

Conference 2006

New Forms of War

The wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, and the terrorist attacks in New York and Washington in 2001, have given rise to a debate about whether our era is witnessing a new form of warfare or combat perhaps unprecedented in history. This conference considers the truth of such a claim, by analysing both the form of current conflicts and their relationship to historical examples. Herfried Münkler has explored whether civil and political conflict in contemporary failing states resembles the unleashing of mercenary armies against civilian populations that Clausewitz deemed definitional of early modern warfare in Europe. Münkler concludes that the new wars in the developing world have their own distinctive characteristics, which cannot be limited to the fatal intermixture of civilian vulnerability and military aggression that typified the Thirty Years War. Alongside his analysis, we investigate how far present-day terrorism retains links with partisan warfare, and how far the challenge it poses to “conventional” military force has provoked new tactics and—in keeping with Clausewitz’s definition of warfare—a new politics.

Guest speakers

- Theodor Paleologu, Ambassador of Romania to Denmark and Iceland
- Aernout van Lynden, Professor of Journalism, American University in Bulgaria
- James Frusetta, Instructor in History, American University of Bulgaria
- Nancy Sherman, Professor of Philosophy, Harvard University
- Lt. Forrest Jones, US Marine Corps
- Alexander Cockburn, editor, CounterPunch