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The Concept of War without Casualties: The Influence of the American Taboo of Death on the Perception of the Events of 9/11

Abstract

The article focuses on the paradoxical phenomenon of modern war and attempts to bring together the two absolutely opposite approaches of trying to be successful and victorious whilst also being completely non-lethal. As the author emphasizes, this problem is very much related to the general modern attitude towards death, which has been almost eradicated from everyday life. It has become shameful, forbidden, private and seemingly non-existent. Therefore, modern war could not gain public support if it did not try to adapt to this general tendency. The article presents ways that are used nowadays to obtain public endorsement for military conflicts and examines phenomena such as casualty aversion, body-bag syndrome, and non-lethal weapons. It also relates all these elements to the wide-spread problem of terrorism, which completely contradicts the modern urge to eradicate death from everyday life.

Key words: death, war, casualty aversion, terrorism, 9/11

Introduction

War means violence and death. But does it really? In the film *Eye in the Sky* (2015), directed by Gavin Hood, Helen Mirren plays the role of a UK military intelligence officer, Colonel Katherine Powell, who is hunting down a group of terrorists who are currently hiding in Kenya. Using drones and high-tech military equipment, her team manages to locate the criminals and can, at any moment, assassinate them using precise bombing. However, there is an obstacle—a young girl appears near the target area and would likely be killed in an attack. The team has to go through the entire chain of command and make sure that they are still authorized to conduct the strike, which is getting more and more essential as the terrorists are preparing for a suicide attack in a village nearby. Things get

more and more complicated. One of the British officials sums it up accurately: “Frankly, politically I’d rather point to Al-Shabaab¹ as murderers of 80 people shopping than have to defend a drone attack by our forces that kills an innocent child”.

The situation described above has also another less direct meaning. The urge to eradicate mortality from the public sphere is the widespread desire of many modern communities and it also entails areas traditionally associated with violence and death. As will be shown in this paper, this paradoxical desire is doomed to fail, partially because of the violent phenomenon of suicide terrorism that will be described later, based on the unprecedented events of 11 September 2001.

The Eradication of Death

It would be safe to say that death is no longer a part of contemporary life. Such exclusion is a part of a bigger phenomenon that is wide-spread in modern countries and might derive from profound changes which have been gradually occurring since the second half of 20th century. Medical development and living standards have minimized people’s direct contact with death and altered it in many ways. According to Gary Laderman, the author of “*Rest in Peace: A Cultural History of Death and the Funeral Home in Twentieth-Century America*”, these changes, called the “mortality revolution”, started in the USA in the early twentieth century:

Life expectancy, infant mortality, cause of death – these and other variables in morality tables all point to the same conclusion: the presence of death in the early decades of the twentieth century looked quite different than any other period of American history. There are a variety of explanations for these dramatic changes in demographic patterns, with most focusing on breakthroughs in medical sciences and technologies, improvements in sanitation and personal hygiene, effective public health reforms, and healthier eating habits. While the repercussions of these social transformations have been analyzed from a number of perspectives, one of the most common observations is that a completely new kind of relationship with the dead emerged in the early decades of the century.²

This new place of death in our daily lives has become one of the main topics of death studies, also known as thanatology. Many researchers from that area are interested not in the death rituals of indigenous people that have preoccupied anthropologists for many years, but the reactions to death displayed by members of modern, often secularized societies. Apparently, modern communities also strive to deal with this imminent element of everybody’s life and even medical development and higher life expectancy does not solve this issue entirely. There is a general tendency to try to get rid of death and move it

¹ Jihadist fundamentalist group based in East Africa linked with Al-Qaeda and Boko Haram.

² Gary Laderman, *Rest in Peace: A Cultural History of Death and the Funeral Home in Twentieth-Century America*, (New York: Oxford University Press) (2003), p. 2.

away from the public eye. This evolution of our attitude toward death has been very well described by Philippe Ariès in his work “Western Attitudes toward Death: From the Middle Ages to the Present”. According to this French historian, although our “attitude toward death may appear almost static over very long periods of time (...); changes occur, usually slow and unnoticed changes, but sometimes, as today, more rapid and perceptible ones”.³ A lot has definitely changed since the time when death was a public ceremony, “a ritual organized by the dying person himself, who presided over it and knew its protocol”.⁴ Nowadays, “death, so omnipresent in the past that it was familiar, would be effaced, would disappear. It would become shameful and forbidden”.⁵ Although efforts to get rid of death from public discourse may seem ineffectual, modern societies such as the USA still try to eradicate it from every aspect of everyday life.

A Convincing War

It is safe to say that military conflicts are a standard element of human activities through the ages. The famous Prussian general and military theorist Claus von Clausewitz believed that war was an “eternal human social phenomenon”⁶. In his book, he also added that:

We are not interested in generals who win victories without bloodshed. The fact that slaughter is a horrifying spectacle must make us take war more seriously, but not provide an excuse for gradually blunting our swords in the name of humanity. Sooner or later someone will come along with a sharp sword and hack off our arms.⁷

Surely Clausewitz would be surprised by the contemporary image of modern war. When describing it, it is important to emphasize that when talking about war every word counts and even the term “war” is no longer acceptable—at least in the classic sense, because there have been quite a lot of unconventional wars, especially aimed at narcotics (“War on Drugs”). In the case of military conflicts, the term has been substituted by more subtle equivalents, such as “humanitarian intervention” or “stabilization mission” (both anchored in UN laws⁸). The same method is used in the case of torture, which that is absolutely unacceptable unless named differently. Michael L. Gross, the author of “Moral Dilemmas of Modern War”, gives following examples of such practices:

³ Philippe Ariès, *Western Attitudes toward Death: From the Middle Ages to the Present*, (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press) (1975), p.1.

⁴ Philippe Ariès, p. 11.

⁵ Philippe Ariès, p. 85.

⁶ Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press) (2007), p. ix.

⁷ Carl von Clausewitz.

⁸ Michael L. Gross, *Moral Dilemmas of Modern War*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press) (2010), p. 11.

Thus, torture morphs into “moderate physical pressure,” assassination becomes “targeted killing” and civilian bombing is defensible when directed against “associated” civilian targets, that is, civilians who take some part in the fighting and who bear a measure of responsibility for armed conflict.⁹

However, ideals and sublime phrases are not always enough. Society is also very sensitive when it comes to casualties and the public opinion’s role is crucial in the case of wars conducted by the USA:

public opinion became a key factor in all three wars [Korea, Vietnam, Iraq], and in each one there has been a simple association: as casualties mount, support decreases. Broad enthusiasm at the outset invariably erodes¹⁰.

What then can be done to gain people’s support? There are two basic approaches: creation of an alluring and exhilarating rhetoric around the conflict or accommodation of the image of the modern war to people’s expectations. As shall be shown below, both strategies are being used nowadays.

Undoubtedly, people are torn because of their attempts to reconcile the need to conduct military conflicts in certain cases and their aversion toward casualties and death in general.¹¹ War is a tremendous challenge to their morality and sense of justice. Fortunately, politicians and military commanders are striving to disburden them from those efforts. Every war needs a persuasive narration built around it which is strong enough to persuade people that the risk is worth taking. In 1955, Edward M. Collins wrote that:

Democratic nations can enter wars only when public opinion favors this course, since democracies are by definition and in fact responsive to public opinion coherently expressed. (...) This appears also to be the case with the British population, although it is perhaps less true of the British than of the United States. Both these populations, however, are influenced by a number of idealistic, abstract ideas regarding good and evil, fair and foul, and the virtues of their form of government in contrast to that of other countries. It is usually on the basis of these stereotyped concepts, rather than on the actual concrete issues involved, that they can be most effectively motivated toward war, and it is most often to these images rather than to reason and judgment that the press and other media and political leaders appeal in seeking to lead public opinion toward war.¹²

These “idealistic, abstract ideas” which convince people to accept a certain military conflict might not be commonly acknowledged as “propaganda”, but they work in a

⁹ Michael L. Gross, p. 4.

¹⁰ John Mueller, “The Iraq Syndrome”, *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 84, no. 6 (2005), p. 44.

¹¹ Michael L. Gross, p. 21.

¹² Edward M. Collins, „Clausewitz and Democracy's Modern Wars”, *Military Affairs*, vol. 19, no. 1 (1955), p. 17.

similar way. In “Propaganda and Persuasion”, Garth S. Jowett and Victoria O’Donnell define propaganda as: “(...) the deliberate, systematic attempt to shape perceptions, manipulate cognitions, and direct behaviour to achieve a response that furthers the desired intent of the propagandist”.¹³ All these features can be found in the rhetoric built around recent military conflicts, such as The Iraq War (2003–2011). George W. Bush Jr. and his administration have put great effort into persuading Americans that the Iraq invasion was not motivated by an urge to gain control over important oil deposits, but rather by a general sense of justice and a desire to help an oppressed nation.

According to Murray Edelman, a political scientist and the author of “Politics as Symbolic Action”, public opinion needs guidance—someone who would explain the complex reality, especially during challenging times.¹⁴ After 11th September 2001, national confusion in the USA increased to a hitherto unknown level. This confusion was very rapidly transformed into a need to act, to take revenge for the horrifying destruction. This transformation was accomplished by the well-aimed rhetoric of politicians, especially George W. Bush Jr. In one of his most famous speeches (the State of the Union address delivered in 2002), Bush asserted:

Iraq continues to flaunt its hostility toward America and to support terror. The Iraqi regime has plotted to develop anthrax, and nerve gas, and nuclear weapons for over a decade. This is a regime that has already used poison gas to murder thousands of its own citizens—leaving the bodies of mothers huddled over their dead children. This is a regime that agreed to international inspections then kicked out the inspectors. This is a regime that has something to hide from the civilized world. States like these, and their terrorist allies, constitute **an axis of evil**, arming to threaten the peace of the world. By seeking weapons of mass destruction, these regimes pose a grave and growing danger. They could provide these arms to terrorists, giving them the means to match their hatred. They could attack our allies or attempt to blackmail the United States. In any of these cases, the price of indifference would be catastrophic.¹⁵

The brilliant expression “the axis of evil” reminded people of Ronald Reagan’s term “the evil empire”¹⁶ and thus became one of the most symbolic terms of Bush’s War on Terror. As New York Times journalist Elisabeth Bumiller wrote:

Nobody ever remembers much from State of the Union speeches, but one thing they do remember is the “axis of evil” formulation that President Bush brandished in last year's address to describe Iraq, Iran and North Korea. Like

¹³ Garth S. Jowett, Victoria O’Donnell, *Propaganda and Persuasion*, (London: SAGE) (2012), p. 7.

¹⁴ Brigitte Mral, “The Rhetorical State of Alert before the Iraq War 2003”, *Nordicom Review*, no. 27 (2006), p. 47.

¹⁵ The White House, <https://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/news/releases/2002/01/20020129-11.html>, date accessed: 5 April 2017.

¹⁶ Voices Of Democracy, <http://voicesofdemocracy.umd.edu/reagan-evil-empire-speech-text/>, date accessed: 5 April 2017.

Ronald Reagan's description of the former Soviet Union as an “evil empire”, the axis of evil is a leitmotif that will follow Mr. Bush beyond his presidency.¹⁷

A War without Casualties

They are many ways in which the USA tries to accommodate the image of the modern war to people's expectations. One way is taking into consideration the phenomenon of “casualty aversion”—public unwillingness to accept casualties in military conflicts. This controversial idea is described by many as a pure myth. This is an opinion shared for example by Lieutenant Colonel Richard A. Lacquement, Jr., who states in the first words of his paper:

There is no intrinsic, uncritical casualty aversion among the American public that limits the use of U.S. armed forces. There is a wide range of policy objectives on behalf of which the public is prepared to accept American casualties as a cost of success. Squeamishness about even a few casualties for all but the most important national causes is a myth. Nonetheless, it is a myth that persists as widely accepted conventional wisdom.¹⁸

Myth or not, the idea of “casualty aversion” definitely shapes the way modern wars are depicted. During the Korean and Vietnam Wars, The American Army used the body count as its dominant indicator of strategic assessment. It has since become the index of progress and the measure of success in anomalous wars “without front lines and territorial objective”.¹⁹ Wars nowadays are very different. They should have a specific goal, be limited and preferably be a kind of a “military intervention”: short, successful, and using precise high-tech technology. A role-model for this kind of military conflict is the First Gulf War that took place between 1990 and 1991 and began with the attack and occupation of Kuwait by The Iraqi Army. The media coverage of the war depicted it as technically advanced and precise. It was broadcast as a kind of pure fiction—a TV miniseries about war that looked almost like a perfectly prepared product, ready to be sold to public opinion.²⁰ In his essay “The Gulf War Did Not Take Place”, French sociologist and philosopher Jean Baudrillard even asked if that war really happened at all and determined it as a kind of a “simulacra”²¹ and “madness”.

¹⁷ Elisabeth Bumiller, “White House Letter; Axis of Evil: First Birthday for a Famous Phrase”, *The New York Times*, <http://www.nytimes.com/2003/01/20/us/white-house-letter-axis-of-evil-first-birthday-for-a-famous-phrase.html>, date accessed: 5 April 2017.

¹⁸ Richard A. Lacquement Jr., „The Casualty-Aversion Myth”, *Naval War College Review*, vol. LVII, no.1 (2004). p. 39.

¹⁹ Scott Sigmund Gartner, Marissa Edson Myers, “Body Counts and "Success" in the Vietnam and Korean Wars”, *The Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, vol. 25, no. 3 (1995), p. 377.

²⁰ Encyclopedia of the New American Nation, <http://www.americanforeignrelations.com/O-W/Television-The-persian-gulf-war.html#b%23ixzz1uKXkqB1I>, date accessed: 5 April 2017.

²¹ See: Jean Baudrillard, *Simulacra and Simulation*, (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press) (1994).

The idea of a clean war, like that of a clean bomb or an intelligent missile, this whole war conceived as a technological extrapolation of the brain is a sure sign of madness. It is like those characters in Hieronymus Bosch with a glass bell or a soap bubble around their head as a sign of their mental debility. A war enclosed in a glass coffin, like Snow White, purged of any carnal contamination or warrior's passion. A clean war which ends up in an oil slick.²²

The idea of “casualty aversion” has also shaped popular culture and has become an inspiration for many films. A popular slogan: “Leave no man behind” influenced the plots of *Rambo: First Blood Part II* (1985, George P. Cosmatos), *Missing in Action* (1984, Joseph Zito), *Saving Private Ryan* (1998, Steven Spielberg), *Behind Enemy Lines* (2001, John Moore), *Black Hawk Down* (2001, Ridley Scott), *The Great Raid* (2005, John Dahl), *Behind Enemy Lines* (2001, John Moore), and *Lone Survivor* (2013, Peter Berg). What is more, the searches for soldiers lost in action, such as Pvt. Jessica Lynch²³, were media events watched by millions that had enormous potential to build morale. The aversion toward casualties in the US Army and the unimaginable power of the images of dead American soldiers was especially visible in case of the story told by Ridley Scott in *Black Hawk Down*. The film was based on the events of the 1993 Battle of Mogadishu and Operation Restore Hope in Somalia (1992–93), which was terminated after the broadcasting of certain disturbing images:

Retrospectively, the U.S. withdrawal from Somalia has been widely understood to have been caused by the public response and subsequent pressure to withdraw following the publication of negative representations of the conflict by the media. This public pressure is claimed to have influenced members of Congress who subsequently forced an early withdrawal. The event which culminated in congressional pressure to cease operations in Somalia was the publication of images which depicted dead U.S. soldiers being dragged through the streets of Mogadishu.²⁴

The tragic events in Somalia affected US foreign policy for many years and were one of the reasons America has become very reluctant to risk casualties and reduced its involvement in many future conflicts. The so-called “body-bag syndrome” (or “body-bag effect”) that “describes a situation where the public is confronted with images of their dead soldiers and consequently asks the government to withdraw its forces from abroad”²⁵ has become an important factor in the decision-making process.

²² Jean Baudrillard, *The Gulf War Did Not Take Place*, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press) (1995), p. 43.

²³ Jessica Lynch was serving as a unit supply specialist was ambushed in Iraq on 23 March 2003 and seriously injured. She has become the first successful rescue of an American prisoner of war since War in Vietnam and the first ever of a woman.

²⁴ Daniel McSweeney, „The CNN Effect and Somalia”, *E-International Relations Students*, <http://www.e-ir.info/2011/08/11/the-cnn-effect-and-somalia/>, date accessed:7 June 2017.

²⁵ Sascha Nlabu, „Body Bags without Effects”, *The Heptagon Post*, http://heptagonpost.com/Nlabu/Body_Bags_without_Effects, date accessed:7 June 2017.

(...) any pressure to intervene with troops was always held in check by the fear of taking casualties, the so-called ‘body-bag effect’. To put this bluntly, policy makers, as much as they might feel compelled to respond to media pressure to ‘do something’ about a humanitarian crisis, were also aware that risking the lives of troops could ultimately backfire and generate negative media and public reaction when casualties were taken.²⁶

The body-bag effect was noticed not only by media and the government, but also by the military itself, which gradually tried to adapt itself to the expectations of public opinion. This is precisely why they emphasize the use of non-lethal weapons (NLWs) in military conflicts—they help to keep the casualties on both sides to a minimum. These weapons use “optical and acoustic means, energy wave devices, and chemical agents to cause disorientation, discomfort, severe nausea, or temporary unconsciousness to incapacitate opposing forces and minimize collateral harm to non-combatants”²⁷. NLWs either:

(...) repulse an enemy and thereby avoid direct encounters, others temporarily incapacitate an enemy so that the enemy can be overwhelmed and disarmed. In both cases, NLWs provide a force continuum, allowing a wide range of options between using high explosives and doing nothing. Properly deployed, nonlethal weaponry offers advanced military organizations the possibility of temporarily incapacitating enemy forces, controlling crowds, or conducting rescue missions without the need to endanger large numbers of noncombatants.²⁸

Besides, all weapons nowadays emphasize the aspect of safety. In their thorough analysis of armament advertisements (“The Vision of War without Casualties: On the Use of Casualty Aversion in Armament Advertisements”), Niklas Schörnig and Alexander C. Lembcke point out that “weapon designers (...) have done an incredibly good job in protecting those who use these weapons in war and have reinforced this impression by actively promoting it via advertisement and lobbying.”²⁹ It is very clear that the aspect most commonly emphasized in those commercials is the safety of soldiers. For example, one of the ads quoted in the article (for the new Boeing X-45A) states “aircrews will no longer have to be put at risk to complete the most dangerous of missions” and promises “a more secure future for our country and the brave men and women who serve”³⁰

²⁶ Piers Robinson, „Media as a Driving Force in International Politics: The CNN Effect and Related Debates”, *Global Policy*, <http://www.globalpolicyjournal.com/blog/08/10/2013/media-driving-force-international-politics-cnn-effect-and-related-debates>, date accessed: 8 June 2017.

²⁷ Michael L. Gross, p.7.

²⁸ Michael L. Gross.

²⁹ Niklas Schörnig, Alexander C. Lembcke, „The Vision of War without Casualties: On the Use of Casualty Aversion in Armament Advertisements”, *The Journal of Conflict Resolution*, vol. 50, no. 2 (2006), p. 206.

³⁰ Niklas Schörnig, Alexander C. Lembcke, p. 205.

The Opposite Usage: The Case of the 9/11 Attacks

Unfortunately, all the aforementioned means cannot eradicate tragedies which result in deaths of both civilians and officials. Sometimes the real fight moves from the battlefield to civilian areas and becomes a very asymmetric conflict. This is definitely the case of the current fight against terrorism that perpetually affects cities all around the world. “The 9/11 terrorist attacks and the war in Afghanistan are among the best-known recent examples of asymmetric warfare: conflicts between nations or groups that have disparate military capabilities and strategies”, summarizes the RAND think tank on its official website.³¹ But the 9/11 events were much more than just an example of asymmetric warfare: they were an unprecedented act that caused trauma for the whole nation. 9/11 was also an illustration of the change that occurred in terrorism itself:

9/11 brought about a fundamental change in the nature of terrorism (...), especially because these attacks seem too inherently entwined with 21st century technologies and media to compare easily to other instances of large-scale terror.³²

It was a new face of terrorism that was not reluctant to use modern technologies and combine them with the biggest symbolic weapon of great power: suicidal death and disdain for life which is so different from the usual American avoidance of death—a contrast that definitely empowered the 9/11 attackers and enhanced their actions. As Jean Baudrillard stated in his famous essay “The Spirit of Terrorism”:

(...) the terrorists have ceased to commit suicide for no return; they are now bringing their own deaths to bear in an effective, offensive manner, in the service of an intuitive strategic insight which is quite simply a sense of the immense fragility of the opponent—a sense that a system which has arrived at its quasi-perfection can, by that very token, be ignited by the slightest spark. They have succeeded in turning their own deaths into an absolute weapon against a system that operates on the basis of the exclusion of death, a system whose ideal is an ideal of zero deaths. Every zero-death system is a zero-sum-game system. And all the means of deterrence and destruction can do nothing against an enemy who has already turned his death into a counterstrike weapon. ‘What does the American bombing matter? Our men are as eager to die as the Americans are to live!’ Hence the non-equivalence of the four thousand deaths inflicted at a stroke on a zero-death system.³³

This kind of clash of value systems had already been seen before World War II, when another group powered by radical ideology sacrificed their lives in order to severely harm the enemy. The suicide attacks of Japanese Kamikaze pilots had a profound impact

³¹ <https://www.rand.org/topics/asymmetric-warfare.html>, date accessed: 8 June 2017.

³² Katharina Donn, *A Poetics of Trauma After 9/11. Representing the Trauma in a Digitalized Present*, (Oxon: Routledge) (2017), p. 3.

³³ Jean Baudrillard, *The Spirit of Terrorism and Other Essays*, (London: Verso) (2002), p. 16.

on the Allied soldiers³⁴, who could not understand these attackers' behaviour, which was motivated by extreme dedication to the cause and the samurai bushido code that places honour before anything else. Suicide terrorism is "the most aggressive form of terrorism"³⁵ and does not expect the attacker to survive. As can be seen in the case of the events of 9/11 and more recent attacks, "suicide terrorists often seek simply to kill the largest number of people"³⁶ and at the same time create an atmosphere of fear, suspicion and constant danger. What is especially striking is the logic hidden behind these seemingly irrational attacks. "Even if many suicide attackers are irrational or fanatical, the leadership groups that recruit and direct them are not"³⁷ writes Robert A. Pape in his profound analysis "The Strategic Logic of Suicide Terrorism".

Conclusion

Cold calculation is probably the most shocking element of suicide terrorism. Both its originators and perpetrators are often aware of the symbolic power of their gestures, which stand in complete contrast to the American or even "western" mentality. Our constant attempts to eradicate death from the public sphere and everyday life peter away when faced with public acts of ideologically motivated suicide. When thinking about the influence of the 9/11 attacks and the trauma it caused for American society, it is important to remember that the strength of the attacks was definitely stronger because of the explicit contrast between the two attitudes towards death described in this paper. The American people gathered around TV screens had to face imminent symbols of death and destruction and observe people trapped in the Twin Towers that chose to jump rather than die in the flames or collapse. Even though the media censored the traumatic images and did not show the bodies of the casualties, the American viewers were very drastically reminded of their mortality. Death, formerly excluded from everyday life, came back and called for attention.

The perpetrators of the 9/11 attacks and all the recent examples of suicide terrorism were aware that because human victims are seen as unacceptable in modern wars and death is a taboo topic in the every-day life of many countries, their acts would gain additional power and meaning. In a way, an attack on the whole new "western" way of life would come about. Obviously saying that a change of our attitude toward the phenomenon of death would scare off the terrorists and discourage them from conducting more violent acts is an inappropriate oversimplification. However, a more moderate approach toward death might be a positive influence on our everyday lives. Traumas and

³⁴ Iain Overton, Henry Dodd, „A Short History of Suicide Bombing”, *Action on Armed Violence*, <https://aoav.org.uk/2013/a-short-history-of-suicide-bombings/>, date accessed: 7 June 2017.

³⁵ Robert A., Pape, „The Strategic Logic of Suicide Terrorism”, *American Political Science Review*, vol. 97. no. 3 (2003). p. 345.

³⁶ Robert A., Pape.

³⁷ Robert A., Pape.

dramas might be smaller or even non-existent if we could find the right way to talk about the one and only imminent element of our lives: death.

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Filmography:

Behind Enemy Lines (2001, John Moore)

Black Hawk Down (2001, Ridley Scott)

Eye in the Sky (2015, Gavin Hood)

Lone Survivor (2013, Peter Berg)

Missing in Action (1984, Joseph Zito)

Rambo: First Blood Part II (1985, George P. Cosmatos)

Saving Private Ryan (1998, Steven Spielberg)

The Great Raid (2005, John Dahl)