From my perspective

The future of war☆

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Were Major Barbara's father, Undershaft, with us today, he would chortle with delight at the prospects of war over the next decades. At no time in this century have the prospects of collective violence been more universal, diversified, and stronger than they are today. Consider:

- The drivers of change giving new vigor to violence.
- The various forms of collective violence.
- Implications of that surge of violence for people and nations of goodwill.

1. Trends promoting violence

Throughout the world, America has been and continues to be the promised land, the standard of human success, and the embodiment of the fulfillment of a broad range of human aspirations for prosperity, health, freedom, mobility, and the good things in life. That expanding image of American culture has been augmented today by television and by films. American culture is the dominant culture in the world. English is the universal language of the world's middle class and, increasingly, of business, industry, and diplomacy. One result of the US dominance in entertainment and its delivery of culturally oriented messages are the comparisons, in most parts of the world, with what could be-the U.S. situation, and what is-the local situation. Information technology has led to a rise in global expectations and promoted a global homogenization of values and expectations.

Low-cost transportation allows the direct cultural injection of values into people, as tourists and, more deeply, as students. One consequence of American cultural imperialism we see is pathetically illustrated recently in Tiananmen Square. The plan of the old-guard Chinese leadership was to have their students go abroad and selectively pick up only the economically and technologically useful lessons from the West. Instead, the inevitable happened, they picked up the cultural messages as well, and on returning home became unacceptably culturally disruptive. The Tiananmen Square response is a classic, at least 150-year-old, Chinese response to the inability to separate the cultural from the technoeconomic intrusion of the West.

Together telecommunications and transportation have another more negative implication for collective violence. Cheap worldwide telecommunication makes planning, plotting, orchestration, and execution of plots simpler and flexible. Transportation costs are so low that, not only the materials, but the men of violence can move with ease from place to place. This is the core base of the expansion of terrorism.

Expanding arms sales and the associated attempt to build alliances and, in the case of the United States, to dump obsolescent weapons to make room for new ones has made the U.S.A., U.S.S.R., and Israel the world's biggest armories. The notorious Krupp pales in comparison to what we alone have done to arm the world. The availability of arms at ridiculously discounted prices, leads inevitably to their use and abuse.

Declining legitimacy of governments and other authorities is pandemic. The situation in the Soviet Union and in Eastern Europe today is the clearest most recent example of this trend.

Ethnic conflict continues and will expand, as there is relaxation of authoritarian constraints, which have held incompatible people in tolerable cooperation. The opportunities for ethnic conflict will grow, whether this is the Russians oppressed by the Estonians, Turks by the Bulgarians, or the Turks and the Greeks by each other in Cyprus. Related but distinctly different is the continuing acculturation to perpetual ethnic violence in several parts of the world-notably, Northern Ireland, Lebanon, and Israel.

Decolonization and the failure to resolve structural conflicts at the time of independence are now coming home to roost throughout most of the excolonies of Africa and of the Pacific Islands. The governments already shaky at the time of liberation have now gone into decades of steady decline, corruption and, in many cases, ethnic and racial favoritism in the distribution of government largess. Many Third World governments have frank policies of oppression. The excolonies are generally in a state of declining public administrative capability. Democracy has not caught on, and the greatest number of them is not enjoying any benefits of economic growth. The declining prospects of these countries are the single most important factor promoting internal ethnic and racial conflict and violence.

Divisions along the religious, ethnic, and income lines continue throughout much of the world. This closely correlates with, and promotes the rise of, religious fundamentalism. We see this in the relatively benign form in the United States and in the progressively vicious forms in Northern Ireland, Indonesia, Israel and Iran. The increasing reluctance of big powers to intervene should be clear. The U.S.S.R.'s recent adventures in Afghanistan and the United States' not so recent adventures in Vietnam make each of them reluctant to undertake any aggressive commitments anywhere in the world. Other colonial powers, such as Britain, are facing stringent budgetary constraints, and reluctance to act except

under the most extreme provocations, as with the Falkland Island episode.

The simple rise in the number of nations-some 163 at present count-alone makes clashes more likely. The border promotes two kinds of movements-movements toward further scission, with dissident internal groups wishing to split off, and the irredentists' movements pushing toward groups overlapping national boundaries to come together. The rise of the United Nations as a positive peace-keeping force will expand and in the next decade, in my judgment, move to a peace-making role, which it is very unwilling to assume. But as it learns to deal better with peace-keeping and the negotiation sides of conflict, it will undertake relatively minor peace-making ventures, at first. As with any successful enterprise, it will expand.

Relaxation of central Moscow control both of the Russian satellites and, more recently, the entire Soviet Socialist Republic will unleash several forms of internal, collective violence within and among the various ethnic groups. Liberation can rarely be administered or accepted in moderate and measured doses. It almost inevitably goes to the head of the extremists and destroys any possibility or expectations of modest, stepwise expansion of liberty.

Poor economic prospects in individual countries, particularly those in population explosion, will lead to extreme measures along borders or internally that, in turn, will evoke extreme measures for control or containment.

2. Forms of collective violence

Nine kinds of traditional, collective violence will become increasingly popular, irredentist and balkenizing movements directed at the same goal of putting ethnic groups in closer cohesion with greater independence will flourish. There will be border conflicts, either skirmishes or outright wars between nations. Coup d'etat, the relatively peaceful turnover of head of state with little or extremely limited violence, will be common. Ethnic conflicts and civil war resulting from the expansion of either the coup d'etat, balkenizing and irredentist movements, or ethnic conflict will flourish. Terrorism, both internal and transnational, and civil unrest with substantial collective violence as we recently witnessed in Azerbaijan will be widespread. Finally, insurrection-collective violence to change some policy of the central government, and different from civil war-will be seen in five continents.

There will also be two new forms of violence. We anticipate that in the next decade several countries will go into a form of international receivership. Utter chaos with the total failure of central legal authority will force international collective action to move in to stabilize the situation. The likely and obvious candidates for this are Haiti, numerous minor South Pacific republics, and, most interesting to speculate about, Colombia. The second form of a new collective violence will involve some novel applications of nuclear materials. We see this in three distinct forms: The first is the distribution of radioactive materials in nonnuclear explosive devices by techniques varying from traditional bomb blasts to the equivalent of crop dusting to contaminate a population or a region. Second, we see an occasional weapon being lobbed by one small power at another small power. Since about a dozen countries now have nuclear weapons and materials, the abuse potential will shift from U.S.A.-U.S.S.R.-China to one of the other bomb holders. Finally, one can anticipate terrorist action destroying either a civil (nuclear power plant) or military (weapons facility) installation, thereby releasing large amounts of nuclear material.

3. Sites of collective violence

This brief essay is too limited to go into the details on a country-by-country or even region-by-region basis, so let me use a tabulation of emerging conflicts and allow the reader to work out the details. On the left in Table 1 is a sample of regions and individual countries. Across its top are the eleven forms of conflict. This table deals with the high

Table 1
The future of collective violence, 1990–2010.

	Irredentists	Balkenization	Border conflict	Coup d'etat	Ethnic/racial violence	Civil war	Civil unrest	Insurrection	Terrorism	New nuclear violence	Receivership
USA		●		●		●			●		●
Canada				●						●	
Mexico			●		●		●	●			
Central Am.			●	●	●		●	●			
Brazil											
Argentina											
Carib. Is.	●		●	●	●	●	●	●		●	
Union S. Af.			●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Blk. W. Af.	●		●	●	●	●	●	●	●		
E. Africa			●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
N. Africa			●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
UK			●	●			●		●		
Germany			●				●		●		●
France			●		●		●				
Spain			●	●	●		●	●		●	
E. Europe	●		●	●	●	●	●	●	●		●
USSR			●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Saudi Arabia			●	●			●	●			
Emirates			●	●			●	●			
Iran			●		●		●	●	●	●	●
India		●	●	●	●		●		●		●
China					●		●	●		●	●
Indonesia			●	●	●		●	●	●	●	
Philippines			●	●	●		●	●	●	●	
Korea				●	●			●		●	●
Japan						●					
Bangladesh			●	●				●			
Australia					●		●				

probability of collective violence, not the very low probability of general war or nuclear strategic war. There is no universal remedy. Many of the remedies to the conflicts are, themselves, extremely unsatisfactory since they convert collective violence into individual violence and ambiguous personal fear. For example, in several Latin American and African nations, a fascistic takeover by the military can carry many of those countries into the situation of Haiti under Papa Dot. In other cases, the resolution will come from a definitive resolution of a conflict-one side or the other will win the war.

We can expect a number of border conflict situations. For example, the emerging conflict between the United States and Mexico will result from the uncontrollable population growth in Mexico and is dismal economic prospects, which will create a flood of pressure for illegal movement into the Unites States. Ultimately, the U.S.A. will close the border violently and effectively, and keep it closed. Early and effective peaceful control of the U.S.A.-Mexico border is unthinkable in the present political climate. The happy prospect of economic prosperity washing out the bases of many kinds of recent ethnic and religious conflicts is possible in some areas, but not likely in many. For example, with the rise of the European economic community, the Protestant-Catholic conflict in

Northern Ireland may be alleviated should that region become economically prosperous. Similarly, the conflicts of the Spaniards with the Basques could be relieved by prosperity. The probability is not high, but, on the other hand, is not so low as to leave us without hope.

Some positive collective intentional action may also occur as suggested earlier in the case of countries that are in receivership. The situation in Haiti may reach such desperate proportions that the United States unilaterally, or the United States with Canadian-European forces, may move in to impose peace and even bring some reforms in government. It is unlikely that Latin Americans would cooperate with the Haitian intervention, since so many of them would be candidates for a similar kind of intervention and, hence, would balk at the prospect. Haiti and the South Pacific Islands are likely candidates for that kind of intervention. International intervention in the South Pacific would use more Asian forces, such as the Indians. We might even find ourselves collectively resorting to rearming the Gurkas as an international peace-keeping force. That would be a revived source of revenue for that strapped, small country. World government will grow over the next decades. This growth will be primarily driven by the needs of high-technology systems of value and will be of use to many international partners that require stability. When some international systems are challenged, collective action will protect it.

One of the brightest prospects for collective action may follow one of the nuclear events discussed above. The major powers may pull themselves together to disarm the nuclear capabilities of all the lesser powers. The world opinion can move in only one direction after a true nuclear disaster. This trigger would not be a trivial difficulty like Three Mile Island, or the modest difficulty with Chernobyl, but the kind described above.

Undershaft lives.