

On the Future of War and Money

I remember reading the novel *Ender's Game* as a freshman in high school, alongside other books such as *1984* by George Orwell.

In the book, boys are stationed on a spaceship where they practice warfare and engage in simulated battles using virtual reality. Towards the end of the novel, when they think they are in a simulation, they actually wind up winning a war, defending their ship against the enemy.

In modern warfare, and looking into the future, an 18-year-old kid with an Xbox controller can control robots and drones, blowing up villages and killing innocent people without the physical contact traditionally associated with war.

What are the future implications of this technology in warfare? Could its use in remote-controlled combat lead to ethical dilemmas and unintended consequences?

I think, as it currently stands, with every major nation holding nuclear weapons, we are at a standstill. When I consider Alexander the Great and all the land he conquered, spreading Hellenistic culture throughout various regions, I think about his motives and what drove him. While glory, legacy, political, and cultural reasons come to mind, we must not forget the basic primal instinct of man seeking to conquer for the sake of wealth, money, power, and land. At one point, Alexander the Great looted over 6,000,000 pounds of gold from Persepolis.

One of the regions Alexander the Great conquered was Babylon, or present-day Iraq. In 2003, when the United States went looking for weapons of mass destruction in Iraq, we found nothing. However, one of the immediate actions of the United States military in Iraq was to take control of infrastructure and particular oil fields. With control of the oil fields, the United States benefits not by stealing oil but by stabilizing the economy and market value of this critical commodity.

Now that our US dollar is not backed by gold, and the Federal Reserve prints money infinitely, we have the ability to continuously funnel money into the production of weapons, funding warfare through the money we use daily, driving our debts to unresolvable heights, leading to inflation and a depreciation in the value of our dollars. Last year, you could buy a chicken from ShopRite for five dollars, but recently the price has increased to eight dollars per chicken. While this seems like a small increase in price, it's actually a big deal.

Now, let's consider our current year, 2024, and all of the technological advancements we've had in both war and money. We've gone from hunting with bow and arrow to fighting with sword and shield, to muskets and cannons; from line warfare to trench warfare with the implementation of the machine gun, to now the atomic bomb. Our grandparents have lived through the transition of transportation from horse and buggy to motor vehicles, the radio, television, and now the iPhone that sits in your front right pocket. My grandmother purchased her home for \$10,000, and now, as the current year stands, homes are hundreds of thousands of dollars, if not millions. At this rate, the value of our dollars will depreciate over time, and we will consistently see the rise of our debts and the increase in prices.

What is the solution to this critical problem that keeps society flourishing? Do we continuously print more money? Or do we harness the power of technology and implement a future of peace and prosperity?

When I consider war and money, especially in the context of Alexander the Great looting places for millions of pounds of gold, digital money seems like a very easy solution to fixing this very real, physical problem. Because we are no longer backed by a gold standard, it seems most wise for us to adopt a new standard, a solution to this real problem. Bitcoin, harnessing the power of technology, electricity, and the laws of physics, provides truth in code, the first-ever cryptographically proven, digital, scarce asset. Not only can we consider Bitcoin as digital gold, but an even more interesting way to think about it is as digital property, where you quite literally own a block within cyberspace. Similarly to how there's only so much land in the physical world, there will only ever be 21 million bitcoins ever to be mined. The problem with gold is that we can continuously mine for more, making it not a truly scarce asset. Much like property, and owning the only pair of keys to your house, you take ownership of your bitcoin through a set of private keys that only you have access to.

Could the adoption of a digital form of money, such as Bitcoin, reduce the economic motivations for war

If Alexander the Great, Vladimir Putin, Kim Jong-un, or Xi Jinping wanted to invade a nation and loot their money supply, they couldn't, as it exists in cyberspace. If somebody were to approach you on the street and put a gun to your head, threatening to kill you unless you empty your wallet, they could take nothing from you because your private keys exist in your head. This becomes a radical and revolutionary technology, as not only is it decentralized, our ability to withhold a true asset that forms as a store of value can potentially lead to the end of gun violence and war generally.

Not only does this technology uplift humanity on an individual level, giving you control over your money, rather than a government or a centralized bank, but also has the potential to transform the world globally. With a fixed supply, this could change the way nations spend money, leading to economic stability and transparency, as every transaction is made public through the blockchain. The future of information, money, and technology is inevitably going to be shaped by these modern, decentralized innovations.

If we harness the power of modern technology, we can create a new world, a cleaner world, a more peaceful world for future generations.