Targeting Beyond the Current Narrative: Reframing Inter-state Competition for the 21st Century

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Abstract

This paper puts forward the argument that it is time to shift the current lens with which we view inter-state conflict from an arguably narrow finite mindset in which there are clear winners and losers to an infinite mindset in which success is viewed as long-term sustainability beyond immediate tactical achievements. If this shift occurs it brings forth the potential to see the world as a place for cooperation to flourish rather than maintaining the current focus on inter-state competition. In essence, we need to move our thought patterns beyond what is and imagine what could be. This shift is not going to create a panacea for all of the world's problems. Changing the lens through which we see the world, however, enables more possibilities to be explored. In the end, individuals have the power to change the options that are in front of them and to see the world through an infinite mindset thereby allowing for many more opportunities to be explored.

Keywords

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From a Western perspective, World War II was considered a 'good war', a 'just war'. The narrative at least was simple: it was a war of good versus evil. With the perceived ethical future of mankind at stake, you were either considered to be part of the Allied war effort or you were seen to be part of the problem. It was a total war that commanded complete commitment of the state's resources, political, economic, military and social. The war was fought not just to achieve a desired peace but perhaps equally, if not more, driven by a desire to prevent an undesirable hegemonic power from emerging. Ultimately, it was about survival. This goal required short-term interests to be placed aside for the collective, longer-term goal of cultural survival, often even at the expense of personal survival.[i] Consciously or not, we were playing the long game where failure was equated with the end of a way of life.

Since 1945, Western nations have avoided such total commitment and have waged wars of constrained resources, with limited aims. No longer is complete obstruction of an adversary's ability to wage war the goal. Instead, victory tends to be a bit murkier and, as has been witnessed in recent conflicts, the finish line is far from set in stone, often shifting to be able to sell a certain message to a specific target group. The goal here is not simply cultural survival and the expansion of a perceived 'just cause'. Instead, arguably, the objective is to sell a narrative centred on the perspective of apparent success to the right audience for material gain such as, for example, political favour / domestic and / or international support, alliance building, and /or economic prosperity.

Looking at the future of inter-state conflict (or perhaps more appropriately put these days, competition) from this limited perspective severely constrains the view of events and can lead to a false sense of accomplishment. As author Simon Sinek asked of the United States' role in the Vietnam War: "how do you win almost every battle, decimate your enemy and still lose the war?"[ii] He went on to argue convincingly that the North Vietnamese were "playing an infinite game with an infinite mindset."[iii] Conversely, the Americans were playing a finite game, with limited resources and, more challenging, shifting and unclear goals. As Sinek concluded, "When we play with a finite mindset in an infinite game, the odds increase that we will find ourselves in a quagmire, racing through the will and resources we need to keep playing."[iv] Life, as Sinek argues, is ultimately an infinite game.[v] So too should be our attitude towards defence strategy and competition in the twenty-first century. To do so opens the aperture allowing perspective to broaden.

As we enter the second decade of the twenty-first century, nearly a half century after the end of the Vietnam War, Westerners remain arguably trapped in a finite mindset in an increasingly emerging infinite-mindset world. This myopic view of what success is, is not only limiting achieving actual success in the world, it also often limits our ability to understand success, as viewed as long-term sustainability, beyond immediate tactical achievements. By removing the blinders that are causing a narrow focus of victory from a finite-game perspective, a fuller narrative can be created allowing for the growth of both the narrative and the target audience(s). Importantly, although perhaps too easily dismissed as idealistic, when looking at inter-state competition through this broad lens, it might even emerge that inter-state cooperation is what is ultimately required. Even if inter-state cooperation appears too alien for mere humans to achieve at this point in our history, if we limit our thought patterns to what is rather than what could be,

we will be stuck in our current outdated paradigms. As such, we should perhaps focus our gaze inward as we target minimizing our own limitations first.

APPLYING AN INFINITE MINDSET TO INTER-STATE COMPETITION

> *We think of being at peace or war…our adversaries don't think that way.*

> General Joseph F. Dunford, Jr.
> Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff
> 21 September and 5 October 2016[vi]

Arguably, competition is the new battle-space. In 2018, the American National Defense Strategy observed, "Inter-state strategic competition, not terrorism, is now the primary concern in US national security."[vii] Competition has been defined as state and non-state actors seeking to retain their interests, as well as to compete for diplomatic, economic and, strategic advantage. It has been noted that this "competition continuum describes a world of enduring competition conducted through a mixture of cooperation, competition below armed conflict, and armed conflict."[viii]

In essence, the competition continuum refers to a long-term threat environment, which also presents an opportunity for strategic advantage. In order to achieve an advantage, however, a long-term strategic mindset with regards to the assignment of resources, political, diplomatic, economic and social needs to be maintained.

Indeed, this required shift from a finite to an infinite mindset has subsequent implications on strategy, as well as on targeting. The *US Joint Doctrine Note 1-19*, which describes the Competition Continuum, provides an overview of potential implications of this new battle-space. Notably, it recognized that, "Local successes rarely mean the end of the larger competition and few gains are reliably permanent." In this type of scenario, the report surmised, "consolidation is an ongoing effort to protect and advance national interests and position the joint force for the next evolution of competition."[ix]

As such, some experts have started to argue that the defence environment is in yet another phase of change as it adapts to the reality of the Competition Continuum.[x] For example, as Canadian Chief of the Defence Staff (CDS), General Jonathan Vance, commented in a recent speech at the Canadian Defence Association conference in Ottawa, "We need people who challenge the status quo, and who force us to recognize our own biases and limitations in thinking. Because it's all changing: defence, the global security environment, society and more. We have no choice but to adapt. It's that simple… it's an existential challenge." Vance continued, "long-term stability requires civil solutions that are mutually supported and often enabled by military power. Stability is an illusion if it is forever being secured entirely at gunpoint. Fragile states and societies need to be supported as they build governance structures, regain trust and credibility in their institutions,

fight corruption, and strengthen their economies." He also aptly noted that "In many ways, in fact, we are in a global fight over values." [xi]

This concept itself suggests a need for a long game, or infinite approach, akin to that required in World War II, albeit still distinct.[xii] In the contemporary world, Vance explained, Russian and China "have both demonstrated that they possess the military force, with its latent threat, combined with the political will, to achieve destabilizing effects to their ultimate advantage. These below-the-threshold activities are a death by a thousand cuts. In isolation, they would not merit large-scale responses, and even if they did, determining response options in some of the new domains will demand changes to how we operate." However, he continued, "viewed cumulatively, it is clear that they demand a new approach, persistent engagement and the tools and training to operate throughout the pan-domain arena, whether in combat or conflict. The avoidance of acute kinetic operations is not a guarantee of long-term peace." Nonetheless, twenty per cent of the way through the twenty-first Century, the CDS is commenting that "soon we will be in a position to start looking at changes that will make our organization [Canadian Armed Forces] more effective in the 21st century conflict arena." Vance elaborated noting that, "As we evaluate our structure, we are also rethinking the way that we operate. We are adjusting our mindsets towards more comprehensive, and threat-based analysis that is focused on achieving outcomes in a highly contested pan-domain conflict space." Importantly, he also acknowledged that, "We are far from the days of a simple binary of war and peace. That view constrains our ability to think through the complex spectrum of activities that take place between competition and conflict. So, as we move forward, we will continue to think critically about how to deter, counter, and mitigate adversary actions." [xiii]

In moving into this new era of competition, or as Vance put it, "a global fight over values," one of the "limitations in thinking" that needs to be overcome is that of thinking that there will ever be an end to this struggle in which a clear winner and loser will emerge. Instead one should apply an infinite mindset to the challenge that does not see just this issue as a twenty-first century problem, but rather, one that sees its beginning as being far beyond the present and its end extending further than our current comprehension of the future.

An infinite mindset sees possibilities beyond the immediate horizon, whereas finite games exist in a more confined, delineated space and time. Sinek explained, "Finite games are played by known players. They have fixed rules. And there is an agreed-upon objective that, when reached, ends the game."[xiv] He provides football as an example of such a game. In contrast Sinek described infinite games as being played by both known and unknown players, with no "exact agreed-upon rules." He also stipulated that "Infinite games have infinite time horizons. And because there is no finish line … there is no such thing as 'winning' an infinite game," in which "the primary objective is to keep playing, to perpetuate the game."[xv] From a national perspective, this idea can be expressed with regard to cultural survival and the sustainment of values.

As Sinek argued, life is an infinite game. He further noted that there is no such thing as a "winning life". He elaborated, "no matter how much money we make, no matter how much power we accumulate, no matter how many promotions we're given, none of us will ever be declared the winner of life."[xvi] By adapting an infinite mindset, there is a need to think beyond self and to extend the consequences of actions – both good and bad – to third and fourth order effects, and

beyond. Additionally, this type of view requires a noble cause or purpose in which to devote a life of service towards.

As Vance espoused, "we are in a global fight over values." This "fight" requires an infinite mindset. Whereas a finite mindset might look to have the "winning" set of values, an infinite mindset sees the continued existence of our values as the ultimate objective. These distinctions do not just allow for, but demand, distinct strategies.

For long-term viability, defence strategies need to be formulated within the context of an infinite mindset. In her article, based on Sinek's work, "Five Leadership Lessons: How to Build an Infinite Mindset" journalist Susan Galer outlines five criteria that equally apply to leading defence teams in this era of great power competition:

> 1) Advance a bigger 'just cause';
> 2) Foster trusting teams;
> 3) Admire worthy rivals;
> 4) Practice existential flexibility; and
> 5) Courage to lead.[xvii]

The first criteria, which is to advance a 'just cause', aligns with Vance's advocacy for the continued existence of Canadian, and arguably Western, values. Next is the need to foster trusting teams. In theory this criteria is an espoused value of the Canadian defence community. It also extends to Allied nations. In practice, however, this criteria might need some additional alignment between theory and practice. The third element is to admire worthy rivals. When aligned with the same values, this idea could help to foster cooperation between entities that compete for limited resources, but who are theoretically aligned and thereby also contribute to building trusting teams. From a more adversarial point of view, this concept encourages a deeper understanding of differences. The fourth criteria is to practise existential flexibility, meaning essentially to embrace flexibility and be adaptable. Again, in the context of the Canadian Armed Forces this requirement clearly aligns with espoused values. Last is the requirement for courageous leadership.[xviii] As Sinek explained, "The common factor in all the struggles and setbacks that finite leaders face is their own finite thinking. To admit that takes courage. To work to open one's mind to a new worldview takes even more courage. Especially when we know many of our choices will go badly." He continued, "To actually take steps to apply an infinite mindset to an organization's culture can seem to many like it would take insurmountable courage. And, the truth is, it does." Sinek surmised, "it can be embarrassing, even humiliating, to admit that we are part of the problem. It can also be empowering and inspiring to decide to be a part of the solution."[xix] Unfortunately, saying you are a courageous leader is not enough to enable you actually to be the person who makes hard decisions driven by a long-term focus on the overall sustainability of your ''just cause'.

It is clear that an infinite mindset goes beyond short-term individual goals and instead requires a long-term, collective vision. Can an infinite mindset be less than global in scope then? If so, is it not more beneficial to think in terms of inter-state cooperation rather than competition?

HOW BIG IS YOUR TEAM? A NEED TO SHIFT FROM A PARADIGM OF INTER-STATE COMPETITION TO ONE OF INTER-STATE COOPERATION?

> *#Team work makes the dream work.*
> Pop Culture c. 2019

The word competition implies opponent forces vying for resources, which, the subsequent implication is, are limited. As such, while competition does not need to exist in a zero-sum game, it is often assumed to exist in a world in which for one person to gain, then the other must lose, or at a minimum, not gain as much. In the end, there is a winner and a loser. Cooperation, conversely, implies a common effort towards a common benefit. In this case, for someone to gain there is no need for someone else to have lost. Cooperation largely includes non-zero-sum eventualities in which 'the pie' simply gets bigger. As the recently popular slogan goes: #team work makes the dream work. The question is, how big is your team? how inclusive is your paradigm?

While individuals are not states, and states are ultimately more than the sum of their people, individuals are the building blocks of states, as well as non-state actors. It is important then to think about the people who form the institutions, because, in the end, people can make a difference.

Interestingly, a theme in much of this century's literature on personal development, building and working in effective diverse teams, organizational development, and leadership is working towards a collective good, or 'just cause'. To achieve these objectives requires cooperation rather than competition. Indeed, a principle factor of being able to express and infinite mindset is to have a purpose beyond self, a 'just cause', to pursue. Sinek describes a 'just cause' as "a specific vision of a future state that does not yet exist; a future state so appealing that people are willing to make sacrifices in order to help advance toward that vision."[xx] He further elaborated that a 'just cause' must adhere to five standards. As he noted, a 'just cause' must be: 'for something', inclusive, service-oriented, resilient and idealistic.[xxi]

Other scholars have also used these themes to describe a higher form of both corporate and personal leadership. For example, from an organizational leadership perspective, authors Dave Logan, John King and Halee Fischer-Wright express similar altruistic views in their concept of Stage 5 organizations. Fundamental to their theory of 'tribal leadership'[xxii] are the five stages of workplace culture. In essence, Logan and his team argue that individuals may pass through five evolutionary stages in their life. Notably, the stages are progressive and to get to the next, you must have gone through the previous one. Additionally, the culture of organizations will also be representative of one of these five stages. Individuals and groups, however, may get stuck at any one of the stages and regression is also possible. They describe these five stages as follows:

Stage 1: Life Sucks – people in this stage believe life is hopeless and unfair.

Stage 2: My Life Sucks – people in this stage believe they are not valued and that they cannot succeed.

Stage 3: I'm great (and you're not) – people in this stage believe they are doing all the work and get no support. There are many, although not exclusively, two-person relationships formed but generally there is competition between individuals and everyone is competing with each other to be seen as the best. The leader resides in the centre and subordinates extend like spokes acting as minions to fulfil specific tasks.

Stage 4: We're great – individuals come together and recognize that they are more than their individual competencies. With this recognition the group gels and realizes that they are a team. This stage is marked by many three-person – triadic – relationships. Individuals recognize that real power comes from networks. Triadic relationships thus form the basis of this stage as well as stage 5. People in Stage 4 are united over values and hold each other accountable. They bring people together to work on big partnerships. There is a free-flow of information throughout the network; and

Stage 5: Life is Great – people at this stage focus on a large collective and understanding life from a holistic perspective.. They follow an innovative path and generally pursue a noble cause, focusing on the impact they may have rather than the competition they might face. They attempt to bring everyone together and change the world in a desirable way.[xxiii]

Importantly, developmental theory has also for offered similar developmental pathways that can be applied to both individuals and groups of people.

Using conceptual understandings of growth and development such as the ones outlined above, author Frederick Laloux queried if organization are going through another stage of transformation. Laloux's central argument in "The Future of Management is Teal," is well reflected in the article's subtitle in which he states: "Organizations are moving forward along an evolutionary spectrum, toward self-management, wholeness, and a deeper sense of purpose." [xxiv] The colour orange has similarities to Stage 3 in the 'tribal leadership' model; green can be seen to represent Stage 4; and teal Stage 5.[xxv]

Laloux describes the evolution of organizations through these developmental levels noting that teal organizations are driven by an evolutionary purpose – a commitment beyond self for the benefit of many, much like the 'just cause' that Sinek uses in his description of an infinite mindset.[xxvi] Arguably business schools are also recognizing this shift as courses focus on topics such as 'authentic leadership', which is centred on self-development, as well as no longer focusing on profit as the singular driving force of businesses.[xxvii]

Indeed, the ideas and objectives that support the concepts behind an infinite mindset, (Stage 4 and 5 in the 'tribal leadership' model and Green / Teal in developmental models) are not new. Additionally, when presented with these frameworks, intellectually, many people naturally gravitate towards desiring to be in Stage 5, or at a minimum, expressing that desire. In essence, few people want to overtly state, "I'm great and you're not" (finite mindset / Stage 3 / Orange). Instead, they would rather be saying "life is great" (infinite mindset / Stage 5 / Teal).

Again, however, saying that you want to be something and actually being that entity are not always the same thing. Logan et al.'s research suggests rather that the composition of teams at each level within a normal organization is as follows: Stages 1 and 5 have the lowest percentages in these groups; Stages 2 and 4 are in the middle range; Stage 3 is where the majority are.[xxviii]

Perhaps not surprisingly, it is the competitive zone of Stage 3 that is most represented in organizations. In this vein, it is easy to see how and why defence teams focus on competition – that is the world in which most of them reside. As a senior United States Special Operations Forces Command (USSOCOM) general officer explained, winning in the great power competition is "avoiding conflict and accumulating wins / gains while opponents lose (e.g. access, influence)".[xxix] It is about making sure you are the winner and not the loser in this binary viewpoint.

Notably, it is generally easier for individuals to develop rather than have whole organizations evolve. So even if certain people within defence teams want to develop themselves to Stage 5, it will continue to take a long time for the culture of the whole organization to shift. Again though, individuals are the building blocks of organizations and people have a direct impact on the culture, even though sometimes individual contributions are hard to tease out. Nonetheless, if the centre of gravity of an organization is drastically different than an individual's, then it is unlikely the person will be able to survive in such an environment. For example, an individual who is at Stage 5 in their personal development, and who has a collective "life is great" attitude is unlikely to be able to function in a Stage 2 "My life sucks" environment for long. As such, it may take even longer for cultures to shift if individuals who develop beyond the cultural norms choose to leave rather than try to transform the larger group.

Clearly, individual and organizational growth are connected. For an organization to recruit and retain Stage 4/5 individuals, it needs to also be at this level. Notably, Stage 4/5 organizations are not so much driven by competition as are Stage 3 companies ("I'm great, you're not"). Conversely, they are more focused on the greater good and cooperation, although their viability may also depend on their ability to perform and, perhaps even outperform, their 'competition'. Their emphasis is on the long game, not the short-term tactical victory.

While actually living an infinite mindset (Stage 4/5) is not an easy task, it is what might be required of defence organizations in order to survive this new era. This mindset requires cooperation towards collective goals and a long-term strategic focus. As such, one must be clear on who is part of the team. Within militaries, is cooperation at the unit level enough? At the Service level? At the national level? With Allies? Globally? In the end, one must ask if there a need to reconceptualize the concept of inter-state competition to become an appreciation of the possibilities of inter-state cooperation?

In brief, an infinite mindset requires workplace culture which focuses on relationships. To reach these positions, people should feel as if they are contributing members of a team and the overall accomplishments of the 'just cause' supersede any individual accomplishments. People need to be encouraged to expand their comfort zones and to meet and work collaboratively with people from different backgrounds thus creating effective, cognitively diverse teams. Again, one needs to ask how big is your team, and secondly, who needs to be targeted to allow for this shift to happen?

TARGETING FOR COOPERATION

Everyone thinks of changing the world, but no one thinks of changing himself.
Russian Author Leo Tolstoy

There are several steps that should be taken within defence departments in order to be able to benefit from the wisdom of holding an infinite mindset in an age of where inter-state cooperation may exceed the self-imposed limits looking through the lens of inter-state competition. Specifically, there needs to be clarity around core values, in particularly, to make sure that the espoused core values are actually internalized and that all behaviours express these core values; there needs to be a common 'just cause'; cooperation, openness, information sharing and transparency should be central tenets. Leadership needs to be unwavering in its commitment to the cause and the development of the organization to achieve the desired outcome If alignment between groups occurs at these levels, cooperation, in theory, should be simple. If there are deltas in these areas, however, there will be even more challenges in aiming for cooperation while maintaining a readiness for competition should disagreements occur and / or escalate.

Notably, it is easy to express these arguably utopian views. To live them, however, has proven to date beyond our collective capabilities.

Inter-Service rivalries is but one example of how defence organizations are generally stuck in a Stage 3, competitive mindset. From a national defence perspective, for example, the defence pie is considered finite. As such, there are inter-Service rivalries for budgets, not to mention prestige and power.

At best, this competitive atmosphere results in a fight for resources. though more egregious when this rivalry results in an attempt to shape policy to a specific advantage. For example, as authors Alice Friend and Shannon Culberston described of US Special Operations Forces (SOF), as they enter this new period of inter-state competition, "in the absence of clarity on its role in state-based strategic competition SOF may proactively position to be a part of the solution. The elite ethos in these units generates a sense of obligation to solve pressing problems that do not yield to conventional solutions and the confidence to do so even when those problems are outside SOF's 'lane.'" They also posited that "Entrepreneurship may be how SOF responds to strategic ambiguity, seeking to set its own path or even drive policy."[xxx]

Beyond inter-service rivalries, this finite, Stage 3, mindset can contribute to over-selling military solutions to political problems. General Michael Mullen, a former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, admitted, "My fear, quite frankly, is that we aren't moving fast enough in this regard. US foreign policy is still too dominated by the military, too dependent upon the generals and admirals who lead our major overseas commands. It's one thing to be able and willing to serve as emergency responders; quite another to always have to be the fire chief."[xxxi]

With competent Western militaries, adapt at winning in the tactical arena, from a finite mindset it might seem reasonable to continue to use the defence network as a primary tool for national

policies. Not unlike during the Vietnam War, it is tempting to try to sell these tactical successes as leading toward strategic goals. This approach can be a dangerous path, however. Retired Lieutenant-General Mike Day aptly remarked that in the era of great power competition "our loss equates to the failure to create conditions that can be publicly described and accepted by the public as victory."[xxxii] One should not simply try to shape a palatable message, however. Rather, one should ethically create the best conditions upon which to build a desired narrative and long-term, sustainable future.

From an infinite mindset perspective, a broader picture can be recognized that can help to build this type of narrative. It appears as though it is time to shape this space. As Katherine Zimmerman, an analyst with the American Enterprise Institute in Washington assessed of the US it is "not losing militarily, but in the soft-power space."[xxxiii] Additionally, Mullen had described of the US situation circa 2010 as: "a vicious cycle of policymakers turning to the military and increasing funding to the Defense Department because they have greater trust in military capability than in other agencies, and this greater funding in turn makes the military even more capable relative to other national security institutions." He continued, "Instead of correcting a significant imbalance in resourcing national security capabilities, policymakers just turn to the military to handle an increasing array of missions. The military then becomes the lead while other organizations find themselves in supporting roles."[xxxiv]

This example of the militarization of US foreign policy centres on the notion that if your strongest tool is a hammer, then you are likely to see and categorize your problems as nails. The challenge is reality does not always works this way. The question that one was ponder is do you try to change the world, (i.e. turn everything into nails), or do you shift your own perspective in order to form a broader, more nuanced, picture?

To create this shift in your own perspective, targeting for cooperation should begin with self. If you are stuck in Stage 3, as an individual and / or an organization, you may be blinded to anything but your own wisdom (i.e. "I'm great and you're not"). To see beyond this finite mindset, requires a shift in perspective to see the value of engaging co-operatively as a larger organization.

When we think of a target audience there is a natural tendency to think of changing someone else's perspective. The desire is often how can I influence you to see things my way? From a larger perspective one might ask, how do we shape the narrative to be appealing to a specific target group? Rarely, however, do people reflect and inquire about how they can shift their way of thinking to see things differently.

To be able to express an infinite mindset, however, often you are the first person that needs to change. It is not enough to simply verbally shift from the expression of "I'm great" to "we're great." There is a need to actually attitudinally make this transformation as well. Your default has to move from an individual to a collective perspective. To do so, there needs to be an acceptance that the team is greater than the individual.

The collective space then has to be defined. If thinking from a national view, for example, it could be expressed in terms of a whole-of-government approach, a term that became popularized in the Canadian context in the early 2000s, although arguably did not get much traction beyond the theoretical. From an international perspective, the collective could be viewed in terms of national

allies and friendly states. Using the World War II example, while maintaining national independence, the Allies were collectively united against the Axis countries, which had also formed their 'collective'". As we enter into the second decade of the twenty-first century, the world in undeniably interconnected, which as unpalatable as it may be to many, begs the question, is it time for a global collective in which inter-state cooperation is prioritized over competition? Do we have to continuously be dividing 'the pie' when really it is within our collective power to simply bake a few more?

2020 GLOBAL PANDEMIC: COVID-19 - GAME CHANGER?

> *Courage is what it takes to stand up and speak; courage is also what it takes to sit down and listen.*
>
> Attributed to Sir Winston Churchill

It is impossible to predict fully the effects of the current Global Pandemic on defence communities.[xxxv] Equally, it would be wrong to suggest that COVID-19 would not have a long-term influence on the world. Importantly, the pandemic provides a topical example in which to explore the distinctions between holding a finite or an infinite mindset. A finite mindset person might ask how might I benefit from such a situation? (For example, reselling disinfectant products online for profit.) An infinite mindset individual might inquire about what is needed to ensure the greatest good for the greatest number of people. (A very Utilitarian approach as espoused by nineteenth-century philosopher John Stuart Mills.[xxxvi]) And, as is so often the case, many will fall in the middle, hoarding for example a vast amount of toilet paper for personal use while still suggesting that they are community focused. Again, it is unlikely many would openly choose to be the profiteer, but much like during World War II, there are those who favour immediate, tangible profit to long-term viability and well-being of an extended group, especially when they fear that their short-term personal interests might be at stake.

What has become increasingly clear as the pandemic continues is that global cooperation for gaining control of the situation will be more effective than competition between states for resources and knowledge, and / or playing the 'blame game'. What is perhaps equally clear is that while there is little challenge to the argument, it is unlikely to be the case that differences are set aside for common goals. For example, a recent *Crisis Group Special Report* highlighted many friction points that could be aggravated by the recent pandemic.   Nonetheless, the report noted that there are opportunities that can seized, remarking that "While the warning signs associated with COVID-19 are significant, there are also glimmers of hope. The scale of the outbreak creates room for humanitarian gestures between rivals." The report concluded, "Looking ahead, governments will have to decide whether to support more cooperative approaches to handling the crisis, not only in global public health terms but also as a political and security challenge."[xxxvii]

The importance of this last question does not lie in whether or not people agree with it – and in fact, quite arguably those with long-standing careers in the defence environment are very unlikely

to agree with a proposition that puts their fundamental way of being and thinking at risk. Rather, proposing this notion shows courage in being able to ask if there is a different paradigm through which to view global relations. Is there value of even imagining a world driven by cooperation, centred on people who hold an infinite mindset even though it is recognized that there is much individual and collective development that would need to happen before such a world could exist? In fact, it is unlikely that anyone working towards this goal would live long-enough to realize their creation.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

> *Change will not come if we wait for some other person or some other time. We are the ones we've been waiting for. We are the change that we seek.*

<div align="right">Former US President Barack Obama</div>

The only thing constant is change and the only thing certain is uncertainty. This paper is not an attempt to argue for world peace through the call for global cooperation over competition. As pleasant as that theoretically may sound, there are many obstacles that prevent that realization in the foreseeable future, not least of which is that similar to World War II, there are drastically different cultural views that currently prevent peaceful co-existence. For one side to expand, then the other must diminish in a very finite-minded, zero sum way. Or, at least, trapped in a finite mindset that is perhaps the only way the world can be seen.

This paper, however, offers a different lens through which to redefine the competitive space as an opportunity for cooperation. This shift, to many, especially those within the defence community, may be too easily dismissed as idealistic and unrealistic. This rejection is not surprising because if viewed from a finite-mindset it is hard to even imagine the potential of such a concept.

Nonetheless, as people grow, as communities develop, as nations evolve and as non-state actors emerge in increasing levels of importance on the global stage perhaps it is time to change the lens through which we explore the possibilities of the future. At a cultural level, instead of asking what we can do to win, maybe we should be asking what we can do to survive and help to perpetuate our noble 'just cause'.

Quite simply, this paper proposes that seeing the world through an infinite mindset allows for a different, broader perspective to be taken than is possible if limited by a finite-mindset. This shift is not a panacea for world hunger, distress and / or violence, etc. Rather, it offers a different lens through which to form strategy that is arguably less likely to be tricked by tactical successes and more able to be formed in the context of a non-zero-sum world with a focus on long-term sustainability rather than short-term, tangible victory.

Ultimately, until our thinking paradigm shifts, it is unlikely that much else will be able to change. Nobody claims that the current defence environment is the same as it was even thirty years ago.

As such, why are we applying many of the same theoretical concepts and understandings to a vastly different world?

Notably, broadening a conceptual understanding of events is simply the first, and arguably easiest, part of change. Transforming your actual outlook and behaviour is considerably more challenging. Before you can change others, the shift has to begin internally. As such, targeting beyond the current narrative begins with personal development and a willingness to see the world as it could be rather than simply as it is.

NOTES

i This argument is not to say that some individuals did not intentionally prosper from the state of conflict. Their place in the overarching Western narrative of WWII, however, remains marginal.

ii Simon Sinek, *The Infinite Game*, Penguin House, New York, 2019. p.2.

iii Sinek, *The Infinite Game,* p.16.

iv Ibid.

v Ibid., p. 224.

vi US Department of Defense (DoD), Joint Publication 1. Doctrine for the Armed Forces of the United States (Washington D.C.: DoD, 25 March 2013, incorporating Change 1, Competition Continuum, 12 July 2017. https://www.jcs.mil/Portals/36/Documents/Doctrine/jdn_jg/jdn1_19.pdf?ver=2019-06-03-133547-197.

vii US Department of Defense (DoD), *Summary of the 2018 National Defense Strategy of the United States of America*, DoD, Washington DC, 2018.
https://dod.defense.gov/Portals/1/Documents/pubs/2018-National-Defense-Strategy-Summary.pdf.

viii *Joint Doctrine Note 1-19: Competition Continuum*, p. V.

ix *Joint Doctrine Note 1-19: Competition Continuum*, p. X.

x Notably, competition in internal relations is not a new phenomenon. In fact, in *Joint Doctrine Note 1-19*, historical examples are used to explain the Competition Continuum. The players, both state and non-state actors, might be different today than they were and the ability to shape and share narratives and reach target audiences may also be unique to this time. Nonetheless, we should not forget that competition is an historic tool for strategy.

xi General Jonathan Vance, Jonathan Vance speaks at 2020 Ottawa Conference, CDA Institute, 5 March 2020.
https://cdainstitute.ca/jonathan-vance-speaks-at-2020-ottawa-conference/.

xii Importantly, a distinction should be drawn between an infinite mindset and a total war mindset. While the two ideas can support one another, they are not the same concept. An infinite mindset as will be explored see continued existence as the end goal. A total war concept could be considered a means to get there by directing all national resources to this pursuit. Nonetheless, even if engaged in a limited war where not all resources are engaged, one could still hold an infinite mindset that expands beyond short-term goals. While this association is in theory possible, it is likely difficult to put into practice.

xiii Vance, "Jonathan Vance speaks".

xiv Sinek, *The Infinite Game,* p. 3.

xv Ibid., pp. 3-4.

xvi Ibid., p. 221.

xvii Susan Galer, "Five Leadership Lessons: How to Build an Infinite Mindset", *Forbes*, 18 April 2019. https://www.forbes.com/sites/sap/2019/04/18/five-leadership-lessons-how-to-build-an-infinite-mindset/#3f2a5c8b11f5.

xviii Ibid.

xix Sinek, *The Infinite Game,* p. 218.

xx Ibid., pp. 32-33.

xxi Ibid., p. 39.

xxii The term 'tribal leadership' is referenced here as the term that the above authors used to describe their leadership theory.

xxiii Dave Logan/ John King/ Halee Fischer-Wright, *Tribal Leadership: Leveraging Natural Groups to Build a Thriving Organization*, Harper Collins, New York, 2008.

xxiv Frederick Laloux, "The Future of Management is Teal", *Strategy + Business*, Issue 80, Autumn 2015. https://www.corenewalker.com/uploads/The_Future_of_Management_Is_Teal.pdf.

xxv Barrett C. Brown, "An Overview of Developmental Stages of Consciousness", *Integral Institute*, 3 April 2006. https://integralwithoutborders.net/sites/default/files/resources/Overview%20of%20Developmental%20Levels.pdf.

xxvi Laloux, "The Future of Management is Teal", p. 10.

xxvii I use the word "arguably" here as I have not conducted a review of all business school curricula. In my limited exposure to this field, however, I offer that this shift represents an emerging trend.

xxviii Logan, *Tribal Leadership*. Interestingly, having worked with many members of the Department of National Defence within a developmental capacity and / or discussing 'tribal leadership' as a theory, for the most part, everyone always declares that they and their organization are Stage 5. It is only the most self-reflective individuals who seem to appreciate the rarity of Stage 5 and who commit to the hard work required to live this mindset.

xxix Keynote address at the "Transforming SOF to Meet Future Challenges" SOF Symposium at the Joint Special Operations University, Tampa, Florida, 7 January 2020.

xxx Alice Hunt Friend/ Shannon Culberston, "Special Obfuscations: The Strategic Uses of Special Operations Forces", *Center for Strategic & International Studies (CSIS) Brief*, March 2020.
https://www.csis.org/analysis/special-obfuscations-strategic-uses-special-operations-forces.

xxxi General Michael Mullen cited in David Oakley, "The Problems of a Militarized Foreign Policy for America's Premier Intelligence Agency", War on the Rocks, 2 May 2019. https://warontherocks.com/2019/05/the-problems-of-a-militarized-foreign-policy-for-americas-premier-intelligence-agency/.

xxxii Keynote address at the "Transforming SOF to Meet Future Challenges" SOF Symposium at the Joint Special Operations University, Tampa, Florida, 7 January 2020.

xxxiii Katherine Zimmerman cited in Eric Schmitt, "Terrorism Threat in West Africa Soars as US Weighs Troop Cuts", The New York Times, 27 February 2020. https://www.nytimes.com/2020/02/27/world/africa/terrorism-west-africa.html.

xxxiv Mullen paraphrased in David Oakley, "The Problems of a Militarized Foreign Policy for America's Premier Intelligence Agency".

xxxv For a proposed prediction of such occurrence see: International Crisis Group, "COVID-19 and Conflict: Seven Trends to Watch", *Crisis Group Special Briefing*, No. 4, CrisisGroup.org, 24 March 2020. file:///C:/Users/CSOTC/Desktop/200324%20ICG%20B004-covid-19-seven-trends.pdf.

xxxvi This comment is not to imply that having an infinite mindset and Utilitarianism are the same concept. Rather, this paper suggest that they can be complimentary.

xxxvii "COVID-19 and Conflict: Seven Trends to Watch", pp. 12-13.

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