



War, Peace, and Cinema: Excerpts from the Foreign Policy of the USA with a Look at Stanley Kubrick's Cinema

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Abstract: The notion of peace, regardless of theorizations accepted in the field and since the Enlightenment Period, and the era known as Modernism, has, constantly, been one of the challenges of mankind, and also scientists in the field of political sciences and international relations. Contrary to the presentation of the idea of peace and respect to the human rights in some of the foreign policy doctrines of the USA in different periods, this country has had the largest number of cases of application of army force in its file, during the 20th century. This article sheds a brief look on the moments of the US foreign policy during the years of war with Vietnam, in combination with anti-war cinema introduced by Stanley Kubrick, the famous American film producer. In his movie, "Full Metal Jacket" he criticizes the American politicians, regarding Vietnam War. Although he has not provided a theory of peace, he is wholeheartedly, an anti war Film producer.

Keywords: Peace, Foreign Policy of the USA, Vietnam War, Antiwar Cinema, Stanley Kubrick

Introduction

The Second World War ended on May 8th, 1945, after Adolph Hitler's suicide and the surrender of the Nazi Germany to make the United States of America to be entitled as the great victorious, and a new era of the 20th century history to appear in which the guidance of the world to become a dream for the authorities of the White House. This situation continued to the time the mentioned idea and wish turned to the Cold War with the CCCP (Soviet Union) in a close competition. The evident reason of this claim is the book "Beyond Peace" written by Richard Nixon, the 37th president of the United States. Guidance of the world is a dream that he has pictured for the America. Although Nixon was not successful in his policies which led

to his resignation, his success in the foreign policies is not avoidable, even for his critics. The initiation of the relations between America and China, detent with the Soviet Union, starting negotiations for the cease fire, and finishing Vietnam War, are considered as Nixon and his cabinet's innovations in the field of foreign policies (Amiri, Political and Economic Etelaat Newspaper, Tehran, No 79 and 80: 3).

Considering all the issues mentioned, according to Stanly Hafman, a professor at Harvard University, Nixon committed tremendous mistakes, from among which throwing down Salvador Alende in Chile by the help of CIA in 1973, and his substituting with Augustine Penuche, the blood shedding dictator" can be mentioned.

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Foreign Policy of the USA: War or Peace?

The time after the First and the Second World War and their interval from the Cold War was a very important section in the history of the USA. The period in which the history looked to the people and the leaders of the America from a different perspective (Folly and Palmer, No time: Vii).

In the foreign policy of Nixon-Kissinger which was deeply impressed by the Vietnam War and its consequences inside the America, "the national interests" of the America was provided, all over the world, through making the Power Balance. According to Nixon, the World can live in peace and security, only when the Soviet Union, Europe, China, Japan, and the America are strong and healthy, and when each one tries to make balance with the others. It has to be mentioned, of course, that dependence on the concept of the balance of powers by Nixon-Kissinger to explain the international systems was, in fact, a deviation from the "Two Polarity System" of the world after the Second World War, in which the two nuclear powers, the America and the Russia, could write the fate of the world (Amiri, Op, Cit: 31).

Provision of Global peace and security, by politicians, is only possible by reliance of the principle of survival and the balance of powers, in a Bipolar System. On this basis, International policies can be considered as permanent efforts to keep and increase the power of their own government and to control or decrease the power of other governments. The relative power of governments depends on the quantity and quality of the government, especially its diplomacy. International politics, as a series of technical accomplishments which are free from ethical considerations, has objectives like decreasing or even demolishing the population of the competing government, killing the most prominent political and military leaders, and wiping out the traces of the most powerful diplomats, to make them consider themselves rightful and just, in

achieving the mentioned goals. Whenever the international policy is applied as a sole technique free from the ethics, and is inclined to the power struggles, these strategies are, obviously and acceptably, followed (Morgenthau, 1995: 377).

Hans. J. Morgenthau, the theorist of the International Politics and the Foreign Policy of the America after the Second World War, proposes a six-fold principle, which is embodied in the realism theory, which turns to an important guideline for the diplomacy system of the country. Regarding the peace issue in the modern age, he believes that the occurrence the two World Wars during the life time of one generation and the possibility of the occurrence of a Nuclear War, has converted the international order and, the preservation of global peace for the west civilization, to a very important problem. Hatred from war has always been prevalent as a calamity. At the time when property based governments of Saint Empire of Rome, which was a political domain for Christianity, turned to a hallow shell and a legal legend, writers and politicians contemplated, much more than before, on the issue to preserve the lost political unity of the World of the West.

Erasmus in the Sixteenth Century, Ducde Sully, Emeric Cruce, Hugo Grotius, William Penn in the Seventeenth Century, Abbe de Saint Pierre, and Kant in the Eighteenth Century, were the pioneers whose ideas were materialized during the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries, to solve the problems related to the international peace and order. Examples of their activities include: The sacred Union, the Hague Peace Conferences (1899 and 1907), National Society, and the establishment of the United Nations (Ibid: 627).

Meanwhile, and as an example, Emanuel Kant at the very beginning of a dissertation under a term called "Sustainable Peace" presents, a number of preliminaries for the Sustainable peace among governments, without any introduction, while considering "why" and "under what condition" should it be regarded an unacceptable depravity. These pre-

liminaries could easily lead all the Eighteen Century governments which agreed with them, to peace, of course if they truly could follow them. They obligate those who had signed the treaty to abrogate all secret treaties, possession of a country by another through inheritance, purchasing or offering it as a present, preserving the stable values, indebting the country because of military purposes, any illegal involvement in the internal construction of another country, terrorizing, subversion, and the like, which make the future peaceful relations among governments, impossible. It is, clearly, this frankly stated introductory section that made the dissertation very popular and people believe that Kant would provide the world with an immediate and long lasting peace. He, of course, takes into account all political presuppositions and courses of conduct without which no Eighteen Century country could seriously be expected to follow the exact materials (Galli, 1993: 18-19).

Those who have signed the treaty, should in one way or another, benefit from the republic construction based on representativeness. Kant clarifies, in this way, the issue that the signature of his preliminary principles in just the beginning of a long term program to establish peace, and the real actualization of it, requires centuries of experience and political endeavor, in spite of repetitive disappointments. Even if it gets practical, it is not totally guaranteed (Ibid: 5-19).

This is the same difference that makes distinction between politicians and philosophers. Although they both think about the same objective, their operational strategies are separated from each other. Philosophers consider the operationalization of an idea useful and favorable during a long term, and politicians consider the same favorableness in a short period of time. But the basic question that remains is about the quality and the degree of the role systems like United Nations Organization, Regional Organizations, and Non Governmental Organizations (NGOs) have played in developing a sustainable peace. In an urgent response to the

question, it has to be mentioned that the idea of sustainable peace actualization in the 20th century has not been comprehensive enough, although few positive steps have yet been taken. As we are approaching the 21th century, a deeper understanding of the reasons behind involvements and the new strategic atmosphere, new opportunities, are provided to make it possible for us to study accessing these objectives again (Kenny, 2002: 31).

The most important issue is that whether all these can prevent wars and blood shedding, whether the historical roots of aggression in the nature and instinct of human beings will dry, whether the suppressive anti human tactics will be replaced by the human security preservation policies and enough attempts will be made to provide the global needs of the human beings, today, or they are crook imaginations that have occupied the thinkers' minds, or we will, eventually, be forced to be along with the main character of George Orwell's novel, 1984, and read these verses on the walls of the "ministry of facts" of his virtual country that reads "War is Peace", a country in which ignorance is knowing, and freedom is slavery. The ministry of facts disperses lies, and the ministry of love makes laws out of hatred. The ministry of immenseness distributes poverty, and ultimately the ministry of peace fights (Orwell, 2005: 6 & 19).

Although, Orwell's virtual country in the industrial world was either the Russia or the Nazi Germany, today and at the onset of the twenty first century, in a world without objectification of conventional definitions, and with interwoven national borders in the process of globalization, we are like villages in which the institutes and the fates of the East and the West are united, and in between all these, we shout from among the noises emerging from hundreds of theories and theorists over the peace and equality all around the world, for the idea of peace and peaceful coexistence to become eternal. Can the art of the artists draw back the borders of hatred, rage, and violent and anarchism to the Utopia, and institutionalize the idea of love

and peace, can art principally, play a role in the developments of the international politics? These and many other questions draw a more fake picture from the coarse face of politics and never leave free the domain of thinking. But, if we keep a little away from the vague Utopia, in the real world of the art of cinema, an anti war critic appeared from the Holly Wood cinema of America in the 1950s, with the name of Stanley Kubrick, to be able to shorten the distance between the world of politics and that of the art.

Stanley Kubrick and Anti War Cinema

Stanley Kubrick was born on July 26, 1928 in Manhattan. His father was Jacksus Leonard Kubrick, a physician (1901-1958) and his ancestors were among Australian Jew migrants. He got acquainted with camera and the art of photography since his young ages. Although, his introduction to the art of film production took him away from photography, his dominance over the picture is derived from his interest in photography (see [www. Wikipedia.org](http://www.Wikipedia.org). the Free Encyclopedia/ Stanly Kubrick). He was not a type of person to ever go to the church and follow the religious rituals, although he was born in a Jewish family (Cocks, 2004: 22-4).

Kubrick started long film production by making the film "Fear and Desire." This was a movie about a group of soldiers who were confined behind the enemy war fronts in an imaginary war. At the end of the film, soldiers notice that the faces of their enemies are similar to those of themselves, and they were actually fighting with themselves. This movie was attracted by many critics who wrote clear and exact criticisms about it, although it was not sold desirably. Almost all his films are derived from famous novels, and he has been successful in presenting them in the body of films. He never intended to materialize the novels as exactly as they were written in words, but he used them at the service of the cinema, though he was faithful to the atmosphere, characters, and the stories. As an example, Richard Jenkins, the famous critic of cine-

ma, in criticizing the anti war movie of "Full Metal Jacket" writes that Kubrick had been faithful only to twenty percent of the novel in some parts of the movie, especially in the scenes about the camping (Jenkins, 1997: 128).

- Cinematology

Paths of Glory (1957), Spartacus (1960), Lolita (1962), Dr. Strangelove (1968), The Shinning (1980), Full Metal Jacket (1987), Eyes Wide Shut (1999), and A Space Odyssey (2001) can be mentioned as examples of films produced by Kubrick.

Kubrick was the director of popular and discussable films in different genres, but it can be stated, courageously, that the cinema of war and the war incidents were constantly a part of Kubrick's involvements, as he made the film of "The Path to Honor" on the basis of an anti war novel produced by Humphrey Cab under the same title. The "Path to Honor" was a very successful movie about corruption and treachery at different military levels during very sensitive moments of war. A group of soldiers have been defeated in war attack and now they should look for the guilty. Here, the commander who is the guilty himself accuses two innocent soldiers as the cause of the defeat and who were indifference to the job, to life sentence. The officer whose role is played by Kirk Douglas cannot save him, although he does his best. This movie which is produced in Munich, was the first important success of Stanley Kubrick in the business and his credit, and introduced him as a stylistic cinematographer. Critics appreciated the natural scenes of war and Kubrick's art of film production. The sequence of the marching of Colonel Doug in the soldiers' front drench turned to classic cinema metaphors and, even today they are taught in film making classes. Steven Spielberg, another famous American Film producer, considers this film as the best and the most popular one among other works of Kubrick. In another work made in 1964, Stanley Kubrick made a film under the title of Dr. Strangelove, or "How I Learned Not to Worry and Love

the Bomb” in the genre of Black Comedy, during the climax of the Cold War. Kubrick made this film on the basis of the novel “Red Alarm” by “Peter George.” This movie which was produced during the climax of the cold war about the savagery and threatening ideas and savage programs of politicians of the two super power countries, America and Russia, who arranged conspiracies behind the closed doors and did not worry about the destruction of humanity and life on earth for the sake of the destruction of each other. Large amount of the time of this film (about 90 percent) is spent in a closed environment (The Strategic Room) in which the great commanders of the army decided about their future, and actually about the destruction of the world. The creation of the fake characters from war inducing politicians, the excellent designing of the scenes and environments, the exact and at the same time crazy and dizzy movements of cameras which is, in one way or another, the reflection of imbalance thought and imagination of the film characters, show very appropriately and evidently, the pessimistic view of Kubrick toward politics. Perhaps the world of politics, for him, is the world of the shades of wills and wishes of super powers to the price of trampling the facts, human, and humanity. He keeps this view and turns it to a different perspective and shows that he is not optimist about the world human beings have made for themselves or have been made for them, forcefully, and this is implied in his later movies by a type of fear, and lack of security. Kubrick’s epistemology is suffering from an internal suspicion regarding human relations to each other and those with the society and politics. “Spike Lee” a famous film producer and American oppressive critic has mentioned about this film of Dr. Strangelove in which Kubrick was not to parody the Nuclear War. He wanted to question the American policy. It is not arbitrary that America is constantly remembered as the coarsest country in the human history. In this country every individual possesses a gun. This is, actually, genetic and Americans have always, re-

quired nightmares. Today, the countries in the Middle East are playing this role.

He made the admirable film of “Full Metal Jacket” in 1987. This movie was a bitter narration of Vietnam War. It refers to the specific condition of soldiers in specific situations. Kubrick, in this film presents a very coarse and horrible picture of the barracks to which the young new comer soldiers attend, and the military training they undergo.

Savagery of the first part of the film, which is happening in the barrack, is unique in the whole history of cinema. It was only after the screening of this movie that all military savageries are shown by reference to the “Full Metal Jacket”. Ultimately, this rage causes insanity of one of the soldiers, who in a state of psychic crease, kills his commander, and then commits suicide. In the second section of the film, the same soldiers are assigned to Vietnam, and there they confront a deadly, merciless rage imposed on them by the War. As the film precedes, the rate of the savagery and rage increases, and at the final sequence of the film, soldiers are presented as animals and vampires, they are no longer human beings.

This movie has a critical view toward the nature and occurrence of the War and the American young people are to destroy a generation of Vietnamese, and what is left after the American domination over Vietnam.

Background of the Vietnam War

The Vietnam War is rooted in the colonialist period, because of its nature and formation. Persistence of France in colonization in the area of India and China continued to the end of the World War the Second and the onset of the Cold War, while the world was changing and gradually, new equations were dominating the polarizing world. In this condition, Russia and its allies were to extend their influence over the world, and the excitement of looking for freedom and justice in the countries dominated by the West, also, were pulling the revolutionaries all over the world toward a leftist Uto-

pia. On the other hand, America was trying to attract the equation of Power, all through the world, toward itself, by adding to the anti leftist feelings and showing the fearful communism to them. This was the way in which America entered the dispute between France and Vietnam with the excuse of the spread of communism. The combination of military operations and involvements which occurred between the forces of the North Vietnam and the National Liberation wing of the South Vietnam (known as Vietcong), on the one side, and those of the South Vietnam and its allies (specially America) on the other, between the years of 1950 to 1975. In this way the objectives of the North Vietnam forces and those of Vietcong was expelling the America and its allies from Vietnam and to toppling down the government of the South Vietnam, and the creation of a unique country under the name of Vietnam. All these objectives were achieved at the end of the Vietnam War, and the country which is today, called Socialist Republic of Vietnam was created (see [www. Wikipedia. org/ Vietnam War/ net](http://www.Wikipedia.org/VietnamWar/net)).

But the American cinema manifested a totally different feedback from the times before and after them, as a result of the consequences of the Vietnam War. The Second World War and after that the Korean War have always been pictured with an admiring and supporting look by Holly Wood. The Second World War is the climax of the interactive influence between the system and Holly Wood, and was considered as an effective cultural means of the systems influencing on each other. Holly Wood from the very beginning of the War adhered to agitating the patriotic feelings and creation of a national wave in defense of the American identity and its land. Most of the films produced in this section of the history show the taste of support toward the American identity. Even during the recent years, regardless of a few cases, most of the films that deal with the World War II show a positive view toward the subject. In these films, the American Flag has special importance and sacred-

ness. Almost all of the flags shown in these films are erected and moving in the wind, to show the national pride (Fekri Ershad, 2010: 12&58).

The Vietnam War is a strange point in the history of Holly Wood cinema. Vietnam War was, qualitatively, a picture of confrontation of the two blocks of the West and the East which was evident in every corner of the world. Middle East, Latin America, Africa, Far East, and even West and East Europe were the scenes of these confrontations. On the basis of such a background, feedback and the reaction of Holly Wood was totally different from what was expected by the system. This is the first place that Holly Wood abhors the introduction of the US to the War. It talks about both the dark side of the war and the broken and crushed national pride. Just pay attention to the American Flag in the anti war films. It is dropped, dusty, bloody, torn, and wrinkled (Ibid, 60).

Generally, all media (including journals, television and cinema) did their best to make any anti war movement of the USA to be responded by any small sign of the success of the American forces in the operations of TET, lest their country would win the war.

For example, George Mc govern, the candidate for the American Presidency in 1972, told James Web one of the old soldiers of the Vietnam War and the previous Marshal of Navy, "what you cannot understand is that I didn't want the US win the war, or the headline of the National Press of April – June 1968 of old soldiers of Vietnam was as follows: "Professor requires that the congress make enquiry about the behavior of the Media toward the Vietnam War" which he meant "Leonard Mc Groder who requested the Congress investigate about the way the victory of American Forces was reported to the people of America as defeat. This request was, also, supported by twelve organizations from among great organizations of Old Soldiers and General West Moorland.

Mc Groder quotes from the book of General West Moorland under the topic "Reports of a Sol-

dier” "...after the defeat of the enemy in TET operations, it was still possible to end the war in a desirable way, but it was not supposed to be like that. The press and television were propagating defeat, rather than the victory.”(Heidari, 2007: 2)

Although the sound and the picture of cannons were transferred to the houses of Americans, from the war field, in the TET operation, in less than 24 hours, reporters had broadcasted the Second World War during the primary years picturing the soldiers who had, in one way or another agreeing with their performance. Nevertheless, many historians believed that the reporters had started sending reports by showing the fatigue from the war and in this way had put more emphasis on the war broadcasting. Cameras showed the cultural, social, and historical dimensions of the war in a very blurred and vague fashion, and as a result changed American feelings and perceptions toward this issue. As an example, media were reporting, in many cases, that the Vietcong soldiers had attacked the American Embassy, while such an attack had never taken place. Twenty six individuals had moved toward the walls of the Embassy, but the armed navies had prevented their entrance to the building (Ibid: 3).

Meanwhile, in Vietnam, almost half of the fighting potentials of the military forces were gathered in the Bisseig forces. Thus, this group would receive very weak services regarding their training, equipment, and technical commandeering. Moreover, the local forces would leave the military services, and this was one of the permanent problems of the governmental security forces. Between the years of 1959 and 1960 a tremendous decrease occurred in the number of personnel under the military services in the South Vietnam and the local powers diminished (see [www. Fcnl. org](http://www.Fcnl.org)).

Americans, generally, except a group of minorities, disagreed with the military presence of America, with such presupposition; movies about the Vietnam War showed a ritual viewpoint to the genre of the war cinemas, of course if we accept that there is such a thing as the war genre of the cinema.

The reflection of Vietnam War in the cinema of America was severely dependant on many political and cultural factors. The period of American military presence in Vietnam lasted from the second half of the 60's to the first half of the 70's. This period had specific characteristics.

Request for justice and socialism was very popular, on the one hand, and on the other hand, the intellectual young people of the world were observing the possibilities of achieving their ideals embodied in the leftist ideology. Wherever there were signs of injustice, dictatorship, liberalism and aristocratic life, internal or external colonialism and exploitation, leftists would appear and grow very fast (Fekri Ershad, Op, Cit: 60).

In short, it should be stated that in such a political, social, and international atmosphere, the cinema of Stanley Kubrick was being understood. His view was nothing more than a critical view of the American society toward the topic of war and violence. In this way, the view of cinema toward the Vietnam War during the decades of 70 and 80 was always accompanied with memorable songs of the 60's and the magnificent scenes of the War. Meanwhile, the "Full Metal Jacket" is the narrator of the metamorphosis of human identity in the furnace of war. Here, the soldier "Pile" changes from an individual to a different one, just similar to the metamorphosis of humans who are pictured in the film of Mulholland made by David Lynch. While the effect of media on investigating the realities of war is analyzed by Kubrick, his unique narration of the Vietnam War gives a horrible picture of the contemporary world (Ibid, 59).

His pessimistic triangle composing of factors affecting human, technology, and society in different shapes and with ebbs and flows, are observable and recognizable. It should be remembered that Kubrick does not talk of peace with us. His view and his cinema are just a reflection against war and war orientedness, and the complex relations of the contemporary world, which seems to take the humans to nothingness with itself, although in different pic-

tures and sequences of his film, and as an example in "Full Metal Jacket" his humanitarian concerns can clearly be observed. He is worried about human, his nature, his society, and the world. It seems that Stanley Kubrick shouts in a very clear voice, under the influence of the modern thought and as a primitive man, that war is a losing game, started with any purpose and with any nature.

The evidence of this claim is the horrible scenes of the movie in a sequence from the second section of the movie, in which a group of American soldiers are following the Vietcong soldiers from within a ruined building, who are suddenly shut, each one escapes to a corner and hides himself. In another scene, a group of American soldiers are watched over the coffin of one of their friends, with an impressive look, weeping, and uttering a dialog which is indicative of Stanley Kubrick's impression toward the Vietnam War. They express farewell with their senseless friends, as follows:

"You are going home, now."

"We are scandals."

"Keep Calm, comrade!"

"You are better than we are."

"At least you die for a good reason."

"What is that reason?"

"Freedom"

"Do you believe that we should kill our yellow colored fellows for the sake of freedom?"

"This is genocide, isn't it?"

Conclusion

Political cinema in a very delicate concept from the word, points to the political films which have not hidden their political position and identity. This does not mean that they are, necessarily propagating films that develop a special idea. The other difference these types of films enjoy from is the way they show their political position (Rosenbaum, 1997: 13).

Cinema is an expensive art and industry and requires a lot of investment. The industrial nature of

them has caused the conceptualization in these types of films express a conservative position, and since they are produced in liberal societies, seldom they express their objections about the infrastructural relations in a context whose every component is subject to the financial benefits. But the political deviations in the 20th century have provided opportunities for film directors to consider the critical political centers as agenda in their film production procedures. Two World Wars, Rise and fall of Fascism, appearance of Communism and the Cold War, Vietnam War and other wars happening in the second half of the twentieth century, the collapse of Russia, widespread economic and political crises, and the appearance of protesting movements toward West foliate infrastructures all over the world, which are along the ongoing collapse of governances and national Powers since the latest period of the 20th century and the beginning of the recent century, led to the prominence and appearance of different kinds of the political art. The political performance of these artistic works, since their conception which was just an observer of the show environment and had not dealt with the instinct of it, and found a different fate when it experienced World War II, and the Cold War, following it. The political cinema confronted paranoia of the left ideology and was subjected to tyranny and submissiveness, whenever it showed any suspicious inclination toward the left and the Radicalism inside the West geography and even their political counterparts in the Third World. Therefore, the political cinema from the very beginning was in line with the political ideology, in exposing and overthrowing the Radical Systems.

During the 60's we observe another principle deviation in the political content of cinema. This metamorphosis is derived from the interaction of different factors that led to the development of liberation movements in the third world. The attention of people to exposing the calamities and gaining political awareness made the political cinema experience a new evolvement, and tried to pay more

attention to the satisfaction of this new request of the people in the world. These waves were followed, not only in Europe, but also, in many Third World Countries which were liberated from colonialism, and created everlasting examples in Africa, Cuba, Brazil, Chile, Argentina, and other societies. This process has continued its existence to today in the body of objective cinema that deals with the phenomena like war, terrorism, fundamentalism, neo colonialism, and the like.

At the end, it has to be remembered that the theories of international relations, and the theorists of international politics cannot join the spirit and culture of peace loving, humanitarianism, and avoiding rage with the new concepts they have made on freedom, equality, and peace, no matter what they do. This is the unique effect of art that can evolve the senseless world of politics and that of politicians. This sentence might be considered seriously that politics is too important an issue to be in the control of politicians.

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