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# WARS WITHOUT WINNERS :

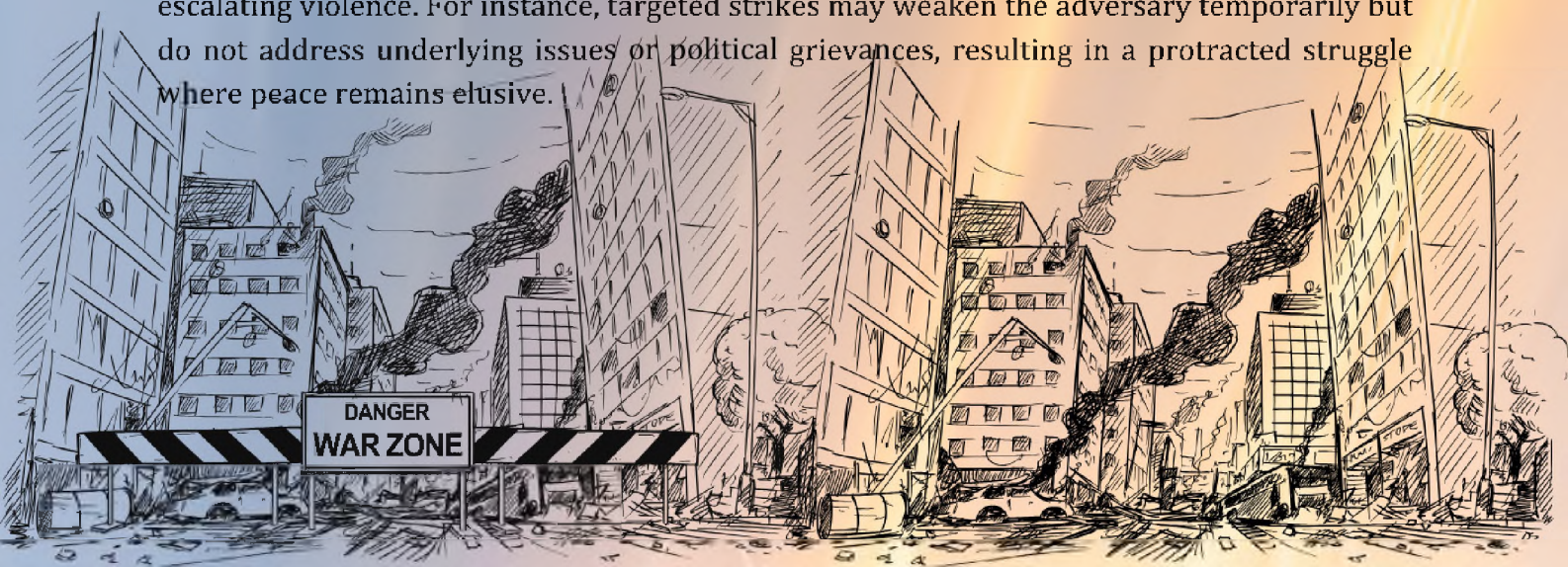
## The Perpetual Nature of 21st Century Conflicts


Warfare has long defined human civilisation, evolving from the conquest-driven conflicts of the Roman Empire to the protracted struggles of the 21st century. Historically, wars have been characterised by clear outcomes, in which one side has emerged victorious and the other has faced defeat. This binary resolution has often led to a restoration of peace. In contrast, modern conflicts frequently blur the lines of victory and defeat, manifesting as enduring streams of atrocities that inflict profound suffering on civilians and devastate the environment. Hence, this discussion seeks to explore the contrasts between ancient and modern warfares, emphasising how contemporary conflicts differ in duration, impact, and resolution.

From the Roman Empire through to the Second World War (WWII), warfare has had definitive endpoints. Conflicts have been fought to achieve dominance, leading to a clear victor and a vanquished party. The ancient world has seen wars that, despite their brutality, have often been concluded with treaties or agreements that established new political orders or boundaries. The post-conflict period has usually involved recovery and reconciliation, allowing for a return to relative stability. While ancient wars have indeed been violent, their resolution has provided a foundation for peace. In contrast, contemporary warfare in the 21st century shifted dramatically.

Modern conflicts, often termed 'new wars', are marked by their protracted nature and the erosion of traditional boundaries between combatants and non-combatants. These wars frequently involve irregular tactics, such as insurgency and terrorism, which obscure the lines of victory. The lack of clear objectives and identifiable opponents results in a state of perpetual violence, contributing to a relentless cycle of suffering. These conflicts often persist for decades, leading to ongoing humanitarian crises and instability.

A notable feature of modern warfare is the concept of 'surgical military strikes', which is intended to target specific military objectives precisely. While these operations aim to minimise collateral damage and civilian casualties, they often fail to bring about a decisive end to the conflict. Instead, they can prolong the war by creating cycles of retaliation and escalating violence. For instance, targeted strikes may weaken the adversary temporarily but do not address underlying issues or political grievances, resulting in a protracted struggle where peace remains elusive.






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Additionally, the modern wars also have a severe environmental impact. The scale of destruction inflicted on natural landscapes, combined with environmental degradation caused by conflict-related activities, represent a significant departure from ancient warfare. Pollution of water sources, deforestation, and soil contamination are the examples of how the contemporary conflicts exacerbate environmental damage. This environmental toll affects not only the immediate area of conflict but also has global implications, contributing to ecological crises that transcend national boundaries.

Despite the similarities in violence and barbarity between ancient and modern wars, the absence of clear resolution in the contemporary conflicts diminishes the hope for peace. The ancient wars, notwithstanding their ferocity, have often led to periods of recovery and reconciliation. New political orders or peace treaties have provided a framework for post-war reconstruction. In contrast, the ongoing nature of the modern conflicts, coupled with ineffective conflict-resolution mechanisms, leaves societies entrenched in persistent instability. The enduring nature of these wars, along with the failure of modern strategies to achieve conclusive resolution, erodes the possibility of lasting peace.

In conclusion, while the ancient and modern wars share inherent violence and brutality, the key distinction lies in the resolution and aftermath of these conflicts. The ancient wars have often led to a definitive end and clearer path to peace. In contrast, the contemporary conflicts are marked by their protracted duration, targeting of civilians, and severe environmental impact, leaving societies in a state of persistent turmoil. The concept of 'surgical military attacks' and the overall conduct of modern warfare contribute to the prolongation of the conflicts rather than their resolution. However, addressing these challenges requires a re-evaluation of conflict-resolution strategies and a renewed commitment to mitigating the human and environmental costs of war. The hope for a return to peace, once more tangible in ancient times, has become increasingly elusive in the context of modern warfare, demanding innovative approaches to achieving lasting resolution and stability.



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