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THE COGNITIVE FRAME OF WAR: CONTEMPORARY EXPANSIONS**Agnieszka Uberman** *Institute of Modern Languages, University of Rzeszów, Poland***Received:** 7.05.2024 **Reviewed:** 1.06.2024 and 2.06.2024**Similarity Index:** 2%**Bibliographic description:** Uberman, A. (2024). The cognitive frame of WAR: Contemporary expansions. In *Lege artis. Language yesterday, today, tomorrow*. Trnava: University of SS Cyril and Methodius in Trnava, IX (1), p. 104-120. ISSN 2453-8035 DOI: <https://doi.org/10.34135/lartis.24.9.1.06>**Abstract:** A war is a form of hostile activity. Wars have been fought for centuries, however over time, the tactics used, and the means employed in them have changed and developed. The present study is devoted to the cognitive frame of WAR. From the cognitive linguistic perspective, a frame is a complex knowledge structure with a number of interrelated elements. Conventional frame elements will be presented on the basis of lexicographic sources, while the most recent expansions will be outlined after selected online BBC News reports pertaining to information, cyber- and hybrid war.**Keywords:** conflict, war, frame, cognitive frame of WAR, cyberwar, hybrid war.**1. Introduction**

Since the beginnings of mankind different groups of people have engaged in conflicts of diverse origin. The sources of conflict can range from territory, power, resources (either economic or natural), social issues, philosophy, to religion; the list is far from exhaustive. These differences could be settled either peacefully or with the use of weapons and physical force. Conventional wars have been fought for centuries; however, they have evolved over time. War tactics have developed, changing according to the means employed, technology used and affect the outcomes reached. Nevertheless, a war is of incessant character, constantly replicated in various places all over the world, and breaking out for numerous reasons.

Undeniably, war is a centuries-old phenomenon, a notion with diverse aspects, which can be considered with reference to direct and metaphorical meanings. Because the 'faces of war' change, so does the language describing conflicts and warfare. This means that apart from new technologies



incorporated into human conflicts, their descriptions are also subject to modification. These contemporary expansions are of particular interest for the present study and will therefore be considered and discussed in the sections to follow.

Section 2 of the study (Defining war: Material and methods) addresses the various aspects of war. It also attempts to define the concept itself, including lexicographic as well as descriptive features. Notably, aspects of religious foundations of conflicts are addressed by Cook (2015); figurative war-related language use is analysed by Charteris-Black (2017); the language of conflict is discussed by Chilton (1998); and Curtis (2022). War in political discourse is considered by Dąbrowska-Burkhardt and Hanus (2022); conceptual metaphor of war discourse is the focus of attention by Fabiszak (2007); war as metaphor is considered by Hartmann-Mahmud (2002), and disapproval of war is expressed by Ivie (2007). Figurative language of war is analysed by Jobbágy (2014); metaphorical language focus of the war on terror is addressed by Khan and Khan (2022); the language of conflict in the Ukrainian crisis is debated by Knoblock (2020); verbalizing war experiences is tackled by Korablyova (2022); war within the power perspective is addressed by Lieshout (2011), while the philosophy of war and peace is the core of attention by Nardin (2005). War in mass media discourse is discussed by Osovska and Vyšňovský (2023), Panasenko (2022), Panasenko et al. (2017; 2018) and Pawliszko (2023). Online reporting on the conflict in the Persian Gulf is carried out by Pinnel (2018); political war-referenced discourse is considered by Rasulić (2020); the philosophy and rationale of conflict and war are tackled by Rummel (1979); contemporary online reporting devoted to the war in Ukraine is covered by Tidy (2022; 2023).

The concept of war itself is a very extensive knowledge structure comprising numerous interrelated elements which together form a cognitive frame. This cognitive construct will be briefly outlined in section 3, titled Cognitive frames, based on specialist literature (Ahmad 2018; Evans 2009; Figar 2020; Fillmore 1982; Fillmore & Atkins 1992; Lakoff & Johnson 1999; Sullivan 2013; Uberman 2016; 2018; 2019a; 2019b; 2023). Section 4 (The cognitive frame of WAR: Results and discussion) constitutes a detailed discussion of the investigated knowledge structure. Numerous frame elements will be presented on the basis of the consulted sources (Oxford English dictionary, *s.a.*; BBC News reports available online). Attention will also be focused on the most recent extensions that have resulted from the developments in war tactics and arsenal of weapons used (such as **cyberwar** or **hybrid war**). Concluding remarks, presented in section 5, summarise the findings from the presented lexical corpus of the cognitive frame of WAR.

2. Defining war: Material and methods

War has been present in daily human life for centuries; apparently, humanity has witnessed very few days without some form of conflict or combat taking place somewhere around the world. Weapons, power or economy have been universal tools employed to subdue nations or groups of people and place them in dependent, subservient positions. Wars are subject to conspicuous reiteration. Ivie (2007: 1) states the painful truth as follows: "War is easy. Peace is difficult. That's the hard reality of human history. War occurs with such frequency that it seems inevitable, even natural".

2.1 Diverse aspects of war

As a phenomenon, war is described as "Hostile contention by means of armed forces, carried on between nations, states, or rulers, or between parties in the same nation or state; the employment of armed forces against a foreign power, or against an opposing party in the state" (War (a), *s.a.*). Lieshout (2011: 702) states that wars are considered "organized acts of physical force between states," but they can also be fought between other political entities such as tribes, nations, empires, etc. In conflict, they "employ organized violence against other political units in order to compel the latter to act more in accordance with their wishes" (*ibid.*, 702). Wars are tools, political instruments that are used purposefully to force another political unit to weaken its power and thus yield to the demands of the aggressor.

War as a phenomenon has been analysed from a variety of perspectives, such as for instance, religious, metaphorical, political and media discourse as well as philosophy of war and language of conflict (Cook 2015; Charteris-Black 2017; Fabiszak 2007; Hartmann-Mahmud 2002; Ivie 2007; Jobbágy 2014; Khan & Khan 2022; Knoblock 2020; Korablyova 2022; Nardin 2005; Panasenko et al. 2017; 2018; Rasulić 2020). It can be investigated with reference to local, national or international arenas. It has an array of backgrounds including historical, philosophical, religious, economic and power, to mention but a few. The foundations for the contemporary theory of war, as amply discussed by Fabiszak (2007), have been outlined by the Prussian General Carl von Clausewitz and the Swiss general of the French and Russian army, Henri Jomini. As noted by Fabiszak (2007: 76), "Clausewitz saw war as a dynamic process, whose nature and understanding changes with each change of policy and according to societies that fight these wars". Advocating civilian control over the military, he also thought political aims to be the primary grounds for wars, which may be "enhanced by traditional stereotyping of the opponent or historical aversion between two nations" (*ibid.*, 76). War is perceived as a political instrument with strategy building, conducting tactical operations and various manoeuvres. Jomini, however, voiced an opinion against attempts to understand the nature of war;

instead, he saw the necessity to educate commanding officers how to conduct wars and not consider their nature. This hands-on style has been adopted into the contemporary military policy framework.

It is essential to note that at the root of wars there is always some form of disagreement or conflict. Significantly, the lack of its resolution can lead to an escalation, and ultimately the employment of violent means of settlement: "conflict arouses confrontation; confrontation may lead to war accompanied by violence" (Panasenko et al. 2018: 133). Conflict can result in a crisis situation, very often with an imminent threat of forceful activity. As pointed out by Tay (2020: 231), considering crisis from a psychological standpoint a tangible threat does not have to be present; however, it "may result from subjective perceptions that give individuals a sense of intolerable difficulty".

In an extensive study Rummel (1979) addresses international violence and conflict behaviour. Based on wide-ranging research he identified the following sources of International Conflict Behaviour (as quoted in Panasenko et al. 2018: 134): "opposing interests and capabilities [...]; contact and salience (awareness); significant change in the balance of powers; individual perceptions and expectations; a disrupted structure of expectations; a will-to-conflict".

Tragic as it is, nations have worked hard to develop various new types of warfare as well as gradually more sophisticated means of destruction. However, it has been stressed by Curtis (2022: 31) that "language is central to conflict and [...] there can be no conflict without language". This view is supported by Chilton (1998: 2), who claims that among all the social variables and factors contributing to causing and maintaining wars, "language is the most diffuse and the most difficult to define. This is because language is profoundly implicated in all human social activity and cannot easily be isolated as a specific causal factor in violent conflicts". It is debatable whether language use can ignite a conflict, however, it can definitely contribute to either sustaining it or bringing it to an end. Chilton (1998: 2-3) points to the role communication and language play in conflict situations, stating the following:

"(1) The decision to mobilise military force can only be executed through the verbal activity of political elites who possess the legitimacy to issue mobilisation orders. A declaration of war is a linguistic act.

(2) Military operations themselves can only be set in motion and continued by verbal activity. [...]

(3) Cases (1) and (2) can only exist as part of a wider political, social and cultural structure which gives them legitimacy. Indeed what constitutes a legitimate concept of 'war' can only be established in linguistic activity. Political structures and institutions are themselves constituted and instituted by forms of language and communication. Social and cultural forms include both cognitive and affective dimensions that support notions of legitimacy, permissible violence, patriotism, patriarchy, and so forth, and these too are dependent on, and in turn support, language and communication.

(4) Special cases of (3) are historical instances of war justification and propaganda. Warfare, whether between sovereign states, or whether 'civil' war, is underpinned by (3), but particular wars rely on particular propaganda to justify human and economic sacrifice".

Not all conflicts can be resolved with words, but words can certainly either fuel many heated debates or appease communicative tension. It is the language describing war and conflict, the lexical elements creating the frame of WAR, that are fundamental in the present research study.

2.2 Material and methods

The primary focus of the discussion to follow is placed on the cognitive frame of WAR and its elements, including those that have only recently entered the investigated domain. For this purpose, the frame elements will be identified and presented, reflecting their functions and existing interrelations.

The corpus that has been gathered for the purpose of the present research and presented in the form of the cognitive frame comes from an online dictionary (the Oxford English dictionary, *s.a.* henceforth OED, *s.a.*) as well as online BBC News reports. The selected articles cover the topic of warfare, specifically the recent armed conflict in Ukraine. The online news items that have been quoted and referred to are all related to the issues of cyberwar and hybrid war – both of which constitute the most recent elements of the analysed frame.

The frame to be presented is a composite multidimensional construction with diverse constitutive elements. Categories of war as well as the types of people engaged will be listed. Conflicts involve not only individuals but also tools used to carry out activities. In the case of war these tools are weapons, and the use of language – an essential element of the information war. Most frame elements have been identified from conventional warfare; however, it has to be stressed that the end of the 20th and the beginning of the 21st centuries have seen the introduction of a specific types of conflict, i.e. **information war**, and most recently **cyberwar** and **hybrid war**. The instances of lexemes constituting novel expressions in the investigated cognitive construct have been presented on the basis of online BBC News reports describing the current war in Ukraine.

3. Cognitive frames

It is worth noting that the encyclopaedic approach to meaning views the semantic content of a lexical item as the entryway to bigger and more complex meaning structures, i.e. frames, which are related to the original content (Evans 2009; Figar 2020; Fillmore 1982; Uberman 2016; 2019a; 2019b; 2023). Fillmore and Atkins (1992: 76-77) propose that lexical meaning "can be understood only with reference to a structured background of experience, beliefs, or practices, constituting a kind of conceptual prerequisite for understanding the meaning". Frame, as one of the cognitive constructs, operates as an interrelated system of concepts, whereby through evoking one element, the entire

system into which it fits is instantly made available. Frames "are complex knowledge structures, which encompass not only culturally-conditioned information, but also descriptions of activities and tools employed in the related processes, their linguistic exponents and elements that are interrelated and mutually-conditioned" (Uberman 2018: 428). A semantic frame is viewed as "a script-like conceptual structure describing a particular type of situation, object, or event and the participants and props involved in it" (Sullivan 2013: 18). Lakoff and Johnson (1999: 116) point out in this connection that semantic frames provide "an overall conceptual structure defining the semantic relationships between entire "fields" of related concepts and the words that express them". Moreover, "the conceptual frames that inhabit our cognitive unconscious *contribute semantically*¹ to the meanings of words and sentences". Hence, an item is interpreted with reference to the frame in which it is rooted. Similarly, as exemplified by Ahmad (2018: 146), war is not just another lexical item, it is also "a frame, a system of many concepts connected to each other such as: army, tanks, enemy [...]. When any of these concepts are introduced in a conversation the frame of War gets evoked [...] and different concepts related to war by design/ unconsciously come in our mind". This cognitive semantic approach will be applied to the description of the lexical corpus that constitutes the cognitive frame of WAR.

4. The cognitive frame of WAR: Results and discussion

Any frame is a complex system of related concepts, and the frame of WAR is no exception. More to the point, it is an extensive structure and the discussion to follow should only be considered an attempt to outline the most salient elements of which it is composed. They include the people involved, activities conducted, weapons, machinery and tools employed, as well as a tentative set of types of conflict. The definitions of constitutive elements come from the online Oxford English dictionary (OED, *s.a.*).

Analysing the cognitive frame of WAR, a number of interrelated features emerge. According to Frame Net, **war** is specified as "a state of competition, conflict, or hostility," (War (b), *s.a.*) and it constitutes an element of the frame HOSTILE ENCOUNTER (Hostile encounter, *s.a.*). It is a complex and extensive structure combining the origins, the people involved, the activities undertaken, the tools employed as well as possible outcomes. The discussion to follow is an attempt at outlining the possible elements of the frame under consideration.

Wars take place as a result of some **conflict** of interests, usually by the use of **force** in order to **weaken the power** of one state/group so that it becomes **dependent** and carries out the **orders** and/or

does things that it otherwise willingly would not do (Lieshout 2011). A war can be **waged, declared, levied, fought, won, or lost**.

Wars are conducted as an **armed conflict** with the use of diverse **armed forces** and **weapons** of various kinds. The armed forces constitute numerous **military groups**, i.e. the **navy**, the **air force**, the **army**.

As defined by the OED (OED, *s.a.*) an **army** is "an armed force, on land, sea, or in the air, formed to meet a particular need and often later disbanded; an assemblage of people equipped to fight". From a narrower perspective, an **army** is considered as "an organized body of soldiers trained to fight on land; a land force"; while **the army** stands for "the entire body of a nation's military force trained and equipped to fight on land, permanently established and formally organized and maintained. Also: the military profession" (Army, *s.a.*).

An army is a group of **soldiers** who are a force subdivided into smaller units, such as **regiments, battalions**, each with its own **commanding officer**.

An **officer** is "a person holding a position of authority, especially one with a commission, in the army, navy, or air force" (Officer, *s.a.*). The OED (OED, *s.a.*) lists a number of officer types, including **air officer, cavalry officer, combatant officer, company officer, flag officer, general officer, line officer, navigating officer, observation officer, petty officer, staff officer, warrant officer, officer of the day, officer of the guard, watch-officer**, etc. Soldiers can hold various **ranks** from **private, corporal** or **sergeant** though to **commissioned officers: lieutenant, captain, major, colonel, brigadier, general**, etc.

However, armed conflicts involve not only **military personnel**, but also **civilians**. Any individual, civilian or soldier, irrespective of rank, can become a **casualty**, a **prisoner of war (POW)**, a **hostage**, a **refugee**, a **veteran**, a **war hero**, or a **war criminal**. POWs, **captives**, or refugees can be detained and placed in **refugee camps, prisoner camps, or concentration camps**. As defined by an online dictionary, a **concentration camp** can be understood as a military term referring mainly to "a camp for the concentration and contemporary accommodation of large numbers of troops awaiting active service". This sense originated in the US and is used mainly with reference to the American military. The second sense, however, has a much wider application and it designates "a camp in which large numbers of people, esp. political prisoners or members or persecuted minorities, are deliberately **imprisoned** in a relatively small area with inadequate facilities, sometimes to provide **forced labour**

or to await **mass execution**" (Concentration camp, *s.a.*). In its latter sense, concentration camps are strongly linked to the most infamous camps; Dachau, Belsen, and Auschwitz, set up by German Nazis during World War II in the countries of **occupied** Europe.

Some military groups may not be formally organised within state structures, but engage in a fight for their nation's freedom and independence. These may be **guerrilla**, conducting a **guerrilla war** employing **guerrilla tactics** including **sabotage** (carried out by one or many **sabotage units**). Guerrilla is defined as "an irregular war carried out by small bodies of men acting independently; one engaged in such **warfare**" (Guerrilla, *s.a.*).

In the phase of **pre-war**, there are certain tensions and **terror threats** forecasting **imminent danger** or the **threat of war**. Such circumstances are also considered responsible for evoking/triggering **war fever** i.e. "an enthusiasm for war," (War fever, *s.a.*) or **war hysteria** "unhealthy emotion or excitement caused by war; an enthusiasm for war" (War hysteria, *s.a.*). The **war mind** of some national leaders pushes them to **levy war** instead of **peace work**, i.e. "efforts to promote, preserve or restore peace" (Peace work, *s.a.*). A **war resister** is a person who opposes war in general, or for a particular ideological reason.

Once a state decides to enter an armed conflict, war is declared; i.e. a **declaration of war** is issued: "formal announcement or proclamation by a Power of the commencement of **hostilities** against another Power," (Declaration of war, *s.a.*) thus entering a **state of war** and engaging in a **war effort**. Often **waging a war** assumes the form of an **invasion** involving **military intervention**, euphemistically referred to in the recent Russian invasion of Ukraine as a **special military operation**, carried out by **troops** i.e. "armed forces collectively" (Troops, *s.a.*) as a **direct attack**. While **launching attack**, usually military objects are in focus, however, **civilian targets** are also frequently affected and **damaged**. This usually happens as a result of **bombing**, during **air raids** by **enemy** forces, or (either **light** or **heavy**) **artillery** fire by **tanks**, **cannons**, **large-calibre firearms**, etc. The **air forces** have, until relatively recently, conducted their attacks by airplanes, now however, **airfield attacks** are also **launched** from **drones**.

During **war time** in **combat** on the **front-line**, troops (and often also guerrillas) in the **battlefield** are involved in **direct combat** and in **open war**. Unlike times of peace, during wars the **combat call-up (age)** is usually lower. Large-scale armed conflicts may turn into a **total war**, i.e. a "war which is unrestricted in terms of the resources or personnel employed, the territory or nations involved, or the objectives pursued; esp. war in which civilians are perceived as combatants and therefore as

legitimate targets". Contrary to this, a **limited war** is the one during which "the weapons used, the nations or territory involved, or the objectives pursued, are limited or restricted" (War (a), *s.a.*).

Commanding officers carry out specific **war tactics** and follow a pre-designed **war trail**. An attacking army or force must expect a **counterattack** in **self-defence**, or as a form of **taking revenge** on the **attacker**. Field forces also attempt to **shoot down** enemy **missile-carrying** objects. Attacks that are directed at the **opponent's** forces, troops and targets employ **weaponry** of all kinds: **weapons of mass destruction, chemical weapons, energy weapons, nuclear weapons, saturation weapons**, etc. Forces under attack attempt to either **take shelter** or **strike back**.

Once an armed conflict reaches an endpoint, **peace talks** are conducted, as a result of which a state of friendly **alliance** is likely to be announced and a **declaration of peace** signed.

Unfortunately, diverse **war crimes** and **atrocities** are committed during the state of war, such as **shooting, killing, raping**, incidents of **manslaughter**; **casualties** are buried in mass graves, or burnt to dispose of the evidence of **mass murder**; when large numbers of individuals are affected, cases of **massacre** can be identified. With shortage of goods in the supply chain of **humanitarian aid**, including food and drinking water, **starvation** as well as **famine** spread over substantial areas bringing **malnutrition** and, in severe cases, **death**. **War damages**, more often than not, amount to exorbitant sums to be paid out in **compensation**. Accused war criminals are subject to **war trials**, with the aim of sentencing them for committing war crimes.

A specific type of war is a **cold war**, described as "a state of hostility that falls short of armed conflict, typically consisting of **threats, propaganda, espionage**, or other similar measures" (Cold war, *s.a.*). Another particular war category is a **civil war**, i.e. "war between the citizens or inhabitants of a single country, state, or community" (Civil war, *s.a.*).

Holy war is a type of hostile activity that is "declared or waged in support of a religious cause; a violent campaign carried out especially by religious fundamentalists, to further the cause of a religion or a particular ideology" (War (a), *s.a.*).

Among numerous types of war, beyond the predominantly military-based, an **economic war** can be identified. It is "an economic strategy based on the use of measures (e.g., a blockade) of which the primary effect is to weaken the economy of another state". Similarly, a **white war** refers to "war without **bloodshed; economic warfare**". Other economy-related activities of this sort that can be

listed and include a **price war**, i.e. "a bout of heavy price-cutting among competing retailers or traders", or a **stamp war**, which stands for a "competition amongst retailers to attract custom by providing the best trading-stamp offer". Depending on the manufacturing and industry sectors involved, different types of wars are identified. A **gas war** pertains to aggressive rivalry between gas corporations or conflict related to the manufacturing and supply of the fossil fuel; while a **drug war** refers to competition on the pharmaceutical sales market. However, more recent senses of the term denote "violent aggression between rival dealers in illegal drugs" and "an organized campaign (usually government-sponsored) against the production, trafficking, and use of illegal drugs" (War (a), *s.a.*). Similarly, a **psychological war** (employing techniques of **psychological warfare**) or a **propaganda war** do not require the use of physical force or weapons, instead they rely on the skillful use of language and manipulation techniques.

4.1 Contemporary faces of WAR: Information war

A special type of contemporary war, an **information war**, describes "a war during which the reporting or manipulation of information is particularly important or notable; a conflict over the possession or distribution of information" (Information war, *s.a.*). Moreover, with the spread and access of internet and media coverage, **information warfare** can be identified as the latest advancement in warfare, defined as "the strategic use of information or information-technology for intelligence-gathering or military purposes; the deliberate disruption of information and communication systems, esp. by a terrorist or subversive group" (Information warfare, *s.a.*). Apart from the activities outlined above, information wars make use of the spread of **disinformation**, i.e. "the dissemination of deliberately false information, esp. when supplied by a government or its agent to a foreign power or to the media, with the intention of influencing the policies or opinions of those who receive it; false information so supplied" (Disinformation, *s.a.*). It can be carried out in the form of **disinformation campaigns** or public misdirection campaigns, through unfounded rumours and **fake news**, i.e. "news that conveys or incorporates false, fabricated, or deliberately misleading information, or that is characterized as or accused of doing so" (Fake news, *s.a.*).

As reported by BBC News, in 2018 an **online war** was underway employing "a new **arsenal** of weapons: **bots**, fake news, and **hacking**" (Pinnel 2018). Spreading fake news on online media, such as through tweets and using hashtags, has been carried out by fake accounts known as bots, which are "automated accounts which attempt to **manipulate** public opinion by artificially boosting the popularity of social media posts" (*ibid.*). A **bot net** is created when a number of bot accounts cooperate in this fashion.

4.2 Contemporary faces of WAR: cyberwar and hybrid war in Ukraine

However, it has to be stressed that the most recent type of war that has entered the frame under consideration, **cyberwar**, is closely related to information technology and involves **cyber-attacks** and violation of **cyber security**.

The term **cyberwar** was first used in the 1990s (Cyberwar, *s.a.*). **Cyberwarfare** refers to "the infiltration or disruption of computer or other information technology systems for strategic or military purposes," (Cyberwarfare, *s.a.*) and a **cyberwar** describes "the use of computer technology to attack an organization, state, etc., esp. infiltration or disruption of computer or other information technology systems for strategic or military purposes; an instance or period of this" (Cyberwar, *s.a.*). An individual involved with cyberwarfare is dubbed a **cyberwarrior**, and defined as "a person who uses computer technology to disrupt the activities of a government or organization, esp. by infiltrating and attacking information technology systems for strategic or military purposes," and also "a person employed to defend a government or organization against such attacks" (Cyberwarrior, *s.a.*). Cyber-attacks are carried out to weaken opponents' positions, to affect their cyber security and/or to compromise computer systems of various kinds.

A **hacker** is defined as "a person who attempts to gain unauthorized remote access to a computer system or network (= computer hacker)," but also, more recently, "a person who gains unauthorized access to another's telephone communications or data (= phone hacker)" (Hacker, *s.a.*). As noted in a BBC News report (Tidy 2023) in the recent Russian war on Ukraine, cyber-attacks are quite a common measure adopted to protect and defend the **cyber front line** once the **battle in cyberspace** was initiated. The **hacker armies** work as unofficial **activist hackers** who **disable websites**, **disrupt services** at banks, **attack** for instance banking **websites** to take them offline, or **hijack radio stations** to broadcast the sound of fake air raid sirens. The **cyber defence HQ** (Headquarters) works towards providing defence measures and ensuring cyber security.

Another new term that has recently entered the scope of the frame WAR is **hybrid war**. As reported by BBC News two weeks after the war on Ukraine was launched by the Russians, Ukraine "is fighting a war in the **digital realm**, as well as on the ground" (Tidy 2022, March 4). **Cyber-defences** are said to have repelled most attacks, but the **cyber-conflict** with Russian forces has been unparalleled, which has led to it being referred to as a hybrid war. A high-ranking official has stated "This is happening for the first time in history and [...] cyber-war can only be ended with the end of **conventional war**" (ibid.). Moreover, there had been low level cyber-attacks prior to the invasion proper, in which "government and financial service **websites were knocked offline** briefly," some received warnings

to "expect the worst", but more importantly "authorities discovered a more serious **"wiper" attack**, which removed the data from a small number of private company networks in Ukraine". An **IT Army** was launched in Ukraine, carrying out cyber-attacks on Russian **targets**, which "included attempts to **disrupt** transport and power **networks**" (ibid.). The **cyber-army** gathers nearly 400,000 hackers **fighting online**, never targeting civilian networks or **civil targets**, only the **military** and **government targets**.

Wiper attacks are meant to destroy data on affected equipment causing **outages** and **DDoS attacks**. As noted by Tidy (2002: February 24), "Distributed Denial of Service (DDoS) attacks are designed to **knock a website offline** by **flooding** it with huge amounts of requests until it **crashes**".

Preventive measures are taken by cyber-armies to **withstand cyber-attacks** (Tidy 2022, April 12). **Malicious software** was a weapon that was employed in cyber-attacks on energy/power companies in an attempt to **cause blackouts** and **power cuts** over large areas. Luckily, this malicious software employed by Russian **cyber-military units** was **identified** and **neutralised** in time. Other instances of **malware** and **wiper software** are reported to have been used and **spread** around Ukraine with the intention of **deleting data** on **infected computer systems**. As further reported, "a wiper was also used to **disrupt** the US **satellite communications provider** Viasat on the first day of the Ukraine invasion" (ibid.). Such hacking attempts against various systems (banking, communications, power supply, government services, etc.) have drastically increased in number; Ukraine has also been "repeatedly bombarded with low-level cyber-attacks" (ibid.).

Other forms of safeguards to be employed involve '**locking digital doors**' against the prospective threat of further cyber-attacks, as well as increasing **cyber-security precautions**. **Cyber-superpowers**, capable of serious security threats, are equipped with **cyber-tools** capable of conducting "disruptive and potentially destructive cyber-attacks" as well as **going on a cyber-offensive** (Tidy 2022, March 22). Cyber-attacks can affect and **target critical infrastructure** and **spread destructive software**, among other hostile acts.

5. Concluding remarks

The cognitive construct considered in the discussion of the frame of WAR is a highly complex, multifaceted structure. The number of elements presented above is far from exhaustive, as it is nearly impossible to trace and put together all possible elements of the analysed composite and wide-ranging construct. It covers a spectrum of perspectives, each of which can be independently developed into a knowledge structure with a particular focus (linguistic, metaphorical, philosophical, political, media,

reporting, religious, to mention but a few). Obviously and in addition, outdated forms and tools of warfare have been excluded from the discussion. However, it is possible to show how those lexical items that have been identified are interrelated, and how this mental representation of reality is shaped.

War is an instance of a hostile encounter, which is therefore an embodiment of conflict which cannot be resolved by peaceful means. There are two groups of people involved: the military and civilians. The military also form subgroups, such as the army, navy and air force, which are composed of soldiers and officers of various rank. The guerrilla, who are not organised within formal national military groups, conduct irregular military operations independently, hence they are strictly neither military nor civilian. Civilians do not carry out military activity, but they are hugely affected by military operations, as they can become hostages, refugees, prisoners of war, war casualties or war survivors. Depending on the circumstances, any individual taking part in and surviving a war becomes a veteran and has a chance to become a war hero or a war criminal.

Wars can be waged, declared, levied, fought, won or lost. Preventive wars can also be initiated in expectation of the alleged antagonistic activity of another nation or state. They are fought with the use of weapons of various kinds, employing diversified tactics. During war time, in open war, troops attack enemy forces, defend their positions and carry out counter-attacks, including sabotage. War activities take many forms, including attacking, bombing, shooting, retreating, evacuating, etc. Eventually, peace talks are carried out and a peace treaty is signed to declare peace.

Not all wars entail physical force and violent attacks with assault weaponry. Such types include cold war, economic war, psychological war, information war, or cyberwar. The two latter forms of hostility reflect the most recent developments of war tactics basing on technological advancement. They are, however, also wide-ranging and can significantly affect the lives of millions of people, threatening their security and daily existence. The case of hybrid war in Ukraine, described in the news reports referred to in the discussion above, is wreaking havoc on an unprecedented scale as it affects both military forces (open war) as well as civilians (cyberwar), by targeting critical infrastructure, banking systems as well as medical welfare systems, among others. It has to be stressed that language, employed for propaganda or manipulation purposes, is an inseparable element of information wars. Sadly, it can be concluded that the development of technology, which should be utilised for the benefit of mankind, is misused and abused by employing it for malevolent purposes as a cyber-weapon of mass destruction.

Wars are hardly ever justified, with the exception of cases like the war on crime, or the war on drugs – both of which are aimed at safeguarding human life.

Notes

1. The italics have been introduced by the original authors (Lakoff & Johnson 1999).

Abbreviations

OED – Oxford English dictionary


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