



“Ethics and urban warfare”

Call for Papers

for EuroISME’s re-scheduled conference in Berlin, 5-7 May 2021

Due to the covid-19 pandemic, EuroISME’s conference of May 2020 conference has been re-scheduled to take place in May 2021. Given the unpredictability of virus developments, EuroISME will decide at a later stage on the exact format of the conference. We hope that the situation will have improved enough to allow us to hold a physical conference. However, we are aware that an online (or a hybrid physical/online) conference might be unavoidable. We shall decide on which format to adopt nearer the time, when the situation is clearer, not only relating to the virus, but also concerning the impact likely travel restrictions may have. Nonetheless, EuroISME hereby issues its Call for Papers.

The authors of submissions which had been accepted in anticipation of our (re-scheduled) conference of 2020, will receive a separate notification: in principle, the “accepted” status of their submission remains valid and they are kindly encouraged to present their paper in May 2021. EuroISME has a number of time-slots available for “new” submissions, *i.e.* submissions which had not been made in anticipation of the conference of last May. Thus, also “new” submissions will be welcomed; they will be assessed by the programme committee.

Archaic stone-age type of warfare

Urban warfare represents one of the most challenging aspects of warfare. Viewed from the perspective of command & control, it is difficult to manage. Viewed from the perspective of the laws of war, the principle of distinction is difficult to apply. Viewed from the perspective of humanitarian relief, it becomes near-impossible to bring either safety to the people, or, alternatively, to bring the people to safety. Seen from the perspective of human rights, no basic rights appear to exist, other than the

law of the jungle. Quarters, streets and even houses can change hands several times in as many weeks. Killing becomes, almost inevitably, indiscriminate. While much attention is at present being paid to AI in order to avoid the indiscriminate nature of the killing, it seems unlikely that AI will, by itself, minimise the dire humanitarian issues involved.

Frequently, urban warfare is asymmetric. It is a war of David versus Goliath, where Davids of this world are able to reduce the military might of superpowers to a stone age type of warfare, almost literally. Urban warfare is also a propaganda war. It emphasises the collateral damage caused by one side, while non-sovereign pyjama-wearing fighters are firing RPG's at civilian population centres from behind their own civilian population. They fight with virtual impunity; regular soldiers usually do not. These characteristics encompass the quintessential challenge of the military commander in practically every battlefield today. This challenge is characterised as humongous. Even where urban wars are not asymmetric, the stone age hallmarks are usually still in place.

Challenges for humanitarian-military interface and CIMIC

Once the fighting dies down and the appearance of victory of one side over the others looms, the problems are not over. The first hours, days and weeks after a victory can be claimed, can be the most frightening for the civilian population. The old order has been defeated; the new order, still unknown, has to assert itself. Transgressions can be conducted with impunity. Basic services need to be re-established, a functioning municipal authority needs to be in place; a minimum of security & order needs to be guaranteed.

Inevitably, a civil-military and humanitarian coordination effort faces its own challenges. Senior military personnel from within the allied coalition in Afghanistan, Iraq and other theatres are making the argument that warfare today is a 360° effort; the military mission can only succeed if it takes into account the humanitarian needs of the civilian population and coordinates with many other actors to allow the supply of humanitarian aid to be distributed not only in times of fighting but also during the immediate aftermath. To what extent does this fly in the face of humanitarian considerations of neutrality and independence?

At EuroISME's 10th annual conference on "Urban warfare" the question will be what role military ethics, and the morally sensitive military can play in order to alleviate the problems mentioned. In view of the fact that we have already received a considerable number of submissions relating AI to urban warfare, and in order to avoid a one-sidedness in the conference programme, we specifically encourage submissions on the following topics:

- Can honourable armed forces with morally trained soldiers function both effectively and legitimately under such difficult circumstances, or should one accept that this has become impossible or should one resign to the fact that the armed forces need open areas in order to function without undue collateral damage?
- What lessons can be learnt from historical examples to avoid unnecessary bloodshed?
- Once the military has acquired control over the city, how should they deal with the immediate aftermath: the governance of the city, humanitarian supplies, maintenance of law & order, allowing children back to school, etc?
- How should one prepare one's own personnel for the horrors they will witness?
- How should one deal with the remnants of the defeated army?

Submissions

The deadline for submissions is February 1st, 2021; submissions can be sent to our online submission form:

<https://forms.euroisme.eu/index.php/482524?newtest=Y&lang=en>

Submissions received after the deadline will not be considered. Submissions should be made through the electronic submissions form, which is available on this website.

The following submissions will be welcomed:

- Professional submissions. This concerns submissions of both the military (active or retired) or academics. The submissions are 850-1000 words (that is two or three pages) in length. These submissions need to give: 1) discuss the societal relevance of the proposed topic; 2) a definition of the research problem; and 3) a summary of conclusions. For academics, we appreciate a description of the research method. Professional submissions will be given a right of priority if the number of submissions received exceeds the number of time-slots available.
- Full panel submissions. We define a panel session as a time-slot of 90 minutes. A panel has preferably 3, though a maximum of 4, presentations, to be followed by some 20 minutes for questions and answers. In practice, this implies that with three presentations, each presenter has 20 minutes (15 minutes with 4 presentations). A full panel submission will contain the submissions of each of the panellists plus the title of the full panel and the Point of Contact on behalf of that panel. A full panel submission should be made by means of a comprehensive email, which includes all the presentation which will be made in that panel. Full panel submissions will also be prioritised and we encourage non-native speakers of English to submit a full-panel proposal. Preference will be

given to panels where the panellists come from two or more countries. At request, EuroISME can assist in seeking a moderator or a presenter for a near-complete panel proposal.

- Brief submissions. Submissions of 250-350 words will be welcomed by the Programme Committee in much the same way as in previous years. If however, the number of submissions received is greater than the number of time-slots available, a preference will be given to the two possibilities of submitting mentioned above.

All submissions shall be made in the English language, unless specific prior agreement has been made with the chairman of the Programme Committee, dr. Ted van Baarda. Should the conference be live-streamed only, then no translatory facilities will be available. This does not mean that presentations in French or German are not possible, but it does mean that panels whereby the presenters use different languages in the same panel are not possible. Thus, a fully German-language or French-language panel is possible with a live-stream only format of the conference, although such panels will only be accessible to Germanophone or Francophone members of the audience.

Should you already know in advance that you will be only attending EuroISME's conference via live-stream, then please indicate this when you submit. We will subsequently endeavour to take account of your time-zone, if you are outside Europe. Moreover, if you consider submitting a full-panel submission, then it may be convenient to keep in mind that the divergence of the time zones of your panellists is not too far apart.

Publication

EuroISME wishes to speed-up the production of the conference volume considerably. Authors who wish to submit for the conference volume, should submit their manuscript no later than *one* month after the conference. Our aim is to have the conference volume published in time for our conference of May 2022.