

# Can the third world-war be prevented?

## Outline

### I. Introduction:

Human history and contemporary examples attest the fact that the third world-war can be prevented by enhancing multilateralism, bilateral engagements and pursuing friendly cooperations. However, some people believe that the third world-war cannot be prevented because of the growing geopolitical and geo-economic confrontations. This notion is not true because above mentioned measures can reduce such confrontations at all levels.

### II. An overview of the world-wars

### III. The third world-war cannot be prevented - the wrong notion:

- A. Growing geo-political confrontations
- B. Increasing geo-economic clashes
- C. Expanding phenomenon of non-traditional threats
- D. Escalating situations of geo-strategic collisions

### IV. The third world-war can be prevented - the proposition:

- A. Empowering United Nations General Assembly (UNGA)

- B. Reforming the veto-powers of United Nations Security Council (UNSC)
- C. Enhancing multilateralism
- D. Increasing bilateral engagements
- E. Strengthening economic inclusivity
- F. Pursuing friendly cooperations
- G. Widening people to people contacts
- H. Expanding technological outreach

#### V. Challenges in the way of preventing the third world-war:

- A. Neo-imperialist mindset of global leaders
- B. Presence of weapons of mass destruction

#### VI. Global best practices in preventing the third world-war

#### VII. What if third world-war cannot be prevented

#### VIII. Conclusion

Although some people hold the view that due to expansion of non-traditional threats and escalation of geo-strategic collisions, the third world war cannot be prevented, is in fact a wrong notion. The prevailing reality of growing people to people contacts, increasing friendly cooperation and efforts to reform United Nations suggest that the third world-war can be prevented.

## Can the third world-war be prevented?

Woodrow Wilson was an American politician and academic who gave the idea of League of Nations. He carried out several consultation meetings with different leaders of the world and different sections of academia. When he finally got them agreed on the formation of League of Nations (LoN), his own country, United States of America (USA), refused to rectify it. As a result the world has seen the World War Two (WWII). Based on such few examples from history, some shortsighted people believe that similar to the efforts being made to prevent WWII, the efforts being done to prevent the third world-war will also end up in failure and the prevention of the third world-war can not be possible. They strengthen their argument by giving the growing geo-political and geo-economic confrontation, expansion of non-traditional and traditional security challenges as evidence. This notion is in fact flawed. The prevailing reality of an enhancement in multilateralism and bilateralism, increasing efforts to reform and empower United Nations Organization (UNO) and pursuance of friendly cooperation and people engagement to improve economic and technological inclusivity

suggest that the third world-war can be prevented.

The topic has alluded to the ideas summarized above by using the word "World War". World war is one of the type of the wars fought by humans against humans. Historically, humans had fought three world wars: The Peloponnesian war also known as ancient world war, World War I (WWI) and World War Two (WWII). These three wars was fought on an many seasons but among them one reason is common - expansionist idea of global powers. These wars have changed the course of history and in doing so millions of people paid the price. Historians are of the view that had these wars not fought, the human civilization could have progressed to many folds that it is today and the prosperity of humans could have been at the highest point in history. In short, for the prosperity of both humans and human civilization, prevention of world war is a must and the prevailing reality suggest that the third world-war can be prevented.

As pointed out earlier that some people believe that the third world-war cannot be prevented. In the defense of their claim, they argue that the growing geo-political confrontations around the world gives

indicates that the third world-war is in the making. This logic has flaws in itself. During the war time as well as the peace time, geo-political confrontation remained a common phenomenon throughout history. And on such common phenomenon, the assumption that the third world-war can not be prevented is misleading.

In addition to the claim that the third world-war cannot be prevented because of the growing geo-political confrontation, they further argue that the increasing geo-economic clashes around the world provides another sign of the incoming third world-war. This argument is also flawed because of the fact that all of the world-wars were fought as the mainly on the expansionist idea of empires and colonialists. Although the economy was at the helm of their expansionist agendas, it always got second priority over their strategic interests. Based on this notion the assumption that the third world-war cannot be prevented is wrong because of the fact that the reasons behind the prevailing geo-economic clashes are different in nature and intensity. Today, most countries of the world including the global leaders want to avoid such

confrontations and want to promote economic cooperation. Therefore, this argument also has weak standing.

Along with the increasing geo-economic confrontations, the people who believe that third world-war cannot be prevented argue that the expanding phenomenon of non-traditional threats also provides enough signs that the third world-war is approaching. This again is misleading. Non-traditional threats such as social issues, religious intolerance, population explosion and political instability are in existence since the start of human civilization and it will end after the third world-war. Every nation around the world and throughout the history has been making efforts to mitigate these issues, and in doing so they have succeeded in improving social and political system around the world. The prevailing reality suggest that the same trend of improvement will continue in the future as well. As a result, it is expected that the world will drift toward peace not war in the future.

Building further on the notion that the third world-war cannot be prevented, ~~also~~ the believers further argue that the escalating situations of geo-strategic collisions is another indication of the upcoming third world-

war. This stance also has weak standing. Geo-strategic interests of the countries are now solely confined to the security of that particular state or region. This has happened due to the ideology of non-interference and sovereignty of states under International Law. This law along with the presence of an observatory body, UNO, has made difficult for super-powers to pursue unwanted geo-strategic goals on one hand and has reduced the intensity of collisions on the other hand. In short, to assume that third world-war cannot be prevented due to escalating geo-strategic collisions is again misleading and flawed. The above sections has discussed why the notion that the third world-war cannot be prevented is wrong and how the arguments such as growing geo-political, economic and strategic confrontations presented to support the claim is flawed and weak. After proving the above notion as a flawed notion, the following sections will discuss how and why the third-war can be prevented by pursuing multilateralism, bilateralism, economic inclusivity and technological improvement coupled with strengthening and reforming UNO.

In this context, the claim that the third world-war can be prevented holds true due to many reasons. First, since the inception of UNO, confrontations of geo-economic, geo-political and geo-strategic has been reduced to many folds as compare to previous eras. For example, UNO has played key role in decolonization of Africa and Asia. Similarly, UNO also played key role in regulating global economic system and international trading mechanisms. These two examples and other similar examples proves that UNO is playing key role in reducing the above mentioned confrontations. However, by reforming and improving United Nations General Assembly will surely solidify global peace as there are scepticism about the role of UNSC and veto powers. In short, the existing structure of UNO has reduced above mentioned confrontation and by reforming and improving it will surely prevent the threat of the third world-war.

Second, the third world-war can be prevented by reforming UNSC along with UNGA. UNSC is the executive arm of UNO responsible for the maintenance of peace around the world. The world had witnessed on multiple occasions such as the Cold War, Paris Climate Agreement, formation of North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and World Trade Orga-



organization (WTO) that when it comes to the interests of UNSC members, they use veto powers to protect their own interests instead of global peace. This has rise the threat that another world-war could ~~have~~ happened in future. Therefore, in order to avoid such situation reformative measures are needed to reform UNSC. In this regard two most prominent proposals are under discussion at the UNO:

- (i) Addition of 6 more permanent members and 3 non-permanent members without veto powers
- (ii) Addition of 8 non-permanent members for 4 years and 1 for 2 years without veto powers.

These two reforms if implement in letter and spirit especially the later will surely improve and diversify the existing structure of the UNSC and can help in preventing the third world-war.

In addition to reforming UNGA and UNSC, promoting and enhancing multilateralism can also prevent the third world-war. Since the enactment of Bretton Wood System in 1945, the world has witnessed a substantial increase in multilateralism. Formation of European Union (EU), Association of South East Asian Nation (ASEAN) and Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa (BRICS) nations are cases in point. Due to increase in multilateralism

the clashes of geo-political, economic or strategic nature has reduce both in intensity and frequency. And by enhancing multilateralism, the existing engagements of socio-economic, political, strategic, and technological nature will increase and the threat of armed conflict will reduce. Thus, multilateralism has reduced armed conflicts before and it will prevent the third world-war.

Similar to enhancing multilateralism, an increase in bilateral engagement can also <sup>prevent</sup> the third world-war. War cannot be started without the pursuance of national interests. In order to pursue national interests, bilateral engagements play more effective role than multilateral engagements because two countries always have many interests in common than three or more countries. The relationship between India and Russia, and USA and United Kingdom (UK) are case in point. These bilateral engagements have provided necessary stimulus to accelerate multilateralism and global co-operation. Similarly, the relationship between China and Pakistan also provided another stage for multilateralism in the form of China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) in particular and Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) in general. The above mentioned bilateral engagements and similar other engagements proves that by increasing bilateral engagements, the third world-war can be prevented.

Fifth, the third world-war can also be prevented by strengthening economic inclusivity. Historically, world wars had started to pursue and protect economic interests of nations. The Peloponnesian War also known as the ancient world war started because of the economic conflicts between the Spartas and the Greeks. Similarly, the World War I was started because the Germans wanted to dominate the Europe both economically and strategically. Taking these two examples into account, it becomes evident that economical exclusivity results into armed conflicts and wars. Therefore, in order to avoid this, economical inclusivity can reduce arms conflict and wars. It is evident from the ongoing armed conflict between Russia and Ukraine that it still did not convert into world-war because of the economic inclusivity of both nations with other countries. Hence, the third world-war can be prevented by strengthening economic inclusivity.

In addition to strengthening economic inclusivity, pursuance of friendly cooperation can also prevent the third world-war. Friendly cooperation is needed to address bilateral and multilateral issues in a peaceful manner. And when

issues between states start to resolve through peaceful means, it not only provides room for growth to economic activities but also to economic and political inclusivity. Through such measures, when the populace of a country start to prosper then they raise their strong voices against armed conflict. Consequently, states around the world will try their best to avoid armed conflicts and will pursue policies that promote friendly cooperation. For example, Europe have seen two world wars fought on their lands. But when they started to pursue friendly cooperation with each other, they not only have reduced the chances of armed conflict but also ~~got~~ increased the prosperity of their people. Today, this region has been regarded as the most peaceful region. In short, pursuing friendly cooperation can reduce armed conflict and as a result it can prevent the third world-war.

Coupled with friendly cooperation, widening people to people contact between states can also prevent the third world war. As a result of technological innovation such as social media, the academic linkages and cultural interactions around the world have been improved significantly. This resulted in an increasing people to people contact on one hand and online hatred, propaganda and disinformation on the other. For example, despite sharing similar culture

and tradition, Pakistan and India went on the brink of war many times due to the spreading of propaganda and misinformation. Therefore, remedial steps are needed to increase people to people contacts by regulating the channels of modern communication such as social media. When such measures are taken in the spirit, it will ensure people to people contact in a positive way. Consequently, this will promote friendly cooperation, economic inclusivity and bilateral engagement between states. And in doing so, people to people contact can also prevent the third world-war.

Finally, by expanding technological outreach can also prevent the third world-war. According to Ian Bremmer, the new world order will be based on three new orders: military might, technological outreach and multinational cooperation. In his views, the third world-war can be avoided by increasing the above mentioned orders. For this purpose, expanding technological is necessary because it drives the engagements between other two orders. Failure to expanding technological outreach will result into clashes between military order and multinational corporations (MNCs) order which can push the world towards the third world-war. However, by increasing technological outreach by taking various

steps such as promoting economic inclusivity, fighting global threats with dedicated technology and taking steps to equip world countries with modern technology will result into prosperity around the world. And when nations start to prosper, they decide against war and in this way technological expansion can prevent the third world-war.

So far this discourse has established how the claim that the third world-war cannot be prevented is flawed and why the claim that the third world-war can be prevented is a proposition. Building further on this discourse, it is necessary to understand that what are the challenges are there in the way of preventing the third world-war. In this context, the presence of neo-imperialist mindset in world politics and the presence of weapons of mass destruction are the two challenges which needs to be overcome.

For this purpose, it is necessary to understand how the neo-imperialist mindset of global leaders creates challenges in the way of preventing the third world-war. Neo-imperialism is a theory of International Relations which states that the current global leaders are colonizing countries around the world through their financial system. In view of this, it becomes clear that weaker countries around the world are not free to choose their system of governance and financial system. And as a result they are under the influence

d global leaders. Consequently, such countries will gradually develop a sense of repugnance towards them which could force them towards armed conflicts with global powers. In such circumstances, the prevention of world-war three could become impossible. Therefore, global leaders need to review their policies and should pursue remedial steps to address the concerns of weaker nations. And by doing this, the third world-war can be prevented.

Similarly, the presence of Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMDs) pose another major challenge in the way of preventing the third world-war. Currently, USA, UK, France, Russia, China, India and Pakistan have declared nuclear weapons while Israel and North Korea have undeclared nuclear weapons. Furthermore, USA, UK, Russia, France, China and many other countries also possess biological and chemical weapons. Under the strategic doctrines of these countries, they have made it clear that they might use WMDs as the last ~~and~~ arsenal to defend their countries. On the other hand, United Nations (UN) has been trying to control and limit the number of WMDs in the world. However, its efforts are not bearing any fruit due to fact that all members of UNSC have WMDs. In this context, any serious armed conflict between WMDs countries or their allies can

push the world toward the third world-war. Therefore, reforming UNSC, empowering UNCTA and Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and similar other treaties such as Biological Weapons Convention (BWC). And by doing so, the third world-war can be prevented.

After proving that the third world-war can be prevented by overcoming the challenges in its way, it is necessary to recognize the global best practices that are beneficial in preventing the third world-war. In this regard, the first practice is of African and South American countries. Both these regions have kept themselves free from WWIDs. Second, the practice of Japan and modern Germany are also beneficial in preventing the third world-war. Both these countries have the capability to coerce and influence other countries yet they prefer to engage in trade and economic development. Finally, the practice of Japan, China and Scandinavian countries should also be followed to avoid the third world-war. Both China and Scandinavian countries emphasize on human development and mutual cooperation. These global practices yet again prove the fact that the third world-war can be prevented.

Up to this point, this discourse have proved that the third world-war can be prevented and the challenges in



its way can be addressed. Now, it becomes imperative to figure out what will happen if the world fails to prevent the third world-war. Based on the historical evidences, it can be safely say that the world will plunge into socio-economic and political crisis. However, by analyzing the prevailing reality of the world, the world will suffer in three ways. First, the presence of WMDs suggest that the third world war will be fought between WMDs countries and as a result the world will be fell into darkness and diseases. Second, all of the technological advancement will become useless as there will be no energy source to power them. Finally, the world will become uninhabitable to all living organism and the age of stone and woods will return. Due to this catastrophic scenario, it is necessary to accelerate efforts to prevent the third world-war.

Having discussed the contrasting views on the possibility of third world-war, it can be concluded that the third world-war can be prevented. For this purpose, pursuance of policies to empower UNGA, reform UNSC and strengthening of economic inclusivity and expansion of technological advancement are needed by promoting friendly cooperations, multilateralism and

bilateralism. Although the existing neo-imperialist mindset of global leaders and the presence of UNMOs pose challenges in the way of preventing the third world-war but by promoting the global best practices such as that of nuclear free regions of the world, China, Germany, Japan and Scandinavian countries and by pursuing above mentioned policies can overcome these challenges. Therefore the claim of some short sighted people that the third world-war cannot be prevented because of the presence of non-traditional and traditional threats in the world is not only misleading but also glaringly flawed.