

# Hybrid Analysts and the Modern Platforms of Conflict – Michael Lortz

## Introduction

There is no doubt conflict is more complex than ever. Although the basics are still the same and man is still man - still driven to conflict by the same factors that drove him to war thousands of years ago – the continued development of technology, systems, and social processes have made conflict continuously complex.

The complexity of modern conflict, especially on a geopolitical scale, forces those who study conflict to constantly reevaluate its causes, re-explore its methodologies, and re-strategize options to mitigate it.

While grand conflict has evolved, other conflict has remained stunningly basic. Technology has opened doors to more expansive, more explosive threats to human kind, yet bareknuckle, man-on-man or woman-on-woman fights still remain. In his seminal work, *Man, The State, and War*, Kenneth Waltz reviewed social conflicts and categorized them into three levels: individual, state, and international.<sup>1</sup> Understanding how conflict changes across these levels is important as we look at various modes of conflict.

In this essay we will begin with a brief exploration into the Causes of Conflict. From Causes of Conflict, we will define where conflict is occurring in the modern world. Instead of geographically however, our definition will focus on what I call the Five Platforms of Conflict. Then we will explore Conflict through Clausewitz, Hobbes, the Security Dilemma, and Just War Theory. We will conclude by introducing the concept of “Hybrid Analysts” and how to best train and prepare new analysts in a constant conflict world.

In this essay, I will use the term “conflict” instead of the often-used “war”. What differentiates war from conflict? The answer is resources – the amount of blood and treasure put towards a conflict (perhaps a percentage of GDP or military age personnel in the forces). With enough applied personnel (blood and treasure), war can be declared on any of the Platforms of Conflict. But to label everything a war, as many are apt to do, is to put too much emphasis on the conflict. If the blood and treasure isn’t there, it’s not a war. This is the difference between the theoretical “total war” – where all of a nation’s resources are dedicated to the effort – and current low-intensity conflicts making headlines today.

## 1. Causes of Conflict

For centuries, the idea of war was Westphalian military versus military<sup>2</sup>, if not in uniform, then armed group versus other armed group. War could be a gang war, a tribal war, or a world war between nations. For most, war equaled the brandishing of arms.

Throughout history, Man has competed with other Man for three predominant reasons. We will call them the Essential Causes of Conflict. These Essential Causes are:

- Power
- Resources
- Belief

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<sup>1</sup> <https://cup.columbia.edu/book/man-the-state-and-war/9780231125376>

<sup>2</sup> [https://ipfs.io/ipfs/QmXoypizjW3WknFjJnKLwHCnL72vedxjQkDDP1mXWo6uco/wiki/Westphalian\\_sovereignty.html](https://ipfs.io/ipfs/QmXoypizjW3WknFjJnKLwHCnL72vedxjQkDDP1mXWo6uco/wiki/Westphalian_sovereignty.html)

From bar fights to trench warfare, most conflicts occur because of these causes. Conflicts in power occur in personal relationships, families, within states, and within and between nations. Resources have been a cause for struggle since homo sapiens gained consciousness. Belief is a wide ranging cause that includes self-belief, religious belief, to national pride. Conflicts of belief sometimes mirror conflicts of power, but there are enough differences to create this third category.

## 2. Platforms of Conflicts

There are many ways Man battles Man over Power, Resources, and Belief. Not all conflict is armed conflict. Although armed conflict gets the glory, acclaim, and national holidays, it is only one of five Platforms of Conflict. These Platforms of Conflict are similar to the US Army Elements of Natural Power with one addition<sup>3</sup>.

The Five Platforms of Conflict can be shortened to the acronym MEDIC<sup>4</sup>:

- Military (Physical)
- Economic (Financial)
- Diplomatic (Political)
- Information
- Cyber

Every conflict, be it between nations, corporations, groups, or individuals operates on one of these platforms. On these platforms also lay Waltz's individual, national, and international levels of interaction.

Military, by far the most physical threatening platform, is the most well-known and its victories easiest to celebrate. It is the most studied platform, with centuries of texts ranging from Sun Tzu's *The Art of War*<sup>5</sup> to numerous current papers on gray zone<sup>6</sup>/hybrid<sup>7</sup>/irregular<sup>8</sup> warfare. The military platform uses the strategy of physical violence to impose control and therefore includes gang wars, bar fights, or any other martial conflict.

Economic conflict is the battle of business. While not as studied as military conflict, economic conflict also has a robust library of research. At the international level, economic conflict includes controlling the flow of money and goods in and out of nations via tariffs, sanctions, interest rates, and trade wars. At the local level, economic conflict is the battle for consumer dollars. It is Coca-Cola versus Pepsi, Apple versus Google, or a local pizzeria versus your local diner. Businesses, be they international, national, or local, are always in conflict with each other and competing for market share.

Diplomatic conflict has also been widely studied through International Relations, Political Science, Sociology, and Psychology. Diplomatic conflict is politics, negotiations, treaties, and agreements. Every

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<sup>3</sup> <http://publications.armywarcollege.edu/pubs/87.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> An evolution of the military's DIME acronym.

<sup>5</sup> <http://classics.mit.edu/Tzu/artwar.html>

<sup>6</sup> <https://warontherocks.com/2015/05/fighting-and-winning-in-the-gray-zone/>

<sup>7</sup> <https://globalsecurityreview.com/hybrid-and-non-linear-warfare-systematically-erases-the-divide-between-war-peace/>

<sup>8</sup> [https://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/testimonies/2012/RAND\\_CT374.pdf](https://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/testimonies/2012/RAND_CT374.pdf)

level of relationship is diplomatic, from nations meeting at the United Nations, to opposing parties meeting in Congress, to two people agreeing to marriage.

Information conflict is the battle for hearts and minds. It is influence and media, academia and marketing. It is multinational media conglomerates, religious messages, and social influencers. It is this essay and the ideas I am putting forth versus the ideas you already know. While sometimes there is no conflict of information, such as when a new scientific discovery is made, sometimes information conflict cuts deep and threatens our beliefs and ideas. While information conflict has been studied, it does not have the history of the previously discussed platforms.

Cyber conflict is the newest and least studied platform. Networks form the backbone of so much of our societal infrastructure and the battle to protect them. While cyber conflict can be incorporated with military and information conflict at the international level, there are enough independent cyber conflicts at the local level to justify cyber as its own conflict platform.

### **3. Clausewitz and the Platforms of Conflict**

Now that we have defined our variables and effectively separated “conflict” from “war”, let’s visit the classical philosophies of Carl Von Clausewitz and further explain the utility behind the Platforms of Conflict.

Here is Clausewitz’s definition of War, Chapter 1, Section 1 of *On War*:

*“War therefore is an act of violence intended to compel our opponent to fulfil our will.”<sup>9</sup>*

While the definition of the Military (Physical) Platform is an act of violence, the Military Platform is only a small percentage of how nations, organizations, or individuals can compel opponents. Nations, organizations, businesses, or individuals can compel opponents through any of the five platforms.

Now let’s take Clausewitz’s most famous phrase from *On War*: “War is politics by other means”<sup>10</sup>. Some have claimed “by” should actually be “with”.<sup>11</sup> Using the Platforms of Conflict, “with” makes much more sense. As mentioned earlier, “war” is conflict with maximum resources, to include Military, Economic, Information, and Cyber, as well as Politics.

In one of his lectures, French philosopher and historian, Michel Foucault, inversed Clausewitz’s famous phrase.<sup>12</sup> Using this inverse also provides an interesting method of proving the validity of the Platforms of Conflict.

“Politics is war by other means.”

Substituting “conflict” for “war”, we get “Politics is conflict by other means.”

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<sup>9</sup> <http://oll.libertyfund.org/pages/clausewitz-war-as-politics-by-other-means>

<sup>10</sup> <http://oll.libertyfund.org/pages/clausewitz-war-as-politics-by-other-means>

<sup>11</sup> <https://thediomat.com/2014/11/everything-you-know-about-clausewitz-is-wrong/>

<sup>12</sup> Clausewitz and Foucault: war and power. Roger Deacon. *Scientia Militaria*, 31 (1). 2003.

We know this to be true because politics and diplomacy are never ending and never in full agreement. There is always pushing, pulling, and varied perspectives as long as there is time. The Platforms of Conflict are the means of conflict, and politics is one of the five.

As Foucault concluded in his “Society Must Be Defended” lecture: “We are always writing the history of the same war, even when we are writing the history of peace and its institutions.”<sup>13</sup> Again, because conflict never ends, it just moves from one platform to another.

What if we substituted the other types of conflict in the Foucault/Clausewitz concept?

“Military conflict is conflict by other means.” – Very true. This is how people typically interpret Clausewitz’s “by other means” phrase. Military is one means of conflict where laws exist and anarchy is restrained. When anarchy prevails, such as in the animal kingdom, physical force is the only means of conflict. But Man, through his organizations and legislations, has pushed Military or Physical conflict to a phase that often proceeds other ways of dealing with conflict such as Diplomacy.

“Economic conflict is conflict by other means.” – Also true. Businesses are in constant conflict for market share. Each business or, on the international level, each nation, is trying to make money and a dollar spent somewhere else is a dollar lost for a business. This is the realm of Competitive Intelligence, Financial Analysis, and Market Analysis.

“Diplomatic conflict is conflict by other means.” – As we stated above, this is true as well. All relationships are an agreement and ongoing adjustment of power. Diplomacy is the grease that keeps relationships going. The adjustment of power in a family as a child matures to the realignment of power as a nation of people enters statehood and achieves geopolitical recognition is very similar. Both require those with more power (parents or other nations) to recognize and respect the identity and power of the new entity. If a nation’s power is not recognized, they, like the family child, will not be able to sit at the adult’s table.

“Information conflict is conflict by other means.” – The power of information is the power to persuade. Controlling the mental is often more efficient than controlling the physical. Information conflict is the battle for hearts and minds. As C. Wright Mills writes in *The Power Elite*, “Words win wars or sell soap”.<sup>14</sup>

“Cyber conflict is conflict by other means.” – Controlling the cyber front is a new platform of conflict by a means unlike any we have had before in our history. What is cyber conflict? Conflict on the cyber front is not physical, economic, diplomatic, or informational. Cyber attacks have the ability to disrupt or control our infrastructure, our financial systems, our media, and our military.

All of these statements encompass never ending conflicts for Power, Resources, and Beliefs. As mentioned, conflict never stops. Hence, just as we removed “war” from our discussion – reserving it only for the utmost assignment of resources – we also must remove “peace” from our discussion – reserving it only for the utmost cessation of conflict, similar to the cessation of molecules in Absolute Zero.<sup>15</sup> Like Absolute Zero, Total Peace on the Five Platforms of Conflict is not humanly possible. There are only short moments of quiet before conflict begins anew. Although we can attempt to regulate or “freeze” conflict

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<sup>13</sup> “Society Must Be Defended”, MICHEL FOUCAULT, LECTURES AT THE COLLEGE DE FRANCE, 1975-76. Edited by Mauro Bertani and Alessandro Fontana. General Editors: Francois Ewald and Alessandro Fontana. English Series Editor: Arnold Davidson. Translated by DAVID MACEY

<sup>14</sup> *The Power Elite*. C. Wright Mills, Alan Wolfe. Oxford University Press, pg 315.

<sup>15</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TNUDBdv3jWI>

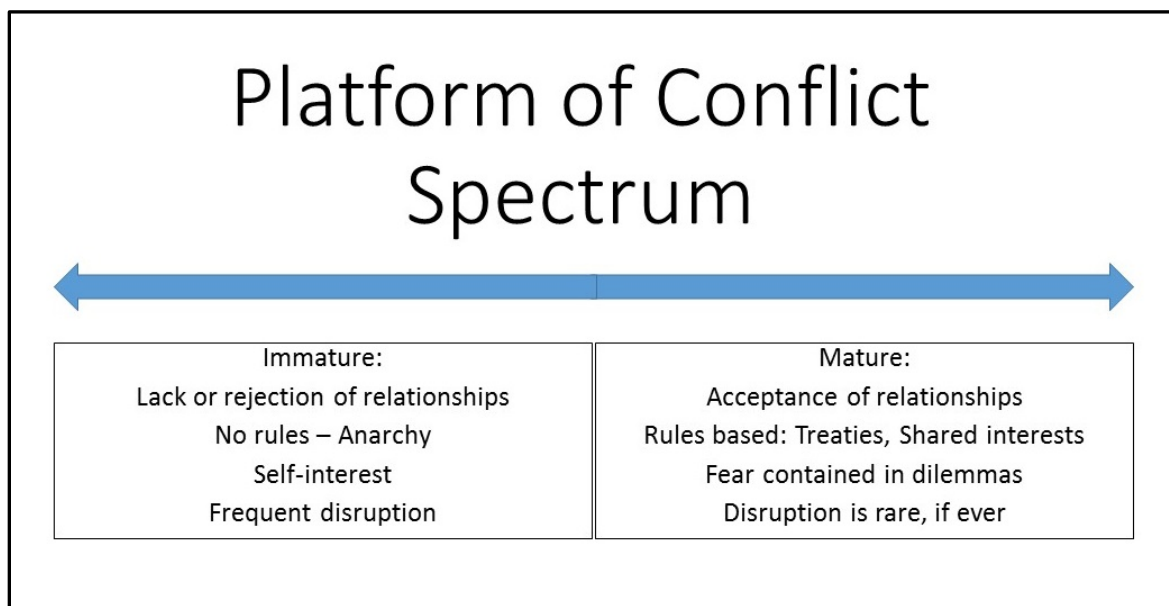
through anarchy-reducing treaties, rules, and shared interests, as long as the Essential Causes of Conflict (Power, Resources, and Belief) are factors in society, there will always be the potential for conflict.

#### 4. Anarchy and the Platforms of Conflict

A world of constant conflict is anarchy. Each of the Five Platforms has the potential to move to and from complete anarchy. Typically, potential for anarchy depends on the experience partners have on the platform. Newer platforms tend to be more anarchistic until they settle and powerful actors agree and maintain the rules of the platform.

On each platform, anarchy is prevented only by cost of entry. If an actor achieves the cost of entry and is on the platform, before engaging in conflict they must evaluate the cost of their action. The evaluation of cost is part of a dilemma. Dilemmas derive from the fear one state has of the intentions of another state. They have both reached an equal level of participation on the platform, and both acknowledge the ability of the other to hinder their respective growth. So they perform actions that may either be considered defensive or offensive, depending on perspective. Despite the perceived bellicose nature of dilemmas, they do hold anarchy in check. Without dilemmas, and if there is no cost to an action, a platform would be in a state of disruptive Hobbesian anarchy.

Although not every platform has a discussed dilemma, dilemmas are good models to determine the actions of competing actors on a mature conflict platform.



The most common dilemma is the military dilemma, commonly referred to as the Security Dilemma<sup>16</sup>. Defined by British historian Herbert Butterfield and popularized by American political scientist John

<sup>16</sup> <https://www.britannica.com/topic/security-dilemma>

Herz<sup>17</sup>, the Security Dilemma states that as a nation-states grow militarily, they become bigger threats to their neighbors, who in turn build their military, inching both closer to conflict. The Security Dilemma and military anarchy between nations is often held in check by treaties, alliances, and shared interests. The Security Dilemma often extends beyond nation states, however. Rival gangs, non-state actors, paramilitary organizations, and even individuals build their arsenals when they believe they are threatened but do not engage.

It is important to remember that among nation states, military conflict is costly and often has a low reward. With current intelligence and surveillance, the bigger the military, the more eyes on their movements and the easier it is to muster a defense. Intelligence and constant surveillance adds to the high cost of nation state military conflict. Surprise and disruption are rare among higher organizations on the Military Platform. Surprise and disruption are much more frequent among lower level physical conflicts – an individual can sucker punch another and possibly avoid penalty. A nation can rarely sucker punch another without international ramifications.

The Economic Platform is more susceptible to anarchy than the Military Platform. Although treaties and trade agreements hold nations together, changes in national leadership can rapidly change shared interests. Whereas multinational economic blocs are designed to minimize regulations and facilitate trade, the growth of bilateral agreements could increase economic anarchy among nations. Those with more leverage and power will call more shots, and increase the chances of smaller, poorer nations being taken advantage of or completely left out of the international economy.

Like the Military Platform, the Economic Platform becomes more chaotic as we go from nation states to individuals. Below nation states on the Economic Platform is the Business World. Anarchy in Business depends on the market. Only if a market is established and mature can rules and regulations be put in place. Newer industries such as technology fields have little to no rules or regulations and are breeding grounds for disruption. They also have low cost and low barriers of entry. They are start-up culture.

The opposite of the anarchy of start-up culture would be a highly regulated industry with a high barrier of entry such as the airline industry. Because of the air cost of entry and high regulations, there is little disruption in the airline industry. Barring board-level decisions such as buy-outs or corporate mismanagement, the airline market is as settled as nation states.

On the Economic Platform, Business Strategists have to be alert and aware of any move a competitor may make, especially one that could steal market share or disrupt the market. CEOs and other executives have to deliberate their market position often as competitors position their own efforts and products. Business leaders are often told not to focus on the competition, but to position for market victory. This isn't always possible, and Business leaders are often caught looking for stability by clinging to their competition, instead of creating their own way through the fog of anarchy.

Diplomatic anarchy was the case for centuries. Although treaties were written, they were often only to end wars.<sup>18</sup> As the international community matured, the number of treaties and agreements grew. Nations realized their shared interests and agreed to cooperate.

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<sup>17</sup> ibid

<sup>18</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List\\_of\\_treaties](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_treaties)

Political pairing makes intent and actions more transparent and easier to understand. The concept of political cooperation is applicable to nation-states through to high school teenagers. Announcing a relationship status reduces anarchy among rational actors. In high school, if everyone paired up, there would be less gossip and less shuffling. But high school relationships are marred by immaturity and irrationality, hence anarchy is likely. The political anarchy of high school dating is defined by low cost and low barrier of entry. Anyone can date and break-ups don't cost much. The legal bond of marriage (a treaty between two mature people) reduces anarchy by increasing barrier of entry as well as the cost of the breakup. A divorce not only has financial cost, but also the high cost of re-entering the anarchistic dating scene at an older age when many of the best options may have already paired.

At the international level, Ian Bremmer's *G-Zero World* is a return to diplomatic anarchy. When national leaders reject the treaties and agreements of the past – as we have seen in recent years – they reduce the cost for other nations going alone. Unilateralism becomes a domino effect as nations pull out of other treaties. When every nation seeks their own diplomatic goals, previously established shared bonds, morals, compromise, and agreed standards disappear. The result is every country for themselves.

The Information Platform has a long and complicated history. Since the first cave drawings, humans have been attempting to sway the beliefs of other humans. For most of civilization, conveying information was education. Guttenberg's printing press lowered the cost and provided mass information, but had a high barrier of entry at the creator level. Hundreds of years later, internet publishing (web sites, blogs, and social media) combined with algorithmic driven direct marketing created a new anarchy on the Information Platform.

Today there is little cost and no barrier of entry to attempt to win hearts and minds. Winning hearts and minds has been reduced to the effort put in to the endeavor at both the local, national, and international level. The 2016 US Presidential Election showed Americans how fast and convincing "fake news" could be. Truth loses in anarchy. Truth loses when it has to play defense to aggressive, first moving propaganda. Because humans are preconditioned to agree with the first thing they hear<sup>19</sup>, chaos reigns and disrupts traditional knowledge sources, leading to a Hobbesian state on the Information Platform.

A dilemma cannot exist on the Information Platform. With little cost of entry, there is no higher level of organization, no agreed upon cooperation, and no mutual trust. And with ad revenue, there is rarely shared interests. If one information entity is suspicious of another's message and thinks the first could steal readers/viewers, the entity counterattacks immediately. Building up ammunition on the information platform wastes time.

Whereas conflict on the information platform has moved from organized to chaos due to technological advancements, Cyber Conflict started and has continued as anarchy. Innovation has made the world more interconnected and reliant on networks for infrastructure and social essentials making the threat of cyber conflict a much more imperative. As with other platforms, Cyber Conflict can be local, national, or international. Individuals have to protect themselves, businesses have to protect themselves, nations have to protect themselves, and even international organizations such as the United Nations have to be cautious. Threats now vary from data thieves and lonewolves on the dark web to antagonistic nation-states building capabilities to cripple opposing nations. There are few if any rules on the low-cost, high-

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<sup>19</sup> <https://abcnews.go.com/Technology/people-frauds-misinformation-hard-correct/story?id=15538721>

impact cyber platform, although organizations such as NATO and the United Nations are trying to reduce anarchy on the international level. The long-term results of their efforts have yet to be seen.

Like the military platform, which relies on physical force, anarchy in the cyber platform has created its own dilemma at the international level. According to researcher Ben Buchanan in his book “The Cybersecurity Dilemma: Hacking, Trust and Fear Between Nations”, as nations build capabilities to attack networks and the online infrastructure of other nations, counter attack, intelligence, and counterintelligence efforts increase<sup>20</sup>. With so much of our society networked and reliant on hackable devices, fear of disadvantage or losing power drives nation-state actions. Buchanan states that the only way out of the cyber dilemma is through agreed norms, such as treaties, and other cooperative behavior that reduces anarchy.

The following chart depicts a proposed way to measure where a conflict is on each platform. Where the conflict is on a 1-5 scale could determine strategy, future actions, and if long-term stability can be achieved.

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<sup>20</sup> <https://www.wilsoncenter.org/event/the-cybersecurity-dilemma>



	Military Conflict					
	Anarchy					Stability
International	0	1	2	3	4	5
Nation vs Organization	0	1	2	3	4	5
Organization vs Organization	0	1	2	3	4	5
Individual	0	1	2	3	4	5
	Economic Conflict					
	Anarchy					Stability
International	0	1	2	3	4	5
Nation vs Organization	0	1	2	3	4	5
Organization vs Organization	0	1	2	3	4	5
Individual	0	1	2	3	4	5
	Diplomatic Conflict					
	Anarchy					Stability
International	0	1	2	3	4	5
Nation vs Organization	0	1	2	3	4	5
Organization vs Organization	0	1	2	3	4	5
Individual	0	1	2	3	4	5
	Information Conflict					
	Anarchy					Stability
International	0	1	2	3	4	5
Nation vs Organization	0	1	2	3	4	5
Organization vs Organization	0	1	2	3	4	5
Individual	0	1	2	3	4	5
	Cyber Conflict					
	Anarchy					Stability
International	0	1	2	3	4	5
Nation vs Organization	0	1	2	3	4	5
Organization vs Organization	0	1	2	3	4	5
Individual	0	1	2	3	4	5

## 5. Just War Theory and the Platforms of Conflict

As mentioned earlier in this essay, the term “war” is too synonymous with military action to be of use describing current conflicts. Removing the “war/peace” absolute – as conflict is continuous – also greatly affects Just War Theory.

In sum, Just War Theory is the philosophical approach to the escalation of conflict, specifically on the military platform. The theory was popularized by Saint Thomas Aquinas in the 13<sup>th</sup> Century. Aquinas’s writings on when and with what degree to engage in war inspired many Just War philosophers throughout the centuries.<sup>21</sup>

According to the accepted definition of Just War Theory, there are two traditional requirements for “just” wars: Jus Ad Bellum (conditions for going to war) and Jus In Bello (conditions during war).

### Jus Ad Bellum

- Just Authority
- Just Cause
- Just Intention
- Last Resort

### Jus In Bello

- Proportionality
- Discrimination
- Responsibility

If we define “war” as only a degree of escalated conflict – one that applies a threshold of resources – and we understand conflict on each Conflict Platform is based on either a balance of cooperation or anarchy, Just War Theory becomes an exercise in conflict strategy.

Using “Just War” conditions, both Jus Ad Bellum and Jus In Bello, as conflict strategies, we can see how each relates to actions on the Five Conflict Platforms. Given the reasons people engage in conflict (Power, Resources, Belief), we need to ask if entities in conflict felt morally justified or acted fairly. This is the case for any interaction on any platform. While most “Just War” writing focuses on nation-states and militaries, the theory could also be used to explore police actions, propaganda conflicts, corporate buyouts, legal actions, diplomatic meetings, cyber attacks, or network penetrations.

The higher the barrier of entry to a Platform of Conflict, the more discriminating it’s inhabitants can be. A low barrier of entry on to a platform means members are too busy fighting for survival than to determine rules of justice or fair play. Conflict in chaos is not just, it is more analogous to barbaric.

Using the elements of Just War Theory as a lens we can derive many comparative questions on each platform for each of Waltz’s three levels: international, national, and individual. For example, here we use Just Authority:

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<sup>21</sup> <http://www.iep.utm.edu/justwar/>

## Just Authority

**Military** – Does the person, state, or nation-state have the authority or legal coverage to use force? This could include, but is not limited to self-defense, shooting an attempted robber, using police force to arrest protestors, or using military force to attack or defend a defined border.

**Economic** – Does a nation have authority to disrupt the economic flow of another nation? Does a nation have the authority to strangle a business out of existence through regulation? Does a business have the authority to prevent another business from taking market share? What about hostile takeovers? Does a person have the authority to organize a boycott of a company in an attempt to affect a company's bottom line?

**Diplomacy** - In Diplomacy, authority is the ability to engage. Entities that achieve the cost of entry can limit participation of other entities. Not all groups are given legitimacy and invited to the discussion, be they national diplomats, board members in a meeting, or a child when parents need to make adult decisions. Typically, authority in a diplomatic setting is granted to representatives having equal power or knowledge. What authority does a nation or group of nations have to accept or reject the political presence of any group?

**Information** – What are the limits of influence? Does a nation-state have the authority to coerce the citizens of another nation? What about the authority of a nation to back a business designed to influence the people of another nation?<sup>22</sup> What are the authoritarian limits of propaganda? In the US, there are libel and slander laws protecting individuals, but what authority does an influencer have to affect the business of a corporation? While Upton Sinclair revealed the shocking conditions of the meat industry in 1906,<sup>23</sup> Oprah Winfrey was sued by Texas Cattle Ranchers in 1998 by inferring that mad cow disease could affect US beef.<sup>24</sup> When is it just to speak out against someone or something?

**Cyber** – What authorities do hackers have? While IT professionals may be given permission to remote access, does this give them permission to unknowingly monitor individuals? Do nation-states have the authority to hack into the networks of nation-states they believe are plotting against them? Do parents have the authority to monitor what their children see online?

Defining the authority of actors in any of these scenarios could lead to a decision and a possible action. These actions could then lead to conflict. Any of the seven categories under Just War represent decision points that either escalate or deescalate conflict on any of the Five Platforms. Studying platform conflict strategies through the lens of Just Conflict should continue and expanded beyond nation-state observations.

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<sup>22</sup> <http://www.uawire.org/russia-to-create-news-agency-to-fight-american-hegemony>

<sup>23</sup> [http://www.slate.com/articles/arts/books/2006/07/welcome\\_to\\_the\\_jungle.html](http://www.slate.com/articles/arts/books/2006/07/welcome_to_the_jungle.html)

<sup>24</sup> <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/oprah-triumphs-over-the-texas-cattle-ranchers-1147137.html>

## 6. Better Preparing for a Constant Conflict World

In 1978, the legendary Shaw Brothers Studio released the kung-fu classic “5 Deadly Venoms”. In the movie, five kung-fu students are each trained on a unique style: centipede, snake, scorpion, lizard, and toad.<sup>25</sup> After training the five students, the master trains a sixth student in knowledge and understanding of the five styles, their weakness and their strengths, but the masters does not teach the sixth to the depth of the five masters’ individual skill.

Fans of the movie have labelled the sixth master “The Hybrid Venom”. The analogy of the kung-fu classic fits perfectly with how we should train analysts on the Five Platforms of Conflict. As I have described throughout this essay, a constant conflict world is incredibly complex. Actors, from nation-states to corporations to individuals must always be prepared for actions that may disrupt the status quo in their environment. Good preparation requires knowledge and continuous learning.

Instead of the Hybrid Venom, a Hybrid Analyst would be a “jacks of all conflicts”, master of none. The masters would be the subject matter experts – in Military, Economic, Diplomatic, Information, and Cyber conflicts. Hybrid Analysts would understand the vocabulary and issues of the masters enough to connect the dots. A well-trained Hybrid Analyst would look at conflict holistically.

Unfortunately, Hybrid Analysts take years to train. But in order to train for a complex conflict, we have to start somewhere. This section details a multi-year/multi-course training solution that results in analysts fluent in linkages and able to see the big picture.

Since 9/11, many universities have offered courses in basic intelligence tradecraft<sup>26</sup>. These courses are usually military and politically focused, and devoid of the other platforms of conflict. Students need to take courses in Business Strategy, Communications, or Computer Science to understand the remaining platforms of conflict. A better model would teach students the groundwork for all modern conflict and how to analyze the actions of actors on each platform.

The following is a summary of an eight course program designed to teach Basic Hybrid Analysis. This program also lays out a path to Hybrid Analyst specialization, a focus that would be not be considered a specified expert, but would be far above novice analyst.

### Course 1 – Analysis Basics

Course 1 of the Hybrid Analyst Program would teach students the concept of critical thinking, how to critically think, and the Intelligence Cycle. Students would also learn basic analyst tools such as SWOT<sup>27</sup>, Porter’s Five Forces<sup>28</sup>, Win/Loss Analysis<sup>29</sup>, Competitor Analysis<sup>30</sup>, and other tools taught by respected analysis instructors. Lastly, students will learn the difference between Policy, Vision, Strategy, Operations, and Tactics and how analysis requirements are different for each.

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<sup>25</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kX6EHgcvqyo>

<sup>26</sup> <http://scholarcommons.usf.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1459&context=jss>

<sup>27</sup> <https://www.investopedia.com/terms/s/swot.asp>

<sup>28</sup> <https://www.investopedia.com/terms/p/porter.asp>

<sup>29</sup> <https://labs.openviewpartners.com/how-to-conduct-win-loss-analysis/#.WwyH0-6FPIU>

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[https://books.google.com.qa/books?id=hzN3L5Z3JNsC&pg=PA23&hl=ar&source=gbs\\_toc\\_r&cad=3#v=onepage&q&f=false](https://books.google.com.qa/books?id=hzN3L5Z3JNsC&pg=PA23&hl=ar&source=gbs_toc_r&cad=3#v=onepage&q&f=false)

## **Course 2 – Threat Analysis**

The second course aspiring Hybrid Analysts would take is Threats and Threat Analysis. This course focuses on the threat modelling of the previous course but also dives into case studies and real world examples of threat detection or lack thereof. Students in this course would also be introduced to entity divisions such as nation-states, non-state actors, corporations, non-government organizations, and individuals. Discussions of political theories such as Realism, Nationalism, and Liberalism could also be taught in this course.

## **Course 3 – Platforms of Conflict and the MEDIC Model**

The third Hybrid Analyst course would introduce the MEDIC model and the Platforms of Conflict introduced in this essay. Students should learn the top issues in each platform and how anarchy as well as treaties, regulations, and agreements affect each platform. Students should also have an understanding of the thought leaders on each platform and their strengths and weaknesses. Lastly, threat discussion from Course 2 will be integrated as well.

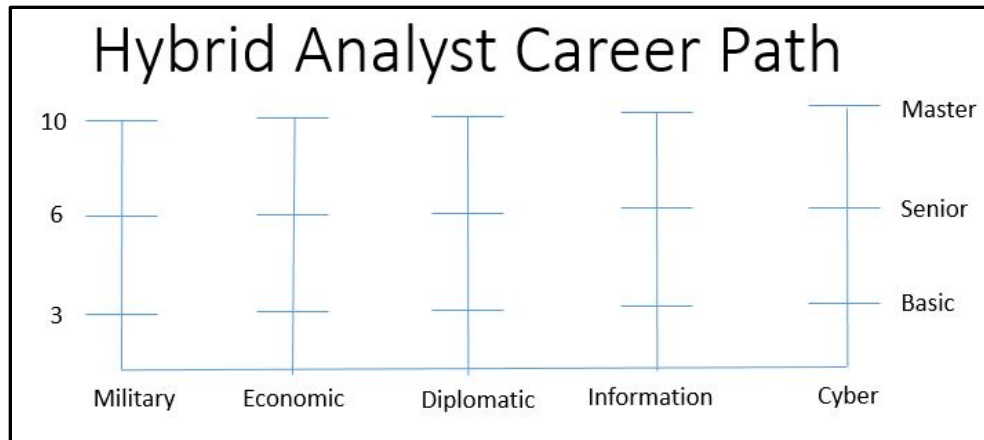
## **Courses 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 – Conflict on Each Platform**

Hybrid Analyst Courses 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 each focus on conflict on an individual MEDIC platform. By the end of the courses, Hybrid Analysts will be able to identify the similarities and differences between military, economic, diplomatic, information, and cyber conflicts. They should be familiar with Irregular Warfare, Sanctions, Protests, Propaganda, and Denial of Service Attacks and how these tactics can form a synergy in modern conflict.

## **Courses 9-11 – Platform Specialization**

After the 8<sup>th</sup> course, Hybrid Analysts will be required to select a MEDIC platform on which to specify. Specialization is three additional courses on one of the platforms. Completion of courses 9 through 11 grant the student the title of “Basic Hybrid Analyst with a focus on (platform)”. Courses 9 through 11 will also train students for any required professional certifications, such as Security+, A+, and Network+ for the Cyber Platform and Association of Certified Anti-Money Laundering Specialists certification for the Economic Platform. The goal of these courses is to get analysts employable as soon as possible.

As they progress in their careers, Hybrid Analysts can grow both horizontally and vertically. They can either take classes in other platforms, possibly complete another basic-level focus, or they can go deeper into their platform. As three courses provide Basic certification, six courses on a specific platform would grant Senior-level certification, and 10 courses would endow a Master’s level certification.



A total of 50 courses could be taken, and a student could be a Master's level Hybrid Analyst in all five platforms, however this should be highly discouraged until a student has career experience.

Here we should note that these courses are not geographically bound, meaning they teach about conflicts in various nations, but do not deep-dive into the social sciences such as history, culture, or social makeup. Geographic social experts should still be consulted whenever needed.

## Conclusion

Through this essay, I have discussed the complexities of modern conflict and how I think we should be training analysts to deal with these complexities. I detailed the sources of conflict, the platforms of conflict, how to explore these platforms, and how to train new analysts to understand the platforms.

There is a huge need for analytic skills in both the government and private sector.<sup>31</sup> The growth of data and depth of information requires people who can ask the right questions, find answers, incorporate answers with other answers, and present the situation to leadership. While these soft skills are great, equally important is the focus of knowledge and how it integrates with other fields of knowledge.

Analysts trained in various platforms will not only be more valuable to organizations, but also have more career flexibility, able to increase their value from organization to organization. They will speak the language and understand the current trends and issues of several fields.

Conflict is eternal. Rapid innovation and technological growth has lowered the barriers of entry and made conflict low-cost and high impact. Innovation has not only disrupted markets but it has increased anarchy worldwide. Political immaturity, diminishing natural resources, and increases in inequality have also added to social stresses and the potential for conflict on every level, from individual to international. Rarely in human history have so many people been threatened by so many types of conflict.

Hybrid Analysts may not be able to solve the world's conflicts, but they will be able to see the big picture and put the pieces together for policy makers and visionaries so they can keep their organizations prosperous.

<sup>31</sup> <http://projectmanagethacks.com/why-you-need-better-analytical-skills/>