

Embracing the world out of order

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Keynote at conference

Peace-ing it Together:

*Reconsidering Communication, Community and the Media
in the Anthropocene*

Eastern Mediterranean University, Famagusta

4 April 2024

Keynote outline:

Anthropocene: the concept

History: from colonialism to multipolar world

Current megatrends: militarization, environment, disorder

Media policies under megatrends: five stages

Peace in journalism and media studies

Most of the keynote is about the world as a revision of history.

Media are brought into focus only towards the end.

*Topics are covered with hyperlinks to relevant sources,
the keynote serving as a portal for further readings.*

Anthropocene: the concept

- [Anthropocene](#) is the geological epoch since significant human impact on earth, first in the *Neolithic Revolution* 10,000 – 15,000 years ago, affecting the earth's ecosystem. That changed human lifestyle from hunting and gathering to one of agriculture, making large populations possible in [various parts of the globe](#) and notably in [Afro-Eurasia](#).
- In the 18th century the [Industrial Revolution](#) hastened the change so that anthropocene is understood to have begun only then.
- The concept only attracted wider attention after the WWII, when global population growth, exploitation of natural resources, pollution and nuclear risks increased dramatically, with a significant impact of human life on earth as suggested e.g. by Nobel laureate [Paul Crutzen](#).

Anthropocene: the concept

- Anthropocene as a concept was preceded by [noosphere](#), introduced by Russian geologist [Vladimir Ivanovich Vernadsky](#) in the 1920s. This was the third stage in the earth's development, after the lifeless *geosphere* and the biological *biosphere*.
- I welcome these concepts as an instrument inviting us to adopt a really wide and all-encompassing look at the world history. They tell about huge [megatrends](#) of history – indeed *metatrends* – which introduce an overall paradigm for our thinking about the world.
- Paradigms which guide our thinking are typically tied to experience of everyday life. Therefore concepts like anthropocene are a welcome antidote to diseases of particularism and presentism.

History: from colonialism to multipolar world

- [Colonialism](#) is political and economic domination involving the control of a country and its people by settlers from a foreign power. It is [defined](#) as control by one power over a dependent area or people: when one nation subjugates another, conquering its population and exploiting it, while imposing its own language and cultural values upon its people.
- By 1914, the vast majority of the world's nations had at some point been colonized by Europeans. Japan, Korea, and Thailand are the only nations never to have been colonized by Europeans.
- The concept of colonialism is closely linked to that of imperialism, using power to control another nation or people underlying colonialism.
- Let's see [500 years of European colonialism](#)

History: from colonialism to multipolar world

- Revolutions by the oppressed people and independence movements led in the 20th century to a gradual undoing of colonialism.
- [Decolonization](#) means political and mostly violent resistance in the colonies and the collapse of global colonial empires. It also refers to the economic and cultural aspects of the colonial experience.
- When the [United Nations](#) was founded in 1945, based on the pre-WWII [League of Nations](#), some 750 million people, nearly a third of the world's population, lived in territories under colonial rule. Today, virtually all territories of the world are formally independent.
- While the wave of decolonization changed the face of the planet, the economic structures of colonialism still persisted as [neocolonialism](#).

History: from colonialism to multipolar world

- [Cold War](#) between the US-led West and the Soviet-led East was the second global trend after the process of colonialism & decolonization. It broke out in the late 1940s and was intensified by the arms race, including nuclear weapons of mass destruction, between the two great powers and their military alliances of [NATO](#) and [Warsaw Pact](#).
- Cold War mobilization involved the Northern hemisphere, while the developing South began to organize itself in 1955 at the [Bandung Conference](#) leading to a third constellation in the global arena: the [Movement of Non-Aligned Countries](#) (NAM).
- By the 1960s the world was divided into three geopolitical spheres: [East, West and South](#).

History: from colonialism to multipolar world

- In the late 1960s [détente](#) between East and West enabled the USA and USSR to agree on disarmament and promote co-operation, highlighted by the [CSCE Helsinki Summit](#) in 1975.
- In 1985 the Soviet Communist Party adopted a reformist policy of [perestroika & glasnost](#) under Michail Gorbachev. However, the USSR began to disintegrate, its dissolution in 1991 leading to several independent states, first and foremost the Russian Federation.
- Towards the end of the 1980s, East began to crack down when opposition from the socialist countries in Central & Eastern Europe challenged their ruling parties, leading to peaceful regime changes and to the fall of the Berlin Wall and reunification of Germany. See e.g. [BBC](#).

History: from colonialism to multipolar world

- The [end of the Cold War](#) came gradually in the 1990s, but the [Persian Gulf War](#) broke out between Iraq and the US-led coalition in 1990-91, followed by the [Second Gulf War](#) against Iraq in 2003-11.
- The Cold War with East-West confrontation was not replaced by worldwide peace, while alongside the Gulf Wars, [international terrorism](#) emerged as shown by [9/11](#). Some called it the *New World Order*.
- In this world, the [US hegemony](#) indeed dominated, after the fall of the Soviet Union and insufficient counterweight from NAM or China. A formerly bipolar world was widely seen to be *unipolar*.
- The American dominance was accompanied by [globalization](#) connecting national economies with interdependence of peoples and countries.

History: from colonialism to multipolar world

- In reality, the world was never truly unipolar and as the US hegemony was challenged after 2000 by not only the EU but also China with its constant economic growth and a new geopolitical entity: BRICS.
- Other regional bodies also became active and in the 2010s globalization was met by increasing protectionism by countries and regions.
- Actually the world had become multipolar on political, economic and religious grounds, questioning the traditional international order.
- A historical challenge was created by the Russian invasion of Ukraine on 24 February 2022 and the unprecedented sanctions against Russia by the West. The Russian aggression was promptly condemned at the UN:

Item 5 - Draft resolution A/ES-11/L.1

Aggression against Ukraine

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IN FAVOUR:141



AGAINST:5



ABSTENTION:34



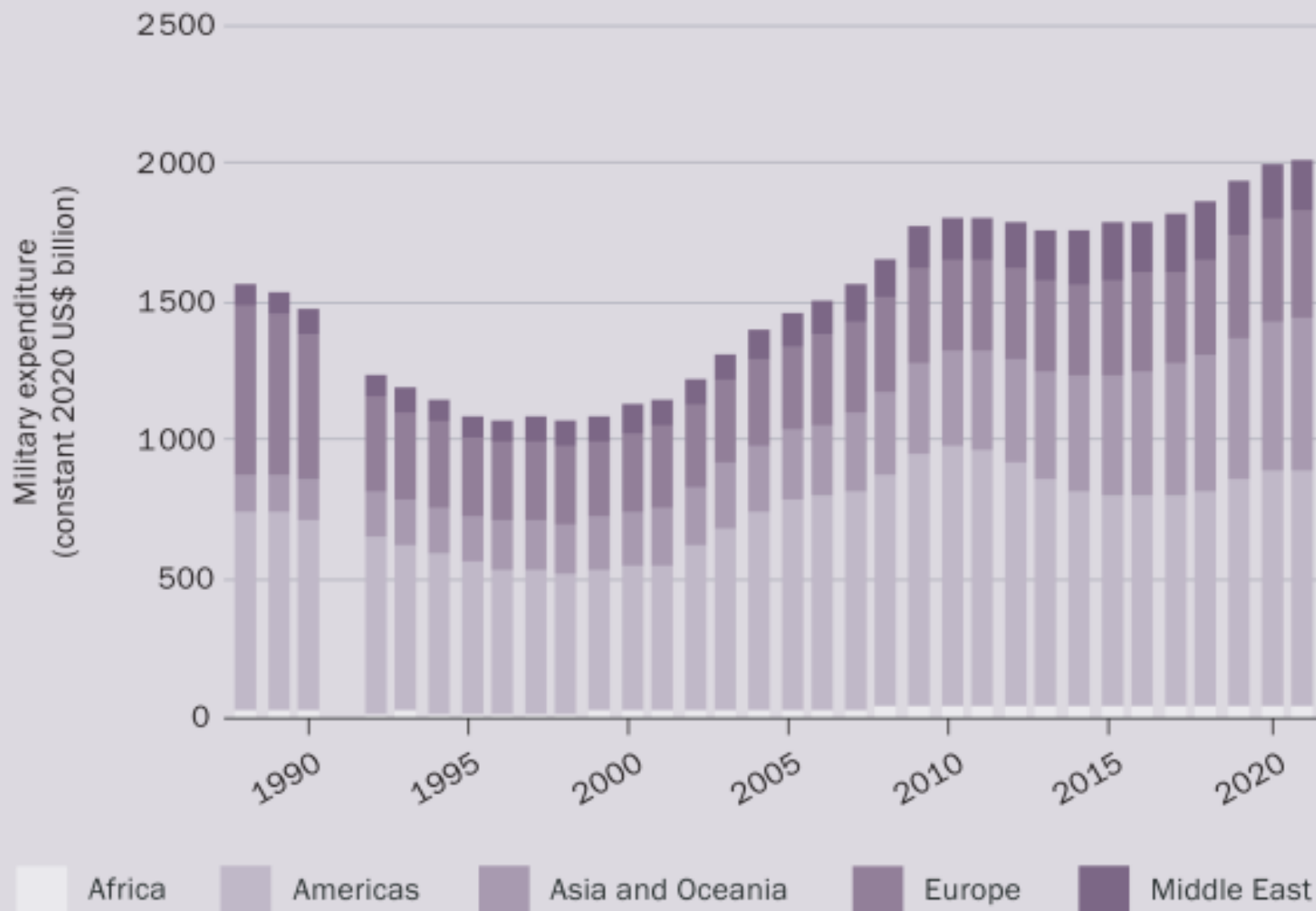
History: from colonialism to multipolar world

- While an overwhelming majority of the General Assembly voted in favour of condemnation, the Security Council was unable to accept it as permanent member Russia vetoed, with tacit support of China.
- A reverse situation occurred with [*Israel's war in Gaza*](#), retaliating to Hamas atrocities on 7 October 2023: almost all UN member states condemning Israel, but the USA vetoing the Security Council resolution.
- The international community is left without firm leadership.
- Western initiatives to make *democracy* as the rallying point with such initiatives like [*Global Democracy Coalition*](#) have not gained universal support, while global [*Democracy Index*](#) shows that less than half of the world's population lives in countries of true or even flawed democracy.

Current megatrends: militarization

- After the Cold War there was only a short period for disarmament and preference to peaceful solutions. After 2000 an underlying uncertainty and distrust created security needs among both political leaders and general public, facilitating support to [militarization](#) around the world.
- This megatrend was completed by the Russian war against Ukraine. It suddenly raised NATO's status, leading Finland and Sweden to join, and also helped to increase the share of defence budgets around the world.
- In 2020 NATO spent three times as much as Russia and China together. Compared to Russia alone, NATO spent ten times more. The share of USA of world's total military expenditure was still about 40 percent.
- According to [Sipri](#), world military expenditure is at a record level:

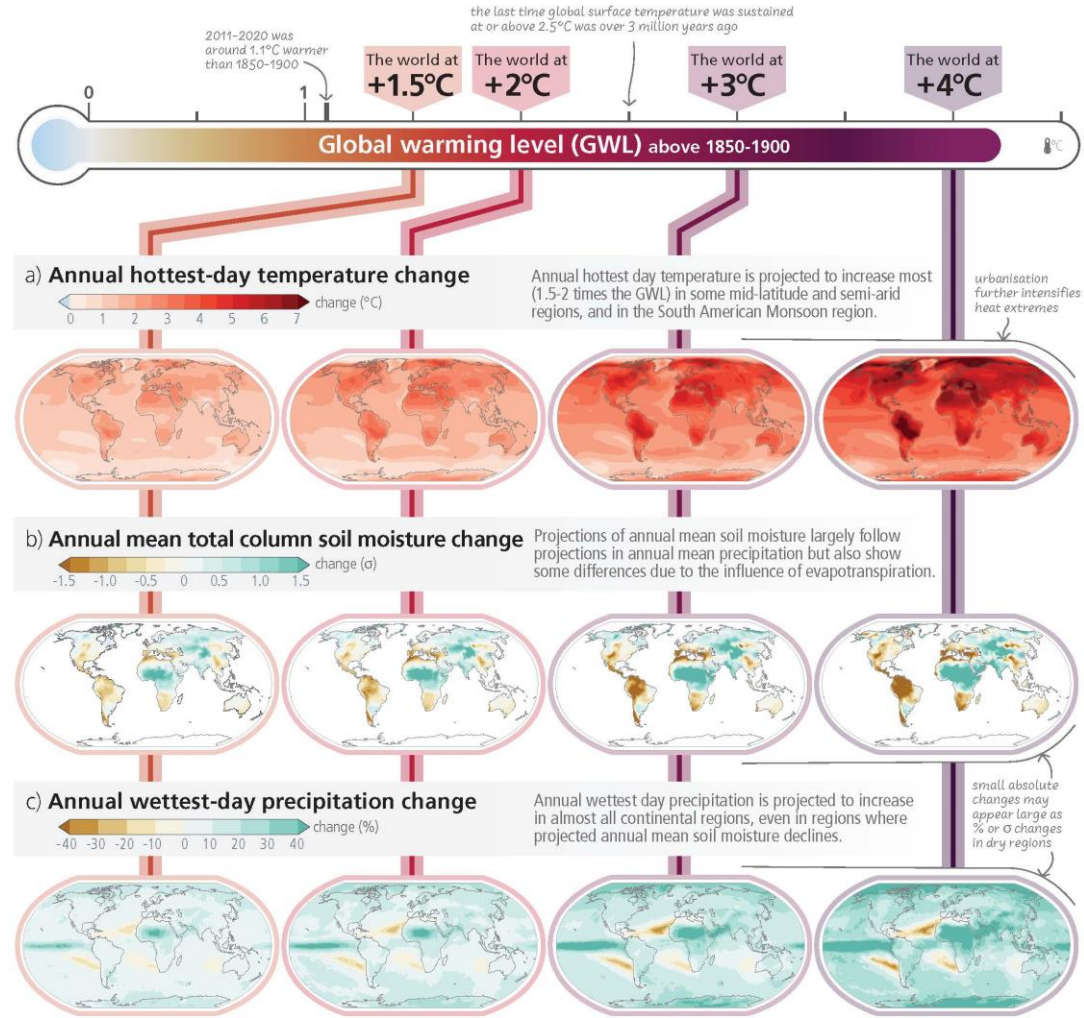
WORLD MILITARY EXPENDITURE, BY REGION, 1988-2021



Current megatrends: environment

- Concern about the environment grew in the early 1970s prompted by the idea of limits to growth articulated by the [Club of Rome](#). The first [UN conference on environment](#) in Stockholm 1972 started a process making environmental problems prominent topics of public life.
- In [50+ years](#) environmental hazards including climate change have been recognized by governments and civil society alike. Activism has mushroomed among numerous parties from [youngsters](#) to [business](#) providing all kinds of promotional material, such as [this](#) and [this](#).
- Compared to this the visibility of peace movement is negligible.
- In climate change the leading authority is [ICPP](#). Its [latest report](#) includes ample dramatic data and forecasts, including this:

With every increment of global warming, regional changes in mean climate and extremes become more widespread and pronounced



Section 3

Figure 3.1: Projected changes of annual maximum daily temperature, annual mean total column soil moisture CMIP and annual maximum daily precipitation at global warming levels of 1.5°C, 2°C, 3°C, and 4°C relative to 1850-1900. Simulated (a) annual maximum temperature change (°C), (b) annual mean total column soil moisture (standard deviation), (c) annual maximum daily precipitation change (%). Changes correspond to CMIP6 multi-model median changes. In panels (b) and (c), large positive relative changes in dry regions may correspond to small absolute changes. In panel (b), the unit is the standard deviation of interannual variability in soil moisture during 1850-1900. Standard deviation is a widely used metric in characterising drought severity. A projected reduction in mean soil moisture by one standard deviation corresponds to soil moisture conditions typical of droughts that occurred about once every six years during 1850-1900. The WGI Interactive Atlas (<https://interactive-atlas.ipcc.ch/>) can be used to explore additional changes in the climate system across the range of global warming levels presented in this figure. [WGI Figure SPM.5, WGI Figure TS.5, WGI Figure 11.11, WGI Figure 11.16, WGI Figure 11.19] (Cross-Section Box.2)

Current megatrends: the world in disorder

- Compare world military expenditure to expenditure for countering environmental problems: no data available but obviously the military gets ten(s) times more than environment.
- Counting all megatrends, the world is in disorder, with bleak [prospects](#).
- My opinion: Putin's biggest mistake has not been killing of hundreds of thousand Russians and Ukrainians but provoking a historical process putting humankind on the road to disaster – entering a soft WWIII. But the West and NATO also need to look in the mirror.
- Now, let's leave the gloomy world for a moment and focus on media studies, first looking at international media policies from the 1970s to the 2010s, summarizing [my standard story](#):

Media policies under megatrends: five stages

- Stage One 1970-76: Decolonization offensive
 - NAM invents idea of New International Information Order (NWICO) in [Tunis](#)
- Stage Two 1976-78: Western counterattack
 - Western publishers create World Press Freedom Committee
- Stage Three: 1978-80: Truce – progress through compromise
 - UNESCO adopts [Mass Media Declaration](#) and the [McBride Report](#)
- Stage Four: 1981-90 – Corporate offensive
 - US & UK leave UNESCO; Western publishers promote Voices of Freedom
- Stage Five 1991-2010 – Globalization
 - UN hosts [World Summit on the Information Society](#) (WSIS) in Geneva & Tunis

Peace in journalism and media studies

- Today peace as a topic is buried in the media under everything else, but in the 1980s it had a high profile as shown by rallies worldwide – here in New York during the UN Special Session on Disarmament in June 1982.
- On this occasion I delivered as the IOJ President a 10-minute address at the General Assembly – the only speaker from media and journalism on a day dedicated to NGOs. An extract of the talk is [here](#), addressing a vital issue for media.



Peace in journalism and media studies

- Those were the days when it was fashionable to be a pacifist. No longer so after Ukraine and Gaza turned the tide in favour of military might.
- For example, peace has clearly been an underdog perspective in the Russia-Ukraine war coverage in [TV news around the world](#).
- But journalism and media studies still retain peace on the agenda, e.g.
 - [Communication and Peace](#) edited by Julia Hoffmann and Vigil Hawkins (2015) “Mapping an emerging field”
 - [Communication and Peace](#) by Cees Hamelink (2020) “Celebrating moments of sheer human togetherness”
- Bringing even new approaches to the topic:
 - [Introducing a New Form of Socially Responsible Journalism](#) by Mikko Hautakangas and Laura Ahva (2018) “Experiences from the Conciliatory Journalism Project”
 - [Constructive Journalism](#) by Peter Bro (2023) “Precedents, Principles, and Practices”

Peace in journalism and media studies

- A lot of academic scholarship on peace-related journalism has accumulated over the years and there is a fertile ground to continue building this tradition. The question is how to ensure proper attention and resources for this area at a time when AI and other topical issues make research market increasingly competitive.
- An example of research proposals still waiting to be materialized is the idea of international media monitoring in matters of peace and disarmament, advocated by the late [Johan Galtung](#) with [me](#).
- We need will and skill to mobilize an international movement bringing peace studies onto the agendas of journalism and media.
- Thank you. I wish you a successful conference!

My profile

Born 1941 in Helsinki, capital of Finland, to upper middle class family

School in Helsinki suburb, University of Helsinki (psychology, phonetics),
BA 1963, PhD 1969

Freelance journalist in radio since age 15, including reportage of the
Finnish UN batallion in Cyprus 1964 and interviews with [C.G. Jung](#) and
[Marshall McLuhan](#)

Work at Univ Tampere as instructor 1965-, Finnish Broadcasting Co (YLE)
as Head of Research 1967-, Univ Tampere as Professor of Journalism &
Mass Communication 1971-, Emeritus 2009-

Involved in a number of national associations and committees as well as
internationally as consultant at UNESCO and in several associations,
notably Vice-President of [IAMCR](#) 1972-88, President of [IOJ](#) 1976-90

More at <https://sites.tuni.fi/kaarle/about/>