White House Office of the Press Secretary) <http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2012/01/24/remarks-president-state-union-address>

<sup>33</sup> Karim Sadjadpour, "The Revolution Turns 33," January 31, 2012 (Washington D.C.: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace) <http://carnegieendowment.org/2012/01/31/revolution-turns-33>

<sup>34</sup> Karim Sadjadpour, "The Revolution Turns 33," January 31, 2012 (Washington D.C.: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace) <http://carnegieendowment.org/2012/01/31/revolution-turns-33>

<sup>35</sup> Uri Friedman, "Most American support using force to prevent a nuclear Iran," February 23, 2012 (Passport a Blog from the Editors of *Foreign Policy*) [http://blog.foreignpolicy.com/posts/2012/02/15/most\\_americans\\_support\\_using\\_force\\_to\\_prevent\\_a\\_nuclear\\_iran](http://blog.foreignpolicy.com/posts/2012/02/15/most_americans_support_using_force_to_prevent_a_nuclear_iran)

<sup>36</sup> Karim Sadjadpour, "U.S. and Iran, a Decade After 'Axis' Declaration," January 29, 2012 (Washington D.C.: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace) <http://carnegieendowment.org/2012/01/29/u.s.-and-iran-decade-after-axis-declaration>

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<sup>38</sup> CNN Wire Staff, "Iran suspends oil exports to France, UK," February 19, 2012 (CNN US News website) [http://articles.cnn.com/2012-02-19/middleeast/world\\_meast\\_iran-oil-exports\\_1\\_oil-exports-iran-exports-crude-exports?\\_s=PM:MIDDLEEAST](http://articles.cnn.com/2012-02-19/middleeast/world_meast_iran-oil-exports_1_oil-exports-iran-exports-crude-exports?_s=PM:MIDDLEEAST)

<sup>39</sup> Clausewitz, *On War*, 81.

<sup>40</sup> Kenneth Katzman, "Iran Sanctions," February 10, 2012 (Washington D.C.: The Congressional Research Service), ii accessed via <http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/mideast/RS20871.pdf>

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<sup>42</sup> Jon Sopel, "Greece protest against austerity package turns violent," June 28, 2011 (London: BBC News) <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-13935400>

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