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Proceedings of the
International Conference on Emerging Issues in
Environment, Livelihood and Development: A Future Road
Map Towards Sustainable Earth

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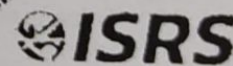


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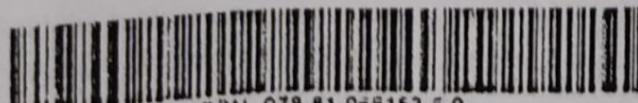
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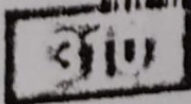
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ISBN 978-81-968153-6-9

Printed at: The University Press, MBU



Exploring the Geographical trends in Asymmetric Warfare in historical perspective

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Abstract

Warfare has been the norm of human existence for centuries. The competition for territory and resources led to numerous conflicts among the human race in which some triumphed while others lost.

Victory and defeat in warfare was primarily determined by which side held the most resources in terms of men and weapons. In the ancient and medieval periods of warfare, that side which held the bulk of resources and was ably generalled by far-sighted military leaders with a clear vision for winning held the ground and triumphed over their adversaries. The medieval period in Europe was the scene of symmetric warfare among kings and feudal lords on equal terms. Good swords and lances and shields decided the fate of a battle in most cases. The Industrial Revolution revolutionised the modes of warfare, and increased its geographical extent to a considerable degree. Gun powder technology not only altered the approach in traditional war methodologies, but also rendered it asymmetric in ways more than one. As Europeans mastered modern weapons and the necessary technological prowess, they went for world domination and colonial ventures. This created a kind of global asymmetry vis-à-vis the developed world and the peripheral regions of Asia, Africa and Latin America. The two World Wars of the last century bear eloquent testimony to the ruthless and the devastating use of the weapons of mass destruction. This paper makes a modest attempt to highlight the different aspects of warfare across the globe, and its asymmetric nature when superior powers confronted the lesser adversaries in the former's quest for supremacy.

Key Words: war, technology, gun powder, artillery, gun boats

Antecedents

Warfare has been the norm of human existence for centuries. The competition for territory and resources led to numerous conflicts among the human race in which some triumphed while others lost. The defeated combatants were either killed or enslaved in perpetuity for profitable ventures such as the slave trade.

Victory and defeat in warfare was primarily determined by which side held the most resources in terms of men and weapons. In the ancient and medieval periods of warfare, that side which held the bulk of resources and was ably generalled by far-sighted military leaders with a clear vision for winning held the ground and triumphed over their adversaries. However, the invention

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THREE DAYS INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE on
Emerging Issues in Environment, Livelihood and Development:
A Future Road Map Towards Sustainable Earth

Organised by : Department of Geography & Applied Geography
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