

Results and conclusions

The end of the Cold War was the most relevant geopolitical change in the world after the end of World War II. Wide consequences of this change have been studied by many political and social sciences. Ideologically motivated rivalry of Great Powers which was producing, during the previous confrontation period, regional conflicts nearly all over the world, was (seemingly) over. There appeared consequently the room for new forces, activities and processes, the aims, forms and orientations of which began to transform the political and security map of the world. Many authors concentrated their attention at internal conflicts – civil wars which have become the dominant type of armed conflicts. And as ideological motivations of conflicts have practically disappeared, the specialists have turned their attention to studying of primary causes of new (and old) “civil” wars (this paper also discusses this very frequent term and draws attention at its incorrect using, especially because civil war in the true meaning of word is a relatively rare type of intrastate armed conflict).

As wars and armed conflicts are mostly conditioned multilaterally, not only by the above-mentioned basic factors, but also contextually (by heritage, experience, international situation, position, global economic situation, changes of offer), they cannot be explained unambiguously and simply, i.e. on the basis of one dominant or several (few) significant factors. Especially when these factors and contexts are changing in time. Explanation cannot be reduced by the traditional dichotomy of factors – cultural versus (political) economic ones, especially because the explanation of causes and character of civil wars and other armed conflicts is largely variable, even controversial. Neither more sophisticated analytical methods can explain the genesis of wars and conflicts with the necessary certitude. It can be even said that simple statistical comparisons and traditional graphic means express the development and changes of armed conflicts more clearly and also more convincingly.

In spite of that, the majority of the defined questions and hypotheses can be answered and consequently used for formulating of relatively trustworthy conclusions:

1. It is not quite trivial to give an unambiguous answer to the question whether the end of the Cold War has significantly influenced the occurrence and quantity (or intensity of occurrence) of wars and armed conflicts. In the period at the beginning of the geopolitical transition (immediately after the end of the Cold War), the conflicts were without any doubt more frequent, but later – according to the majority of datasets – the quantity of armed conflicts decreased, but certain sources and datasets document, at least for the turn of the century, their new increase. An increased quantity or a stagnation of the number of armed conflicts is recorded by those institutions and datasets which have resigned to exact criteria and high levels of battle deaths (HIIK/KOSIMO) or which began to quantify also inter-ethnic conflicts and episodes of unilateral terror – mass repressions (PIOOM, PITDF and UCDP).

2. The end of the Cold War contributed to a decrease of wars between states and of armed conflicts and to a relative growth of the share of internal conflicts. But also the share of conflicts internationalized in various ways has been increasing (see Table 3).

Table 3 Trend in armed conflicts after the end of the Cold War
(according to their basic types)

| | 1989 | 1991 | 1993 | 1995 | 1997 | 1999 | 2001 | 2003 | 2005 | 1946 1988 | 1989 2005 |
|-------------------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|--------------|--------------|
| Intrastate | 37 | 49 | 41 | 37 | 35 | 32 | 30 | 26 | 25 | 68 | 91 |
| Interstate | 2 | 2 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 33 | 9 |
| Internationalized | 5 | 0 | 5 | 1 | 2 | 5 | 5 | 2 | 5 | 9 | 20 |
| In total* | 44 | 51 | 45 | 38 | 38 | 39 | 35 | 29 | 30 | 110 | 121 |

Source: PRIO/UCDP; Eriksson and Wallensteen 2004.

3. The proportion of basic types of wars and armed conflicts has significantly changed – there are fewer civil wars in sensu stricto, i.e. conflicts motivated primarily ideologically, and more armed conflicts of cultural character (identity conflicts) which are characterized by toughness and therefore long duration (see Table 4).

Table 4 Development of the structure of types of armed conflicts
(according to Marshall)

| | 1950- | 1955- | 1960- | 1965- | 1970- | 1975- | 1980- | 1985- | 1990- | 1995- | 2000- |
|------------------|-------|-------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------------|-------|-------|
| In total | 54 | 59 | 64 | 69 | 74 | 79 | 84 | 89 | 94 | 99 | 04 |
| Civil and others | 77 | 86 | 117 | 139 | 157 | 221 | 257 | 263 | 283 | 211 | 161 |
| % | 41.6 | 44.2 | 39.3 | 35.3 | 34.4 | 34.8 | 36.2 | 34.2 | 33.9 | 35.6 | 37.9 |
| Ethnic/religious | 15 | 26 | 38 | 57 | 65 | 96 | 110 | 120 | 173 | 126 | 88 |
| % | 19.5 | 30.2 | 32.5 | 41.0 | 41.4 | 43.4 | 42.8 | 45.6 | 61.1 | 59.7 | 54.7 |

Source: Marshall 2006: *Major Episodes of Armed Conflict and Political Violence* 1946-2005

4. Economic factors play a significant part in generating and extending conflicts, but it would not be correct to say that they are primary and the most important ones (such explanations are considered as reductionist). With a certain caution it can be said that their significance has increased after the end of the Cold War. On the other hand, numerous empiric studies confirm an increase of the share of conflicts made exclusively for profit and enrichment (predatory wars). The profit and financial means are no longer only a means to reach some aim, they are the explicit aim of armed activities. These are no longer motivated by the effort to defeat an adversary and to win, but rather to ensure alternative sources of livelihood or even sustainable profits. But statistical analyses do not mostly confirm such finding.

Although numerous authors stress, as a significant risk factor, the dependence of economy on exports of primary raw materials, this correlation has not been confirmed by analysis. This fact is also a consequence of the controversial effect of natural assets which somewhere (if these are easily controllable resources and negotiable commodities) contribute to internal conflicts, elsewhere – especially in the case of oil – the situation is rather opposite.

5. Armed conflicts are generated more and more often due to political changes within the transition from one system and regime to another – in the period of (transitional) weakness of state power. During the 1990s, and especially at their beginning, the number of unstable transitional political regimes – anocracies – sensibly increased, and (consequently) also did the number of armed conflicts. Definitely the highest risk of genesis of armed conflicts is in the states that are not able and often even willing to perform basic public functions (especially enforcement of the law). These states are qualified as “shadow” or collapsed.

It is difficult to decide what types of factors (cultural, economic or political) are decisive for unleashing of wars and armed conflicts, but if at least two types of these factors are present, the risk of conflict is immense.

6. During the second half of the 1990s, the number and share of the most important traditional conflicts (wars) significantly decreased, so that the share, and according to certain datasets also the number, of conflicts of a lower category increased (see Table 5). However, these conflicts last in average longer.

Table 5 Development of armed conflicts in the 1990-2005 according to UCDP

| Conflicts | 1990 | 1992 | 1995 | 2000 | 2005 | 1990-94 | 1995-99 | 2000-04 | 2001-05 |
|--------------|------|------|------|------|------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| Minor | 17 | 23 | 14 | 14 | 12 | 39.8 | 39.7 | 38.6 | 38.8 |
| Intermediate | 16 | 10 | 18 | 11 | 14 | 29.9 | 37.2 | 37.3 | 40.6 |
| War | 16 | 18 | 6 | 12 | 5 | 30.3 | 23.1 | 24.1 | 20.6 |

Note: Number of armed conflicts in the first part of the table; % share of "war-years" in the other; intermed. – intermediate.

7. Confirmation of the hypothesis on extension of conflicts is relatively trivial; this is caused above all by an increasing share of ethnic and religious conflicts that belong to those of the longest duration. The results are also influenced by the relatively short time segment from the end of the Cold War (only 17 years in comparison with the previous 45 years, see Table 6).

As traditional wars, especially classical civil ones, which were in the past characterized by a very high intensity of fighting, are ever less frequent, the average number of battle deaths decreases (which is documented by more conservative datasets, e.g. COW). If however also indirect deaths are included, especially because many ethno-religious conflicts last a very long time, then the situation is quite contrary.

Table 6 Number and duration of armed conflicts during the Cold War and after it

| Period | Number of conflicts | Duration of period (months) | Duration of conflicts (months) | Average duration (months) |
|-----------|---------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1945-2005 | 231 | 732 | 16235 | 22.2 |
| 1945-1989 | 119 | 540 | 9881.3 | 18.3 |
| 1990-2005 | 112 | 192 | 6412 | 33.2 |

Source: PRIO/UCDP

8. The geographical image of spreading of internal conflicts has changed. Their focal point is moving from the area of rivalry of Great Powers – Eurasia to the Sub-Saharan Africa (see Table 7).

Although the data comparing both periods document that the change is not substantial, the trends are quite obvious – concentration of conflicts in Sub-Saharan Africa continues, but long-term conflicts in South Asia continue (the ever more significant share of this macroregion is given by the fact that in multinational countries as India, Myanmar, Pakistan or Indonesia there are several armed conflicts at the same time). The situation is similar in the Middle East. But the dominant share of the total amount of deaths (mainly when including the indirect ones) is in Africa.

Table 7 Spreading of armed conflicts after the Cold War according to HIIK

| Region | 1995 | 1997 | 1999 | 2001 | 2003 | 2005 | Total | % | Wars | % | W/C | % |
|-------------|------|------|------|------|------|------|-------|------|------|------|-----|------|
| Europe, CIS | 11 | 12 | 7 | 12 | 8 | 12 | 114 | 13.4 | 11 | 10.6 | 25 | 6.8 |
| Middle East | 23 | 15 | 16 | 16 | 12 | 14 | 169 | 19.8 | 24 | 23.1 | 85 | 23.1 |
| Asia* | 14 | 17 | 20 | 31 | 27 | 35 | 262 | 30.8 | 12 | 11.5 | 110 | 29.9 |
| Africa | 12 | 20 | 20 | 27 | 24 | 27 | 240 | 28.2 | 48 | 46.2 | 116 | 31.5 |
| America | 6 | 5 | 4 | 5 | 10 | 10 | 67 | 7.9 | 9 | 8.7 | 32 | 8.7 |
| In total | 62 | 69 | 67 | 91 | 81 | 98 | 852 | 100 | 104 | 100 | 368 | 100 |

Note. Data in development include wars (W), serious crises and (violent) crises; *including Oceania

9. In accordance with the majority of experts it can be said that wars and armed conflicts have changed after the end of the Cold War, but the question is to which extent. Effective proofs in this regard cannot be given by this type of paper, as they are mostly findings from field monitoring - case studies. Vagueness, complicity, changeability and globalization of the present armed conflicts are at the same time another reason of their difficult and controversial explanation.

10. Presumption of a high significance of ethno-religious factors for genesis of armed conflicts was not definitely confirmed by correlation and regression analysis (which is somehow in contract with the evident increase of the share of these conflicts). In spite of that mainly large-size datasets manifest, for the period after the Cold War, positive correlation values with occurrence/duration of conflicts and indicate an increasing importance of these factors in time. The analysis has thus confirmed the findings of many papers that ethnic fractionalization produces tough, long lasting conflicts, nevertheless of a low intensity.

11. The majority of datasets, especially the Marshall's one, confirm an increasing importance of economic factors on the character and impacts of wars in time (a higher average amount of deaths), or in comparison of the Cold War and the post-Cold War periods. In some cases there is also a feeble impact of basic economic variables (GNP, HDI) on the number of deaths of armed conflicts – with an increasing number of deaths the (correlation) dependence increases. A deepening of this dependence can be considered as quite banal – more developed countries are affected by armed conflicts ever less, whereas the less developed countries ever more.

12. Presumption of an increasing impact of geopolitical factors on the intensity of conflicts can be confirmed – the highest correlation is manifested by the heritage of recent wars and conflicts as well as by colonization (struggle against colonizers) and the position of the country in the world hierarchy – a higher intensity of occurrence of conflicts in geographical periphery and in the interest periphery; another factor – raw materials resources, or export of primary raw materials have not a more important influence (according to the results of this paper and differently from affirmations of many empirical studies).

13. The impact of a higher intensity of conflicts (of a higher number of deaths – on the basis of maximal estimations) manifests only feebly, mainly in datasets with higher numbers of armed conflicts. A more significant correlation with the respective variables is evident in occurrence/duration of conflicts, but we can confirm also a deepening of correlations in time, i.e. in the period after the end of the Cold War.

The mentioned not very convincing results of statistical analysis as well as some controversial findings of experts reflect the fact that there exist dozens of theories and approaches for explaining wars and armed conflicts. This situation proves that it is difficult to explain the complexly and contextually conditioned social phenomena, as wars undoubtedly are. It is therefore not surprising that the findings are heterogenous and ambiguous and the approaches insufficient/uncertain (or the branch is little developed). No theory can have aspiration to priority or universality of explanation. It is therefore evident that a deeper knowledge of present wars is possible only on the basis of combination of statistical-analytic approaches and empirical studies or rather field monitoring - case studies.