



Beyond an Enemy

Exploring the need for mindfulness training in a new generation of warfare
by Amanda Hester

Fighting for Peace

War and peace are two ends of a spectrum, intrinsically connected. The *forward strategy* employed by the United States and by many western industrialized countries has become a multi-headed beast of peace enforcement, humanitarian intervention, and counter-insurgency operations. It has developed a new kind of warfare, one that embodies the co-emergent nature of conflict and peace whereby western soldiers on foreign soil rush in as medics to try and save the life of men they just gunned down. War is waged so that *we* can have peace, so that *others* can have peace. This conversation between war and peace is becoming the linchpin of strategic operations. The mandate for our military has become one of creating peace in an environment of conflict and in an environment where that conflict arises in part from the presence of our soldiers. Mindfulness practice, which develops peace within individuals, has become necessary in order to engage efficiently the mandate of this new warfare.

When the strategic objective of war is peace, we need our soldiers to employ mindfulness training, so that force is not applied sub-strategically. It is the mind and heart that controls the man.¹ Yet, as it stands, we often let horror reduce soldiers to their training alone, a training that bypasses the reasoning mind. In this new realm of warfare, mind training is essential. De Becker writes, “Knowing how to tame and manage the sometimes counter-productive reactions of the body, many more warriors will have the presence of mind to avoid combat altogether.”² A mindful soldier is an efficient soldier, able to choose the most direct path toward victory. Grossman describes the need for cultivating and training “peace warriors” to be the new knights and paladins of society. He writes, “There can be no more important or noble endeavour.”³ In a situation rife with tension, conflict, disorientation, and inherent contradictions, mindfulness is an act of chivalry that protects both the warrior and his objective. Mindfulness has always been inherent to eastern notions of warriorship, and it is time that it be explicitly embraced by western traditions as well.

Human beings are naturally compassionate. We have an aversion to killing other human beings, so powerful that it can override our natural instinct for personal survival. Studies by US

¹ Appreciating that many soldiers today are women, for the sake of simplicity and the ease of expression this paper will use the masculine pronoun. No offence is intended.

² Gavin de Becker, *Forward, On Combat*, by LTC Dave Grossman with Loren W Christensen, 3rd ed. (United States of America: Warrior Science Publications, 2008) xv.

³ LTC Dave Grossman, *Introduction, On Combat*, 3rd ed. (United States of America: Warrior Science Publications, 2008) xvii-iii.

Army Brigadier General S.L.A. Marshall found that “only 15 to 20 percent of the American riflemen in combat during world War II would fire at the enemy.”⁴ It took extensive adjustments in US military training to bypass this natural revulsion and increase firing rates to 95% during the Vietnam War. Grossman notes, “The ability to increase this firing rate, though, comes with a hidden cost. Severe psychological trauma becomes a distinct possibility when psychological safeguards of such magnitude are over-ridden.”⁵ The legacy of these adjustments is an assumption that in moments of intense conflict a soldier’s mind will freeze and his training will take over. This is a dangerous assumption to carry forward.

The *Dorje Kasung*⁶ is a mindfulness practice within Shambhala Buddhism that uses military form and discipline as a means for attaining peace and realization as well as offering organized protection for the community. An adaptation of these practices could be used as an access point for introducing mindfulness training into western militaries. Meditation, along with aspects of Kasung practice, could provide a framework for training soldiers to hold their minds during combat, enabling them to meet the demands being placed on them by a new generation of warfare. It would also create a means for the soldiers to reconcile feelings of compassion, fear, anger, and sadness, with the requirements of duty, allowing for greater emotional survival and fewer instances of post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

Kasung practice engages with traditional military forms as a discipline for practicing mindfulness-awareness meditation in order to cultivate awareness and compassion for oneself and others. The purpose of this practice is to “transform a culture of aggression.”⁷ Through the disciplines of Kasung practice one works directly with aggression: one’s own and that of others. The uses of military forms such as uniform, command hierarchy, marching and drill, as mindfulness disciplines, “allow practitioners to work directly with the ego and its various games of ambition, power, and control.”⁸ The practice engages energy that is generally associated with destruction, and through a framework of self-discipline and contemplation redirects that energy into wakefulness: awareness and compassion. The teachings of the Dorje Kasung suggest that it is specifically through military forms that a disciplined gentleness of mind and body can effectively manifest as the antidote to aggression and impulsive reaction.⁹

The central precept of the Dorje Kasung is service. The practice recognizes that every aspect, each military form, can and should be understood and enacted with service as its

⁴ LTC Dave Grossman, *On Killing: The Psychological cost of Learning to Kill in War and Society*, Revised Edition. (New York: Back Bay books/Little, Brown and C., 2009). 3-4.

⁵ Grossman, *On Killing*. 252.

⁶ *Dorje* is a Tibetan word meaning ‘diamond-like’, or ‘indestructible’; and *Kasung* is made up of two syllables: *ka* meaning ‘sacred word’ or ‘command’, and *sung* meaning ‘to protect’. The overall translation of Dorje Kasung is ‘indestructible protector of Dharma’, the actual Sanskrit translation of which is ‘truth’ or ‘sanity’. Therefore, ‘indestructible protector of sanity’ conveys the most direct meaning of the term, Dorje Kasung.

⁷ Dr. Mitchell Levy, Public Talk, Halifax Shambhala Centre, Tower Rd. Hfx. NS. May 16, 2010.

⁸ James Gimian, Introduction, *True Command: The Teachings of the Dorje Kasung*, Volume 1: The Town Talks, by Chogyam Trungpa, Ed. Carolyn Rose Gimian, (Halifax N.S.: Trident Publications, 2005). xviii.

⁹ ‘Gentleness’ in this context refers specifically to a quality of warriorship, and should not be understood in its conventional sense alone. Cf: Chogyam Trungpa, *Shambhala: The Sacred Path of the Warrior*, Ed. Carolyn Rose Gimian, Dragon Edition (Boston and London: Shambhala Publications, 1988).45.

motivation. It is the military's unique understanding of service, of unlimited liability,¹⁰ that differentiates the military from other professions or organizations. "The profession of arms is distinguished by the concept of service before self."¹¹ This presents the opportunity for the realization of selflessness in every action taken. "Working for the benefit of others eases the self-centered grip of ego by removing oneself as the central reference point of all activity."¹² Kasung practice is thus one of the most immediate and effective means for training in mindfulness.

Another principle of Kasung practice is the notion of container. One uses a container, either physical or psychological, to facilitate both function and communication. From a classroom to a boardroom, container refers to the procedures, boundaries, protocols, and basic decorum that are used in various situations to create form. "Any container is the ground for what takes place within it, providing both accommodation and boundary."¹³ This is embodied by the military, which provides a container for society. The military itself, however, can provide a profound container for individual practice as well, creating a context within which soldiers can find emotional and psychological protection when going into combat zones and/or battle.

Chogyam Trungpa often equated the Kasung's use of military forms with the rich tradition of monasticism.¹⁴ Like monasticism, the military creates an environment where all of one's activities, thoughts, emotions, turmoil, etc., occur within a set boundary. Both disciplines emphasize structure, uniformity and simplicity as being primary aspects of service to others. Likewise, Patrick Milehan describes the military covenant that a soldier enters into as creating a "moral community constituting the essence of dedicated service – service taken under oath as [an] act of faith."¹⁵ In this way, Kasung practice perceives the role of the military as being both protector and caregiver for society.

The complex role of the military in today's society is one of protection, but also destruction. The military confronts the uncomfortable for us. It does what needs to be done to maintain our safety and stability. Sakyong Mipham explains "There is an attitude, when you become a kasung or join the military, you physically take on the uniform and duty, and mentally you cross a certain line ... a lot of people hang out near the line but mentally they don't engage."¹⁶ We tend to shy away from this destructive element; we want to enjoy our lifestyle of convenience without having to confront its price. The power of a military, is in being a strong and definite, unyielding boundary. This does not mean, however, that the military needs to be hard and without compassion.

Within Kasung practice, protection and action, even if that action is destructive, arises from an attitude of non-aggression. Through contemplating service to others, and using military

¹⁰ Unlimited liability meaning: "All accept that no one is exempt from being ordered into harm's way. All accept the obligation to bear arms as required". Canada Department of National Defence, *Duty with Honour: The Profession of Arms in Canada*, Canadian Forces Leadership Institute, (Ottawa: Published under the auspices of the Chief of Defence Staff by the Canadian Defence Academy, 2003). 54.

¹¹ *Duty with Honour: The Profession of Arms in Canada*. 10.

¹² Gimian, Introduction, *True Command*. Xxvi.

¹³ Gimian, Introduction, *True Command*. xxiv.

¹⁴ Chogyam Trungpa, *The Dorje Kasung Handbook*, (n.p., 1996). 47.

¹⁵ Patrick Milehan, "Unlimited Liability and the Military Covenant", *Journal of Military Ethics*, 9:1 (2010). 32.

¹⁶ Sakyong Mipham Rinpoche, "Kasung Talk", Shambhala Mountain Center (Red Feather Lakes Co.) January 2006.

disciplines as a form of mindfulness meditation, one is able to maintain awareness and act with sanity in a way that most skilfully meets the demands of a situation. This is described as compassionate action. Protection is the act of guardianship, of keeping something safe from harm. It is seen as extending sanity outward, rather than “solidifying personal or collective territoriality.”¹⁷ This is the practice of the Dorje Kasung: seeing what needs to be done to protect the sanity of a situation, and doing it. Ultimately, this is the training needed to meet the demands being placed on today’s soldiers, who are asked to consider the second and third-level effects of their actions in the midst of intense aggression, confusion, and conflict.¹⁸

War Amongst the People: A New Paradigm

Sir Rupert Smith writes “War no longer exists.” Conflicts, confrontations, and combat continue, “states still have armed forces which they use as a symbol of power”, but there has been a “transformation of war.”¹⁹ Van Creveld argues that contemporary strategic thought rooted in “a Clausewitzian world picture ... is either obsolete or wrong.”²⁰ A new generation of warfare has evolved, and is evolving. It must be met with a new generation of theory, and training.

What has become known as 4th Generation Warfare (4GW) is characterized by a blurring of the lines between the political and the military, the civilian and the combatant. It manifests as protracted conflicts, often in the form of insurgencies, and it is unique in that “4GW does not attempt to win by defeating the enemy's military forces.”²¹ Along with an emphasis on the political, 4GW recognizes the power and salience of the will, or moral spirit, of either side as being the main determining factor in military success.²² Smith describes a “paradigm shift” in what constitutes war in all of its wider definitions and permutations.²³ He argues for the need to change our institutions and our ideas in order to meet this new paradigm.

Smith calls this new paradigm “War amongst the people,” as both a graphic and conceptual description of modern warfare. “It reflects the hard fact that there is no secluded battlefield ... the reality in which the people in the streets and houses and fields – all the people, anywhere – are the battlefield.”²⁴ Combat is no longer elite. Civilians constitute the targets, the objects to be won, the victims to be saved, and, simultaneously, the opposing force.²⁵

When fighting amongst the people, it is now important to recognize that living element, that interactive entity. The people have become a significant variable for both the strategy and tactics of war. In 4GW the people represent a significant node of strategic power and influence. Smith writes, “Power is a relationship, not a possession,” thus the capability of a force can only

¹⁷ Trungpa, *The Dorje Kasung Handbook*. 9.

¹⁸ Canada Department of National Defence, *Counter-Insurgency Operations: Land Force*, (Ottawa: Published on the authority of the Chief of the Land Staff by National Defence HQ, 2008). 1-8.

¹⁹ Rupert Smith, *The Utility of Force: The Art of War in the Modern World*, (London: Penguin Books, 2006).1.

²⁰ Martin Van Creveld, Introduction, *The Transformation of War: The most radical reinterpretation of armed conflict since Clausewitz*, (New York: The Free Press, 1991). ix.

²¹ Thomas X. Hammes, “War Evolves into the Fourth Generation”, *Contemporary Security Policy*, Vol. 26, No. 2, (August 2005). 190.

²² Hammes. 201.

²³ Smith. *Utility of Force*. 2-5.

²⁴ Smith. *Utility of Force*. 3.

²⁵ Smith. *Utility of Force*. 4.

be assessed: “opponents must be considered in relationship to each other.”²⁶ But they must also be considered in relation to the dynamic living body of this new battlefield. “In order to understand operations amongst the people, and to capture their will, we must first understand the people.”²⁷ The further implication of this is that we must also come to better understand ourselves.

4GW exists in a complex reality. Insurgency is no longer the representation of a movement or a people, it is a competition between the raw energy of various groups, energies that struggle and collide in ways that are incomprehensible, “incoherent and incomplete.”²⁸ Insurgency “as a manifestation of war, it is a competition of wills,”²⁹ Clausewitz described “insurrection” not as a form of warfare, but as “another means of war.” It is something which the momentum of war, almost as a separate entity in and of itself, might spawn and create: “an outgrowth of the way in which the conventional barriers have been swept away ... by the elemental violence of war. It is, in fact, a broadening and intensification of the fermentation process known as war.”³⁰ This suggests the birth of something new, carrying within it potential and possibility, for both wisdom and confusion.

With this new paradigm, a significant change takes place in terms of strategic goals: “The fundamental maxim of all [counter-insurgency] is that the strategic centre of gravity is the populace of the threatened state or region. Without the moral support of the people, no [counter-insurgency] campaign can succeed.”³¹ Insurgents develop and expand interwoven within the civilian population and local space. “An insurgency requires only the indifference of a populace to operate,” to give it manoeuvrability. Within this dangerous apathy, friend and foe become indistinguishable.³² This brings a new level of significance to every effect and detail of an operation. Every action performed by every soldier, at every level, holds strategic significance.

A near absurdity arises as military force is subordinated to the entirely new concept of pacific military influence. The Canadian Counter-Insurgency (COIN) manual states that properly conducted, “Influence activities may even convince certain portions of the insurgent group to either convert to support the COIN campaign or at least enter a peaceful negotiation process.”³³ Because of this, the manual calls for the subordination of force. Even in the US strategy for Iraq and Afghanistan there was a shift toward focusing on “protecting civilians over killing the enemy; assuming greater risks; and using minimum, not maximum force ... a radical departure from the precious doctrine based on force protection.”³⁴ The new paradigm of war is changing what it means to be a soldier, yet military culture and training have not changed at all.

²⁶ Smith. *Utility of Force*. 240.

²⁷ Smith. *Utility of Force*. 279.

²⁸ “War turns into something ... incoherent and incomplete” – Carl Von Clausewitz, *On War*, ed. and Trans. Michael Howard, and Peter Paret, (New York: Random House, 1993), Book 8, Ch. 2. 701.

²⁹ Canada Department of National Defence, *Counter-Insurgency Operations: Land Force*, (Ottawa: Published on the authority of the Chief of the Land Staff by National Defence HQ, 2008). (1-2).

³⁰ Clausewitz, *On War*, Book 6, Ch. 26. 578.

³¹ *COIN*. (3 – 1).

³² *COIN*. (1 – 13).

³³ *COIN*. (5 – 20).

³⁴ Lorenzo Zambenardi, “Counterinsurgency’s Impossible Trilemma”, *The Washington Quarterly*, 33:3 (July 2010). 27.

Military objectives in this new warfare are “softer, more malleable, complex, [and] sub-strategic.” Rather than wanting to hold and maintain territory, military concern is now with how to effectively extricate itself after the confrontation. Smith writes

The ends for which we fight are changing from the hard objectives that decide a political outcome to those of establishing conditions ... we seek to create a conceptual space for diplomacy, economic incentives, political pressure and other measures to create a desired political outcome of stability.³⁵

COIN doctrine is rife with the importance of “influence” activities. “Force must be used discriminately” because even a tactical success could cause an escalation of conflict if its secondary effects are not fully considered.³⁶ The primary strategic goal becomes establishing “a climate of order within which responsible government can function effectively and progress can be achieved” rather than destroying an enemy. Indeed, within 4GW it is very difficult to discern a clear and specific enemy to be either vanquished or understood.³⁷

4GW, however, is by no means peaceful. It is somehow more brutal, stressful, demanding, and horrific. Operational tempo and attrition rates increase almost as quickly as resources diminish, troops are over-taxed and pushed to such extremes that the military situation often becomes not only unsustainable but also counterproductive.³⁸ 4GW exacts an enormous toll from soldiers, civilians, and governments alike.

Today’s warfare has no front line, no refuge or sanctuary.³⁹ There is no clear enemy and no clear friend, no decision-making framework upon which to place one’s mandate and training. Western armies are everywhere engaged in wars and conflicts where there can be, “no decisive victory.”⁴⁰ “The perpetual uncertainty is mentally exhausting and physically debilitating, and often its effects linger even after returning home”.⁴¹ While traditionally war followed a sequence of peace-crisis-war-resolution, our military engagements today are born in attrition, exist in chaos, and tend to have no exit strategy but infamy.

4GW presents new complications for a military that finds its actions bound by the need to factor in potential second and third-order effects for every action, on both physical and psychological levels. These determine long-term success or failure for the campaign.⁴² Military units, however, tend to be “trained, organized and equipped for combating conventional threats that are similar to themselves in terms of aims, structures and doctrines.”⁴³ They are not trained to be able to hold their mind to the present moment, or control their influence at a psychological

³⁵ Smith. *Utility of Force*. 269-270.

³⁶ *COIN*. (1 – 8).

³⁷ *COIN*. (1 – 5).

³⁸ David Perry, “Canada’s seven billion dollar war”, *International Journal*, 63:3 (Summer 2008). 720.

³⁹ “The single most prevalent fixture in the experience of combatants was the recognition that there were no sanctuaries in Iraq.” Daryl S. Paulson, and Stanley Krippner, *Haunted by Combat: Understanding PTSD in War Veterans Including Women, Reservists, and those coming back from Iraq*, (Westport, Connecticut: Praeger Security International, 2007). 19.

⁴⁰ Smith. *Utility of Force*. 5.

⁴¹ Dr. Elizabeth Stanley, and Dr. Amishi P. Jha, “Mind Fitness and Mental Armor: Enhancing Performance and Building Warrior Resilience”, *Joint Forces Quarterly*, No:55 (Oct. 2009).. 2.

⁴² *COIN*. (6 – 5).

⁴³ *COIN*. (5 – 2).

level, or easily withstand psychological attack. Soldiers are trained to react on impulse with force and aggression, not to take pause and contemplate the ramifications of their actions and influence. This requires mindfulness and the capacity for contemplation.

Training and cultivating a mind of discernment and control is essential if soldiers are to meet the demands being placed on them. In war amongst the people, knowing what action to take, or not to take, not only has life and death consequences, but strategic implications as well. Kasung practice provides a unique perspective on how to engage with the world in a mindful military way, so as to inspire, protect and stabilize peace with non-aggression. In the wars that we are now facing this mental and emotional capacity is as important for a soldier to have as the ability to kill the enemy, in some cases more so.

Sakyong Mipham writes “The more force you have to apply, the greater your compassion should be.”⁴⁴ If we are sending soldiers to fight wars in order to stabilize an end-state of peace, we must train them to deal with their own minds and aggression, as well as the minds and aggression of others.

War Beyond An Enemy: Exploring The Paradigm

Over the last seven decades, 4GW has developed as an evolution of war. What constitutes victory, what it looks like, how it is won, has begun to transcend conventional notions of warfare entirely. In a new paradigm of warfare, what we are fighting to conquer is essentially war itself: “The object of both sides [is] to establish their respective versions of peace.”⁴⁵ Although the politics that send our soldiers into a conflict may feel differently, at a military level, rather than fighting for territory or resources, the strategic goal is often an end to violence.

In this new paradigm warfare becomes not just a dance but also a dialogue.⁴⁶ “The military determines victory in accordance with the enemy.”⁴⁷ With counter-insurgency, success is defined by the end-state, which falls often and increasingly outside “of an identifiable victory in a strictly military context.”⁴⁸ This changes how we understand the utility of our employment of military force. “The victories of Napoleon’s army were the result of [a] conceptual shift” and this is what is needed again: a reorganization of method and perspective at both the conceptual and physical levels.⁴⁹

The world is in flux and what an army is, what it can or cannot do, is not fixed. There is no “unchanging essence” to what a military must be; indeed it *must* be as changeable as warfare itself.⁵⁰ The Dorje Kasung use the motto “victory over war” as a reminder of an eastern military

⁴⁴ Sakyong Mipham Rinpoche, qtd.in Sgt. Pual M. Kendel, *Walking the Tiger’s Path: A Soldier’s Spiritual Journey in Iraq*, (Denver Co.: Tendril Press, 2011). 34.

⁴⁵ Smith. *Utility of Force*. 10.

⁴⁶ “Every cunning plan has to succeed against not blind nature but rather an adversary with whom [one] conducts a long-term tactical, operational, strategic, political and moral dialogue” – Canada Department of. of National Defence, *Leadership in the Canadian Forces: Leading the Institution*, Forward by General Rick Hillier, Canadian Forces Leadership Institute, (Ottawa: Published under the auspices of the Chief of Defence Staff by the Canadian Defence Academy, 2007). 56.

⁴⁷ Sun Tzu, *The Art of War*, Translation and Essays by The Denma Translation Group, (Boston: Shambhala Publications, Inc., 2003). 40.

⁴⁸ Smith. *Utility of Force*. 34.

⁴⁹ Smith. *Utility of Force*. 34.

⁵⁰ Denma Translation Group, “Taking Whole”, qtd. in Sun Tzu, *Art of War*, Denma Translation. 85.

principle that sees true victory as being that which arises only from non-aggression.⁵¹ Sun Tzu states “If the general is not victorious over his anger ... one-third of the officers and soldiers are killed and the walled city not uprooted – this is the calamity of attack.”⁵² Many eastern military traditions, from ancient Chinese generals to the Japanese traditions of the Samurai, hold this view. In the *Hagakure* (the way of the Samurai), it is said, “Win first, and then go to battle.”⁵³ This refers to the importance of maintaining the warrior’s mind and spirit above and beyond just engaging in battle. A warrior must “be unfathomable.”⁵⁴ The mental and emotional training of mindfulness instills certainty and confidence in the warrior, so that when fear and hesitation arise they have no power over the individual.

Within these eastern traditions is the potential for a new approach, one to meet this new paradigm of war. This approach is represented by the notion of *Taking Whole*. Taking whole refers to a means of “conquering the enemy in a way that keeps as much intact as possible.”⁵⁵ It is also a fundamental way of being: connecting to one’s environment and viewing situations from a larger perspective than is ordinarily possible with a mind distracted by aggression and fear. This is the underlying premise of *The Art of War*:

One hundred victories in one hundred battles is not the most skillful. Subduing the other’s military without battle is the most skillful ... one must take it whole when contending for all-under-heaven.⁵⁶

Essentially this is an approach to warfare aimed at conquering the hearts and minds of both the people, and one’s enemy. Taking whole is an attitude of fundamental non-aggression; it recognizes and respects the basic humanity of the enemy, potentially rendering further conflict unnecessary. In this way what is accessed is an inclusive victory that goes beyond the divisions of conflict.

This is the victory that most effectively answers the challenges of 4GW. This is the victory of the new paradigm. COIN doctrine states:

Military forces do not defeat insurgencies; instead, they create the security conditions necessary for the political resolution of the conflict ... [engaging in] political dialogue with potential or existing insurgent elements, there is a reasonable chance that the legitimate grievances underlying the insurgent cause can be addressed in a non-violent manner and progress made towards an enduring solution.⁵⁷

This emphasis on the need to recognize and address the “legitimate grievances” of the insurgents and the population is an approach to taking whole. The focus of 4GW is already on the intellectual and psychological aspects of a campaign, with force being applied selectively,

⁵¹ Gimian, “Introduction”, *True Command*. Xxxii.

⁵² Sun Tzu, *Art of War*, Denma Translation. 26.

⁵³ Yamamoto Tsunetomo, *Hagakure: The Art of the Samurai*, Trans. Barry D. Steben, The New Illustrated Edition, (London: Duncan Baird Publishers, 2008). 231.

⁵⁴ Sun Tzu, *Art of War*, Denma Translation. 64-65.

⁵⁵ Denma Translation Group, Introduction, *Art of War*, by Sun Tzu, Denma Translation. 8.

⁵⁶ Sun Tzu, *Art of War*, Denma Translation. 25-26.

⁵⁷ *COIN*. (1 – 14) and (1- 20).

and destruction viewed as a means not an end.⁵⁸ The aim is not necessarily to destroy the insurgents, but rather to disrupt and dislocate them, to create an environment where the insurgency can no longer exist.

Smith writes, “It is the appearance of a real enemy that brings the strategic level into play.”⁵⁹ A shift is taking place in how we understand what strategy entails and what it must become. Clausewitz states “In war, the subjugation of the enemy is the end, and the destruction of his fighting forces the means.”⁶⁰ In war amongst the people this statement becomes obsolete. No longer do only great battles produce major decisions,⁶¹ and no longer can “the impulse to destroy the enemy [be] central to the very idea of war.”⁶² It is important for strategy to become more comprehensive than it has been in the past, particularly as the smallest action or detail in 4GW can be of strategic influence. The strategic goal of warfare has become one of stabilizing the conditions for peace, but not through the destruction of an enemy.

If the objective in war is to achieve peace, perhaps our understanding of that peace also needs to be adjusted. Eastern traditions recognize fearlessness as being not in the absence of fear, but in its transcendence. Likewise “Peace must be understood as a condition relating to conflict: not in the sense of the absence of conflict but as one in which that option is not chosen.”⁶³ Within the context of a new paradigm of warfare, peace is not the absence of aggression; rather it is a situation in which aggression and conflict are overcome. The warrior still wields his weapon, but it is with precision, rather than hatred.⁶⁴ It is to protect, nurture, and secure, rather than to destroy. From an Eastern perspective, the greatest expression of the military “is when the weapon and all forms of violence can be transcended, and if not transcended, than used as the means to establish peace.”⁶⁵

In contrast, Clausewitz writes “We are not interested in generals who win victories without bloodshed. The fact that slaughter is a horrifying spectacle must make us take war more seriously, but not provide an excuse for gradually blunting our swords in the name of humanity.”⁶⁶ The possibility of a warrior, a soldier, who is connected to the present moment and fully aware of their experience, whose activity comes from mindfulness and compassion, does not negate the ruthless enactment of bloodshed when necessary. Rather, such a warrior is able to perform their duty more efficiently, more precisely, and with greater success at all levels. Clausewitz writes “War is such a dangerous business that the mistakes which come from kindness are the very worst.”⁶⁷ But war has changed, objectives have changed, and to be kind does not necessarily mean to be nice. The sharpness of a blade is not dulled by the motivations that guide its use. In the meditation practice of the Dorje Kasung, a weapon is viewed as that

⁵⁸ *COIN*. (5 – 32).

⁵⁹ Smith. *Utility of Force*. 210.

⁶⁰ Clausewitz, *On War*. Book 7, Ch. 3. 637.

⁶¹ Clausewitz, *On War*. Book 4, Ch. 11.

⁶² Clausewitz, *On War*. Book 1, Ch. 1. 85.

⁶³ Smith. *Utility of Force*. 151.

⁶⁴ “Killing the enemy is a matter of wrath” – Sun Tzu. *The Art of War*. Denma Translation. 23.

⁶⁵ Gross.

⁶⁶ Clausewitz, *On War*. Book 4, Ch. 11. 308-309.

⁶⁷ Clausewitz, *On War*. Book 1, Ch. 1. 84.

which “focuses energy and changes the ground of a situation.”⁶⁸ The inclusion of mindfulness training would work to support and enhance the efficacy of current training, not supplant it.

War is inherently destructive, yet it can also be the means for connecting to a greater perception of reality, as it challenges the fundamental premises of security, life and death. “The very act of questioning the meaning of one’s existence offers the possibility of authentically coming to terms with life.”⁶⁹ The world of the military professional, by means of its immediacy, more easily allows a connection to one’s inherent strength, confidence and compassion. This connection is the warrior’s mind. It is this element of the will or spirit, this moral element, which even Clausewitz acknowledges “Moves and leads the whole mass of force.” He writes “The moral elements are among the most important in war. They constitute the spirit that permeates war as a whole.”⁷⁰

In the Dorje Kasung, a victorious perspective transcends the notion of an enemy. It recognizes all participants as being caught together in an interdependent situation, and works with that reality to find a long-term, stable resolution, acknowledging the inherent value of each party. “The sage commander forms the ground and brings others around to his victorious perspective.”⁷¹ The potential that comes from 4GW is for the development of a strategy based on this approach, for a military that engages at this level. The potential arises for a theory of war that views victory as being that which comes from the dissolution of conflict, from the conquering of aggression, rather than the destruction or subjugation of one side by another.

The moral and physical elements of war must be considered together, “they interact throughout: they are inseparable.”⁷² The environment of 4GW shapes its participants in ways that we are only beginning to comprehend. Clausewitz writes “The need for military *virtues* becomes greater the more the theatre of operations and other factors tend to complicate the war and disperse the forces.”⁷³ War has never been so complicated or dispersed, and the virtues of the military professional have never been so crucial. The heart and mind of the soldier is stressed and over-taxed. “Beyond fear and exhaustion is a sea of horror that surrounds the soldier and assails his every sense.”⁷⁴ It is this sea of horror that our military has not yet been trained to navigate and survive.

Mindfulness training for today’s soldiers is a practical necessity, however, it must be supported by a cultural shift and a new approach to theory. Kasung practice recognizes that by changing oneself there is the ability to affect the environment and others. The ability to control and alter perception is an ability to change reality itself. Sun Tzu writes, “Now the form of the military is like water.”⁷⁵ The victorious perspective of taking whole changes the nature of warfare, just as it affects and reforms the enemy. In a world of dwindling resources, taking whole must become the future of war.

⁶⁸ Gimian, “Introduction”, *True Command*. XI.

⁶⁹ Paulson and Krippner. 56.

⁷⁰ Clausewitz. *On War*. Book 3, Ch. 3. 216,

⁷¹ Sun Tzu, *Art of War*, Denma Translation. 123.

⁷² Clausewitz. *On War*. Book 1, Ch. 2. 111. (Italics in original).

⁷³ Clausewitz, *On War*. Book 3, Ch. 5. 221.

⁷⁴ Grossman. *On Killing*. 73.

⁷⁵ Sun Tzu, *Art of War*, Denma Translation. 39.

The notion of warriorship suggests that “in the face of the world’s great problems, one can be heroic and kind at the same time.”⁷⁶ The military that meets and contends with the challenges and demands of 4GW must be able to manifest the warrior’s mind in order to take whole. This requires an adjustment in training to bring concept together with practice. Only then can we begin to affect the realities on the ground, only then can we attempt a victory that utilizes force to affect peace. Until then, our soldiers shall continue to flounder in attrition and chaos. Chogyam Trungpa writes, “aggression desecrates the ground altogether.”⁷⁷ We must begin to train our soldiers to move beyond the rampant aggression of war and combat so that they can perform their duty with honour and meaning, for society, but also for themselves.

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⁷⁶ Trungpa. *Shambhala: The Sacred Path of the Warrior*. 28.

⁷⁷ Trungpa. *Shambhala: The Sacred Path of the Warrior*. 117.

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