

Is Middle East the battlefield for the third world war?

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The Middle East, a region having a history of conflicts, has now become a bone of contention for global powers. Its strategic location and oil reserves has made this region a focal point of a potential world war. In recent few years, the world has witnessed drastic events in the Middle Eastern region and devastating consequences as a result. This region with the history of numerous conflicts, involvement of global powers, escalation of sectarian tensions, growing arm race for domination has the potential to initiate a world war. However, some people may argue ^{it is arguable that} that the tensions in Middle East can not ignite a world war. Facts, on the other hand signal to a potential magnification of the existing conflict. Adequate mitigation measures should be taken to prevent a global conflict.

Middle East has a long history of conflict. Immediately after the collapse of Ottoman Empire, Jews from all over the

world started to pour into the region. As a result, tensions began to rise between Arabs and the settlers. When the state of Israel was declared in 1948, the intensity of the conflicts ~~increased~~ ^{has intensified} and ~~lead to Arab-Israel~~ wars. From 5th June 1967 to 10 June 1967, Arab countries fought "six day war" against Israel and as a result Arabs lost. Israel took control of West Bank, Gaza, Sinai Peninsula, Golan Heights and Jerusalem. The tensions in the region further escalated. Presently, the Israel-Palestine conflict has become the centre of attention for whole world, inviting interests of the global powers.

Besides, Arab-Israel conflict, Iraq-Iran strained relations further complicate the situation. Iraq-Iran was invited the involvement of external powers in the region. US attacked Iraq and the region faced devastating outcomes. Gulf-wars further destabilized the region in the past but still there was no possible ignition of global conflict.

The history of internal conflicts and external involvements make middle-east a potential battlefield for world war 3. As we have seen the strategic location of this region and its oil reserves intrigue the world powers. Most of the world trade passes through Red sea and Suez canal. The oil rich gulf and Bab al mandeb are also significant choke points for world's sea trade. All the powers have their strategic interests in the region. United States ~~have always played a notable role in Middle East.~~ The ongoing Israel - Palestine conflict is backed by US. US has been supplying arms and providing all kind of support to Israel. Israel is slowly expanding the radius of its atrocities, under US influence.

With the direct involvement of US in the region, has sparked the need of intervention in the opposite power block. After the dismantling of Soviet Union Russia has been trying to regain its power. Russia had

a major foothold in Syria in the form of Bashar al Assad regime, that collapsed recently. The event is significant for geopolitics as it is going to reshape the politics of whole region. The position of Iran and Russia has changed or rather weakened by the fall of Assad's regime. Israel can potentially take this as an opportunity and make any advancement in the region, which consequently will escalate tensions and global power. China has also been making significant developments regarding Middle-East issue. From Saudi-Iran deal to Hamas-Fatah agreement, China has increased influenced in the region. This has made Middle East a battlefield where China, Russia and US are fighting to gain power and dominate other.

Geopolitical Interests and the involvement of major global powers is facilitated by the Internal Sectarian conflicts. Middle East is a diverse region. People from different religions, sects, ethnicities and cultures

live here. The major actors in the region are Iran and Saudi Arabia. Both have strained relations due to sectarian differences. The traditional Sunni-Shia rivalry has waged the region into war. Both Iran and Saudi Arabia has been supporting proxies to pursue their motives of sectarian dominance.

This has lead to the rise of extremist groups in the region. Militant groups like ISIS, Al-Qaeda, Hamas, HTS, and Houthis have organised over time. The terrorist activities of these extremist groups further destabilizes the region. Israel has been striking Hezbollah on accuse of terrorism. There has been tensions between Saudi Arabia and Yemen due to these proxies. All this increases the magnitude of destruction going on in the region.

In the same manner, the race for arms and dominance in the region has pushed the region on the brink of destruction. Israel has been building Nuclear weapons

for a long time now. Iran on the other has been sanctioned by US for building Nuclear weapons. The increasing race for arms between Iran and Israel has further escalated the situation. Russia and China has been allegedly supporting Iran in developing Nuclear Weapons, although none of the countries have openly accepted the claim. Neither Iran, nor Israel is going to stop in building arms. This heightens the intensity of a serious threat of a third world war.

In addition to that, the world witnessed Iran's 200 ballistic missile fired toward Israel on Oct 1, 2024. Prime Minister Netanyahu threatened Iran to destroy their nuclear facilities. However, Israel retaliated in response to Iran's attack. In these attacks ballistic missiles were not used in their full capacity, neither do they carry nuclear warheads. But the future can be different. The region can get

pushed into a war, and use of weapons of mass destruction.

Moreover, the ongoing conflicts can magnify to a full-fledge global war with active involvement of Global powers. Recent developments in Syria, Lebanon, Iran and Palestine indicate the upcoming repercussions. The fall of Assad's regime has complicated the position of whole region. Hayat Tahrir al Ahsam has ousted Bashar al Assad. Once claimed as terrorist organisation by the western world, HTS has appointed their interim PM in Syria.

There is a probability of escalation of war from region to a world war. Turkiye is playing its role in Syria, meanwhile the position of Iran is weakened in the region. The influence of Russia is also shattered. The probable steps that Russia could take to regain its position in middle east, reaction of Israel and counter strategy of US against Russia will shape

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the future of this region. The situation is getting worse so far with every passing day.

~~It is inevitable for the existence and sustainability of world to mitigate the ongoing middle east crisis. There is no other solution but a peaceful resolution of the conflicts. United Nations and other international stakeholders need to intervene immediately and proliferation of weapons of mass destruction should be halted. Saudi Arabia and Iran should come to a peace agreement and should play role in deescalating the situation. Furthermore, an effective and permanent solution should be devised for Palestine issue. If not mitigated in time, the conflicts will lead to a bigger war, eventually turning into a world war.~~

Middle East, with its history of conflicts and strategic value, remains a region of instability. Involvement of global powers, sectarian conflicts, increasing proxy

wars, growing race for arm and dominance has the potential to initiate a world war. To prevent a wider war, it is inevitable to address the issue of peaceful resolution for sustainable future. The international community must recognize the graveness of disputes and play a constructive role in resolving these conflicts peacefully. The Middle East stands at a crossroads, the role of international community and conflict actors will shape the future of not only this region but whole world.

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