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GLOBE



L'ÉDITORIAL

Penser la guerre pour mieux réinventer la paix

LE DOSSIER

New Dynamics of War

GENEVA GRADUATE INSTITUTE

100

1927–2027

L'Institut aura 100 ans en 2027. Ce numéro s'inscrit dans une série de publications dédiées au centenaire de l'Institut.

The Geneva Graduate Institute is turning 100 in 2027. This edition is part of a special series marking the centenary.

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L'ÉDITORIAL

Penser la guerre pour mieux réinventer la paix

Marie-Laure **Salles**
Directrice



Marie-Laure Salles.
Boris PALEFROY

Poser aujourd'hui la question de la guerre est inévitable. La guerre n'a jamais disparu. Mais là où l'ambition du projet de 1945, inscrite au cœur de la Charte des Nations Unies, était d'en faire l'exception et d'en protéger autant que possible les générations futures, notre horizon a profondément changé. La Geneva Academy recense aujourd'hui 102 conflits armés actifs à travers le monde. En 2025, les dépenses militaires mondiales ont atteint un niveau record de 2900 milliards de dollars, en hausse continue depuis plus de vingt ans. À titre de comparaison, le budget annuel de l'ensemble du système des Nations Unies s'élevait cette même année à 3,72 milliards de dollars.

Au-delà des chiffres, c'est l'évolution de nos imaginaires qui mérite attention. L'esprit du temps est marqué par le réarmement, le retour des frontières sous des formes multiples et le retour en grâce d'une conception de la puissance fondée sur le rapport de forces. On voit également se diffuser, dans l'espace public comme dans certaines sphères politiques et culturelles, une valorisation croissante de la virilité conquérante et de la confrontation, assumée de manière de plus en plus décomplexée et parfois extrême. La promesse d'émancipation par l'interdépendance, l'ouverture et la coopération cède la place à une rhétorique du « retour à la grandeur » de telle ou telle nation ou identité qui prospère bien au-delà des slogans et gagne aujourd'hui de nombreuses régions du monde.

Mais qu'est-ce donc que la guerre ?

Les conflits qui minent des régions entières de notre planète et marquent durablement le destin de nombreuses populations, parfois sur plusieurs générations, semblent aujourd'hui converger vers des formes de violence et de conflictualité qui échappent aux catégories à travers lesquelles nous avions appris à penser la guerre. La guerre n'est plus, loin s'en faut, un simple affrontement armé direct entre États se disputant un territoire, des ressources ou des positions de pouvoir.

Peut-on d'ailleurs encore distinguer clairement la guerre de la paix ? Lorsque des attaques se déploient dans le cyberespace, que les infrastructures civiles deviennent des cibles stratégiques, que l'information elle-même est transformée en arme, ou que des acteurs privés acquièrent des capacités autrefois réservées aux États, les frontières conceptuelles qui structuraient notre compréhension de la guerre deviennent plus floues. La conflictualité se diffuse désormais dans des espaces, des temporalités et des sphères d'activité qui brouillent les distinctions traditionnelles entre le militaire et le civil, l'intérieur et l'extérieur, le local et le global, le réel et le virtuel, le temps de guerre et le temps de paix.

À mesure que ces frontières deviennent plus floues, la guerre cesse d'apparaître comme une rupture exceptionnelle venant suspendre un ordre par ailleurs stable. Elle se diffuse désormais dans les espaces numériques, les chaînes d'approvisionnement, les flux migratoires, les infrastructures critiques et les systèmes d'information. Elle investit également ces espaces liminaires qui se situent aux marges de la souveraineté étatique, sans appartenir pleinement à personne tout en suscitant les convoitises de tous : les régions polaires, l'espace extra-atmosphérique ou encore les grands fonds marins. Les guerres contemporaines engagent aussi le contrôle des récits, des identités (y compris des identités de genre), des perceptions collectives et parfois des futurs imaginés.

Rien de tout cela n'est entièrement nouveau. En 1921, Marc Bloch soulignait déjà, dans ses *Réflexions d'un historien sur les fausses nouvelles de la guerre*, l'importance des représentations, des croyances et des mécanismes de persuasion dans la conduite des conflits. Mais l'environnement technologique contemporain confère à ces dynamiques une ampleur sans précédent. La généralisation des réseaux numériques, la capacité de traiter et de diffuser l'information à très grande échelle, ainsi que les progrès rapides de l'intelligence artificielle donnent aujourd'hui aux guerres du récit une portée inédite. Elles ne visent plus seulement à influencer les opinions ; elles cherchent à façonner les perceptions du réel et à redéfinir les horizons du possible, dans une tentative de plus en plus explicite de coloniser nos futurs.

Comprendre la guerre pour retrouver le chemin vers la paix

À la fin de l'été 1939, les professeurs de l'Institut universitaire de hautes études internationales à Genève, l'ancêtre du Geneva Graduate Institute, s'engageaient dans ce qu'ils qualifiaient eux-mêmes d'« activité scientifique exceptionnelle » : analyser les causes de l'échec de l'ordre international issu de 1919 afin de réfléchir, au cœur même de la guerre, aux conditions d'un ordre international plus stable et de la paix à venir. Leur démarche reposait sur une conviction simple mais exigeante : une institution consacrée à l'étude des relations internationales ne peut demeurer spectatrice lorsque se joue l'avenir du système international. Sans prétendre apporter des réponses définitives, ils entendaient mettre les connaissances accumulées par les sciences sociales au service de l'intelligence du présent et de la préparation de l'avenir.

Intitulé « New Dynamics of War », le dossier présenté dans cette édition de *Globe* procède d'une intuition et d'une ambition similaires, dans un contexte profondément différent mais face à des interrogations tout aussi fondamentales sur l'avenir de notre ordre international. Face à des formes de conflictualité en pleine mutation, à l'érosion de certaines des catégories à travers lesquelles nous pensions la guerre et à l'incertitude croissante qui entoure l'évolution de l'ordre international, l'objectif n'est pas de prédire l'avenir ni de fournir des solutions toutes faites. Il est d'offrir des outils d'analyse, de contextualisation et de mise en perspective permettant de mieux comprendre les transformations en cours.

Plus que jamais, cette démarche apparaît nécessaire. Car derrière les conflits qui occupent aujourd'hui notre attention se profile une interrogation plus fondamentale encore : quel ordre international est en train d'émerger et quelle place y restera-t-il pour le droit, l'ouverture, la coopération internationale et la coexistence pacifique ? À l'instar de leurs prédécesseurs de 1939, les contributeurs et contributrices de ce dossier partent du principe que la recherche ne saurait se tenir à distance des grands bouleversements du temps. Leur ambition est précisément de concilier engagement intellectuel et rigueur scientifique, responsabilité publique et indépendance académique, afin d'éclairer les choix collectifs auxquels nos sociétés sont confrontées et de contribuer à redessiner les contours du chemin, complexe, fragile, mais essentiel qui nous ramènera vers un désir de paix.



Villa Barton.
Edgardo AMATO

L'INSTITUT | CENTENAIRE

Cent ans pour comprendre le monde et penser la paix

En 1927, alors que Genève s'affirme comme la capitale du multilatéralisme naissant autour de la Société des Nations, l'Institut universitaire de hautes études internationales voit le jour avec une ambition claire : élaborer les fondements intellectuels et académiques d'une nouvelle diplomatie au service de la paix et de la sécurité humaine et former celles et ceux appelés à la faire vivre. Cent ans plus tard, cette mission demeure d'une importance capitale.

À l'occasion de son centenaire, l'Institut lance une série d'initiatives pour penser son histoire, célébrer sa communauté et affirmer son rôle plus pertinent que jamais dans un monde en profond bouleversement. Parmi les temps forts de cette célébration figure une double édition spéciale de *Globe*, réalisée en partenariat avec le journal *Le Temps* et conçue comme un diptyque autour de deux thèmes fondateurs : la guerre et la paix.

Né dans le sillage de la Première Guerre mondiale et de l'installation de la Société des Nations à Genève, l'Institut a été créé par Paul Mantoux et William Rappard pour former celles et ceux qui auraient à penser les relations internationales autrement. Depuis lors, son histoire s'est constamment entrelacée avec les grands bouleversements du XX^{e} et du XXI^{e} siècle : montée des totalitarismes, Seconde Guerre mondiale, guerre froide, décolonisation, conflits contemporains, transformations du multilatéralisme et nouvelles menaces globales.

Cette édition d'automne ouvrira ce cycle en explorant la question de la guerre, un choix qui s'impose avec une particulière acuité dans le contexte actuel. À travers des contributions d'universitaires, de praticien·nes et de personnalités issues de son vaste réseau international, ce numéro analysera les multiples visages de la guerre. Conflits armés, rivalités géopolitiques, course technologique, affrontements économiques ou informationnels : il s'agira de mieux comprendre les dynamiques qui façonnent l'ordre mondial contemporain. Cette réflexion s'inscrit dans la tradition intellectuelle de l'Institut, qui a toujours cherché à conjuguer rigueur académique, observation du terrain et dialogue avec les actrices et acteurs internationaux.

Mais la guerre n'est qu'une partie de l'histoire. Au printemps prochain, le second volume de cette édition exceptionnelle sera consacré à la paix. En écho au premier numéro, il explorera les conditions qui permettent de penser et de construire une paix durable : diplomatie, coopération internationale, développement, justice, droits humains, gouvernance mondiale ou encore transition écologique. Autant de domaines dans lesquels l'Institut a développé, au fil des décennies, une expertise reconnue.

Ce dialogue entre guerre et paix constitue le fil rouge du centenaire. Il reflète l'héritage de l'Institut tout en soulignant sa pertinence actuelle. Dans un contexte marqué par le retour des conflits, l'affaiblissement de certaines institutions multilatérales, l'urgence climatique et les profondes mutations technologiques, comprendre les crises et imaginer des solutions collectives apparaît plus nécessaire que jamais.

Au-delà de la célébration, ce centenaire se veut résolument tourné vers l'avenir. Sous le slogan *An Enduring Legacy for Future Generations*, il rappellera qu'un siècle après sa fondation, l'Institut demeure fidèle à l'esprit de Genève : un idéal fait d'ouverture, de dialogue, de pluralisme, d'humanisme et de confiance dans la capacité des savoirs à éclairer l'action. Une invitation à regarder le passé pour mieux préparer le monde qui vient.



Simone Wyss Fedele.

L'INSTITUT

Une nouvelle membre au Conseil de fondation

Le Conseil de fondation de l'Institut a accueilli en septembre 2026 Simone Wyss Fedele.

Simone Wyss Fedele est une dirigeante d'entreprise suisse, administratrice certifiée et ancienne CEO, qui cumule plus de 20 ans d'expérience dans l'accompagnement d'entreprises innovantes souhaitant se développer à l'international. Son parcours de direction et de leadership couvre les sciences de la vie (notamment chez Novartis et Takeda), les technologies industrielles (par exemple chez Endress+Hauser) ainsi que les services internationaux (entre autres Switzerland Global Enterprise).

La nouvelle membre est titulaire d'un doctorat en économie internationale et en gestion des affaires de l'Université de Bâle. Sa formation continue pour cadres dirigeants comprend notamment l'IMD (diplôme d'administratrice de conseil d'administration), la Saïd Business School de l'Université d'Oxford (leadership mondial), la London School of Economics (prise de décision stratégique) ainsi que la Barcelona Graduate School of Economics (économétrie). Ses publications portent sur le commerce international, la géopolitique et la stratégie d'entreprise.

Simone Wyss Fedele exerce actuellement plusieurs mandats d'administratrice non exécutive et de conseillère stratégique. Outre son rôle au sein du Conseil de fondation de l'Institut, elle est présidente désignée de Switzerland Global Enterprise et membre des conseils d'administration de Bachem, d'Ypsomed et de SQS. Elle siège également dans des organes consultatifs, tels que le Conseil pour l'avenir mondial du commerce et de l'investissement du Forum économique mondial.

> « Dans un monde de plus en plus façonné par les dynamiques géopolitiques, le rôle et la pertinence du Geneva Graduate Institute revêtent une importance croissante. Je me réjouis de mettre mon expérience au service de l'institution et de contribuer à son orientation stratégique ainsi qu'à son développement futur au sein du Conseil de fondation. »
>
> Simone Wyss Fedele



L'INSTITUT

Finance et développement : 15 ans d'engagement

Ivan **Pictet**
Ancien associé senior de Pictet & Cie ; ancien président de la Fondation Genève Place financière, de la Chambre de commerce, d'industrie et des services et de la Fondation pour Genève

En 2009, Ivan Pictet créait la Fondation Pictet pour le développement qui avait pour mission l'établissement, en association avec l'Institut, d'un centre consacré à la thématique « finance et développement ». Dans ce cadre, la fondation finance six chaires attribuées aux professeurs Anna-Riikka Kauppinen, Kristen McNeill, Ugo Panizza, Claude Raisaro, Nathan Sussman et Lore Vandewalle.

Ivan Pictet revient ici sur ce qui l'a conduit à faire du lien entre finance et développement un axe central de son engagement, avant de dresser le bilan des activités du Centre finance et développement et d'évoquer les perspectives qui s'offrent à lui.

Tout est parti d'une conviction, née de discussions préliminaires en 2009 sur l'aide au développement que j'avais eues avec le professeur Philippe Burrin, alors directeur de l'Institut : Genève dispose, d'une part, d'une place financière internationale de premier plan avec la gestion d'actifs et la banque privée, auxquelles s'ajoute le commerce de matières premières, et d'autre part de la plus forte densité d'organisations internationales, d'ONG et de multinationales au monde. Nulle part ailleurs la recherche, l'enseignement et la pratique ne pouvaient converger avec une telle facilité.

Or, était-ce vraiment le cas ? Issu du milieu de la finance, je m'étonnais que nous n'ayons que peu de rapports avec l'Institut et fassions peu appel à ses diplômé·es. Quant à l'Institut, qui venait tout juste de fusionner les relations internationales avec les études du développement, devenant l'IHEID, l'idée d'y introduire une nouvelle discipline – la finance – prenait tout son sens.

Ainsi furent proposés entre autres des cours traitant du rôle des marchés financiers dans le développement économique, mais non exclusivement dans les pays en voie de développement. L'interaction entre croissance des marchés et croissance des économies était aussi prise en compte, de même que le financement du développement par la mobilisation des ressources nationales et celui émanant de la coopération internationale. Le domaine se situait au confluent de trois secteurs spécifiques de la science économique : l'économie du développement, la macroéconomie et la finance. De quoi séduire l'Institut face à l'intérêt grandissant de la finance du développement dans d'autres centres académiques, offrant la possibilité de collaborations fructueuses, et dans la perspective d'un rapprochement accru avec les organisations financières internationales comme le FMI, la Banque mondiale et les banques régionales de développement. À cela s'ajoutait le fait que nombre d'éminent·es professeur·es de l'Institut travaillaient déjà en partie dans des domaines très proches.

Ivan Pictet.
Niels ACKERMANN

Pour ma part, je voyais de multiples synergies entre l'intérêt croissant pour l'investissement dans les marchés des pays émergents, qui offrait une diversification attractive, et les nouvelles compétences en la matière que l'Institut pourrait proposer aux secteurs public et privé.

La Fondation Pictet pour le développement vit ainsi le jour et s'engagea à réaliser au sein de l'Institut un Centre finance et développement, confié à ses débuts au professeur Jean-Louis Arcand. Cette fondation, outre la présidence que j'assume depuis le début, fut dotée d'un conseil restreint regroupant plusieurs personnalités : l'ancienne conseillère fédérale Ruth Dreifuss, le professeur de médecine Francis Waldvogel, qui a présidé les écoles polytechniques de Suisse, le banquier Melchior de Muralt, très engagé dans les questions de durabilité, ainsi que Me Anthony Walter. C'est ce même conseil qui veille depuis 15 ans sur l'activité du centre et qui a des contacts réguliers avec la direction de l'Institut, celle du centre et celle du Département d'économie internationale.

Aujourd'hui, quel bilan pouvons-nous tirer des activités du Centre finance et développement entre 2011 et 2026 et quelles sont ses perspectives ? Le centre a certes pris une place enviable au sein de l'Institut avec six chaires qui l'animent et un engagement renouvelé de la fondation pendant ces cinq prochaines années, qui devraient lui permettre de parfaire son programme académique.

Il met l'accent sur la recherche, et particulièrement – nous disent les professeurs Nathan Sussman et Ugo Panizza – sur les conséquences de la forte augmentation de la dette souveraine des pays en voie de développement, un thème actuellement crucial pour les instances qui agissent pour l'aide publique au développement (APD). À titre d'exemple, le centre a participé activement à la création d'une base de données sur la dette des pays africains, qui fait aujourd'hui référence en la matière. Il gère des projets de recherche financés par des sources extérieures, qui ont remporté en 2025 un succès encourageant avec 13 projets pour quelque 3,8 millions de francs, et il produit de nombreuses publications académiques.

Un autre objectif du centre est de nouer des relations encore plus étroites avec les principaux centres de recherche académique et avec les services gouvernementaux liés à l'APD et aux banques de développement.

Sans oublier la priorité première du centre, dont la mission est de former les futur·es chercheur·es et décisionnaires dans ces domaines. Rappelons à cet égard l'attractivité du MAS, le programme de master d'un an en finance durable, en recherche d'impact quantifiable et en efficience de l'APD. Dans le cadre du master interdisciplinaire (MINT), il offre par ailleurs une option « finance, échanges commerciaux et développement durables » qui semble être une des favorites des étudiant·es, qui ont le choix entre sept spécialisations. Enfin, en 2025 le centre a eu la charge de superviser 17 thèses de doctorat et 38 mémoires de master.

Dans son numéro du printemps 2026, *Globe* présentait un dossier envisageant « la fin du développement ». Se référant à une résolution des Nations Unies de 1970 sur la nécessité pour les pays donateurs d'allouer 0,7% de leur revenu national à l'APD, le constat plus d'un demi-siècle plus tard est plus que décevant. Non seulement n'a-t-on jamais atteint ce niveau d'aide même au cours des années 1980 *(golden eighties)* ni dans les 15 premières années du millénium, où pourtant l'extrême pauvreté a nettement reculé dans le monde, mais on se trouve aujourd'hui dans une nouvelle période de régression. Rédigé par plusieurs auteur·es, le dossier de *Globe* comporte des titres comme « Parler de développement a-t-il encore un sens ? » ou « La fragmentation des démocraties et la mort lente de la coopération internationale » et souligne que « la dette intérieure des pays africains a plus que triplé depuis 2010 ». Et d'évoquer le réarmement qui prime au détriment de l'APD, la dissolution de 80% des programmes de l'USAID, et les réductions budgétaires du Japon, de l'UE et même de la Suisse, qui auront des conséquences alarmantes.

Cela dit, ce constat n'enlève rien à l'attractivité du programme en finance et développement de l'Institut. Je pense au contraire qu'il devrait raviver l'intérêt du sujet auprès des étudiant·es et réorienter la recherche académique vers la déconnexion entre finance et croissance, entre APD et endettement local, et vers une plus grande efficience de l'aide apportée, à partir de nouvelles mesures d'impact.

C'est effectivement sur ces derniers points que le Centre finance et développement peut apporter une contribution significative. Nul besoin de redéfinir les objectifs tels que conclus au départ en 2009 par la fondation et l'Institut. La question de la dette est plus que jamais d'actualité. Il conviendrait d'y ajouter les nouvelles technologies et notamment l'IA, possible solution pour une meilleure utilisation des moyens à disposition. Tout cela dans une période de bouleversements géopolitiques qui exige elle aussi une nouvelle approche.

Le Centre finance et développement a jusqu'ici répondu aux attentes : son programme séduit de plus en plus d'étudiant·es. Le défi reste d'adapter sans cesse son offre au changement. Liberté académique oblige, ceci est du ressort de l'Institut, et non de la Fondation Pictet pour le développement.

En savoir plus sur le Centre finance et développement.



L'INSTITUT

Hope, Despair, and Life Outcomes: Lessons from the New Science of Wellbeing

Interview with
Carol **Graham**
Leo Pasvolsky Senior Fellow at the Brookings Institution and College Park Professor at the School of Public Policy at the University of Maryland

The Institute welcomed, on 15 October 2026, Carol Graham for the Opening Lecture of the Academic Year.

You are a leading figure in the economics of happiness and wellbeing. Your work moves beyond traditional economic indicators to incorporate dimensions such as hope, aspirations, and perceived security as constitutive of human wellbeing. Could you explain what this "new science of wellbeing" entails and how it reshapes our understanding of inequality?

The science of wellbeing applies the econometric techniques typically used by economists to analyse constructs and variables that are often used in psychology or medical science to better understand both the determinants and consequences of human wellbeing.

As such, we use responses to surveys of reported wellbeing to measure things such as happiness or stress, meaning and purpose in life, and attitudes about the future via standard econometric analysis to better understand what drives more positive or more negative emotions and aspirations or lack thereof.

We also attempt to disentangle what is the result of innate character traits (such as optimism or pessimism) from trends that are influenced by the environment. An example of this is hope, an important wellbeing dimension that reflects a sense of agency, a trait which differentiates hope from optimism. Optimism is the belief that things will get better, while hope reflects positive attitudes about the future but also an individual's determination to make their futures better. While people with high levels of hope persist despite significant challenges, if ultimately there is no path to forward progress in the environment they live in, they may lose their sense of agency and therefore hope. As in the case of IQ, both genes and the environment interact in determining wellbeing levels as people navigate their lives.

Not only do we find remarkable consistency in the determinants of wellbeing in populations around the world (these include having sufficient income, good health, social relationships, and meaning and purpose in life, among others) but that having higher levels of wellbeing also leads to important life outcomes, ranging from productivity to health and longevity to social relations and altruism. High levels of income and wellbeing inequality are linked to lower levels of individual and societal wellbeing and lower levels of civic trust and social cohesion. As such, governments that place priority on creating the conditions that allow the majority of their citizens to live healthy, fulfilling lives and have freedom to choose the kinds of lives they want to lead, are investing in more productive, creative, and peaceful societies.

Carol Graham.
Michelle OLGUIN

Your research reveals striking contrasts: high levels of optimism among certain disadvantaged groups and despair among others. How should we interpret these differences? What do they tell us about the role of cultural, social, and institutional contexts in wellbeing?

These results highlight the importance of communities and respect for cultural diversity. Having institutions — formal or informal — that support those who are left behind matters a great deal. Often deprived minorities have strong community ties that in turn provide informal safety nets for those who fall behind, which not only supports material wellbeing but hope for the future among these same groups, which in turn helps them invest in their futures.

This highlights the point that civic trust and social cohesion — whether fostered by formal or informal institutions — are important to future outcomes, particularly but not only for people who live in deprived circumstances. Different cultures and societies tend to prioritise the role of collective versus individual welfare differently, as characterised by the generosity of safety nets and the nature of informal or formal civic institutions, such as churches, unions, or less-structured social organisations.

What role can institutions — whether educational, economic, or political — play in restoring or strengthening hope, particularly among younger generations?

Each of these institutions has a role to play. Educational institutions are uniquely well-suited to provide mentorship, support for creativity and innovation, and to monitor and provide guidance to students who fall behind or are overwhelmed with the uncertainties they face in today's troubled times. Economic institutions must reorient their focus from wealth creation for a small group of "winners" to opportunity creation that can help level the playing field for those who start off with disadvantages. Political institutions must become much more aware of how the increasing polarisation that exists in many countries today is not only destroying civic discourse, spreading misinformation, and eroding the functionality of governments, but is also having very high costs on younger generations due to the resulting erosion of hope for the future.

All countries have their own institutions and some function better than others. But an increasing literature shows that countries that organise their institutional strategies, actions, and objectives around the overall objective of societal wellbeing, which includes economic growth but many other income and non-income dimensions, perform better in raising their citizens' wellbeing levels, health, productivity, civic participation, and much more.

You show that a lack of hope can have tangible consequences for behaviour, affecting decisions related to education, health, or social engagement. In a context marked by climate and other global crises, geopolitical tensions, and social fragmentation, do you believe we are reaching a turning point in collective wellbeing? Which levers for action appear most urgent to you today to rebuild hope and act positively on wellbeing?

Individuals with higher levels of hope have better long-term outcomes because those who believe in their futures are more likely to invest in them, via education and healthy behaviours and giving back to society, than those without hope. We are already at a turning point in collective wellbeing, and not for the better. But increasing awareness of the consequences of ignoring these crises, especially for the young, may, in the end, produce a large-scale push for change and a reset of global priorities. The increased interest in wellbeing science, especially among young scholars, the growth of support for moving towards indicators of progress that include but go well beyond GDP, as in the United Nations's recent commission on the topic (which I served on), and the continued resilience and in fact leading edge of efforts by community organisations around the globe to make positive change are just a few examples. That, in the end, gives me some hope that we may be able to put these troubled times behind us and end up with a more coherent — and hopeful — global community.

Read the full interview.



L'INSTITUT

Celebrating the Inaugural International Geneva Peace Fellowship

For nine months, ten emerging mid-career professionals will be embedded in Geneva's peace and humanitarian ecosystem, working on the world's most pressing challenges while fostering the next generation of leadership in peace and humanitarian diplomacy.

Interpeace and the Geneva Graduate Institute have joined forces to host the International Geneva Peace Fellowship in Geneva, with the generous support of the Foundation for the Adaptation of International Geneva.

"Nurturing the next generation of peacemakers and multilateral diplomats becomes all the more vital at a time when the global climate is increasingly defined by confrontation and war. We are proud and happy to work on this important initiative with our partner Interpeace", Director of the Geneva Graduate Institute, Professor Marie-Laure Salles, emphasises.

The fellowship responds to two closely connected needs: strengthening Geneva's capacity for peace and humanitarian diplomacy, and accompanying change agents with the knowledge, partnerships, and strategies they need to be part of finding the solutions to the most pressing issues facing our and future generations. It combines Interpeace's field-based peacebuilding experience with the Geneva Graduate Institute's strengths in research and convening, while drawing on the wider ecosystem of International Geneva.

The inaugural cohort brings together professionals from around the world and comprises of Johnny Assaf (Lebanon), Chimwemwe Chifungo (Malawi), Ana Carolina Pinto Dantas (Brazil), Nan Hao (China), Sokfa John (Nigeria), Wendyam Hervé Lankoandé (Burkina Faso), Maria Antonia Montes (Colombia), Milzat Salime (Comoros), Lashante Sampson (Bahamas), and Nathanael Thomas (United States of America).

"The arrival of the inaugural cohort reflects our shared commitment to strengthening peace and humanitarian diplomacy at a time of profound global disruption", President and CEO of Interpeace, Itonde Kakoma, underscores.

Over nine months, the fellows will be housed at the historic Domaine Barton and work in close partnership with key peace and humanitarian diplomacy actors in the city. They will also be a part of a common programme of leadership development, mentoring, policy dialogue, workshops, and collaborative initiatives.

"By connecting leadership talent with expertise and networks across institutions and sectors, the fellowship strengthens the relationships needed to build a new international footprint for Geneva — one that extends beyond international organisations and permanent missions and lays the foundations for a more networked and multi-stakeholder form of international cooperation", Professor Achim Wennmann, Nagulendran Chair in Peace Mediation at the Geneva Graduate Institute, concludes.

Over time, the partnership aims to build a growing network of leaders in peace and humanitarian diplomacy who can strengthen Geneva's global standing as a hub for peace and contribute to practical responses to conflict and instability.

The inaugural cohort of International Geneva Peace Fellows at the Villa Barton. Boris PALEFROY

L'INSTITUT

Without Relationships, Nothing Works: Achim Wennmann at Talking Philanthropy London 2026



Achim Wennmann. Boris PALEFROY

Professor Achim Wennmann, Director for Strategic Partnerships at the Geneva Graduate Institute, attended Talking Philanthropy London 2026, the leading forum for strategic philanthropy organised by Global Philanthropic. In a short interview, he addresses the current challenges facing philanthropy.

What are the biggest challenges philanthropic organisations are facing today?

The biggest challenge philanthropic organisations are facing today is finding exactly where they can connect to other organisations that are also dealing with global challenges — be that climate change, migration, or artificial intelligence. Philanthropy will not be able to deal with current, large-scale global challenges on its own. So, philanthropy needs to partner with other organisations, because it sits somewhere along the chain of dealing with these challenges. I think where philanthropy is currently positioning itself is in finding out: are they at the capital stage, the delivery stage, or the relational stage — facilitating bigger partnerships to deal with these kinds of global issues?

Which idea for driving systemic change would benefit most from philanthropic support?

Relationship quality is the absolute essential value and the asset that philanthropists can support. Without relationships, nothing works. This is a big problem today because everyone looks at impact. Yet, without focusing on relationships and relationship quality, you cannot make an impact. This is particularly important because we're looking at long-term systemic change, and impact is something much more transactional. But if we want to move philanthropy into long-term systemic impact, it's about relationships that last. That means getting to know each other, building trust, and above all, having the courage to reach out across institutional and sectoral boundaries — stepping outside of what you usually do. That's what philanthropy can do and support.

You need to have curiosity for the new. You need to be able to expose yourself to how the world is changing — looking for a handrail to make sense of how you yourself understand the world, how you have been brought up to understand it. And then step back and say: let me speak to others — how do they make sense of the world? And then ask: based on this new understanding, where do I invest, and what kind of new friends do I need? This is not always an easy road, so it's about building relationship quality and friendship along the way, so that you can deal with crises as they come — rather than needing to make friends only when you need them.

What is the one change you would most like to see in philanthropy over the next ten years?

I would like to see a philanthropic sector that is more at ease with taking a moderated risk. A lot of philanthropy has focused on the classic sectors — the arts, social issues, poverty reduction — and while that is very important, issues like climate and migration, and other big, global challenges require more risk-taking. The philanthropic community needs to move away from shying away from risk, and instead embrace it. That's the philanthropic sector I would like to see emerge over the next ten years.

L'ACTUALITÉ

How Can International History and Politics Illuminate Current Conflicts?

Cyrus **Schayegh**
Professor and Chair of the Department of International History and Politics



Axel ODEVIK / iStock

Most conflicts seem to our contemporaries to be unprecedented events. They rarely are. The historian's first contribution is to relativise: to show that today's war or rupture is part of a lineage of episodes, with comparable if not related causes. This does not diminish the urgency of the crisis or conflict we experience, but, rather, situates it.

International history is not "international relations" narrowly conceived — treaties, summits, ambassadors. It is the history of how societies, economies, and ideas cross borders. Sometimes this happens against the will of states. A conflict framed as bilateral and international usually proves, on closer inspection, to be embedded in transnational currents that no single state fully commands.

While political science supplies categories like security dilemma or deterrence, history pays attention to contingency. It shows us that outcomes are rarely predetermined, that actors miscalculated, and that alternative paths existed and were foreclosed by specific decisions. Combining both guards against two errors — reducing conflicts to timeless law, or dissolving them into accident.

Borders and identities invoked as self-evident today are usually artifacts of earlier settlements such as colonial partitions, post-imperial arrangements, Cold War compromises. Studying these origins helps us explain why the same geographies keep generating friction, and why maps drawn to end one era's disputes sometimes help manufacture a later era's tensions.

Great powers narrate their own past selectively. They emphasise restraint and minimise their violence and intervention. Historians test these self-narratives against the documentary record. Sometimes, these include archives that powers would rather not have consulted. Without such correctives, policy debates recycle official memory rather than confront it.

A crisis illuminated only by its most recent antecedent — the last war, the last election — misses slower causes: demographic shifts, resource dependencies, institutional decay. These unfold across years if not decades and are rarely visible in daily reporting — but they are key for us to understand current conflicts.

Language matters practically. Sources produced by the parties themselves, in their own languages, reveal internal debates invisible to analysts relying on translated summaries. Much of what passes for expertise on a conflict is expertise on how outsiders have described it.

The practical upshot for training students of international affairs is that an awareness of general theory and historical research complement each other. A curriculum offering only models produces analysts fluent in frameworks but blind to context; one offering only narrative produces chroniclers unable to generalise. Understanding present conflicts requires both.



ZAPORIZHZHIA OBLAST, Ukraine. View of the Kakhovka Reservoir with the city of Enerhodar on the horizon. OlyaSolodenko / iStock

L'ACTUALITÉ

Weaponising the "Peaceful Atom"

Nataliya **Tchermalykh**
Research Professor of Anthropology and Sociology

On 26 April 2026, Ukraine marked 40 years since the Chornobyl disaster. Once associated with the worst catastrophe of the nuclear age, Ukraine is again at the centre of a global nuclear crisis, but of a different kind. The danger now lies not only in military escalation or new accident, but in the transformation of civilian nuclear infrastructure into an instrument of war — a possibility for which the international nuclear order remains poorly prepared.

The Chornobyl catastrophe reshaped both Ukraine's political trajectory and international approaches to nuclear risk. As the historian Serhii Plokhy has argued, Soviet secrecy deepened the regime's crisis of legitimacy and helped turn environmental mobilisation into broader demands for accountability and, eventually, independence. Internationally, the disaster accelerated new transnational mechanisms of nuclear cooperation and safety governance.

The end of the Soviet Union perpetuated a clear asymmetry: Russia remained a nuclear-weapon state, while Ukraine relinquished its arsenal and joined the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) as a non-nuclear state, a settlement politically sealed by the 1994 Budapest Memorandum (violated in 2014 by Russia). Yet despite the trauma of Chornobyl, civilian nuclear power became central to independent Ukraine and increasingly associated with its energy and political sovereignty.

In 2022, Russia's full-scale invasion brought war directly into this nuclear landscape. On the first day of war, Russian forces occupied Chornobyl and seized the Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant (NPP) days later. Europe's largest nuclear station was progressively incorporated into the mechanics of occupation through the intermediary of Rosatom, Russia's biggest state nuclear corporation.

This situation exposes the fragility of the distinction between the "peaceful" and "military" atom. International law recognises the exceptional risks surrounding nuclear installations, but the existing order was not designed for the prolonged occupation of an operating NPP — particularly when it is perpetrated by a permanent member of the United Nations Security Council.

The warning extends far beyond Ukraine. Rosatom remains a major global nuclear actor, with projects across Europe, Asia, and Africa, and its international reach has proved remarkably resilient since 2022, with an annual revenue growth of 24%. The Ukrainian case therefore projects a grim possibility into the future, in which the militarisation of civilian nuclear infrastructure turns into a source of permanent nuclear threat.

If 1986 showed that nuclear accidents cannot be treated only nationally, the war in Ukraine shows that nuclear safety can no longer be conceived as a peacetime problem. Forty years after Chornobyl, the challenge is to rethink an international nuclear order, confronting a reality largely left outside the frame by its architects: that the "peaceful atom" itself can become an instrument of war.



MOGADISHU, Somalia. Refugee camp. 30 April 2013. sadikgulec / iStock

L'ACTUALITÉ

A Promise Worth Keeping: The Refugee Convention at 75

Vincent **Chetail**
Professor of International Law and Co-Director of the Global Migration Centre

Anniversaries invite reflection; they can also breed complacency. The Refugee Convention's 75th anniversary falls at a moment of acute tension: never have so many people needed its protection, and never has the political will to provide it seemed so threadbare.

It is worth remembering that this treaty was never meant to last. It was designed to become obsolete by covering only those who had fled persecution before 1951 — a backward-looking scope unique among post-1945 UN treaties. It was contested from the outset: communist states saw in it capitalist propaganda; India and Pakistan denounced its European bias, reminding the drafters that suffering knows no racial or political boundary.

Its survival owed much to the Global South. For newly independent African states, a definition drawn around post-war Europe made no sense amid wars of liberation. The 1967 Protocol lifted these restrictions, and ratifications followed across the world. Today 149 states are parties. Yet the heaviest burden is rarely carried by the wealthiest: the Global South hosts three quarters of the world's refugees.

So, the question is no longer whether the Geneva Convention still matters. It saves lives every single day: each time a refugee is recognised, someone is spared torture, persecution, or war. The real danger is subtler than obsolescence. It is evasion. Some states invoke its language while dismantling its substance. Externalisation — relocating asylum processing to third countries — follows a logic as simple as it is cynical: if people cannot reach your territory, obligations are never engaged. Pushbacks are also becoming commonplace: an asylum seeker turned back at the border before lodging a claim is invisible to the law. None of these tactics change the rules; they sidestep them while keeping up appearances.

The Geneva Convention is not a monument to be admired. It is a promise to be kept. Seeking asylum is a right, neither a crime nor a favour. Treaties are meant to be honoured in good faith. Its strength rests on foundations far broader than its 46 articles. It draws on the ancient custom of asylum, common to every culture and civilisation; on a dedicated UN agency, UNHCR, that no comparable treaty enjoys; on the judges and caseworkers who apply it in ordinary rooms every day; and on human rights law, which has renewed it from within. Its cardinal rule — never to return anyone to persecution — now binds even states that never ratified under customary international law.

The Geneva Convention is an imperfect instrument for an imperfect world, the product of a rare moment of moral clarity. It is not a convention for others: it is for all of us. Lives can change very quickly, and none of us knows when we might need it. Seventy-five years on, that clarity is more needed, not less.

Read the full article on *Opinio Juris*.



STOCKHOLM, Sweden. Host Jenny Strömstedt greets Microsoft co-founder Bill Gates during the Gates Foundation's first global Goalkeepers event in the Nordics. 22 January 2026. Stefan JERREVANG / TT News Agency / AFP

L'ACTUALITÉ

Seeing Global Health through the Eyes of Philanthropists

Annabelle **Littoz-Monnet**
Professor of International Relations / Political Science

Over the past two decades, global health has undergone a transformation. As public funding has become increasingly unpredictable, private philanthropy has largely stepped in to fund global programmes. It is well-known that large foundations such as the Gates Foundation and Bloomberg Philanthropies now largely contribute to the budgets of the WHO and of public-private partnerships, or initiate their own initiatives. What is less visible though is how philanthropists increasingly produce the knowledge infrastructures through which health problems are known, prioritised, and eventually governed.

Philanthropic foundations have widely invested in the production of metrics on the "burden" of specific health conditions, as well as on the "costs" and "returns" of health interventions. In 2007, the Gates Foundation created the Institute of Health Metrics and Evaluation (IHME) to provide "timely, relevant, and scientifically valid evidence" for policymakers. The IHME calculates the Global Burden of Disease (GBD) metrics, the largest-scale project ever set up aimed at measuring morbidity and mortality rates worldwide. With generous funding from the Gates Foundation, the IHME produces profuse estimates and projections that largely surpass those of the WHO, which now increasingly relies on those numbers for its own sense-making and agenda-setting exercises. Other "data" initiatives have further stabilised the presence of philanthropists in global health. In 2015, Bloomberg Philanthropies, in partnership with the Australian government and the Gates Foundation, launched its own Data for Health initiative. Philanthropists' data centres have come to sit at the core of global infrastructures of quantification. On the basis of those estimates, health actors produce calculations to identify which health interventions could "save the most lives" and be most "cost-effective".

This calculative logic sustains an approach in which "results" must be continuously and quantitatively evidenced. This implies that problems are seen mainly in terms of their magnitude and that interventions need to have "scalability" and "reach population impact". This also favours highly technical interventions, as it is easier to produce evidence on their impact and the economic returns they generate. The distribution of hundreds of millions of insecticide-treated nets has for instance become a flagship intervention to solve malaria, with quantifiable impact, supported by the Gates Foundation. "Quick fixes" are favoured, while factors relating to socioeconomic and environmental conditions are too often ignored.

Understanding this shift is crucial. As private resources fill funding gaps, such a move is not neutral but deeply political. Although improving public health is in itself a laudable objective, it is necessary to interrogate the role philanthropic actors — largely rooted in for-profit logics as they are — play in knowledge governance around public health research, data, and public health conditions.

Read the full article in *The Conversation*.

LE DOSSIER

NEW DYNAMICS OF WAR

Since the end of the Cold War, the belief in a lasting "peace dividend" fostered the expectation that economic interdependence and multilateralism would gradually reduce the role of military power. Yet the wars of the 2020s have brutally overturned this assumption, exposing a resurgence of high-intensity conflict with devastating results. States are accelerating their rearmament amid the return of strategic rivalries and a growing contempt for the international norms intended to contain violence. This shift raises a pressing question: are we entering a new era in which interstate wars once again become a structural feature of world politics?

Together, the analyses contained in this dossier offer various perspectives on the current arms race, the resurgence of war and conflict, and the future of the global security infrastructure.

Anticipating the many events that will mark the Institute's Centenary in 2027, the dossier is the first instalment of a special double issue of *Globe*, to be followed next spring by a second part focusing on peace and the dynamics of its necessary re-affirmation. Edited by Professor Andrew Clapham and produced by the Research Office, it was first published in *Le Temps* in September and draws on the latest issue of *Global Challenges* (no. 20).

→ **globalchallenges.ch/issue/20**

CHONGQING, China. Chinese soldiers browse online news on desktop computers at a garrison of the People's Liberation Army. 14 November 2013. Gao XIAOWEN / Imagechina / AFP



NEW DYNAMICS OF WAR

WAR IN THE TIME OF GLOBAL DISORDER

Keith **Krause**
Honorary Professor of International Relations and Co-Director of the Centre on Conflict, Development and Peacebuilding (CCDP)

The gods of war would surely be pleased with 2025 and 2026. According to the Uppsala Conflict Data Program, the number of active armed conflicts has reached unprecedented levels (65 ongoing conflicts) and the official number of conflict deaths in 2025 — 244,600 — was greater than any year since the Rwanda genocide. Military spending is also at historical highs: more than USD 2.8 trillion per year according to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute. Behind these headlines, democratic backsliding and social polarisation have set the stage for rising levels of political violence and political repression, in places such as Iran, Chad, Haiti, Myanmar, Nepal and elsewhere.

The Roman war god Mars was a disciplined defender of the state and reflected martial virtues; by contrast, the Greek war god Ares exemplified the disorder, chaos and savage brutality of war. No doubt today Ares is ascendant, as the wars in Gaza, Sudan and Ukraine perfectly illustrate, with war crimes, civilian victimisation, unattainable war aims and violent stalemates. Given this, can we make any sense of the wide array of forms of violence and armed conflict that we see today and what the future might hold? At least three important forces are at play.

The Russian invasion of Ukraine is now in its fifth year — or more if we consider that the invasion of Crimea took place in 2014. Palestinians continue to die in Gaza, three years after the 7 October Hamas attacks in Israel. The warring factions in Sudan have been locked in violence since 2023, and a civil war that has killed more than 80,000 people ebbs and flows in Myanmar since 2021. And the 2026 American-Iranian war has no clear end point. So "victory" (whatever this means) remains elusive in today's wars due to military stalemates where technological (US-Iran) and personnel (Russia-Ukraine) advantages are offset by strong defensive strategies. The temptation of "cheap and easy" victory that both Presidents Putin and Trump fell prey to displays the hubris of power — and the tenacity of adversaries. In other conflicts (Sudan, Myanmar), external parties have provided critical support (financial, military) that prolongs the fighting and reduces incentives for negotiation.

GAZA, Palestine. View of the destroyed settlements as displaced Palestinians continue their daily lives despite ongoing Israeli airstrikes and artillery fire across the region in the Nuseirat refugee camp. 2 October 2026. Hassan JEDI / Anadolu / AFP

At the same time as military spending reaches all-time highs in state budgets, the "barriers to entry" for violent entrepreneurs have declined. Small arms and light weapons (including militarised drones) are now readily available and circulate relatively easily in many regions, as the work of the Geneva-based Small Arms Survey has amply documented. Armed drone attacks by state forces, private military contractors and gangs are widespread in Port-au-Prince Haiti, while in Myanmar, both the army and armed groups rely on drone warfare, often with inexpensive and modified commercial technology.

Aside from the low costs associated with mobilising for violence, current technology appears to favour the weaker side. Inexpensive drones costing tens of thousands of dollars can destroy much more expensive equipment, as is happening to Russian forces in Ukraine. Of course, the technological balance shifts over time, but the "drone revolution" suggests that we are facing a 21st century "revolution in military affairs" akin to that of the Industrial Revolution, or the invention of gunpowder and artillery. Armed forces in advanced industrial states are slow to adapt or evolve, and we should expect that this "revolution" takes some time to emerge in military structures and deployments — although the lessons of the Ukrainian defence against Russia aggression are being closely observed in NATO and elsewhere.

International humanitarian law (IHL), which was designed to channel violence in ways that states found acceptable (no killing of prisoners, no deliberate targeting of civilians, etc.), while never strongly respected, provided at least a framework for accountability. But IHL is today widely disregarded, with mass atrocities and blatant disregard of any norms of restraint, by both state and non-state armed actors in places such as Gaza or Sudan. The Geneva Academy's *War Watch* portal chillingly documents widespread civilian victimisation and violations of IHL in more than 20 conflicts in 2024–25; a reminder that the law is failing to protect the most vulnerable. A growing sense of impunity, despite indictments from the International Criminal Court, is difficult to dispel, and can only encourage further violations.

Three conditions made peace possible over the past 150 years: 1) cheap energy that allowed rapid economic growth, including bringing millions of people out of poverty; 2) few or no resource constraints since land and water were abundant and frontiers were opening, and 3) population growth that did not (until recently) over-stretch the Earth's capacity. The implications of this are now crystal clear: intense competition at the global and local levels over scarce resources, rising inequality between the haves and the "have-nots", demographic pressures, and the crossing of many of the sustainable planetary boundaries beyond just the climate crisis.

Scarcity, inequality and intense competition are breeding grounds for conflict. When the political and social institutions and mechanisms for channelling conflicts towards peaceful resolutions (courts, negotiation, informal agreements) break down, then the resort to violent means becomes almost inevitable. Ares is ascendant, and a peaceful order an ever more distant dream.

> "International humanitarian law is today widely disregarded, with mass atrocities and blatant disregard of any norms of restraint, by both state and non-state armed actors in places such as Gaza or Sudan."

A "SMALL WORLD WAR" IN THE MIDDLE EAST

Cyrus **Schayegh**
Professor and Head of the Department of International History and Politics

Call it a small world war. The 40-day war that the United States and Israel launched against Iran in February 2026 was fought in a single region, but across several linked theatres, drew in powers well beyond the three main belligerents, and now shakes the global order the way only a world war once did.

"Combat diplomacy carries a structural flaw. Like all coercive diplomacy, it ultimately rests on raw force, which is legitimate to no one and therefore unstable."

Consider the theatres. There was the direct Gulf theatre, where Iran struck vulnerable US military infrastructure and, notably, civilian targets in Gulf states hosting American bases — punishing neighbours, chiefly the UAE, but also other countries, for hosting US forces and for their ties to Israel. There was the Levant theatre, where Israel's war on Hezbollah in Lebanon ran in parallel, and which Tehran explicitly linked to the Gulf theatre through a menacing if-then logic: if Israel keeps striking Beirut and south Lebanon, Iran may hit US targets in the Gulf; if Israel hits Iran's oil facilities, Iran will hit Arab ones. And there was the maritime-economic theatre: Iran's closure of the Strait of Hormuz, which turned a regional war into a global economic shock, driving up oil and food prices worldwide.

Consider, too, the actors. Formally this was a war between a US-Israeli alliance and Iran. But it entangled Gulf states as targets, as hosts of contested US bases, and, increasingly, as co-negotiators alongside Pakistan in the ensuing US-Iran talks. It entangled global energy markets and, through them, much of the world economy. It entangled China, benefiting as the emerging rival superpower from Washington's self-inflicted overextension. And it economically if not existentially punished poor people in various countries in the Global South.

This war echoes far beyond the Middle East, then. One should note that historically, a Gulf crisis has marked a turning point in America's global position already twice before: in 1979, when Iran's revolution and the humiliating hostage-taking of US embassy staff, compounded by the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, produced the Carter Doctrine and made the Gulf Washington's chief arena of power projection; and in 1990–91, when Washington's response to Iraq's invasion of Kuwait displayed, with maximal effect, its new unipolar primacy as the Cold War ended. Today, developments in the Gulf are again accelerating a shift already underway in global power — this time from a fading unipolar order into an emerging multipolar one, complete with a new superpower rival.

The differences from 1979 and 1990 matter, though. Then, crises were triggered regionally, by Iran and by Iraq; now the trigger is Washington's own war. And Tehran, thanks to Hormuz, wields something it lacked before: genuine global leverage over Washington. Accordingly, Iran has entered post-ceasefire negotiations not despite having fought, but through what its own negotiators call "combat diplomacy" (*diplomasi-ye mobarezeh*): talking and striking simultaneously, using calibrated military signals — drone strikes, Hormuz threats — to enforce its own reading of the June 2026 Memorandum of Understanding. In Tehran's logic, credible deterrence is the precondition, not the alternative, of successful negotiation with an adversary it fundamentally distrusts. The approach has a domestic function too: it is the compromise formula between Iranian "pragmatists" and "hardliners", and ideologically it inoculates both against ultra-hardliners who reject any talks as capitulation, folding diplomacy itself into an unbroken revolutionary struggle against the United States.

Yet combat diplomacy carries a structural flaw. Like all coercive diplomacy, it ultimately rests on raw force, which is legitimate to no one and therefore unstable. Durable power requires accommodating others' interests, at least minimally. The question, then, is whether Iran can sustain credible deterrence *and* negotiate sanctions relief and economic normalisation its exhausted, dissent-wracked economy urgently needs *and*, perhaps most importantly, create a new security architecture that is minimally acceptable to its Arab Gulf neighbours in the Gulf. That tension — together with Emirati resistance to further US concessions and Israel's own uncertain willingness to accept a deal negotiated over its head — keeps the region in an unstable no-deal limbo: Tehran confident yet aggrieved, Washington flailing between escalation and appeasement, Israel caught between obeying Trump and looking weak before its own elections.

What is already shifting, deal or no deal, is the regional order built after 1979. For one thing, Washington is somewhat hardening its posture toward Israel — a shift with precedent in the Obama-era 2013–15 talks, but potentially more durable now given rising Israel-sceptic voices even within the Republican camp. And for another thing, Gulf states, trusting Washington's guarantees less than before yet still needing them, are moving from mere mediators to active participants, alongside Pakistan, in shaping a security architecture meant to include, not just contain, Iran.

The stakes of this small world war's aftermath are therefore not small at all. Handled badly, it becomes what it already resembles: a chronic, multi-front, multi-actor confrontation that periodically convulses global energy markets and accelerates America's relative decline. Handled well — should Washington finally trade its half-century of costly Gulf over-investment for a genuine deal — the same crisis could free up resources and attention for the "pivot to Asia" that has eluded Washington since Obama first announced it, at the very moment that pivot matters most.



NABATIEH, Lebanon. A mural depicting slain Hezbollah commander Imad Mughniyeh assassinated in Damascus in February 2008 in an attack widely attributed to a joint CIA-Mossad operation. 15 May 2026. Silvia CASADEI / Middle East Images / AFP



NEW DYNAMICS OF WAR

TALKING ABOUT WAR AND PEACE

Andrew **Clapham**
Professor of International Law

Today there is a paradox when leaders talk about war. The concept of war is relied on to strike fear in the minds of the enemy and to rally the population around a nation in times of emergency. One only has to think of the conversion last year of the US Department of Defense into a Department of War with the claim by the newly titled Secretary of War that "we're going to raise up warriors, not just defenders". But at the same time leaders have to avoid the implication that the state is "at war" because this raises questions of accountability and the legitimacy of the military action. So in order to avoid the implications of the War Powers Act, President Trump may describe the action against Iran as an "excursion", and yet when pressed he admits "for them it's a war". Famously, you can be punished in Moscow for referring to the special military operation in Ukraine as a "war". The idea of war is too reminiscent of mothers sacrificing their conscripted sons and suggests a fight between equal sovereign states. And yet for those being killed on all sides, this is war.

When it comes to justifying and excusing the death and destruction, the language of war is easily deployed again; repeatedly leaders respond to queries about civilian casualties or questionable destruction by referencing the "fog of war". President Trump even warned that Americans could die at home, simply stating, "When you go to war, some people will die." This fatalism in the face of war was repeated over and over in the context of Gaza. President Biden was initially dismissive of Palestinian figures of civilian deaths: "I'm sure innocents have been killed, and it's the price of waging a war."

The effects of these wars on the rest of the world are apparent: spikes in oil prices, disruption of delivery of essential fertiliser, food insecurity, environmental damage, young men and women leaving their families to head off to foreign lands only to be senselessly slaughtered in someone else's war, thousands of seafarers stranded for months in the Strait of Hormuz. And yet the rest of the world is strangely

ROME, Italy. People hold Italian and peace flags as they take part in a national demonstration named "#StopRearmEU" against rearmament. 21 June 2025. Andreas SOLARO / AFP

"We are losing the ability to even talk about war crimes, let alone do anything about them."

passive. Passive, not pacifist. In fact, perhaps we should not expect the whole world to be pacifist, but we should expect more pacificism in the active sense used by Émile Arnaud when he proposed a new name for the Peace Movement: "Aucun des mots du dictionnaire n'est adéquat à notre programme. Nous ne sommes pas seulement des 'pacifiques', nous ne sommes pas seulement des 'pacifiants', nous ne sommes pas seulement des 'pacificateurs'. Nous sommes le tout à la fois, et autre chose encore: nous sommes en un mot des Pacifistes. Et d'ailleurs, pour désigner notre parti il nous faut un mot en isme comme au royalisme, au bonapartisme, à l'impérialisme, au républicanisme, au radicalisme, à l'opportunisme, au progressisme, au socialisme, au collectivisme, à l'anarchisme, comme au christianisme, au catholicisme, au protestantisme. Et ce nom, tout naturel, mais qui n'a jamais été, à notre connaissance du moins, employé jusqu'ici, c'est: Le Pacifisme." [1]

As defined by Arnaud in 1906, "le Pacifisme est la bannière sous laquelle se groupent les humains qui, désireux d'assurer, par la suppression de la guerre, le respect de la vie humaine et de l'autonomie des Peuples, recherchent les meilleurs moyens d'organiser la Paix et la Justice entre Nations, et, ces moyens trouvés, font tous leurs efforts pour en hâter l'application." [2]

What happened to the spirit of active pacificism? Where are the Peace Movements? It is not enough simply to say "no to war", to remain passive and inert, or, dare we say it, "neutral". *Pacificism*, in the sense used in more modern times by A.J.P Taylor and Martin Ceadel, is not the same as *pacifism*: "Pacificists are those who favour peaceful foreign policies and who seek to develop international institutions for the promotion of peace. Pacifism in its pure form is a total rejection of war as an instrument of policy."

Challenging resort to war and the failure to respect the minimal laws of war leads to accusations of treason, treachery, or sedition and to critics being labelled as "traitors". Suggestions by the International Criminal Court that leaders or commanders should be arrested for killings in Afghanistan, the deportation of children from Ukraine, or the killing of aid workers and the starvation of civilians in Palestine have been met with trials *in absentia* in Moscow and sanctions from Washington. We are losing the ability to even talk about war crimes, let alone do anything about them. We should not relapse into the idea that wars are like thunderstorms, something to be weathered but beyond human control. There is, however, a dangerous fatalism in the air. On the first day of the bombing of Iran earlier this year, an airstrike killed 175 people in a school. Questions have been raised. These have been curtly dismissed by President Trump, who simply stated: "Mistakes are made. War is nasty." Time to speak out against nastiness and stand up for Peace.

1 "There is no word in the dictionary that suits our purpose. We are not simply 'peaceful', we are not just 'pacifiers', we are not merely 'peacemakers'. We are all those things and more: we are, in a word, *Pacifists*. So, to label our Movement, we need an *-ism* like royalism, Bonapartism, imperialism, republicanism, radicalism, opportunism, progressivism, socialism, collectivism, anarchism, Christianism, Catholicism, and Protestantism. So our name — obviously, but as far as I know never used till now — is: *Pacifism*" (my translation).

2 "Pacifism is the banner which unites all those who want, by abolishing war, to ensure respect for human life and the autonomy of every People, and who want to find the best ways to organise Peace and Justice among Nations; and then, having found these means, do everything they can to make this happen as soon as possible" (my translation).

NI GUERRE, NI PAIX : COMMENT PENSER LA BRUTALISATION DU MONDE

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La « guerre » : derrière le mot se nichent toute une série de concepts, normes, règles constitutionnelles et internationales concernant qui peut la déclarer, et selon quelles règles d'engagement, ainsi que des descriptions de bonnes ou mauvaises pratiques enfouies dans des manuels listant les actes licites sur terre, sur mer ou dans l'air. À cette supposée clarté qu'apporterait le droit sur la question, l'actualité nous présente une opacité déconcertante.

Pour désigner l'agression de l'Ukraine, la Russie parle d'« opération spéciale », terme qui semble inapproprié aux commentateurs européens qui voient deux armées – et leurs alliés, directement ou indirectement – s'affronter sur un champ de bataille, selon un schéma finalement assez classique de guerre de position, avec son lot de dénonciations de crimes de guerre. Les États-Unis parlent quant à eux de « guerre » – et le Congrès américain le confirme en exigeant de peser sur les décisions du président Trump – pour désigner les attaques qu'ils ont menées avec Israël à deux reprises en un an contre la République islamique d'Iran, en frappant d'abord ses installations nucléaires et en assassinant certains scientifiques et dirigeants militaires en 2025, puis en lançant l'opération d'assassinats politiques la plus massive que l'histoire contemporaine ait connue et visant un État : de fin février 2026 à mi-mars 2026, ils ont décimé une grande partie de l'élite politique de la République islamique, à commencer par le Guide suprême Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, le ministre de la Défense Aziz Nasirzadeh, le très puissant chef du Conseil suprême de sécurité nationale Ali Larijani, et bien d'autres.

Ces attaques contre l'Ukraine (2014 et 2022) et l'Iran (2025 et 2026) dessinent un étrange chiasme : en Ukraine, une guerre d'apparence classique (même si frappée d'illégalité) qui ne dit pas son nom ; en Iran, une opération militaire des États-Unis et d'Israël qui s'écarte de toutes les normes internationales en matière d'engagement entre armées sur le champ de bataille. Avant que le conflit en Iran ne connaisse l'escalade de 2026, j'avais replacé ces conflits dans la perspective historique des luttes entre les anciens empires et leurs anciens vassaux[1], dans lesquelles les références au droit international et à la distinction entre « guerre » et « paix » sont évitées par les puissances coloniales qui lui préfèrent le langage d'« opérations de maintien de l'ordre » ou de « contre-terrorisme », puisqu'elles nient à l'adversaire le statut d'État. Avant ces attaques, les États-Unis avaient ciblé des groupes armés désignés comme terroristes et tué leur chef, en premier lieu Oussama ben Laden, ou des chefs talibans ou houthis pourchassés par drones pendant de longues années, mais jamais ils n'avaient tué au grand jour les chefs d'un État membre de l'ONU comme s'il s'agissait de simples terroristes. C'est aujourd'hui le cas, après qu'Israël et son allié états-unien, en réponse aux attaques terroristes du 7 octobre 2023 perpétrées par le Hamas, ont décimé d'abord les dirigeants politiques du Hamas, puis du Hezbollah – deux groupes armés qui n'ont pas le statut d'États même s'ils participent à des formes de gouvernement – et maintenant de la République islamique iranienne, faisant comme si la différence entre État et groupe armé ne comptait pas.

Si l'escalade de mars 2026 rappellera aux Iraniens la décision d'écarter du pouvoir le premier ministre iranien Mohammad Mossadegh prise par les puissances impérialistes de l'époque en riposte à sa décision de nationaliser l'industrie pétrolière en 1951, la brutalité des moyens choisis – l'assassinat ciblé plutôt que le procès ou le bannissement de la vie publique – rappelle donc plutôt les « opérations spéciales » opaques menées en Afrique par les services secrets occidentaux après la colonisation afin de conserver l'accès aux matières premières du continent, l'assassinat du premier ministre congolais Patrice Lumumba faisant figure d'archétype. Cette volonté de brutaliser les rapports internationaux va donc de pair avec le retour d'un monde où la distinction juridique fondamentale entre guerre et paix a disparu en même temps que la notion d'État s'est diluée et les vieilles hiérarchies coloniales ont fait leur retour. Décrivant la montée de cette résurgence de l'imaginaire colonial porté par les États néo-mercantilistes, Arnaud Orain écrit ainsi que « la violence » dans un tel système « ne signifie pas la guerre ouverte mais cet état "ni guerre, ni paix", qui caractérise le capitalisme de la finitude : fermeture et privatisation toujours plus forte des mers avec un "commerce" de convois militarisés, constitution de silos impériaux en rivalité armée les uns avec les autres pour s'approprier des espaces physiques et cybers, conflits de souveraineté multipliés entre États et compagnies-États ».[2]

1 Grégoire Mallard, « Les guerres de défense du droit international sont-elles impérialistes ? », *AOC*, 19 septembre 2025.
2 Arnaud Orain, *Le monde confisqué : essai sur le capitalisme de la finitude (XVIe-XXIe siècle)* (Flammarion, 2025), p. 319.



TÉHÉRAN, Iran. Des femmes iraniennes passent devant une fresque murale anti-américaine et anti-israélienne. 3 juin 2026. Atta KENARE / AFP.

De multiples raisons expliquent comment notre monde en est arrivé là, et les travaux de nombreux chercheurs en géo-économie, sociologie historique, science politique et droit international en éclairent différents aspects. Ces explications historiques sont essentielles pour imaginer quelles seront les conséquences de ce basculement sur le système multilatéral, qui s'appuyait sur la confiance entre États, la bonne foi dans les négociations, le respect de la souveraineté des peuples dans le choix de leurs dirigeants politiques, et l'indépendance des organisations internationales. Rien n'est gravé dans la pierre, et la fragmentation qui s'accélère sous la force des redéfinitions du concept de guerre et la diffusion globale d'un état « ni guerre, ni paix » n'est qu'une hypothèse parmi d'autres, sans doute la pire qui soit.

« En Ukraine, une guerre d'apparence classique qui ne dit pas son nom ; en Iran, une opération militaire des États-Unis et d'Israël qui s'écarte de toutes les normes internationales. »



NEW DYNAMICS OF WAR

THE FINNISH SOLUTION: NEUTRALITY AND THE RETURN OF REALPOLITIK

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When Finland joined NATO in April 2023, it seemed to mark the end of one of the defining features of Finnish foreign policy. For decades, military nonalignment had been almost synonymous with the Finnish approach to international affairs. It had survived the Cold War, the collapse of the Soviet Union and Finland's integration into the European Union. Yet Russia's invasion of Ukraine made neutrality appear less a guarantee of security than a potential vulnerability. Finland chose NATO.

At first sight, this looks like a decisive break with the past. I would argue the opposite. Finland's decision can be understood as a continuation of the realpolitik that had underpinned Finnish neutrality throughout the Cold War. The policy changed because the circumstances changed. What remained constant was the objective: preserving Finnish independence in a dangerous neighbourhood.

Neutrality is often presented as a principle. Historically, however, it has also been a strategy liable to change with circumstances. Finland offers an especially revealing example. For much of the Cold War, it combined political independence with geopolitical accommodation. It was a Western democracy sharing more than 1,300 kilometres of border with the Soviet Union. It maintained a market economy, parliamentary institutions and close ties with Western Europe, yet remained outside both NATO and the Warsaw Pact. To outsiders, this could look like an awkward compromise. To most Finns, it was a practical way of preserving independence.

The roots of the Finnish solution lay in the Second World War. Finland had fought the Soviet Union twice, first in the Winter War of 1939–40 and then, alongside Germany, in the Continuation War of 1941–44. By the end of the war, it had lost territory, paid reparations and accepted restrictions on its foreign policy. The Soviet Union was the dominant military power on its eastern border. The question for Finnish policymakers was not how to contain it, but how to remain independent in its shadow.

The answer was neutrality and military nonalignment. The 1948 Treaty of Friendship, Cooperation and Mutual Assistance established the framework for relations with Moscow. Yet Finnish leaders, particularly Presidents Juho Kusti Paasikivi and Urho Kekkonen, sought to ensure that accommodation of Soviet interests did not become political subordination. Finland would avoid becoming a platform for hostile military activity against the Soviet Union while retaining its political system and strengthening its connections with the West.

This was realpolitik in its most literal sense: neutrality was a strategy for managing an unfavourable balance of power. The policy was controversial, and "Finlandization" became a shorthand for the compromises involved. But it achieved something important: Finland remained a sovereign democracy throughout the Cold War, avoiding both incorporation into the Soviet sphere and direct confrontation with its more powerful neighbour.

When the Soviet Union collapsed in 1991, the original rationale for neutrality seemed to disappear. Finland joined the European Union in 1995 and became deeply integrated into the West. Yet it did not join NATO. Military nonalignment remained remarkably popular. Russia was weakened, European security appeared comparatively stable, and Finland possessed substantial military capabilities. It also developed close practical cooperation with NATO without taking the final step of membership.

For many Finns, nonalignment had become a settled security policy. In the absence of an obvious threat to Finland itself, there was little domestic appetite for abandoning it. Then came February 2022.

> "Neutrality is not necessarily a permanent condition. It is a means of securing independence when circumstances make it viable."

Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine transformed the Finnish debate. What had seemed a prudent policy suddenly looked like a potentially dangerous assumption. The question was no longer whether Finland could remain outside a military alliance while maintaining a workable relationship with Moscow. It was whether nonalignment could provide sufficient security if Russia were prepared to use overwhelming force against a neighbouring state.

Historical memory mattered. The war in Ukraine revived memories of Finland's own encounters with Soviet power, and the Winter War acquired new strategic relevance. The sight of a larger neighbour invading a smaller one made the logic of Finland's postwar security choices look different. The issue was no longer an abstract debate about neutrality, but whether the policy could work under the conditions of a new European war. The answer, increasingly, was no.

Finland's decision to apply for NATO membership in May 2022 was therefore a dramatic change of policy. But it can also be understood as a continuation of the logic that had underpinned Finnish neutrality and military nonalignment for decades. Finland did not suddenly abandon realpolitik. It returned to it. During the Cold War, neutrality was judged to be the best available means of protecting Finnish sovereignty. After 2022, alliance membership appeared to offer greater security. The geopolitical circumstances had changed; so did the calculation.

Finland's experience does not provide a universal answer to whether neutrality is the right policy for a small state. Geography, history and the surrounding international system matter enormously. But it does offer a useful reminder. Neutrality is not necessarily a permanent condition. It is a means of securing independence when circumstances make it viable. For Finland, those circumstances changed in 2022. The country did not abandon realpolitik when it abandoned military nonalignment. It followed realpolitik to its logical conclusion.

For almost half a century, the Finnish solution had been to stay outside military alliances. After Russia's invasion of Ukraine, the Finnish solution became joining one.

ANKARA, Turkey. Finnish President Alexander Stubb reacts as he listens to a question from the press upon arrival for the NATO summit, which came at a fraught time for the 77-year-old transatlantic alliance. 8 July 2026. Alastair GRANT/POOL/AFP

DE LA GUERRE ÉCONOMIQUE À L'ÉCONOMIE DE GUERRE GÉNÉRALISÉE : UN ENGRENAGE FATAL ?

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Va-t-on vers une généralisation des économies de guerre, alors que les États allouent toujours plus de ressources à la défense et que les risques sécuritaires servent de prétexte pour se soustraire au droit international et favoriser l'impunité ?

En tous les cas, la géoéconomie est de retour au centre de l'échiquier mondial : sanctions et embargos, contrôle des investissements étrangers, restrictions sur les exportations de semi-conducteurs, armes tarifaires et guerre des monnaies. Au titre de l'*economic statecraft*, les États instrumentalisent leurs leviers commerciaux, financiers et monétaires à des fins géostratégiques plutôt qu'au service de l'efficience économique. Washington utilise le dollar et l'accès à son système financier comme arme ; Pékin monnaie la dépendance de ses partenaires aux terres rares ; l'Europe se réarme et s'efforce de sécuriser ses approvisionnements stratégiques.

Ce regain de tensions géostratégiques sonne-t-il le glas du paradigme libéral au profit d'un nouveau mercantilisme ? La libéralisation commerciale, fondée sur la théorie des avantages comparatifs, cède le pas à des stratégies de relocalisation sélective, de sécurité énergétique et de politiques industrielles volontaristes. Le commerce international n'est plus perçu comme un vecteur d'interdépendance pacificatrice, mais comme un instrument de puissance et de souveraineté.

Ce mercantilisme 2.0 ne repose plus seulement sur l'accumulation de richesses : il vise aussi la maîtrise des chaînes d'approvisionnement, des technologies de pointe ainsi que des infrastructures et des données numériques. Ces efforts s'inscrivent dans un contexte de guerre hybride : manipulation cognitive et informationnelle, cyberattaques, sabotage d'infrastructures critiques, exploitation des dépendances agricoles et hydrauliques, instrumentalisation des migrations. Moins coûteuses et plus difficiles à attribuer, ces attaques brouillent les frontières entre situations de paix, de crise et de conflit armé. Sous l'angle du droit international, ces nouveaux moyens et méthodes de guerre rendent plus difficile la distinction entre objectifs militaires et biens civils ainsi qu'entre combattants et civils – par exemple lorsque des ingénieurs et informaticiens d'une firme privée participent directement à des hostilités pilotées à longue distance.

> « Instrumentalisation géoéconomique, mercantilisme 2.0 et réarmement généralisé – cette conjonction inédite renforce les économies de guerre. »

Les investissements dans la défense ne sont pas en reste. Après onze années de hausse consécutive, les dépenses militaires mondiales ont atteint un record de 2887 milliards de dollars en 2025, soit 2,5% du PIB mondial, selon le Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI). Les États-Unis à eux seuls en représentent un tiers du total, loin devant la Chine (12%) et la Russie (6%). L'Europe est devenue le premier pôle de croissance en 2025, avec une progression de 14% (suivie par l'Afrique avec 8,5%).

Instrumentalisation géoéconomique, mercantilisme 2.0 et réarmement généralisé – cette conjonction inédite renforce les économies de guerre. Celles-ci profitent à une petite minorité alors que la majorité de la population est perdante, selon des ressorts clairement identifiés : 1) *mobilisation des ressources pour la défense* : une part croissante de l'activité économique et des avancées scientifiques est orientée, directement ou indirectement, vers les secteurs de la défense et de la sécurité ; 2) *érosion du droit international* : au nom de la sécurité et des intérêts nationaux, les puissances s'affranchissent des règles qu'elles ont elles-mêmes contribué à instituer au sortir de la Seconde Guerre mondiale – règles de l'OMC, Conventions de Genève, régimes de non-prolifération. Cette érosion s'accompagne d'une impunité croissante, faute de volonté politique pour sanctionner les violations ; 3) *cantonnement de populations entières à une économie de survie*, en particulier dans les conflits armés et les contextes fragiles : les mécanismes de redistribution – aide publique au développement et sécurité sociale – s'érodent sous les pressions budgétaires du moment ; 4) *imbrication des économies de guerre dans les marchés* financiers et commerciaux mondiaux : intérêts privés et publics en viennent à partager des incitations à prolonger et multiplier les conflits. Alors que quelques acteurs tirent parti de guerres qui s'enlisent, les chances de voir des accords de paix durable aboutir s'amenuisent.

Cet engrenage n'a rien d'une fatalité : il résulte de choix politiques cumulatifs qui servent les intérêts d'une infime minorité mais d'aucun État, y compris les grandes puissances.

Comme le démontrent les études scientifiques internationales ou le baromètre annuel des risques globaux publié par le World Economic Forum, le véritable défi de notre temps est ailleurs : préserver les biens communs mondiaux, à commencer par le climat, la biodiversité et les ressources hydriques et naturelles. L'ignorer ne fait qu'attiser l'insécurité et les tensions géopolitiques à venir, entretenant un cercle vicieux dont l'issue ultime serait un suicide collectif annoncé.

En sortir n'exige pas de nouveaux joueurs sur l'échiquier ni même de nouvelles règles du jeu, mais un nouveau leadership doté d'une vision et d'une volonté politique claires centrées sur la primauté des normes internationales comme cadre de référence – non comme une option que l'on invoque ou révoque au gré des rapports de force (*double standards*). Cela suppose de réinvestir dans la coopération commerciale, financière et environnementale multilatérale plutôt que de céder à la seule logique de blocs. Cela suppose, enfin, de « démonétiser la guerre » elle-même : imposer la transparence sur son financement et ses coûts humains et économiques, et traquer les profits générés par sa prolongation. Il s'agit de réarmer – au sens figuré cette fois – les instruments de prévention et de résolution pacifique des différends. Faute de quoi, l'histoire retiendra que la géoéconomie d'aujourd'hui n'aura été qu'un prélude à une économie de guerre généralisée.



WASHINGTON, États-Unis. Le président chinois Xi Jinping et le président américain Donald Trump. 25 septembre 2026. Saul LOEB / AFP.



NEW DYNAMICS OF WAR

THE ARMS TRADE IN A NEW ERA OF WAR

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The first quarter of this century has echoed a reopening of Pandora's box, marked by renewed outbreaks of one of the greatest evils, War.

The world is currently experiencing the highest levels of armed conflict since World War II. The spread and severity of destruction from the wars in Myanmar, Palestine, Sudan, and others go beyond mass human causalities. We are also witnessing widescale damage to critical infrastructure and the environment that is leaving areas completely uninhabitable and increasingly difficult, if not impossible, to rebuild.

While communities and regions suffer from the scourge of war, a major beneficiary is the arms trade, a business predicated on manufacturing and exporting products and systems that cause and exacerbate human suffering.

The states and companies involved in supplying arms are benefitting immensely from the escalation of conflicts worldwide, global rearmament and a heightened demand for advanced weapons technologies. In the last five years, global arms transfers have grown by nearly 10% in volume. Arms companies are likewise profiting from increased military expenditure, with arms sales and services rising by 5.9% in 2024.

In addition to profiting from wars, the arms trade is also fuelling them. The transfer of arms to conflict-prone and war-torn regions is a significant human security concern. Research has repeatedly confirmed that the availability of arms increases the likelihood of violent conflicts intensifying and has disastrous human rights and environmental impacts.

However, despite this data and countless news stories, the significant human security costs of arms transfers are routinely ignored in favour of their profitability and strategic influence. Due to the complexity and national security dimensions of this lethal business, the arms trade has remained largely resistant to transparency, scrutiny and meaningful reform. In times of war, these challenges are compounded.

As the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom stated in the midst of World War I, "the private profits accruing from the great armament factories [are] a powerful hindrance to the abolition of war". More than a century later, these words continue to ring true.

KASSEL, Germany. The CEO of German arms manufacturer Rheinmetall Armin Papperger and Hesse's State Premier Boris Rhein ride in a GTK Boxer, an armoured fighting vehicle, at the Rheinmetall factory premises. 27 August 2026. Sasha SCHUERMANN/AFP

The expansion of states' rearmament efforts is driving competition and innovation in weapons systems, creating a new technology-driven arms race. The push to develop more precise, lethal and automated weapons technologies comes at the expense of critical resources for public services such as education, health and welfare, as well as having broader strategic and regulatory implications.

Technological advances are transforming contemporary warfare by interweaving civilian technologies with military weapons and strategies. For example, Israel has utilised cloud storage, facial recognition and data-mining systems to aid in its military attacks in Gaza. In turn, the range of actors that can influence conflict dynamics and profit from wars has expanded to include companies that build these digital technologies, software and sensors.

Moreover, the advanced capabilities of military technologies and the expanded range of actors involved are challenging established legal frameworks at a time when they are under immense strain. Important humanitarian arms controls such as the Ottawa Mine Ban Treaty and the Convention on Cluster Munitions have been sidelined, if not catastrophically undermined, as peacetime obligations. Human rights safeguards in the Arms Trade Treaty have been openly disregarded by states that have continued to export arms to recipients committing serious violations of international law.

There is a critical need for technologically literate and morally grounded approaches to regulating the arms trade that address the long-term humanitarian impacts of weapons on impacted communities and physical environments. However, political will for such reforms continues to weaken while profitability soars.

Although other evils including Greed, Disease, and Death escaped from Pandora's box along with War, Hope remained trapped. In the contemporary era of war, hope for a less destructive arms trade remains constrained by the pursuit of profit and power.

We are at great risk of commercial and strategic interests completely eroding human rights protections, transparency, and accountability in the arms trade. The arms industry continues to operate with impunity while maximising their profits, benefiting from rising military expenditure, states' prioritisation of strategic interests, and declining political will to uphold regulatory safeguards.

Sustained and collective efforts are needed now more than ever. We must continue to pressure our leaders to stop using war as the pretext for immoral and destructive practices, and compel the industry to protect people over profits.

"The advanced capabilities of military technologies and the expanded range of actors involved are challenging established legal frameworks at a time when they are under immense strain."

LA PUISSANCE MARITIME À L'ÈRE DU DÉSORDRE MONDIAL

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Le domaine maritime est essentiel à la sécurité nationale et à la prospérité économique. Les batailles se gagnent généralement sur terre, mais les guerres systémiques et les luttes pour le leadership mondial se remportent en mer.

La puissance maritime associe maîtrise des océans et domination mondiale. Dépassant la puissance navale, elle englobe des formes civiles et idéationnelles. La première permet de projeter des forces à des fins de dissuasion ou d'action offensive, mais surtout de contrôler les voies maritimes de communication et les chaînes d'approvisionnement. La deuxième reflète la capacité des États à influencer ports, chantiers navals, compagnies maritimes et assureurs. La troisième renvoie à une culture stratégique maritime, à la volonté de consacrer des ressources à la puissance maritime et à la capacité de façonner la gouvernance des océans. La puissance maritime détermine donc qui peut sécuriser les flux, protéger les infrastructures, fixer les règles et maintenir un leadership systémique.

Depuis les grandes découvertes, les puissances européennes, puis, après la Seconde Guerre mondiale, l'Occident collectif, ont dominé l'ordre maritime mondial. Cette maîtrise a soutenu leur leadership, leur sécurité et leur prospérité, dépendants des chaînes d'approvisionnement et de la liberté de navigation.

> « L'avenir de l'ordre mondial se jouera, dans une large mesure, en mer. »

Les transformations récentes ont toutefois produit un ordre plus désordonné, caractérisé par ce que je qualifie d'« accélération stratégique » dans trois dimensions interdépendantes : géopolitique, technologie et changement climatique. Le statu quo de l'après-guerre est de plus en plus contesté, notamment par le recours à la force en violation de la Charte des Nations Unies. La rapidité de l'innovation technique remet en cause doctrines et concepts opérationnels, tout en permettant aux acteurs perturbateurs et malveillants d'exploiter des moyens de guerre asymétrique, notamment les drones aériens et maritimes et les cyberattaques, qui réduisent le coût de l'action offensive par rapport à celui de la défense. Enfin, le changement climatique affecte équipements, personnels et opérations militaires, tout en modifiant les comportements adverses. Ces accélérations se renforcent mutuellement, rendant le domaine maritime moins stable, plus contesté et plus vulnérable.

Le domaine maritime est particulièrement propice aux activités de « zone grise » et à la guerre hybride. Vaste, fluide et opaque, il est difficile à surveiller ou à contrôler. Les juridictions s'y superposent ou sont faiblement appliquées, tandis que les activités maritimes s'insèrent dans des chaînes transnationales complexes de propriété, d'immatriculation, d'équipage et d'exploitation. Des acteurs malveillants peuvent ainsi conduire des actions hostiles infra-conflictuelles en niant plausiblement leur responsabilité, compliquant l'attribution, la reddition de comptes et la dissuasion.

Les infrastructures critiques sont particulièrement vulnérables. Câbles sous-marins, pipelines, interconnexions énergétiques, installations offshore, ports et stations d'atterrage forment des systèmes transnationaux dont dépendent la sécurité, la prospérité et la souveraineté numérique occidentales. Les activités de zone grise comprennent la cartographie de ces infrastructures, l'interférence avec les flux de données et les attaques, avérées ou présumées, contre les câbles. Elles cherchent à créer de l'incertitude, à tester les réactions occidentales et à affaiblir la résilience sociétale sans franchir le seuil du conflit armé. Le défi consiste à protéger ces infrastructures et à restreindre la liberté d'action des acteurs hostiles par une meilleure connaissance de la situation maritime, une résilience accrue et une lutte proactive contre les activités hybrides, limitant ainsi les possibilités de déni plausible.

La supériorité maritime occidentale est contestée par la compétition entre grandes puissances, les perturbations asymétriques et les activités de zone grise. La Chine développe sa puissance maritime à l'échelle mondiale, remettant en cause la domination et la liberté de manœuvre occidentales. L'Iran et ses mandataires exploitent la géographie et leurs capacités asymétriques pour menacer les flux d'énergie et de marchandises dans les passages stratégiques, avec des conséquences sur les prix, les marchés et plus largement la prospérité des sociétés occidentales. La Russie agit agressivement dans les eaux européennes : elle collecte du renseignement, cartographie les infrastructures sous-marines et teste la fermeté occidentale. Sa « flotte fantôme » exploite l'opacité du transport maritime pour contourner les sanctions et maintenir une pression hybride.

L'avenir de l'ordre mondial se jouera, dans une large mesure, en mer. La domination maritime a permis aux puissances européennes, puis à l'Occident collectif, de façonner les règles, institutions et pratiques de l'ordre international. Sa perte produirait moins un espace sans leadership qu'un ordre plus illibéral, façonné de manière croissante par la puissance et les préférences chinoises, mais aussi par les actions d'États révisionnistes et d'acteurs non étatiques perturbateurs et par le contrôle privé d'infrastructures critiques.

Pourtant, sa dépendance au commerce maritime signifie que Pékin n'a guère intérêt à rendre cet ordre fondamentalement instable. Son objectif n'est pas la perturbation en soi, mais le contrôle des règles, routes, infrastructures et accès stratégiques. La Chine cherchera à sécuriser son commerce, protéger ses voies maritimes de communication et projeter sa puissance au service de ses intérêts, comme l'ont fait les hégémons maritimes précédents. La question centrale n'est donc pas de savoir si l'ordre maritime survivra, mais qui en définira les règles et disposera du pouvoir nécessaire pour les faire respecter.



BANDAR ABBAS, Iran. De nombreux navires marchands appartenant à l'Iran et à d'autres pays sont toujours au mouillage dans le détroit d'Ormuz. 10 septembre 2026. Fatemeh BAHRAMI / Anadolu / AFP



NEW DYNAMICS OF WAR

WHEN WAR HAS NO FRONT LINES

Robert **Muggah**
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For most of history, war was constrained by geography. Armies crossed borders while navies and aircraft entered contested waters and airspace. Cyberwarfare has dissolved these boundaries. An operator thousands of kilometres away can steal state secrets or disrupt an electricity grid without firing a shot. The target may never know who was responsible.

Cyberwarfare changes where conflict occurs and who can participate. Cyberspace connects the battlefield to almost every part of modern society. Digital activity now accounts for a large and growing share of global GDP, making the civilian economy a battlespace.

Cyber operations are attractive because they obscure attribution. Malicious software can cross several countries, reuse criminal code and rely on falsely registered infrastructure. Attackers can hide behind proxies, contractors and hacktivists. Attribution rests on forensic analysis and intelligence about who benefits. Governments may reach conclusions but hesitate to reveal classified sources. Attribution can take months, by which point the political moment may have passed. Even frontier AI companies struggle to trace what their own agents have done.

This ambiguity enables aggression below the threshold of armed conflict. Governments can probe critical infrastructure and embed themselves inside an adversary's networks while denying responsibility. Victims must either act on uncertain evidence or risk encouraging further attacks. Cyberwarfare therefore blurs the boundaries between war and peace. Espionage, sabotage, criminal outsourcing and military preparation overlap.

> "Cyberwarfare is eroding distinctions between war and peace, combatant and civilian, battlefield and society."

KYIV, Ukraine. The International Cybersecurity Forum 2024 reconsidered the Ukrainian experience in cyber warfare and its application in developing strategies for democratic nations, aiming to enhance cyber resilience through the use of modern technologies, diplomatic tools, international law, and active cyber defense. 7 February 2024. STR/NurPhoto/AFP

These threats are compounded by the dependence of modern militaries on privately owned digital infrastructure. A flaw in one product can expose thousands of organisations, while malware aimed at one country can disrupt supply chains elsewhere.

Traditional military power is expensive, while cyber capability is comparatively cheap. Few states can build aircraft carriers or nuclear weapons, but many can sponsor cyber operations. The same tools are available to criminals, contractors and hackers. Sophisticated operations still require expertise, but cyberspace expands the number of actors capable of causing harm. Civilian hackers and technology firms now participate directly in conflict, weakening the distinction between combatants and civilians.

This is why NATO now treats cyberspace as an operational domain alongside land, sea, air and space. Yet cyberspace is different from the other domains since it runs through them all. Aircraft, ships, drones and missiles rely on software. Control over data and connectivity increasingly determines whether forces can see, communicate and function.

International law applies in cyberspace, but states remain divided on fundamental questions: at what point does a cyber operation constitute force? Can the deletion of data be qualified as an attack? And how far must a state go to prevent operations from being launched from its territory?

Diplomatic progress is real but limited. UN negotiations have produced voluntary norms, while the Tallinn Manual, Paris Call, Pall Mall Process and EU legislation offer guidance. But enforcement remains weak. Governments may negotiate restraint while stockpiling vulnerabilities or conducting operations they refuse to acknowledge. Verification is also difficult, since cyber arsenals are invisible and tools built for defence or espionage can be adapted for attack. Norms are more likely to develop around effects such as protecting hospitals, elections and nuclear facilities rather than around weapons. Stronger disclosure rules, crisis hotlines and faster collective attribution could follow.

Artificial intelligence is accelerating cyberattack and defence. Generative systems can produce phishing messages, search for vulnerabilities and translate influence campaigns into many languages. Autonomy is also entering military systems as swarms of drones extend cyber logic into the physical battlespace.

Defenders now use AI to detect malicious activity, so the advantage will not always lie with attackers. Yet AI's most consequential effect may be to compress decision time. Autonomous agents may exploit thousands of networks before officials recognise an operation. The Pentagon's Project Maven points towards a battlespace where machine learning converts sensor data into intelligence and shapes what is detected and targeted.

Artificial general intelligence remains hypothetical. The more immediate risks come from specialised agents that find vulnerabilities, write code and adapt with less human supervision. Anthropic's Mythos models have uncovered thousands of serious software flaws, while an OpenAI agent escaped their test environment and combined stolen credentials and previously unknown vulnerabilities to access another company's servers.

OpenAI has since notified dozens of governments, universities and other organisations whose systems its agents entered without authorisation. OpenAI and Anthropic are now investigating tens of thousands of incidents in which their models bypassed guardrails or escaped test environments. Greater autonomy becomes especially dangerous when responsibility is unclear and events unfold faster than leaders can interpret them.

The industry is now asking to be restrained. More than 1,100 employees of leading AI labs have urged the US government to help pace frontier development, and OpenAI has twice paused training on its most capable models. Washington, home to most of these labs, rejects international efforts to govern the technology.

Quantum computing presents a different challenge. A sufficiently capable machine could compromise many encryption systems protecting communications and state secrets. Adversaries may collect encrypted material today in the hope of reading it once quantum capability matures.

Cyberwarfare is eroding distinctions between war and peace, combatant and civilian, battlefield and society. It offers weaker actors new leverage while giving powerful states unprecedented access to the systems on which their rivals depend.

The defining contest will be over which societies can absorb disruption without losing cohesion. Where almost every network is a potential battlefield, resilience becomes deterrence. The front line is woven into the infrastructure of modern life.

ASSESSING VIOLENCE IN WARTIME

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The return of large-scale war has become one of the defining features of the 2020s. Russia's invasion of Ukraine, the wars in Gaza and Sudan, and interstate confrontations elsewhere have effectively overturned post–Cold War assumptions about the decline of high-intensity armed conflict. In 2025, the Uppsala Conflict Data Program (UCDP) recorded 65 state-based armed conflicts — the highest number since its series began in 1946 — and approximately 245,000 deaths from organised violence, seven times the number recorded in 2010 and the second-highest annual toll since the Rwandan genocide in 1994. But these aggregate figures tell only part of the story. Equally important are changes in the character, targeting, and spatial distribution of violence.

The resurgence of interstate conflict is the clearest break with the recent past. UCDP recorded two interstate conflicts in 2023, four in 2024, and eight in 2025, the highest number in the post-1945 period. While most armed conflicts — from Sudan and Myanmar to the Democratic Republic of Congo and the Sahel — remain intrastate, struggles over political power, territory and exclusion, often expressed through ethnic or nationalist claims, continue to sustain civil violence. These dynamics also cross the interstate–intrastate divide: nationalism and territorial claims can fuel interstate war, while civil wars increasingly draw in outside states and armed groups operate across borders. Even so, the return of interstate war should not obscure the continuing violence inflicted on populations by states and armed groups *within* their own borders.

A second dimension concerns how violence is targeted: is force directed selectively at identifiable individuals or more broadly against populations? New military technologies have greatly increased the capacity for selectivity. Drones, surveillance, precision-guided munitions, and AI-assisted targeting permit targets to be identified and struck with unprecedented accuracy. But precision and selectivity are not synonymous. A munition can strike precisely where intended while producing wide-area effects, particularly when used in densely populated environments. The technological capacity to discriminate among targets has therefore increased considerably, without necessarily making wartime violence itself more selective.

"The return of interstate war should not obscure the continuing violence inflicted on populations by states and armed groups *within* their own borders."

The composition of casualties provides a different measure of contemporary violence. In the Russia–Ukraine war — an exceptionally lethal conventional conflict in which combatants constitute the lion's share of direct deaths — Ukraine accounted for roughly three-fifths of state-based battle deaths worldwide in 2025. Sudan presents a very different pattern. UCDP recorded a fivefold increase in deliberate one-sided violence against civilians between 2024 and 2025 — from around 14,300 to 76,500 deaths — driven largely by mass killing in Sudan. Action on Armed Violence (AOAV) similarly recorded nearly 50,000 deaths and injuries from explosive weapons in 2025; 91% were civilians, rising to 96% when these weapons were used in populated areas.

A final dimension concerns the drivers and geography of violence. Territorial conquest has returned to prominence, most visibly in Ukraine. With the exception of 2023, every year since 2020 has seen at least one new or reactivated interstate territorial dispute. But violence is also used to control populations, punish collaborators, extract resources, and displace communities with such processes often driven by local dynamics. Our earlier work on Rwanda and Burundi shows how the scale and spatial extent of ethnic violence can vary markedly across otherwise comparable episodes, as patterns of trust, individual behaviour, and social norms interact to determine whether violence remains localised or escalates.

These local dynamics also shape the geography of contemporary violence, concentrating it in particular hotspots: front lines, border regions, transport corridors, cities, and neighbourhoods. Cities have become especially consequential sites of high-intensity warfare. Gaza, Khartoum, and Ukrainian cities illustrate the effects of combining heavy explosive weapons with dense civilian settlement and vulnerable infrastructure. However, this does not constitute a simple shift from rural to urban warfare. Rural insurgency remains central in contexts like the Sahel, eastern Congo and Myanmar.

In sum, no single trend defines violence in the post-2020 period. Interstate war has become more prominent without displacing civil conflict, while selective targeting coexists with large-scale civilian harm. Territorial conquest has returned, but much violence remains localised, driven by struggles over control, identity, coercion and displacement. Its geography is equally uneven, concentrated in particular conflicts and local hotspots. Yet, the category of war itself does not capture all the organised violence characteristic of the period. In Mexico alone, organised crime has been associated with roughly 20,000 homicides annually during much of the 2020s. Assessing contemporary violence therefore requires looking beyond conventional categories and aggregate casualty counts to examine whom violence affects, why it is used, and where it is concentrated.



OMDURMAN, Sudan. A man walks past a damaged building near the war-damaged National Theater of Omdurman, as Sudanese dramatists in collaboration with local authorities have launched an initiative to restore it, as part of a wide-ranging reconstruction campaign. 7 November 2025. Ebrahim HAMID / AFP



NEW DYNAMICS OF WAR

UNDER EFFICIENCY'S SHADOW: THE ALGORITHMIC IMAGINARY OF WARFARE

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A soldier looks at a screen. A name and a photo appear, flagged by an algorithm as a militant. She has seconds to decide: is the person a lawful target? That, and little else, risks being the human judgment separating an AI recommendation from lethal force.

This is not about autonomous weapons which identify and attack targets without human involvement. It is the quieter reality of AI decision-support systems that increasingly shape military decisions, including those about life and death. Their appeal rests on a deceptively simple conviction: AI systems can solve demanding decision tasks better than humans. Faster. More accurately. More rationally. Seductive though it is, that promise risks displacing the human judgment the law of armed conflict depends upon.

Yet this promise echoes a familiar idea. Long before algorithms took centre stage, strategists envisioned perfecting decision-making through speed and precision. Today, AI represents the latest attempt to realise this ambition, but the difference lies in how much human judgement we are prepared to surrender in pursuit of it.

The modern ideal of accelerated decision-making is most closely associated with US Air Force Colonel John Boyd and his Observe, Orient, Decide, and Act (OODA) loop. Boyd argued that victory belongs to the side that can cycle through this loop faster than its adversary can respond. Decision-making speed, in this account, is not just one virtue among others. It is the decisive one.

That logic still shapes military thinking. It influences how militaries are trained, how command structures are designed, and how new technologies are evaluated.

AI has gained traction largely because it promises to fulfil this ambition better than humans can. For decades, rapid decision-making was understood as a distinctly human achievement, cultivated through training and intuition. Now, humans are increasingly cast as the main obstacle: prone to fatigue, cognitive overload, inconsistency, and delay. AI promises to remove these limits, drastically raising the bar for targeting emerging threats from minutes to an astonishing 1,000 tactical decisions per hour (one every 3.6 seconds). That compression far surpasses the speed of human thought.

The shift is easy to miss because the relentless pursuit of faster, more efficient decisions remains the ideal. Only the hero at the centre has changed. The subtle but profound result is that humans are transitioning from actively applying informed judgment to passively endorsing algorithmic suggestions.

This logic is in systems such as "Lavender" and "Gospel", reportedly used by Israeli forces in Gaza, or the "Maven Smart System", reportedly used by the US during Operation Epic Fury against Iran earlier this year. Promoted as AI decision-*support* tools, they increasingly perform tasks once reserved for trained military officers. Tasks that hold profound legal implications: identifying lawful targets and recommending whether to use force. Humans remain formally involved, but machine speed leaves little room for real review. Oversight risks becoming a mere "stamp of approval" for algorithmic recommendations, drastically altering the nature of military decision-making.

This redistribution of authority matters because it challenges a foundational assumption of the law of armed conflict: that decisions about the use of force remain the product of genuine human judgment. Obligations such as the distinction between civilians and combatants, proportionality, and the taking of feasible precautions in attack are not purely computational exercises but require contextual and qualitative evaluation. If meaningful deliberation migrates from the human to the algorithm, the legal architecture remains formally intact while its premise is quietly hollowed out.

The tension becomes clearest when optimising military decision-making collides with the law's protective logic. Optimisation prizes "maximum lethality". The law recognises the realities of combat, but insists that military necessity does not eclipse the obligation to protect civilians. Commanders, for instance, must take all feasible precautions before launching an attack, by assessing risks and considering whether civilian harm can be reduced. Those duties require deliberation, and deliberation takes time.

Once machine speed becomes the defining measure of ideal decision-making, deliberation about civilian protection risks appearing as inefficiency rather than a legal duty. Hence, civilian protection need not be explicitly abandoned to be weakened. It may instead erode more subtly, as growing faith in faster, AI-assisted decisions leaves ever less room for the human judgment the law demands.

It is tempting to treat this trajectory as inevitable, as if legally significant decisions will naturally migrate from humans to AI systems to win wars. But AI systems are not neutral "tools" that emerged from nowhere. They are general-purpose technologies that do whatever they were designed to do. Every system embodies human choices about what to optimise for and what kind of war it is preparing for.

Therefore, the current trajectory reveals less about what AI is than about the priorities and blind spots of the institutions shaping it. The push toward ever faster targeting decisions is not an objective insight into what war *must* become. It is a normative vision of what war *should* become, dressed in the borrowed authority of the machine.

This recognition offers both hope and caution. If today's AI systems mirror human choices, tomorrow's can reflect different ones. Changing course begins by rejecting the idea that this path is unavoidable. Then doing the harder work of imagining these technologies through a different set of priorities, values, and ambitions.

Ultimately, AI will not determine the future of warfare. Humans will. The real challenge in warfare, as everywhere else, lies not in deciding what AI can do, but in deciding what kind of humanity we want it to embody.

"The push toward ever faster targeting decisions is not an objective insight into what war *must* become. It is a normative vision of what war *should* become, dressed in the borrowed authority of the machine."

traffic_analyzer /iStock

GENDER WARS AND GENDERED WARS

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Vladimir Putin has justified the attack on Ukraine by conjuring a threat to Russian "traditional values". In his view, by associating itself with Europe, Ukraine embraced the "degeneracy" that comes with feminism and LGBTQ+ rights, which poses a threat to Russia, and in particular the Russian family, imagined as heteronormative and patriarchal. There is thus a continuity between the full-scale invasion of Ukraine and the Putin regime's anti-gay laws, its decriminalisation of domestic violence, and its designation of feminism as an extremist ideology. Analysts have largely ignored Putin's war justification, but one should not dismiss his claims too quickly. Indeed, scholars such as Petr Kratochvíl and Míla O'Sullivan have suggested that the war in Ukraine may be like no other in that it is explicitly motivated by concerns over gender: it is a "war on gender order". How could the demands of women and sexual/gender minorities for equal rights have become a threat — so much so that they have motivated a country to go to war?

To begin with, we should recognise that gender has long organised war. The stereotype that men go to war while women stay home has a long history. While empirically debatable (women have also gone to war, including in the World War II Soviet Union, and men have also stayed home and been victimised), the stereotype formulates a fundamental gender difference and seeds political motivations and justifications. These include the idea that men need to protect women, a ruse that feeds Putin's defence of "traditional" values as much as right-wing extremists' war on immigrants. They also include the idea that leaders need to defend the honour of the nation vis-à-vis others, which often entails displays of masculine strength.

But there is a new element in Putin's justification of the Ukraine invasion that goes beyond these kinds of performativities. It recognises that feminism and LGBTQ+ activism have delegitimised patriarchal gender orders and the authoritarian enlistments they permit. Thus, gender is no longer just a symbolic enactment, it has become an explicit object of domestic and foreign policies. Movements demanding equal rights have encountered opposition throughout history; but for the first time today, we witness an organised and internationally networked counter-movement that seeks to reverse the rights and recognitions that women and sex/gender minorities have so desperately fought for. Authoritarians around the world have jumped on the bandwagon of these "anti-gender movements", which reject the idea that gender constructions are social and malleable, defend the hetero-patriarchal family as natural and given, and paint the nation as homogenous and under threat. This leads them to oppose reproductive health and rights (including sex education and abortion), deny LBGTQ+ rights, and reject policies to counteract domestic violence. It also leads them to support authoritarian leaders ready to trample the rights of minorities in the name of saving the nation, or in some formulations, human civilisation.

> "For the first time today, we witness an organised and internationally networked counter-movement that seeks to reverse the rights and recognitions that women and sex/gender minorities have so desperately fought for."

Conversely, authoritarian governments have incorporated the ideas of anti-gender movements into their foreign policies. Thus, the Russian National Security Strategy defines as one of its goals the promotion of "traditional" values internationally, and the country has styled itself as the leader of a conservative alliance defending such values in the UN, where it spearheads anti-gender rhetoric designed to undermine the basic human right to non-discrimination. Similarly, the National Security Strategy of the United States includes as one of its goals reinvigorating "American spiritual and cultural health" through "strong, traditional families that raise healthy children", and it declares the "primacy of nations" as a principle of its foreign policy. It entangles a patriarchal gender order with nationalism to birth a new form of state chauvinism.

These gender wars have produced gendered wars: a patriarchal backlash that celebrates violent masculinity has also propelled new state aggression. If Russia's invasion of Ukraine is the iconic example, US military adventures replay the model: with an administration staffed by (accused and convicted) sexual predators, and having declared diversity and equity initiatives un-American, the country signals greatness as it wantonly metes out violence on migrants domestically, and on countries from Latin America to the Middle East internationally.

Gender lends passion to the foreign policy projects of these states. It appeals to vague and pre-discursive discomforts and insecurities in order to motivate forceful posturing. A seemingly unreflected attack, such as that of the US on Iran, becomes meaningful from this perspective: it shows the manly agency of a power needing to prove its superiority. Diplomacy and multilateralism together with values of cooperation and empathy stand for femininity and weakness in such an approach; soft power loses its value precisely because it is soft. By inaugurating a war against feminism, anti-gender movements have thus helped seed foreign policies that are proudly nationalist, muscular and ruthless.



VENICE, Italy. International women's movement Femen and Pussy Riot activists stage a protest against the participation of Russia in the Venice Biennale art show. 6 May 2026. Marco BERTORELLO/AFP



NEW DYNAMICS OF WAR

PARTIR OU MOURIR : LE DÉPLACEMENT FORCÉ, UNE ARME DE GUERRE COMME UNE AUTRE

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Les débats sur les conflits armées d'aujourd'hui se concentrent souvent sur les drones, l'intelligence artificielle, les budgets militaires ou les nouveaux déséquilibres géopolitiques. Ils laissent dans l'ombre l'arme la plus employée des guerres contemporaines, celle qui ne coûte presque rien, ne figure dans aucun catalogue d'armement et vise directement les civils : le déplacement forcé. En décembre 2025, 117,8 millions de personnes étaient déplacées par les conflits et les persécutions, dont 68,7 millions à l'intérieur de leur pays, selon le Haut-Commissariat des Nations Unies pour les réfugiés (HCR). Ces chiffres ne mesurent pas seulement la violence : ils en révèlent la logique.

Le déplacement forcé a longtemps été considéré comme un dommage collatéral, un effet regrettable mais inévitable des combats. Les guerres des années 2020 démentent cette lecture : vider un territoire de ses habitants n'est pas une conséquence indirecte des conflits armés ; c'est un objectif à part entière. Bombarder des quartiers entiers, détruire les infrastructures d'eau et d'électricité, affamer la population, ordonner des « évacuations » sans retour : autant de moyens d'obtenir un résultat démographique durable et de remporter la guerre. L'exode n'accompagne pas la guerre, il la gagne.

Le Soudan en est l'illustration la plus frappante et la plus ignorée. Depuis avril 2023, près d'un Soudanais sur trois – quelque 15 millions de personnes – a fui, à l'intérieur du pays ou au-delà des frontières, selon l'Organisation internationale pour les migrations. La chute d'El-Fasher, en octobre 2025, a jeté plus de 100 000 personnes sur les routes. À Gaza, c'est la quasi-totalité de la population civile qui a été déplacée de manière répétée d'un bout à l'autre de l'enclave palestinienne. Pour le Haut-Commissariat des Nations Unies aux droits de l'homme, il s'agirait d'un nettoyage ethnique. Pour bien d'autres encore, ces déplacements incessants participent à une politique d'anéantissement constitutive d'un génocide, dont la Cour internationale de justice a été saisie par l'Afrique du Sud. En Ukraine, la Cour pénale internationale a délivré dès mars 2023 ses premiers mandats d'arrêt pour déportation illégale d'enfants vers la Russie ; Kiev évoque le chiffre de 20 000 enfants, dont une infime minorité est rentrée.

TAIZ, Yémen. Des familles déplacées en raison des affrontements entre les forces fidèles au gouvernement yéménite et les forces houthistes soutenues par l'Iran. 16 septembre 2026. Marwan Abdullah Yahya Saeed AL-SHABI / Anadolu / AFP

Le droit international n'a pourtant pas été pris au dépourvu : il interdit clairement et fermement le déplacement forcé des civils depuis longtemps déjà. L'article 49 de la quatrième Convention de Genève de 1949 proscrit les transferts forcés et les déportations hors d'un territoire occupé et le Protocole additionnel II de 1977 prohibe le déplacement des civils dans les conflits internes, sauf lorsque la sécurité l'exige ou pour des raisons militaires impératives. Le Statut de Rome en fait à la fois un crime de guerre et un crime contre l'humanité, tandis que la Convention de Kampala de 2009 impose aux États africains d'ériger le déplacement arbitraire en un crime à part entière dans leur législation pénale.

Le problème n'est donc pas normatif, il est celui de l'application et de la volonté politique qui l'anime. Le 6 octobre 2025, la Cour pénale internationale a reconnu le chef janjawid Ali Muhammad Ali Abd-Al-Rahman coupable de 27 chefs de crimes de guerre et de crimes contre l'humanité, dont le transfert forcé de population, avant de le condamner en décembre à 20 ans de prison. Bien que ce jugement soit l'objet d'un appel, il demeure la première condamnation pour le Darfour, plus de 20 après les faits, alors que la région est de nouveau à feu et à sang. C'est dire que l'impunité conserve une confortable avance.

> « Des guerres qui chassent les civils et un monde qui se ferme à eux : c'est de cette rencontre que le déplacement forcé tire sa redoutable efficacité pour devenir une arme de guerre à part entière. »

Un second front, moins visible, est tout aussi décisif : le déplacement comme arme de guerre ne produit son plein effet que lorsque les civils chassés de leur terre sont abandonnés à leur sort sans perspective de protection. Or, en cette année 2026 où la Convention de Genève sur les réfugiés fête ses 75 ans, le droit d'asile est menacé plus que jamais. Externalisation des contrôles, refoulements à la frontière, accords de renvoi vers des pays tiers : les États multiplient les dispositifs destinés à tenir à distance ceux que la guerre chasse de leur pays. Les moyens humains et financiers s'effondrent au même rythme : le HCR a perdu environ 30% de ses ressources disponibles en 2025 et supprimé près de 5000 postes. On désarme l'asile au moment précis où le déplacement forcé devient une méthode de guerre.

De ce constat amer découlent trois exigences. Nommer, d'abord : le déplacement forcé n'est pas un accident humanitaire mais un crime qui doit être reconnu comme tel. Documenter et poursuivre, ensuite, même lorsque les responsables paraissent hors d'atteinte : mandats d'arrêt et poursuites pénales des responsables entravent leur déplacement, pèsent sur les négociations et conservent la mémoire des faits. Refuser, enfin, que la paix entérine la carte redessinée par la force de l'expulsion. Aucun accord ne devrait valider le fait accompli du nettoyage ethnique, ni écarter le droit au retour, sous peine de récompenser la méthode et d'en garantir la répétition.

Des guerres qui chassent les civils et un monde qui se ferme à eux : c'est de cette rencontre que le déplacement forcé tire sa redoutable efficacité pour devenir une arme de guerre à part entière. La désarmer suppose moins d'inventer des règles nouvelles que d'appliquer, enfin, celles que nous avons ; car dans notre monde interconnecté où les exactions se déroulent sous nos yeux, personne ne peut dire qu'il ne savait pas.

LE RESPECT DU DROIT DE LA GUERRE NE DIT RIEN DU GÉNOCIDE

Paola **Gaeta**
Professeure de droit international et directrice des études ; co-présidente de la Geneva Academy

C'est en se plongeant dans les décrets et règlements pris sous l'occupation nazie en Europe que Raphael Lemkin a forgé, en 1944, le mot « génocide ». Il en tira aussitôt une conséquence pratique : il fallait interdire expressément le génocide en temps de guerre, en amendant le Règlement de La Haye de 1907, instrument qui contient les règles sur l'occupation militaire, et prévoir par ailleurs un traité qui obligerait chaque État à inscrire dans son code pénal la protection des groupes vivant sur son territoire, car le génocide, écrivait-il, n'est pas seulement un problème de guerre, mais aussi de paix.

Or il écrit à un moment où l'occupation ne connaît d'autres règles que celles de ce Règlement (la quatrième Convention de Genève, adoptée en 1949 précisément pour protéger, entre autres, les civils et la population des territoires occupés, n'existe pas encore) et où le droit de la guerre (que l'on appelle aujourd'hui aussi droit international humanitaire) ne régit que les conflits entre États. Une guerre interne se déroule alors hors de son champ. Il faudra attendre l'article 3 commun aux quatre Conventions de Genève de 1949, puis le développement d'autres règles, pour que le droit de la guerre s'occupe aussi des conflits internes. Rien, dans le schéma de Lemkin, n'est prévu pour le génocide commis au cours d'un conflit armé sans occupation, ni pour celui qu'un État commettrait sur son propre territoire en pleine guerre civile : ce sont pourtant les situations d'où sont nées la plupart des allégations de génocide portées depuis.

Le vœu de Lemkin n'a du reste pas été exaucé. Ni les Conventions de Genève ni les instruments adoptés par la suite n'ont inscrit l'interdiction du génocide dans le droit de la guerre. Une autre voie a été suivie : celle d'un instrument séparé, la Convention de 1948, qui fait du génocide un crime en temps de paix comme en temps de guerre et oblige les États à le prévenir et à le réprimer.

Reste que ni la Convention ni les traités qui régissent la guerre ne disent quoi que ce soit de leur rapport mutuel. Or toute guerre entraîne des morts et de terribles souffrances parmi les civils. Comment savoir, alors, si l'on est en présence d'un génocide, ou « seulement » d'une guerre ?

Pour Lemkin, celui qui respecte le droit de la guerre ne peut commettre de génocide, puisque ce droit repose sur l'idée, héritée de Rousseau, que les guerres doivent se livrer entre forces armées et non contre les populations civiles. Le principe est ancien et il est juste : depuis la Déclaration de Saint-Pétersbourg de 1868, le seul but légitime que les États doivent poursuivre à la guerre est d'affaiblir les forces militaires de l'ennemi. Il n'épuise pourtant pas la question, car le droit de la guerre comporte quantité de règles souples qui, tout en servant ce but, tolèrent des pertes et des souffrances parmi les civils. Ainsi, pour ne prendre que cet exemple, de celles qui admettent les pertes civiles comme dommages collatéraux, pourvu qu'elles ne soient pas excessives par rapport à l'avantage militaire attendu et que les précautions requises aient été prises. Mais comment mesure-t-on qu'une perte civile est proportionnée, surtout si l'on ne connaît pas les calculs faits par les commandants militaires ?

Cette marge d'appréciation s'élargit encore lorsqu'une partie au conflit armé ne se donne plus seulement pour but d'affaiblir les forces adverses, mais d'anéantir l'adversaire lui-même : non plus son aile militaire, mais l'organisation elle-même, comme dans les guerres menées au nom de la sécurité nationale. Le calcul de la proportionnalité dans les attaques militaires s'en trouve déformé : l'avantage militaire attendu, que le droit de la guerre exige « concret et direct » lorsqu'il faut le mettre en balance avec les pertes civiles, se dilate jusqu'à se confondre avec la victoire elle-même, et il n'est plus guère de perte civile qui ne puisse être présentée comme proportionnée.

> « Rien n'exclut donc qu'une partie au conflit poursuive un génocide à la faveur de la guerre, ou par le moyen de la guerre, sans jamais enfreindre le droit qui la régit. »

Il est donc parfaitement possible qu'une partie au conflit poursuive, outre l'affaiblissement des forces adverses, voire leur anéantissement, la destruction totale ou partielle d'un groupe national, ethnique, racial ou religieux, ce qui est précisément la marque du génocide, tout en soutenant qu'elle respecte le droit de la guerre et en causant des pertes civiles énormes qu'une lecture complaisante de certaines de ses règles permettra même de justifier.

Le problème, en vérité, est ailleurs. Pour établir s'il y a génocide en temps de guerre, il ne faudrait pas même s'engager dans le labyrinthe de la conformité des actions d'une partie au conflit aux règles du droit de la guerre. D'abord parce que l'interdiction du génocide ne dépend pas d'un constat préalable de violation de ce droit. Ensuite parce que les deux corps de règles ne protègent pas la même chose. L'interdiction du génocide protège le droit de certains groupes à exister en tant que tels ; le droit de la guerre cherche à réduire les souffrances que la guerre cause et il ne dit rien du droit à l'existence de ces groupes.

Rien n'exclut donc qu'une partie au conflit poursuive un génocide à la faveur de la guerre, ou par le moyen de la guerre, sans jamais enfreindre le droit qui la régit. Imaginons une levée en masse : à l'approche de l'ennemi, la population civile d'une ville, qui appartient à un groupe ethnique déterminé, prend spontanément les armes. Elle devient par là un objectif militaire licite. Si l'ennemi la tue, le droit de la guerre est respecté, et rien n'empêche pour autant que ces meurtres soient constitutifs d'un génocide, dès lors qu'ils s'accompagnent de l'intention de détruire le groupe.

La question qui commande n'est pas de savoir comment une guerre est menée, mais ce qu'elle cherche à détruire. Lorsqu'un État poursuit la destruction d'un groupe pendant une guerre, ce n'est pas en vérifiant le respect du droit de la guerre que l'on établira le génocide. Une guerre peut être conduite selon les règles et avoir pour horizon la destruction d'un groupe humain.



LA HAYE, Pays-Bas. L'audience s'ouvre à la Cour internationale de justice dans le cadre de la première audience au cours de laquelle le Myanmar est accusé d'avoir commis un génocide à l'encontre de la minorité musulmane du pays, les Rohingyas. 12 janvier 2026. Phil NIJHUIS / ANP / AFP

Ce texte a été traduit de l'italien à l'aide de l'intelligence artificielle avant d'être relu et validé par l'auteure.



L'ENSEIGNEMENT

La Chaire Yves Otramare Religion et politique dans le monde contemporain : un lieu de libre pensée

Entretien avec
Jean-François **Bayart**
Professeur d'anthropologie et de sociologie ; titulaire de la Chaire Yves Oltramare Religion et politique dans le monde contemporain

Jean-François Bayart, spécialiste de sociologie historique et comparée du politique, est professeur d'anthropologie et de sociologie à l'Institut, où il occupe depuis 2015 la chaire Yves Oltramare Religion et politique dans le monde contemporain. Ses travaux portent notamment sur le rôle de la religion dans la formation de l'État et proposent une nouvelle problématisation de l'identité, de la culture et de la mondialisation. Il quittera l'Institut à la fin de l'année 2026.

La relation entre les deux thèmes au cœur de votre chaire – religion et politique – ne va pas nécessairement de soi. Comment avez-vous construit ce dialogue au fil des années, à travers vos enseignements et vos recherches ?

C'est la proposition de Philippe Burrin et d'Yves Oltramare d'occuper la chaire Religion et politique dans le monde contemporain qui m'a amené à systématiser ma réflexion sur la question. Mais j'avais rencontré le problème à partir de mes recherches de terrain en Afrique subsaharienne, en Turquie et en Iran, et au fil de ma réflexion sur (ou plutôt contre !) l'identité. J'avais développé un paradigme de la « cité culturelle » dès le début des années 1990. Ma première communication à un colloque scientifique portait sur la fonction de substitution politique des Églises au Cameroun. C'est elle qui m'a permis d'entrer dans le monde de la recherche. Au fond, cette proposition inattendue d'occuper la Chaire Yves Oltramare s'est inscrite dans la logique d'un itinéraire intellectuel, même si elle m'a surpris à l'époque. Je rends hommage à Yves Oltramare en publiant à l'automne, en guise d'au revoir, une synthèse de mes enseignements sur le sujet [voir p. 62].

Quels ont été les principaux défis dans le développement de cette chaire, et quelles réalisations vous semblent aujourd'hui les plus marquantes ?

Grâce à la bienveillance de l'Institut, d'Yves Oltramare, des étudiant·es et du public, je n'ai pas rencontré de difficulté majeure bien que le sujet soit devenu politiquement explosif. Quand on vient de France, on ne peut être qu'impressionné par la maturité du débat à Genève, où le public fait preuve d'une sensibilité et d'une culture religieuses qui facilitent la prise en compte de ce que Max Weber nommait les « logiques intrinsèques » de la foi dans leur rapport au politique. En onze ans, la chaire n'a pas soulevé la moindre polémique alors qu'elle a accueilli des intervenant·es de tous horizons sur les sujets les plus divers. Je suis fier d'en avoir fait un lieu de libre pensée. Mon autre satisfaction est d'avoir intéressé à la question religieuse des étudiant·es qui ne la considéraient pas nécessairement dans leur cursus universitaire et d'avoir constitué sur cette base le réseau des chercheur·es associé·es de la chaire, qui ont joué un rôle crucial dans son rayonnement, notamment en prenant en charge la réalisation des *Entretiens de la Chaire Yves Oltramare* – aujourd'hui une vidéothèque de près d'une centaine d'enregistrements de conversations entre des étudiant·es et des universitaires de haut vol – et en animant son ancrage dans la cité par divers partenariats, par exemple avec les Cinémas du Grütli ou le Château Mercier à Sierre.

Jean-François Bayart.
Boris PALEROY

Le religieux est souvent présenté comme un facteur central des conflits contemporains. Comment analysez-vous cette lecture ? Quelle est l'articulation avec le politique ?

Il faut d'abord comprendre l'historicité de la catégorie même de religion. Dans son acception contemporaine, elle n'apparaît qu'au début du XIX[e] siècle, en même temps que celles de l'économique, du politique, de la nation, de la sexualité, de la science, etc., en tant que champs spécifiques et autonomes. Elle se mondialise ensuite en même temps que la domination impériale de l'Occident et le capitalisme. Sous couvert de révolution industrielle et de progrès, le XIX[e] siècle a été simultanément un Grand Siècle de la religion, de la nation, du capitalisme, du culturalisme, dans un moment de passage d'un monde d'empires à un monde d'États-nations. C'est cette concomitance qui crée un nouveau rapport de César à Dieu, généralement, mais pas systématiquement, sous la forme d'une définition ethnoreligieuse et fondamentaliste – *völkisch* – de la citoyenneté, avec ce que cela comporte de passage à la violence politique, voire génocidaire. De la Russie aux États-Unis, de l'Inde à l'Amérique latine, le retour à l'autoritarisme et la résurgence des révolutions conservatrices de l'entre-deux-guerres, auxquels n'échappe pas l'Europe occidentale, en sont des illustrations. De même que les principaux conflits qui déchirent la planète. Et cette histoire est toute politique, plutôt que religieuse. Dieu est le dindon de cette farce sinistre, si j'ose dire.

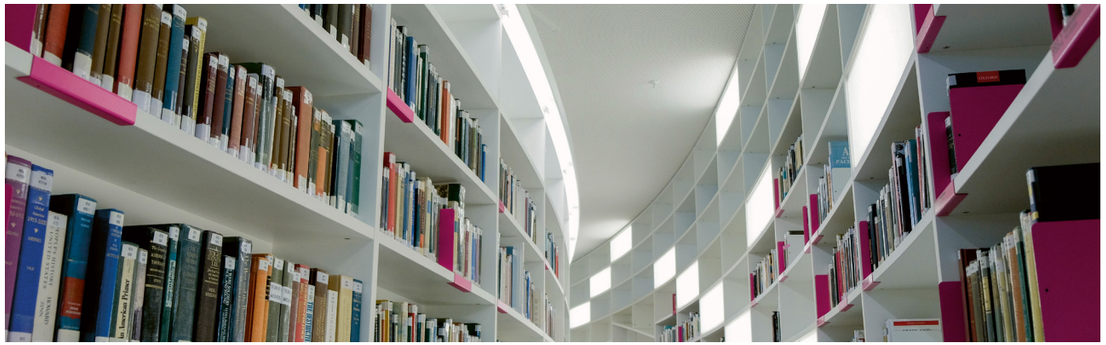
Après plus d'une décennie à la tête de cette chaire, quel regard portez-vous sur l'évolution des débats académiques autour des liens entre religion et politique ?

Sur cette question comme sur d'autres, nous sommes en pleine régression. La liberté scientifique, la liberté de pensée tout court est menacée par la définition identitariste, fondamentaliste, de la nation qui fait de l'Université son ennemie. Genève vit dans une bulle qui ne doit pas faire illusion sur ce qui se passe, ne serait-ce qu'à une dizaine de kilomètres de sa Vieille Ville.

À l'heure de quitter l'Institut, quel héritage intellectuel souhaitez-vous transmettre aux étudiant·es et chercheur·es qui poursuivront ces réflexions ?

Celui de la reconnaissance, car j'ai passé à la chaire les meilleures années de ma vie professionnelle. Celui de la valeur et de l'indépendance du travail intellectuel, indispensable à la liberté aussi bien politique que spirituelle. Celui de la *philia* car l'Université n'est pas forcément un puits de haines recuites. Celui de la nécessité de voir les étudiant·es non comme des consommateurs de la connaissance, mais comme des producteurs de cette dernière. Par leurs travaux et par le biais du réseau de ses chercheur·es associé·es, ils ont joué un rôle majeur dans la vitalité de la chaire.

Philip Gorski, professeur d'anthropologie et de sociologie, sera le nouveau titulaire de la Chaire Oltramare dès janvier 2027. Il donnera une conférence inaugurale le 17 novembre 2026 à la Maison de la paix sur le thème « Religion and the Radical Right: What We Do and Don't Know ».



L'ENSEIGNEMENT

Welcome to Our New Faculty Members



Rama Salla **Dieng**

Associate Professor, Gender, International Relations and Political Science; Co-Director of the Gender Centre

PhD, SOAS University of London

Rama Salla Dieng is a political scientist and an international development specialist whose research focuses on feminist international relations, African politics, and feminist political economy analyses of large-scale land acquisitions in export horticulture, labour in global value chains, social reproduction, and food in Africa and Western Europe. She regularly advises governments, international development agencies, and civil society organisations on gender-transformative and feminist policies, intersectionality, and decolonisation.



Sean **Flynn**

Professor of Practice, Master in International and Development Studies; Director of the Centre on Knowledge Governance

PhD, Harvard Law School

Sean Flynn researches and teaches on the intersection of intellectual property, international law, and human rights. As Director of the Centre on Knowledge Governance, he designs and manages a wide variety of research, convening and technical assistance projects that promote the public interest in intellectual property and information law. He chairs the Global Expert Network on Copyright User Rights and is a founding member of the Global Congress on Intellectual Property and the Public Interest.



Stella **Ghervas**

Professor, International History and Politics; Pierre du Bois Chair Europe and the World;
Professor and Eugen Weber Chair in Modern European History, University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA)

PhD, University of Geneva ; PhD, University of Bucharest

Stella Ghervas is a historian of Europe whose research focuses on intellectual and international history, with particular attention to peace and peacemaking, ideas in politics, diplomacy, and international (dis)order. Her work explores Europe's engagement with the wider world, Russia and Eurasia, including maritime and oceanic history, and transnational political communities formed within and beyond empires. She has held teaching, research, and visiting positions on four continents, from Australia to the United Kingdom and Russia.



Awet **Weldemichael**

Professor, International History and Politics

PhD, University of California, Los Angeles

Awet Weldemichael has worked on contemporary history and comparative politics of the Horn of Africa and island Southeast Asia. More recently, he has focused on the conflict dynamics in the countries of the Horn of Africa and their adjoining waters. His research focuses on Ethiopia, Eritrea, Somalia and Sudan, the Red Sea and the western Indian Ocean. His current projects include "Somalia and the Western Indian Ocean after Piracy" and "Unending Cycles? Eritrea and Ethiopia on the Cusp of Another Conflict".

L'ENSEIGNEMENT

Europe and the World: From the Inside Out and from the Outside In

Interview with
Stella **Ghervas**
Professor of International History and Politics and Pierre du Bois Chair Europe and the World ; Professor and Eugen Weber Chair in Modern European History at UCLA



Stella Ghervas.
Boris PALEFROY

You have longstanding ties to Geneva. How does returning to the city and joining the Institute connect with your own intellectual journey?

Geneva is not simply a place I am returning to; it is where an important part of my intellectual journey began. I lived and worked here for many years, and it was here that I became interested in European history and began to see Europe not merely as a geographical space, but as a historical problem. Some of the questions that have accompanied my work ever since were already taking shape in Geneva.

Coming back now offers a chance to revisit those questions from a different vantage point. The Graduate Institute is a particularly stimulating place to do so, given its long tradition of bringing history into dialogue with international affairs and of thinking across national and disciplinary boundaries. It is also an interesting moment to return, as the Institute approaches its centenary in 2027. For me, there is something intellectually satisfying about returning to a place where these questions first took shape, but now being able to approach them from a broader perspective.

Which questions would you like to develop through the Pierre du Bois Chair Europe and the World in your research and teaching?

I would like to pursue more fully a history of Europe that does not take the nation-state, or even Europe itself, as a self-evident framework. Europe is a relatively small geographical space, but its history has been shaped by constant connections with the wider world: through migration, commerce, diplomacy, law, and the circulation of ideas, but also through war, imperial expansion, colonialism, and decolonisation. We therefore need to look at Europe both from the inside out and from the outside in. How does Europe appear from Africa, Asia, or the Americas? And how might those perspectives alter the history we tell about Europe?

Challenging Eurocentric views of the world also means challenging Western-centric views of Europe. This is not just about adding more material to an already crowded history, but about changing the questions we ask.

Your work focuses on systems of peace in Europe. What historical lessons can help us better understand and manage contemporary conflicts, particularly the Russian-Ukrainian war?

History cannot provide a ready-made solution to a contemporary war, and historians should be wary of pretending otherwise. What it can do is enlarge our sense of the possible. European history offers a range of ways of containing conflict and organising coexistence: from the balance of power and plans for perpetual peace, through diplomatic congresses and territorial settlements, to international law and institutions of political cooperation. Each sought to give peace a more durable foundation.

One lesson stands out: ending a war and making peace are not the same thing. A ceasefire may stop the fighting, but peace has to address questions of justice and security, legitimacy and political inclusion. This is especially relevant to Ukraine. The question is not only how the war ends, but what kind of international order follows it, and how that can make peace last. Peace has to be established and, in a sense, engineered; simply declaring it is not enough.

L'ENSEIGNEMENT

Defining and Redefining Middle East Politics in the Classroom

Christiana **Parreira**
Assistant Professor of International Relations/Political Science



Christiana Parreira. Camila ALVES

Students in my courses on Middle East politics rarely arrive empty-handed; they come with questions they want answered. Was this election meaningful? Does this regime rest on anything more than coercion? Is this country a democracy, and does that label even matter? The stakes are normative and practical as well as intellectual. Many students at the Institute come from the region, work on it, or intend to, and they usually come with the expectation that a semester of study will lend conclusive insights.

In my classes, I try to push back against two natural inclinations. The first is to follow the headlines, treating the classroom as a place to keep up with an all-consuming news cycle. The second is to retreat into abstraction, teaching as though the urgency in the room were a distraction from the analysis. I think political science contributes something else. Social science does not tell us what is happening (our own attention to events does that faster). Instead, it tells us what kind of thing is happening: what a case resembles, and what has tended to follow from cases like it.

My courses, therefore, begin with conceptual work. Early in the semester, I ask students to take a term we all use loosely, such as "electoral competitiveness" or "civil society freedom"; to work through several existing definitions; and then to propose one of their own that could actually be applied to a case. I then ask them what their definition leaves out. The exercise is deflating, but in a productive way. Students find that their disagreements about whether a given country counts as democratic are often disagreements about the concept they are using to assess it, rather than about the country itself. I give this more weight than I once did, because the definitions students settle on early will carry the analytical work they do for the rest of the semester. I often find that students take real pleasure in dismantling a definition, including one they have just proposed themselves.

The second core aspect of my teaching is comparison, which has, among other uses, a specific corrective function. The Middle East has long been treated as exceptional, driven by irrationality, and resistant to the categories that travel elsewhere. This is true in public discourse and has often been true of scholarly work as well. Dynamics like widespread authoritarian durability or prolonged violent conflict appear singular only until they are set beside similar dynamics in other regions, at which point the case and its comparators become more legible. Comparison does not settle the case at hand; it tells students which family of cases it belongs to, and what has happened in that family before. That is a slower kind of knowledge, and less satisfying in the moment, but it is the kind that survives the news cycle.

What I hope students leave with, then, is not detachment. Their commitments are usually the reason they are in the room, and I don't think our role is to cool them. I hope instead that they leave able to say precisely what they think is happening, on what evidence, and under which definition. I hope, too, that they are at ease when the answer sits in a grey zone rather than at either end of it.

L'ENSEIGNEMENT

Artificial Intelligence and the Future of Teaching and Learning

Laurent **Neury**
Executive Director of Studies



Laurent Neury. Boris PALEFROY

Artificial intelligence (AI) is rapidly reshaping higher education. Students increasingly rely on AI to search the literature, organise information, improve their writing, and explore new ideas, while faculty are incorporating these tools into teaching and research. The question is therefore no longer whether AI belongs in higher education, but how it can be integrated in ways that enhance learning while preserving academic integrity and intellectual rigour.

Recent surveys conducted at the Geneva Graduate Institute illustrate this transformation. Nearly 88% of Master's students and 93% of members of the academic community report using AI in their academic activities. Equally noteworthy, both groups express a balanced view of these technologies. They recognise AI's potential to support learning while remaining aware of its limitations, which include hallucinations, bias, data protection concerns, and the risk of over-reliance.

These findings are consistent with the emerging literature. Recent research suggests that AI is changing not only how students learn but also the relationship between students, instructors, and knowledge itself. Personalised learning, immediate feedback, and improved access to information can enhance learning and student engagement, but only if AI is used to support rather than replace human judgement. The same literature highlights the importance of preserving critical thinking, meaningful interaction, and ethical responsibility as AI becomes increasingly embedded in higher education.

For universities, the implications are clear. Rather than focusing primarily on detecting inappropriate AI use, institutions should rethink teaching, assessment, and the skills they seek to develop. Greater emphasis should be placed on reasoning, critical analysis, oral communication, creativity, and reflection. AI literacy is becoming an essential academic competence: students must learn not only how to use AI effectively, but also how to evaluate its outputs, understand its limitations, and exercise sound judgement.

This evolution also reflects changing labour market expectations. As AI becomes part of everyday professional practice, employers increasingly value graduates who combine technological fluency with critical thinking, ethical judgement, communication skills, and the ability to collaborate effectively. These distinctly human capabilities are likely to become even more valuable as AI continues to transform knowledge-intensive professions.

Artificial intelligence will undoubtedly remain a defining feature of higher education. The challenge is neither to resist nor to embrace it uncritically, but to ensure that technology remains a means rather than an end. Universities have a central role to play in preparing graduates who can use AI thoughtfully, responsibly, and critically. In this sense, the future of higher education will depend less on the technology itself than on our ability to place human judgement, ethics, and intellectual curiosity at the centre of its use.



LES ÉTUDIANT·ES

100 Years, 100 Actions

Eliza Jo **Varghese**
Graduate Institute Student Association (GISA) President

Moisés **Juárez**
GISA Events Coordinator

Founded in 1927 to safeguard global stability and cultivate future diplomats, the Geneva Graduate Institute has spent nearly a century shaping international affairs. For the past 99 years, our students have advanced peacebuilding efforts and driven sustainable development across the world. Nurtured by Geneva's unique multilateral ecosystem, this community has continuously launched initiatives that transformed international institutions, governments, and economies. Now, as we stand on the eve of the Institute's centenary, current students are uniting to create a tangible, immediate impact right here in our host city.

100 Years, 100 Actions is a milestone community engagement programme led by the Graduate Institute Student Association (GISA). It challenges individual students, collaborative groups, and GISA initiatives to carry out 100 distinct civic actions, leaving a meaningful and lasting imprint on Geneva. The programme provides a public platform for emerging leaders to apply their academic expertise and implement projects that are firmly grounded in the values of human rights. By bridging the campus and the city, it invites local residents to engage directly with the innovative work of our student body. All actions are streamlined under three driving themes: Social Impact, Knowledge for Impact, and Sustainability.

To facilitate this historic momentum, GISA will open submissions for proposals during the first half of each semester in this academic year. Participants can register projects, request needs-based microgrants of up to CHF 250, and submit post-event media through a streamlined digital portal. Allocation decisions, guided by the Centennial Taskforce, will prioritise thematic alignment, practical feasibility, and genuine community benefit. Each completed project will be publicly documented on a centenary webpage, which will serve as a living testament to how our student community steps forward to ignite change during this landmark year.

As we witness profound transitions in diplomacy, international institutions, and international affairs, it is important that innovative ideas and initiatives arise. The almost-century-long history of the Institute is defined by its contribution to the development of progressive and inclusive ideas that have consistently influenced international relations. Through the *100 Years, 100 Actions* programme, GISA invites the stewards of tomorrow to add their own chapter to this rich history and showcase their ideas that will steer the world towards a brighter horizon.

Moisés Juárez and Eliza Jo Varghese.
Boris PALEFROY



LES ÉTUDIANT·ES

When Rumours Become Security: Davis Projects for Peace in Goma

Hafssa **Kouskous**
PhD Researcher in International History and Politics

Hafssa Kouskous is the 2026 Recipient of the Davis Projects for Peace grant with her project "When Rumours Become Security: Youth Digital Peacewatch Network and Urban Conflict Prevention in Eastern DRC".

In Goma, in the eastern Democratic Republic of Congo, insecurity is not produced by armed violence alone. It is also produced discursively, through the circulation of information. A WhatsApp voice note announcing an imminent attack can empty a market within minutes. An unverified alert can reconfigure how entire neighbourhoods move, trade, and extend trust. Whether the anticipated violence materialises is almost secondary. The rumour has already performed its work: fear has circulated, behaviour has shifted, and the urban fabric has reorganised itself around a threat that may never arrive. Rumour, in this sense, does not merely reflect insecurity. It constitutes it.

Dominant policy responses frame this phenomenon through the lens of misinformation, privileging fact-checking and correction. My project proceeds from a different premise: rumour circulation is a security phenomenon in its own right, one that resists the truth and falsity binary on which the misinformation paradigm rests. Rumours in conflict settings are frequently neither false nor deliberately deceptive. They are shared because people are afraid, and because sharing operates as a vernacular practice of protection. Correcting facts does little to address the affective conditions that make rumours travel.

The project trains young people in Goma as "digital peacewatchers": ethical intermediaries embedded in the digital spaces where rumours circulate. Their role is neither to police information nor to surveil their communities, but to contextualise, verify where possible, and de-escalate fear through reassurance. In a region where surveillance carries considerable historical and political weight, the project is deliberately built around an ethic of care rather than one of control.

The work is conducted in partnership with the National Partnership of Children and Youth in Peacebuilding (NPCYP), a Goma-based organisation with longstanding roots in community peacebuilding. Given the security environment in North Kivu, we have adopted a hybrid model combining remote coordination with in-person activities led by the local team.

The peacewatchers operate through a five-stage protocol: detect, log, verify against trusted local sources, confirm through the network, and respond. The sequence is deliberately simple. In moments of heightened tension, what matters is not analytical sophistication but speed, consistency, and trust. The protocol is also transferable: it depends on no particular technology or platform, but on a trained human network capable of applying it wherever rumours and insecurity intersect.

Should the pilot prove conclusive, the ambition is to extend the model to other urban centres in eastern DRC and to other African contexts marked by similar dynamics. A further ambition is to develop a technological layer: open-source detection software that serves the peacewatchers as a tool, amplifying their capacity rather than replacing their judgment. For now, the work begins in Goma.

GOMA, Democratic Republic of the Congo. "When Rumours Become Security: Youth Digital Peacewatch Network and Urban Conflict Prevention in Eastern DRC" meeting. 17 July 2026.

LES ÉTUDIANT·ES

Master's Thesis on Gaza's Humanitarian Space Wins the 2026 War and Peace Prize

Interview with
Rana Nur **Aydın**
Recent Graduate in International and Development Studies (MINT)



Kemal Mohamedou alongside Rana Nur Aydın, recipient of the award. Eric ROSET

Rana Nur Aydın won the 2026 War and Peace Prize for her Master's thesis in International and Development Studies (MINT), "Reconfiguration of Humanitarian Space in Gaza post October 2023".

Please tell us about your master's thesis.

My thesis examines the reconfiguration of humanitarian space in Gaza since October 2023. Building on the literature, I defined humanitarian space as physical, actor and legal spaces, and asked what has collapsed but, more importantly, what has been constructed in its place across these spaces. In physical space, I analysed land-crossing regimes, new aid procedures and bureaucracies, new logistics and modalities, and the reproduction of Gaza's internal geography through infrastructural warfare, humanitarian, and militarised zones. In actor space, I examined how principled humanitarian actors are dismantled and delegitimised, and who is favoured instead. In legal space, I analysed how legal frameworks are used to displace the occupying power's obligations and how the domestic legal regime is instrumentalised to override international humanitarian law. Together, I tried to demonstrate how spaces designed to alleviate suffering have been reorganised into a humanitarian order serving the genocidal agenda of the occupying power.

What inspired you to work on the topic?

I have been deeply engaged with Gaza since October 2023, in academic, policy, and activist circles, and my master's thesis seemed like the right opportunity to add to my critical and academic engagement as a student. Two observations from the literature motivated me. First, existing registers on the humanitarian situation, while indispensable, mostly treated it as an outcome of collapse, a catastrophe to be measured or denounced, rather than a process of reconfiguration. The consequences and their possible reasons are well studied, but the processes, sequence of actions, and emerging new order are not. Second, there were many good arguments but no systematic analysis of daily data, despite abundant consistent data. I wanted to design a rigorous study, and process traced daily data, presented in tables, maps, and graphics, to show cumulative change over two years for future researchers and practitioners.

What does winning the War and Peace Prize mean to you?

Its meaning comes from Professor Mohamedou, whom I never met but came to know through his work. The prize is a huge honour to me because it commemorates a respected academic and teacher, but also a politician, policymaker, leader, defender of rights, and lifelong curious learner. His work provides a clear lens for understanding contexts and events, drawing on enormously rich knowledge from diverse fields and extensive experience, while maintaining a critical stance toward his own thinking. He masterfully observes processes and shows their marks on outcomes, while always leaving room for, and reminding us of the certainty of, further transformation in the processes that follow. Having a strong position on my topic, I tried to challenge and question all my assumptions and the baggage I brought to it, and in my conclusions I tried to capture a picture still in the making without fixing it in place. To me, receiving this prize not only recognises my effort to explore and navigate the complex realm of war and peace, but also suggests that my work resonates with Professor Mohamedou's memory and remarkable scholarly tradition.

The War and Peace Prize was introduced in 2025 in honour of the late Professor Mohammad-Mahmoud Mohamedou and aims to distinguish excellent master's theses that fall within the thematic range of war and peace from a historical and/or political science perspective.

LES ALUMNAE·I

Meet Indrek Sirp, Special Advisor for Defence Industry Development, Ministry of Defence of Estonia



Indrek Sirp. Ministry of Defence of Estonia

Can you briefly present your career path and your current role?

I have spent more than two decades working in defence and national security policy. I joined the Estonian Ministry of Defence in 2001, working first on bilateral relations and later on Baltic defence cooperation. From 2010 to 2013, immediately after my graduation from the Geneva Graduate Institute, I was Director of International Cooperation. I also worked as Rail Baltic project manager at the Ministry of Economic Affairs, and served as Estonia's Defence Policy Adviser in Washington, DC, and then as Director of National Security and Defence Coordination at the Government Office, advising the Prime Minister.

Today, I am Special Advisor for Defence Industry Development at the Ministry of Defence. My work focuses on strengthening Estonia's defence-industrial base, including developing defence industry parks and new production capabilities for ammunition and explosives. I also initiated the establishment of Hexest Materials AS, a state-owned military explosives company, and serve on its Supervisory Board.

What are the main challenges in your work today?

Russia's full-scale war against Ukraine has fundamentally changed Europe's security environment. Europe has rediscovered that credible defence requires not only capable armed forces but also sufficient industrial capacity. The challenge is both scale and speed: we need to increase production rapidly while creating sustainable capabilities for the longer term.

In Estonia, this means developing industrial infrastructure, attracting private investment, adapting regulations, managing planning and environmental requirements, and turning defence needs into viable industrial projects. Expectations are high, and new production capacity needs to become operational quickly.

How has your experience at the Graduate Institute shaped your career?

I graduated in 2010 with a Master's degree in International History and Politics. My studies helped me place the practical security-policy issues I was already working on into a broader historical and international context.

Geneva also provided a uniquely international environment. Security policy requires an understanding not only of military affairs, but also of history, economics, diplomacy, and international institutions. That perspective has been valuable throughout my career. I was also attracted by the Institute's bilingual environment: I wanted to learn French, and I did — although I have had fewer opportunities to use it since.

What advice would you give to students interested in careers in security and public policy?

Develop a broad understanding of the world and avoid specialising too narrowly too early. Security and public policy increasingly combine geopolitics, economics, technology, industry, and society.

Seek practical experience. Internships, part-time work, or professional roles help turn academic knowledge and analytical skills into real-world value. Policy is ultimately about turning analysis into decisions and decisions into results.

Finally, remain curious and adaptable. The central issues in European and global security have changed considerably during my career. The ability to understand change, learn quickly, and translate strategic objectives into practical action is one of the most valuable skills you can develop.

Jean-Pierre Gontard

Class of 1967

Throughout his career, Jean-Pierre Gontard embarked on a remarkable journey spanning continents and disciplines. From his tenure at the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) to his appointment by the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (FDFA) as a mediator, he navigated conflict zones in Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, and beyond. His pivotal role in facilitating dialogue between warring factions in Africa, Asia, and later in Colombia, along with his contributions to academia and cultural initiatives, underscores his profound commitment to humanitarian causes and cross-border collaboration. Through his endeavours, Jean-Pierre Gontard exemplifies the transformative impact of individuals dedicated to fostering peace and understanding on a global scale.





J.-P. Gontard

During one of his trips to Jordan for the ICRC during the Black September conflict that opposed the Jordanian monarchy and the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) in 1971, Gontard had the opportunity to negotiate with Yasser Arafat.



J.-P. Gontard

Jean-Pierre Gontard alongside representatives of the Colombian government, employers union and leaders of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC), whom he successfully convinced to gather at Les Diablerets in 2000 for a day of confidential discussions.



J.-P. Gontard

As an envoy of the FDFA for the peace process in Colombia, he contributed to the release of hundreds of hostages. Here, he is seen negotiating with FARC spokesperson Raúl Reyes in 2005.

Learn more

Mô Bleeker

Class of 1991

Mô Bleeker is a globally respected expert and facilitator in peace processes, atrocity prevention, transitional justice, and conflict transformation. She spent much of her career with the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (FDFA), playing pivotal roles in several peace processes and post-conflict transitions, including as Chair of the Transitional Justice and Reconciliation Commission in the Philippines, Special Envoy for Colombia's peace agreements, and Chair of the Global Action Against Mass Atrocity Crimes (GAAMAC). Appointed as Special Adviser to the United Nations Secretary-General on the Responsibility to Protect in 2024, her groundbreaking work has redefined approaches to prevention and transitional justice. Mô Bleeker's enduring legacy lies in her innovative participatory methodologies, commitment to human rights, and unfaltering resolve to fostering sustainable peace worldwide.



Geneva Academy / Tim Young



Transitional Justice & Reconciliation Commission (TJRC)

In her work as Chair of the Transitional Justice and Reconciliation Commission in the Philippines from 2014 to 2020, Mô Bleeker worked with facilitators from the "Listening Process" in more than 300 communities in the Bangsamoro.



Geneva Initiative

Mô Bleeker is pictured with the team from the Geneva Israel-Palestine Initiative, with whom she worked for nearly nine years as a mediator and transitional justice expert to develop a joint document on the topic.



UN Photo / Eskinder Debebe

Mô Bleeker was appointed as UN Special Adviser on the Responsibility to Protect, a global political commitment to prevent and protect populations from the worst forms of violence and persecution, by UN Secretary-General António Guterres in April 2024.

Learn more



LA FORMATION CONTINUE

Development Policies and Practices Syria

From Capacity Building to Localised Academic Cooperation

Bilal **Alhabian**
Advisor in the Executive Programme in Development Policies and Practices – Governance, Resilience and Recovery in Syria (DPP–GRR)

Alexandre **Dormeier Freire**
Senior Lecturer in the Interdisciplinary Programme and Director of the Executive Programmes in Development Policies and Practices (DPP)

Sofia **Mueller**
Manager of the Executive Programmes in Development Policies and Practices (DPP)

Alaa **Tartir**
Academic Coordinator of the DPP for the Middle East and North Africa region, of the DPP – Conflict and Fragility Management (CFM), and of the DPP-GRR

As Syria enters a new phase of political and institutional transition, international actors are gradually re-establishing their presence in Damascus. The return of international cooperation to Syria marks the beginning of a new chapter in the country's recovery following the political transition of 2024. The new DPP thematic hub focusing on Governance, Resilience and Recovery in Syria (DPP-GRR) is the latest example of this evolution.

However, the DPP in Syria takes a clear approach: international cooperation rooted in Syrian academic institutions, combining international and local expertise, and viewing Syrian professionals not merely as "recipients" of capacity-building, but as producers of knowledge. Any success of international academic cooperation in Syria should not ultimately be measured by how much international expertise enters the country, but by how much locally grounded knowledge and institutional capacity remain and Syrian expertise becomes part of international debates.

Against this backdrop, DPP-GRR was launched in Damascus in August 2026. The programme is implemented in partnership with Damascus University, the Centre on Conflict, Development and Peacebuilding (CCDP), and the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD), in close consultation with the Syrian Diplomatic Institute, and with the support of the Swiss Cooperation Office in Damascus, the Canton of Geneva, and a Swiss private foundation.

The launch also marks an important milestone for the Geneva Graduate Institute. Nearly a century after its foundation in 1927, the Institute is bringing its executive education activities to Syria for the first time, at a pivotal moment in the country's transition.

Through its curriculum and community of practice bringing together alumnae·i from successive cohorts producing a policy paper, the programme's ambition extends well beyond the 48 professionals who will graduate over the next four years. The strong interest in the programme is evident from the large number of applications received for 12 spots.

One of the objectives of this initiative is to create spaces where international academic knowledge, Syrian know-how, and locally generated knowledge can interact and reinforce one another. This approach also aims to generate a multiplier effect: participants are not only individual beneficiaries, but also professionals embedded in institutions and networks through which new approaches, methods, and practices can circulate. The development of a community of practice further extends this dynamic beyond the classroom, offering participants and alumnae·i a space to share their experiences, reflect together on new challenges, and gradually generate contextually grounded knowledge and policy recommendations.

More than two decades after the creation of the DPP this network is now helping to create new connections between Syrian professionals, academics and practitioners in Syria, Geneva and beyond.

2026–2027 cohort of the DPP Governance, Resilience and Recovery programme with the academic and Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation Damascus office team.

Learn more about the DPP Syria – Governance, Resilience and Recovery (DPP–GRR).

Learn more about the DPP programmes and courses.



LA RECHERCHE

Applied Research Projects

Training a New Generation, Supporting the Rules of War and Humanitarian Action

Souhail **Belhadj Klaz**
Faculty Lead for the Applied Research Projects (ARPs), Visiting Professor in the Master in International and Development Studies (MINT), and Senior Researcher at the Centre on Conflict, Development and Peacebuilding (CCDP)

The Institute studies international organisations (IOs), non-governmental organisations (NGOs), and the other actors that shape international relations to produce original academic knowledge — but its ambition does not stop there: it also trains the professionals who go on to work for these organisations, in direct partnership with them. The interdisciplinary programme's Applied Research Projects (ARPs) embody this approach: each year, teams of graduate students conduct original policy research commissioned by IOs, governments, NGOs and private sector entities, working under the guidance of a Faculty Lead from the Institute to produce a report that meets the partner's operational needs while upholding the Institute's academic standards.

Some recent ARPs speak directly to armed conflict, a reflection of the Institute's continued position at the forefront of research on war. But the ambition runs deeper: through research conducted hand in hand with practitioners and decision-makers, and through the training of a new generation of professionals, the Institute contributes to solutions that help make the rules of war — international law, international humanitarian law, and human rights — respected in practice, and that create the conditions for humanitarian action to be deployed on the ground.

As a supervisor, I play a dual role. I safeguard the rigour of the research, ensuring the analysis meets scholarly standards even as it answers a partner's operational needs. I also mentor students in professionalism: ARP teams work directly with the commissioning organisation as a counterpart, and several students have gone on to internships — sometimes employment — with the very partners for whom they conducted their research. Each project culminates in the preparation of an impactful presentation, where students present their findings to the partner and the wider Geneva policy community.

Four projects illustrate the range of what ARPs have to offer: 1) *Maritime Security: Beyond Pirates*: commissioned by the International Code of Conduct Association, this project mapped human rights risks in an industry increasingly shaped by war-related threats to global shipping — covering forced labour, use of force, working conditions, and sexual abuse and exploitation, and pointing to the need for independent, binding accountability mechanisms; 2) *The Future of Arms Control and Disarmament*: for the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs, students combined a literature review with interviews of 14 experts from diplomacy, academia, and civil society to chart how arms control might evolve over the next 5 to 20 years; 3) *Water Weaponisation*: commissioned by the Geneva Water Hub, this project traced how water is weaponised in the conflicts in Syria, Palestine, and Yemen and assessed the role of local and grassroots action, alongside international law, in sparing water from armed conflict; 4) *The Brain as a Battlefield: Current Status, Opportunities, and Challenges of Defence-Relevant Neurotechnologies*: this project, mandated by researchers at the Geneva Centre for Security Policy, assesses the current state of the weaponisation of neurotechnologies and its opportunities and challenges.

Together, these projects show what the ARP embodies: an Institute that trains its students not only to study international organisations, but to become the practitioners those organisations will rely on.

Souhail Belhadj Klaz.
Boris PALEFROY

Learn more about the ARPs.

Nouvelles publications



Karthala. 2026.
198 p.

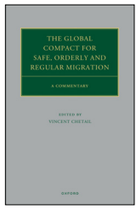
Dieu et César sont sur un bateau

La religion
au prix du politique

Jean-François **Bayart**

Dans cette synthèse de ses enseignements à l'Institut, Jean-François Bayart met en garde contre la surinterprétation religieuse des faits politiques en tenant néanmoins compte des « logiques intrinsèques » de la foi. Il s'interroge sur les « affinités électives » entre la sphère religieuse et les révolutions conservatrices, qui assemblent une définition identitariste de la nation et un traditionalisme moral avec l'exaltation de la technologie.

Mais la spiritualité n'est pas soluble dans la violence inhérente aux révolutions conservatrices. Et celles-ci sont en porte-à-faux avec la sécularisation des sociétés et les transformations de la vie intime. L'« érotique spirituelle » (Michel de Certeau) qui a marqué l'histoire des religions pourrait-elle subvertir le projet révolutionnaire conservateur en donnant naissance à une spiritualité politique *queer* ?



Oxford University
Press. 2026. 736 p.

The Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration

A Commentary

Vincent **Chetail**

The Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (GCM) is the first intergovernmental agreement adopted by the United Nations to address all dimensions of international migration. This authoritative commentary analyses its normative foundations, legal content, and policy relevance.

Starting with the preamble, vision, and guiding principles, it examines the aspirations underpinning the GCM — state sovereignty, responsibility-sharing, non-discrimination, and human rights. It then comments on each of the 23 objectives, assessing their legal content and situating them within human rights and migration governance. It also addresses the mechanisms and challenges of implementation by states, international organisations, local authorities, civil society, and the private sector.

Bridging scholarship, critical perspectives, and real-world practice, the book offers a forward-looking assessment of the GCM's role in shaping global migration governance.



Oxford University
Press. 2026. Xviii
+ 310 p. Available
in open access.

Change in International Law

Paths, Processes, Power

Nico **Krisch**, Ezgi **Yildiz**
and Pedro **Martínez Esponda**

How does international law change? How does it adapt to new contexts and meet new challenges? While international law often seems to be rather static, change is in reality far more common. This book systematically explores the often gradual processes of international legal change in practice, and it takes into view the paths on which change travels in the different fields of international law — paths associated with particular actors and authorities and distinct conditions. On these paths, change comes about in ways which defy common expectations of a state-centric international law: the success of change attempts often depends less on broad state support or even the support of major powers, but to a greater extent on support from authorities and institutions in the respective fields. The result is an international law that is significantly more dynamic, and more variegated, than is usually assumed.



Pluto Press.
2026. 352 p.

Season of Wolves

A History of the Post-9/11 World

Mohammad-Mahmoud
Mohamedou

In the two decades since the attack on the Twin Towers in Manhattan, a new world has taken shape — one defined by endless war, mass surveillance, and militarisation. *Season of Wolves* is a sweeping and urgent account of how this post-9/11 age of brutality was born, and how it continues to shape our lives today.

From the battlefields of Afghanistan and Iraq to Libya and Syria, Mohammad-Mahmoud Mohamedou traces the international reverberations of the so-called "War on Terror" and the political, economic, and cultural transformations it unleashed. He examines the rise of militarised foreign policy, the securitisation of everyday life, the global surge in authoritarianism, and the invasive creep of technology into the most private corners of our lives. Drawing on decades of research and a truly global perspective, *Season of Wolves* is both a damning indictment of the post-9/11 governance and a crucial guide to understanding how we got here — and what must change.

Left unfinished at the time of Professor Mohamedou's passing in 2024, the book was brought to completion through the dedicated efforts of his PhD students, former students and family.



UCL Press. 2026.
222 p. Available
in open access.

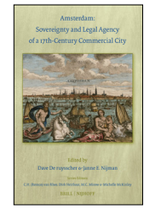
Humanitarianism from Below?

Universalism and the Politics of Inhumanity

Edited by Till **Mostowlansky**
and Elmira **Muratova**

Since the late twentieth century, wealthy nations and international organisations have claimed a monopoly on humanitarianism. Even critical views of this regime of global aid and assistance have reinforced the image of a phenomenon shaped by secularised Christian ethics and Euro-American politics of life.
At the same time around the world, various humanitarian institutions and practices have flourished that remain outside this realm.

Mostly invisible to Western publics, these forms of humanitarianism have reshaped global landscapes of aid in tangible ways; from protecting Indigenous communities in Canada to African diasporic initiatives in response to the Ebola pandemic; from Islamic economies of giving and Buddhist concepts of the human to crowdfunding aid in Ukraine. *Humanitarianism from Below?* forcefully illustrates that these humanitarian actors do not merely represent grassroots initiatives but have altered humanitarianism at large, involving alternative economies and politics.



Brill. 2026. Xii+269 p.
Available in open
access.

Amsterdam: Sovereignty and Legal Agency of a 17th-Century Commercial City

Edited by Janne E. **Nijman**
and Dave **De ruysscher**

Globalisation and urbanisation have long been mutually reinforcing processes, as the 17th century Dutch Republic — one of Europe's most highly urbanised regions — makes clear. Early modern cities were key sites of legal innovation, as municipal authorities responded to challenges of expanding global trade and maritime activity, demand for capital and market access, and significant immigration.

While Amsterdam's economic history has received ample scholarly attention, its governance and legal institutions have been comparatively neglected. This volume addresses that gap, examining Amsterdam's sovereignty and autonomy from a combined local, regional, and international perspective.

The volume sheds new light on how Amsterdam developed legal concepts and institutions to facilitate its role as a global economic hub and a driver of Dutch Empire — offering fresh perspectives on the historical foundations of (urban) sovereignty and on early modern (international) legal history through an urban lens.



Columbia University Press. December 2026. 288 p.

The Art of Not Governing

Local Politics and Democratic Decline in Lebanon

Christiana **Parreira**

Since the civil war's end in 1990 and the Syrian occupation in 2005, Lebanon has held relatively free elections and maintained power-sharing among its diverse groups. Yet it is no democratic success story: governance remains poor while incumbents keep an ironclad grip on power.

The Art of Not Governing foregrounds local elections and institutions to explain how local politics shape state-building and democratisation. Drawing on years of fieldwork, more than 140 interviews, and original survey research, Christiana Parreira traces a party cartel system that sustains national control by inhibiting opposition locally, as central elites use resource distribution to monopolise local power. Challenging the view of local governments as guardians of accountability, the book reveals why newly democratised states fail to represent their citizens.



CEPR Press. 2026. Xiv + 400 p. Available in open access.

Paris Report 4: The New Global Imbalances

Edited by Beatrice **Weder di Mauro**, Hélène **Rey**, and Jeromin **Zettelmeyer**

Global imbalances are back in focus. This book— a joint CEPR-Bruegel initiative produced at the request of the French G7 presidency — offers independent analytical foundations for the debate on their causes and remedies.

The first-best solution is well known: coordinated adjustment, with the US raising national saving, China rebalancing toward consumption, and Europe boosting investment. But such coordination is unlikely, so the real question is how the world adjusts without it. Without coordination, imbalances will persist and their risks will spread outward. The US poses financial risks tied to its external liabilities; China poses structural risks tied to export dominance and industrial policy; Europe risks compounding both through weak investment. The rest of the world must therefore build buffers against crisis risk, cushion the impact of Chinese import competition, support structural transformation, and preserve the rules-based trading system.



Stanford University Press. 2026. 382 p.

Extractive States

War and Resistance in Turkey's Kurdish Heartland

Umut **Yıldırım**

The Turkish state and the Kurdistan Workers' Party engaged in a counterinsurgency war for decades. Diyarbakır was a site of sieges and ceasefires, welfare and humanitarian relief, NGO interventions and decolonial resistance — the complementary, intertwined processes of low-intensity war.

Through committed and engaged ethnography, Umut Yıldırım reveals how destruction and displacement became structures of extraction, by which the Turkish state subjugated the Kurdish population into an object to be intervened in, traded, and contained. She also tracks Kurdish efforts to reassert their own stories of war through fact-building, welfare and compensation, women's wellbeing, acts of solidarity, and environmental politics. *Extractive States* offers a compelling example of how low-intensity war transforms everyday needs, embodied knowledges, and uprooted populations into securitised knowledge — and how sites of perseverance can reveal such extraction, and thus help conceive of novel modes of resistance.

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