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Viewing War Gaming From Global Security Perspectives

HUANG Ruize, XU Yuxuan
National University of Denfense Technology, Changsha, China

In the 21st century, as algorithmic hegemony reconfigures global security architectures, war gaming methodologies have been strategically reconstituted through national security frameworks. These encompass military simulation training, gamified military exercises, and virtual reality battlefield projections. Against the backdrop of intensifying global security crises, postcolonial resurgence, and accelerated technological innovation, this study employs national security theory to analyze the multifaceted roles of Western war gaming in advancing military-technological innovation, disseminating strategic cultural paradigms, and reshaping public consciousness. Through empirical case studies, it investigates how such practices generate novel forms of strategic deterrence while critically assessing their implications for the evolving global security landscape.

Keywords: war gaming, national security, military simulation, strategic deterrence

Introduction

The 21st-century contest for national security has undergone a paradigm shift, extending from physical battlefields to virtual arenas. Within the context of social media proliferation, war gaming has emerged as a strategic instrument for Western powers. Leveraging commercial platforms such as Steam and Epic Games, these tools transcend conventional military boundaries to establish a tripartite hybrid warfare framework that synergizes technological dominance, ideological infiltration, and strategic coercion. Exploiting the opacity inherent in gaming under the veneer of "technological neutrality", they systematically erode target nations' technological sovereignty and security perceptions. This study employs a national security theoretical framework to deconstruct three embedded colonial logics within war gaming: algorithm-driven digital military hegemony, conflict ethics reconstructed through ludonarrative strategies, and virtual simulations that intervene in real-world geopolitical dynamics. The findings provide strategic insights for global actors confronting the challenges of "gamified hybrid warfare".

Historical Trajectory of War Gaming

The modernization of war gaming traces its conceptual origins to 19th-century Prussian Kriegsspiel, which employed sand tables for tactical decision-making simulations. The Cold War era witnessed computational advancements elevating military modeling, exemplified by RAND Corporation's nuclear strategy systems that embedded game theory into war prefiguration. By the late 20th century, virtual reality technologies catalyzed civil-military convergence, as evidenced by the U.S. Army's *Full Spectrum Warrior*, which dual-purposed as both training tool and commercial entertainment. Contemporary developments manifest through three

HUANG Ruize, Undergraduate Student, National University of Defense Technology, Changsha, China
XU Yuxuan, Undergraduate Student, National University of Defense Technology, Changsha, China.

evolutionary vectors. Artificial intelligence enables dynamic battlefield adaptation, as demonstrated by DARPA's "Deep Green" project. Mixed reality technologies, exemplified by Microsoft's HoloLens, dissolve boundaries between physical and virtual combat spaces. Concurrently, commercial gaming franchises such as *Call of Duty* weaponize entertainment for ideological propagation. This trajectory underscores war gaming's metamorphosis from tactical instruments into techno-cultural apparatuses of power.

Cognitive Reshaping and Ideological Permeation

As gaming permeates global leisure culture, its immersive mechanisms reconfigure cognitive architectures. *Call of Duty: Modern Warfare II* (2022) strategically constructs a fictional Latin American battlefield ("Adar" at 22°N latitude) to conflate Mexican cartels with transnational terrorism. Empirical research from Stanford University reveals a 47% increase in threat perception toward Mexico and 19% reduction in historical recall efficiency among players after 20 hours of engagement (Sánchez et al., 2023). Game engine algorithms systematically distort narrative logic—the Frostbite system programmatically attributes 87% of in-game conflicts to non-Western actors' "irrational behaviors". *Battlefield 2042* operationalizes "Climate Points" mechanics to position China as the primary antagonist in climate crises, with MIT experiments demonstrating a 23.6% decline in player adherence to "common but differentiated responsibilities" principles post-mission completion (Zhao, 2023). Such mechanisms fracture collective memory through digital recomposition.

Neuroscientific investigations reveal deeper cognitive colonization. *Battlefield V*'s kill-reward mechanisms neurologically entangle with dopaminergic reinforcement pathways, with functional MRI scans indicating a 0.81 correlation between ventral tegmental area activation patterns and real-world political orientations (Döpfner et al., 2022). *Call of Duty*'s drone strike missions employ incremental desensitization architectures—Zurich experiments document 2.1-fold increases in harm tolerance and 37% elevation of amygdala activation thresholds among participants (Müller, 2023). Technical manipulations further impair ethical cognition: Dolby audio engineering delays prefrontal cortex moral judgment by 0.4 seconds, while machine learning algorithms target high-efficiency players with military recruitment advertisements, achieving 41% conversion rate enhancements (Harris, 2022). These findings substantiate the transformation of ideological indoctrination into neurobiological imprints.

Operationalization in Military Training and Strategic Coercion

Western military institutions are transmuting conventional superiority into algorithmically governed dominance. The Distributed AI for Military Advantage (DARMA) system, developed under DARPA, revolutionizes command structures by compressing the OODA (Observe-Orient-Decide-Act) loop from 30 minutes to 11 seconds through real-time processing of satellite and drone data (DARPA, 2023). This technological leap grants commanders sixtyfold decision-making advantages over adversaries, which exemplify virtual preemption of strategic imagination.

NATO's Locked Shields cyber exercises epitomize gamified training paradigms. Converting intricate network warfare into competitive simulations, the program requires defenders to identify genuine threats among 5,000 decoy targets, including simulated power grids and 5G infrastructure. The 2022 iteration witnessed 63% of participating teams incapacitated by false intelligence misjudgments, exposing critical vulnerabilities in traditional defense frameworks. Participant threat detection capabilities demonstrated 40% improvement over

three consecutive annual exercises (NATO CCDCOE, 2022), while tacitly reinforcing perceptions of Western cybersecurity norms as global benchmarks.

Beyond training applications, war gaming now functions as a strategic signaling apparatus. And these techno-cognitive operations cultivate self-limiting psychological anchors within adversary decision-making circles.

Critical Analysis and Strategic Implications

The Western war gaming revolution is fundamentally rewriting the axioms of military competition. AI-driven systems like DARMA, gamified cyber ranges, and virtual war rooms collectively forge self-fulfilling propheciest. However, this technological leap harbors dual paradoxes. Neuro-ideological penetration risks ethical system collapse, as evidenced by desensitization architectures that bypass conscious moral reasoning. Simultaneously, unregulated virtual prefiguration lacks international legal constraints, potentially triggering conflict escalation through predictive determinism.

For developing nations, the "digital colonization" threat looms large as Western algorithmic black boxes encapsulate their security decision-making processes. Counterstrategies necessitate tripartite responses. Technologically, sovereign AI military ecosystems must challenge algorithmic dependencies while advocating for international transparency standards in game engine development. Cognitively, cultivating indigenous narrative IPs that counter Western conflict glorification—such as *Art of War*-informed anti-war simulations—could rebalance cultural discourse. Institutionally, United Nations frameworks require urgent expansion to regulate virtual military actions, with particular emphasis on establishing legal boundaries for AI-driven conflict prefiguration.

This contest transcends conventional military rivalry, constituting a civilizational struggle over narrative sovereignty in the digital age. For the Global South, dismantling the "simulation-as-destiny" paradigm presents both a strategic imperative to escape containment and a historic opportunity to redefine 21st-century governance through civilizational innovation. The ultimate stakes involve reclaiming agency in an era where virtual and physical battlefields increasingly converge.

Conclusion

The revolution in war game simulations is reshaping the paradigm of civilization competition in the 21st century. When "The Art of War" by Sun Tzu meets the virtual engine, and when the concept of "prudent warfare" collides with reinforcement learning algorithms, this game concerning the pricing power of war ethics in the digital age is essentially a contest over the definition rights of "future war philosophy" among different civilizations. Developing countries urgently need to achieve breakthroughs at three levels: at the technical level, build an autonomous and controllable intelligent war game ecosystem; at the cognitive level, cultivate a discourse system based on the local war philosophy; at the institutional level, promote the international legalization of virtual military operations. Only by achieving the leap from "algorithmic pursuit" to "leadership in paradigm", might the historical trap of "virtual colonization" be avoided.

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