Pros and Cons of War

JULY 29, 2013 / STEFAN GRASSO

I haven't talked about war a whole lot on this site, mainly because it's been very hard for me to decide my stance on the issue of war. On the one hand, it results in many, many innocent lives being lost. But on the other hand, it can provide money and jobs, and hey, it wasn't always that bad.

In the ancient times, there were more honorable reasons for war, and if there weren't, then at least the conflicting nations were fighting honestly (as in no chemical warfare). Now flash forward to the present, where today we have cowardly methods of fighting, which include chemical warfare, the H-bomb, and even the ability to coax nations into submission by threatening them with the big bad nuclear bomb.

In order to determine my own stance on war, I'm going to list the perceived advantages and disadvantages, weigh them against each other, and then make a rational conclusion. Without further ado, here's the list.

Advantages

- **Economic growth** – War can strengthen an economy by providing jobs. Also, war allows manufacturing to thrive, especially weapons and ammo manufacturing. In times of conflict,

more people buy weapons and ammo, and thus more money changes hands, which benefits the people selling the weapons, and boosts the economy.

- **Technological advancement** – Competition and conflict tend to lead to nations trying to develop better technology than their opponents. Think of the accelerated progress in aviation technology. By the year 1900, we barely had any. By the time World War II had ended, we had fully functional fighter planes. Also, the technology that is created can still be useful after the conflict is over.

- **You get to play your part in history** – History is written when conflict happens, and those who participate in wars play a role in shaping the course of history.

- **The aftermath of winning** – Of course, what happens as a result of victory depends from country to country, but generally it means that they avoid suffering under the yoke of another power, that is if it's that kind of war.

Disadvantages

- **The obvious casualties** – An inevitable part of war is of course the loss of life. Sadly, lots of the lives that get lost are innocent people who get caught up in the situation, and of course, many opponents of war (and advocates of world peace) tend to only see that side of war.

- **Hatred and propaganda** – War is often used to justify hatred and discrimination against certain groups, which is obviously not good. The opportunity to rile people up against a certain group of people also gives rise to propaganda, as we've seen in World War II, the Cold War, the Vietnam War, and the current Mid-East conflicts.

- **Environmental damage** – Modern warfare has been known to cause damage to the environment. One notable example is the damage done to the oilfields of Kuwait during the Gulf War of the early 90's. Before the Gulf War, Kuwait's desert was healthy, in spite of centuries of nomadic grazing, and years of oil development. In the 60's and 70's, America sprayed herbicides over the forests of Vietnam in an attempt to deprive guerilla fighters of any cover the trees provided them with. This resulted in numerous toxins sinking into the soil and sea, many plants dying, many animals siring deformed offspring, and numerous other dreadful consequences.

- **What if the "bad guy" wins?** – If a tyrannical nation wins a war, then they can do whatever they want whatever free nation they conquer. I don't think I need to describe it.

- **Liberty takes a back seat to patriotism** – In times of conflict, nations will want the people to support the war. This is why anyone who criticizes the conflict is seen as a "traitor". This is most particularly true in America (which is ironically still called the land of the free), where several civil liberties have been occasionally curtailed in the named of patriotism. This was true in World War II, and in Vietnam, and it was true after 9/11, and when the US lands itself in other stupid war, the same will happen again.
- **It's just pointless now** – In the old days, wars would be fought to restore order, settle scores between rival powers, and for various other reasons. Nowadays, rich nations get bored so easily, that they need to come up with excuses to fight. However, when they do decided to fight, it's only ever really for the money. The US invaded the Middle East for oil, that was established as a fact years ago. However, the media still tries to convince us that it's a war being fought in the name of "counter-terrorism". There's no real, honorable excuse for war now, especially in the era of automatic weapons.

So now I've got **four** arguments in favor of war, and **six** arguments against it. Well, I guess I've never been supportive of modern warfare, nor have I ever believed the reasons for war. I can enjoy war in fiction and fantasy, but only because in there, it's meant to be entertainment and nothing else.

Overall, yes, I do oppose war, but not in the way that Hollywood liberals and hippies do, because I do realize that some wars had to be fought in the past. But here's hoping we don't have to fight any wars for the wrong reasons in the future.