WF Professor Gives Paper at Meeting

A paper which compares peacemaking procedures of primitive societies and modern states was presented by a Wake Forest University professor this weekend at a meeting of the Southwestern Anthropological Association in Tucson, Ariz.

Dr. Stanton K. Tefft, associate professor of sociology and anthropology, criticized social scientists for being “overly preoccupied with the study of primitive war rather than primitive peacemaking.”

He gave data which suggests that peacemaking methods of primitive peoples were as sophisticated as those of modern states. The procedures included truce, good offices, direct mediation, arbitration and peace conferences.
It seems to me that Professor Wendt was much too cavalier in his review of Margaret Mead's book *Culture and Commitment Journal*, May 3). While the thesis Mead presents in this book seems fraught with ambiguities, her explanation for the generation gap deserves a more serious consideration than Professor Wendt gave it.

Mead argues that in the prefigurative (industrial) societies of today the elders, who in their formative years were raised under cultural and historical conditions completely different from those of today, view the problem from a perspective completely different from their offspring. The knowledge and moral perspectives of adults are so obsolete that "... elders can no longer present with certainty moral imperatives to young."

While Mead will convince many that the adult generation no longer has a firm grasp on the realities of modern life, she does not quite convince the reader that youth themselves have a new perspective and, if so, why their view is a more realistic one. There is some evidence to suggest that youthful dissenters are trying to reform social institutions so that the realities of social life are more in line with the values they learned from their parents. Yet a good number of their elders consider them "bums" for doing so, to coin a phrase of the current President of the U.S.

Could it be that both youth and elders are aware of the immediacy of the crises but that the elders have a greater vested psychological, political, and economic interest in the very institutional structure which stand in the way of reform?

Mead's book raises many interesting questions. She does not provide all the answers in it. But, if we were to take Wendt's review seriously, we would assume that she had not even raised any provocative questions at all.

—STANTON K. TEFFT

Winston-Salem.
Deterrence Didn’t Work in Past, WFU Professor Says

By Nina Savin
Staff Reporter

The strategy of accumulating weapons with the intent of preventing war failed among primitive tribes and nation states, and no evidence exists to suggest that the strategy will succeed for modern nations.

That assessment is the theme of a research report written by Stanton K. Tefft, a professor of anthropology at Wake Forest University and an expert on warfare among early societies.

Tefft presented his report in Washington earlier this month to anthropologists from across the nation gathered at the 81st annual meeting of the American Anthropological Association.

In a recent interview in his office, Tefft said that his research reinforces the conclusions of other scholars in his field and reveals a frightening problem for modern society in the nuclear age.

Tefft’s report shows that primitive tribes and nations failed in their attempts to base their security on the strategy of deterrence. Deterrence holds that a relative balance of military power will lead nations to fear the consequences of war and therefore refrain from launching one.

"But there never can be a stable balance," Tefft said. "That is something that is obvious from our studies.

"Balance-of-power politics has a catch to it: A balance exists when we have the edge," Tefft said. "As time goes on and the nuclear arsenals improve ... the likelihood is that the pressure will build for one power to make a first strike, particularly when international tensions are escalating. The reason will be the same (as it has been for early societies). One side feels it has the military edge and uses it to gain a political or military advantage.

The implications for modern society of failed deterrence strategy is appalling, Tefft said, because of the unique characteristics of nuclear weapons. In early societies and even in conventional wars, warning of conflict preceded conflict, he said. Even after the outbreak of hostilities, negotiations could be carried on.

"But of course in a nuclear conflict, it will happen so rapidly that it is unlikely there'll be any time to make rational alternatives," he said.

Tefft wrote in his report that primitive nations and tribes had the same primary policy goal as modern nations — protection against damage from outsiders and maintenance, as far as possible, of friendly relations with other nations and tribes. Yet that goal did not prevent primitive nations from entering the spiral of conflict that ultimately led to war.

The causes for conflict differed from one historical situation to another, he wrote, but the underlying process of conflict escalation remained the same. Pressure from expanding populations, technological advancement or the ambition of tribal leaders eventually led primitive nations to attempt to expand their territory and influence.

"This created a violence-prone environment to which all political communities adapt and jointly respond," Tefft said.

Tefft’s studies and other studies also show that serious disputes between primitive nations engaged in arms races are much more likely to result in all-out war than in disputes between nations exhibiting normal patterns of competition. And among nations with mutual hostility, those with advanced military capabilities are more likely to engage in frequent wars than those with less sophisticated military capabilities.

Moreover, the studies show that sophisticated military capabilities do not necessarily confer a long-term advantage on the nation that possesses them — in fact, when new military technology contributes to the cycle of warfare, the advantage gained from the warfare is often lost.

One of many examples cited in the report concerns the Maoris of New Zealand in pre-European times. The Maori tribes conquered land and took other aggressive actions that led to the growth of the tribes and to their dispersion and to the acquisition of resources.

When the Maoris acquired European muskets, however, some tribes banded together into armies and acquired more land than they could efficiently exploit. Warfare among the armies resulted at times in slaughters on the battlefield, and the effort to produce goods that could be traded for guns resulted in the neglect of subsistence crops and starvation among the people.
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WF Professor, Former Student Are Published

An article on warfare regulation among tribal people by a Wake Forest University professor and a former Wake Forest graduate student was published recently by Behavioral Science Research, a journal of comparative studies.

The authors are Dr. Stanton K. Tefft, associate professor of anthropology, and Douglas Reinhardt, a former graduate student who is now an instructor in sociology and anthropology at Campbell College.

Their study was financed by the Society for the Psychological Study of Social Issues.