How Military Technology Became a Tool for Justification for Military Intervention

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The Change of Enemy

- Enemy is no longer represented as a state but as a regime or leader or terrorist
- Differentiation between the people and the rogue elements, hence making rogue elements as target and the people as the object of rescue.
Change of Enemy (examples)

• “Our quarrel is not with the Serbs in Serbia, it is not with the Serbs in Kosovo, it is not with Serbian Americans; it is with the leadership who believes it is alright to kill people and to uproot them and to destroy their family records and to erase any record of their presence in a land simply because of their ethnic heritage” President Clinton on Kosovo Crisis

• “[NATO’s bombing] is not intended against the Serbian people. It is not intended to undermine your country . . . our objective has been to strike against the power-base of President Milosevic . . . I bitterly regret having to enter into conflict with your country. It started because President Milosevic chose to ignore our warnings and conduct the most awful cruelty in Kosovo. It can end when he calls a halt to that cruelty, and lets the people of Kosovo, and the people of Yugoslavia, have the peaceful and prosperous future they deserve.’ Foreign Secretary Robin Cook
Change of Enemy (Examples Con’t)

• “The Iraqi people are hostages to a vicious regime. They will be liberated. It's going to happen. The only way to do it, they tried diplomacy for 13 years. They tried economic sanctions. Neither worked. They tried limited military applications in the northern and southern no-fly zones. That didn't work. They tried 17 U.N. resolutions. President Bush went one extra step and provided 48 hours for the Iraqi regime to leave the country and leave it without a conflict. Every single effort was rebutted, rejected.” Donald Rumsfeld
Virtuous War

- Rogue elements are represented as threats to:
  - international peace and security by association to terrorism
  - their own people through repression of people’s democratic demands
- Military intervention for regime change (democracy) which would restore people’s will and spread peace.
- “In spite and perhaps because of efforts to spread a democratic peace through globalization and humanitarian intervention, was is ascending to an even “higher” plane, from virtual to virtuous” (Der Derian, J. (2009) Virtuous War: Mapping the Military-Industrial-Media-Entertainment Network, 2nd ed. New York & London: Routledge, p. xxxi)
- “At the heart of the virtuous war is the technical capability and ethical imperative to threaten and, if necessary, actualize violence from a distance - with no or minimal casualties” (Der Derian, p. xxxi)
Main Premises of Intervention Discourse

• During a military campaign, people and the rogue elements can be distinguished, only rogue elements would be hurt.

• Military campaign would entail no or minimum casualties (both on part of civilians and intervening party military)

• Both premises heavily depend on the precision of weapons and target selection.
Examples

- “Military power was used to end a regime by breaking a nation. Today, we have greater power to free a nation by breaking a dangerous and aggressive regime. With new tactics and precision weapons, we can achieve military objectives without directing violence against civilians. No device of man can remove the tragedy of war. Yet it is a great advance when the guilty have far more fear from war than the innocent.” George W. Bush (02.05.2003)

- “The fact, however, is that there was not an attack on Baghdad. There was an attack on the Iraqi regime, and it was as precise as ever before in the history of warfare. The care that went into the targeting is just breathtaking. And the battle damage assessments and the people from the ground that we talked to are telling us that, to a great extent in Baghdad, people are going about their business, because they are so impressed with the precision of those targeting and those bombs and those attacks, that they feel that the coalition forces are doing it in the best possible way.” Donald Rumsfeld (23.04.2003)
How the Discourse is Supported and Why it Persist

- Cooperation between military and cultural industries in representation of war and military technology
  - Clean War
  - Technofetishism
  - War as Spectacle / War as Art
Clean War


- “Fought in the same manner as they are represented, by real-time surveillance and TV “live-feed” virtuous war promote a vision of bloodless, humanitarian, hygienic war” (Der Derian, p. xxxi)

- Elimination of body from the language of warfare through the mobilization of euphemism (Stahl, p. 26)

- “The disappearance of death represents the primary method of neutralizing the citizen’s moral culpability in the decision to unleash state violence” (Stahl, p. 27)
Technofetishism

- Entails worship of high-tech weaponry

- "The fetishism of technology goes beyond ascribing weapons an inherent virtue or beauty to positioning military hardware at the center of the television drama" (Stahl, p. 28)

- "Technofetishism organizes the world according to the divine right of high-tech "civilization" to conquer and defeat low-tech "barbarism"... In this manifestation the specific difference is cast not in terms of culture but rather hardware. Weapons not only take center stage but also become the primary symbolic currency through which war negotiates legitimacy, righteousness, and a host of other related values" (Stahl, p. 28)

- "The bomb-mounted camera footage, H Bruce Franklin argues, captured the "virtual reality" ethos of the techno-war: perfect visual identification with the weapon, perfect precision, and a perfectly clean and invisible result" (Stahl, p. 44)
War as Spectacle / War as Art

- “War was becoming the deadliest exhibition of l’art pour l’art, in which self-alienated humans become ‘their own showpiece, enjoying their own self-destruction as an aesthetic pleasure of highest order’” (Der Derian, p. 40)

- “Political, economic and cultural forces reconditioned the civic experience of war into one governed by the logic of spectacle” (Stahl, p. 22)

- Citizens have been purged of political connection to military. (Stahl, p. 22)

- A civic experience of war throughly choreographed for private consumption. (Stahl, p. 22)
Conclusion

• Precision strike enabled the construction of the rhetoric that distinguishes between the people and rogue elements

• Rogue elements are represented as threats to its own people, international peace and security

• Such threat construction established a basis of humanitarian intervention (virtuous war) for both the sake of innocent people and international peace and security

• Persistence of such rhetoric, despite the counter evidence, depends on close relationship between military and cultural industry in creating a virtual understanding of war through representing war as clean and some of art and technofetishism.