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## Is World Peace a Utopic Dream?

### Outline

#### 1. Introduction:

Thesis statement: Ongoing armed conflicts around the world have made world peace a utopic ideal. It is succumbed to structural violences and competing interests of the states having nuclear power. Thus, wars and conflicts are inevitable, whereas peace looks like a distant dream.

#### 2. Understanding the notion of peace and <sup>the</sup> situation of restlessness in the world

#### 3. World Peace is an unattainable idea (thesis)

a. Humanity's long history of wars and conflicts

b. Peace is not possible in a world developing nuclear stockpiles

c. World peace will continue to be succumbed to structural violences

and economic inequalities

- d. States' power show and competing interests at the expense of peace
- e. Clash between civilizations does not allow peacekeeping
- f. Fundamental rights e.g., right to vote and equality are achieved through bloodiest wars

4. A peaceful world is not a dream but a reality (anti-thesis)

- a. The core of <sup>social</sup> political contract theory is to maintain peace and security
- b. International law and regional legal frameworks are designed to achieve world peace
- c. Democracies are the saviours of the world from conflicts
- d. War is a conscious choice of world leaders which can be avoided.
- e. Religions like Islam are the promoters of peace and order

5. World peace is not achievable due to human nature, history and political choices (Synthesis)

- a. World peace is just the hope of humanity not a reality
- b. International platforms are induced by nuclear and economic powers
- c. Democracies provide weaponry support on the pretext of maintaining peace
- d. Political "will" takes over the religious teachings and prefers conflict
- e. Psychological inclinations of leaders that fuel wars and conflicts

## 6. Conclusion

The great Greek philosopher Aristotle once said "It is not enough to win a war. In fact, the important thing is to maintain peace." Winning the war is one side of the coin, and maintaining peace is an Herculean task. Ongoing armed conflicts around the world have made <sup>the</sup> world a utopic ideal. It is quite visible from the track record of human beings that its progress perpetuated on the shoulders of conflicts and

constant wars. It has been chasing after the nuclear stockpiles right after the World War II (WWII). Meanwhile it is negligent of structural violences and economic inequalities that multiplied the occurrence of global conflicts. Civilizations are at the edge of fighting with each other as projected by political philosophers. On the other hand, the proponents of a peaceful future argue that a man longed of his security since the <sup>inn.</sup>beginning and developed a social contract theory, along with International law and peacemaking bodies. Moreover, democratic setups protect the world from wars by keeping a check on political leaders to make a conscious choice between peace and chaos. Religion also plays a similar role <sup>to</sup> ~~by~~ protect the world peace and order. However, it just look like a hope of the humanity to maintain peace. In reality international platforms are hijacked by <sup>the</sup> nuclear and economic powers. Democracies, themselves, provide weaponry

support to antagonists of any armed conflict. Political "will" has also taken over the religious teachings, and its <sup>the</sup> psychological inclinations of a leader that instigate him to prefer unrestlessness, conflicts and tensions over peace.

Word "peace" is derived from a Latin term 'Pax' which means to control or to make an agreement between two individuals or nations. On the face of it, meaning of peace reflects the absence of conflict or any tension between two parties. However, modern day scholars and activists have assigned it a broader meaning. According to Martin Luther King, word peace is not just the absence of conflict, but the presence of justice. Justice in terms of having equal access to economic resources and opportunities, absence of inequality on the basis of sect, religion, gender, <sup>and</sup> breed. These inequalities fuel the pre-existing conflicts between groups and hinders the prevalence of peace. A "Conflict Data Center" at

Uppsala University in Sweden, reported that there are 189 armed conflicts occurring across the world, which are categorized as non-international armed conflicts. It has doubled the human death toll, from 1,22,000 to 2,38,000 by 2023. These figures and on-going armed conflicts have made "peaceful world" mere an idea and not a reality.

Human beings have a long history of wars and conflicts. From classical age, ~~to~~ dark ages, middle ages, to modern ages - there have been number of conflicts pertaining to territories, religious disputes and clash of cultural values. History has recorded hundred years of war between Kingdom of England and France - from 1337 to 1453. It was a dispute over French throne and England's land holding in France. In 20<sup>th</sup> century, the world again witnessed World War I, and II (WWI, WWII), in which, first time nuclear weapons were used against the adversaries. Even today, there are two internationally recognized armed

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conflicts, killing hundreds of people every day. Though, the wars are happening in Middle East "Israel vs. Palestine" and in Eastern Europe "Russia vs. Ukraine" the whole world peace is at stake.

To simply put, past history does not have any record of peaceful days, so it does not have today and peace continues to be a dream.

It is also not possible in a world, which is chasing nuclear power and continuously accumulating the nuclear stockpiles. Post WWII, the race of nuclear weapons manufacturing and possession started. It lasts till date with nine countries having nuclear weapons on the pretext of their safety and defence. There were some international efforts to curb the development of nuclear weapons in the form of Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, 1968. It is astonishing to know that the treaty itself exempts five major nuclear power states from its provisions to not develop nuclear weapons e.g., US, UK, Russia, China. Both US and

Russia, have 5428 and 5977 nuclear weapons respectively. ~~It~~ Such exemptions do not make sense to allow states to develop more nuclear weapons when the essence of this treaty is to procure world peace and order. Hence, peace is not possible in a world with nuclear stockpiles.

Similarly, world peace will continue to be succumbed to structural violences and economic inequalities. Structural violence is an indirect form of violence that exists in the form of poverty, religious and ethnic discriminations. In 2023, United Nations released<sup>2</sup> New Peace Agenda, in which Secretary General Antonio Guterres highlighted the impact of poverty on peacekeeping. He remarked that income inequalities have exacerbated to the (2/3rd) two-third of the population of the world since 1990. Amid the ongoing income inequalities, peacekeeping is not possible. It is, a looming threat that fuels the pre-existing clashes between communities. Thus,



peace is a distant dream in a world with structural violences and economic inequalities.

Along with economic inequalities states' power show and competing interests have pushed the world away from maintaining peace. States' power show was visible through proxy wars happening in Middle East and Asia. In 19th and 20th century,

Afghanistan became a hub of proxy war. a type of war in which two states fight through their allies and do not directly confront. It lasted from 1979 - 1989, however it gave a gift of war on Terror to the world that lasted for twenty years. Pakistan, alone, had to face a human life loss of 75000 people with a gift of terrorism within its territories.

It implies that power show of the states and their competing interests are detrimental to overall peace and prosperity of the world. Russia

vs. Ukraine war and continuous tensions in Vietnam are a perfect example of power show and competing interests of the states at the expense of world peace.

Not only competing interests but also the clash between civilizations does not allow peace keeping. It is a fact that a civilization is built on harmony, acceptance and mutual respect. It is also necessary for two different civilizations to survive at one point. An American political scientist Samuel P. Huntington wrote in his book *Clash of Civilizations* 1996 that in a post cold-war era major wars and conflicts will occur due to the difference of culture and religion. This claim stands to be true as in war on terror started with 9/11 attack, however it was a war between two different religions and cultures. Similarly, Yemen civil war is

an Iran-Saudi proxy conflict due to Shia-Sunni sects difference. To conclude, peace does not reflect in the bigger picture of clash of civilizations.

Furthermore, every true advancement for the betterment of society comes with bloodiest wars like the access to fundamental rights. Today the world talks about/chant for the accessibility of fundamental rights during wars and conflicts. However, during peace times such rights were not granted to certain people of colour, and religion. United States of America has world's oldest constitution and it is world's oldest democracy. Still, the black Americans had to face discrimination in education sector, health sector and job markets. They were not allowed to cast votes during peace times. Thereafter, black Americans opted for protests and bloodiest civil rights movement under the guidance

of Martin Luther King. Even in Pakistan person with disabilities and transgender persons have to opt for violent protests to get fundamental rights e.g., Right to vote and right to contest elections. To simply put, basic rights come at the cost of peace - on unfavourable track record of maintaining peace.

On the other side, proponent of achieving peace in near future argue that the core of social contract is to maintain peace and security. Ancient communities longed for their social security including the security of life and property which could be envisaged through maintaining peace. Political scientists like Thomas Hobbes, and John Locke presented social contract theory that people <sup>from</sup> of the past willingly signed social contract theory to maintain peace and order. It implies that peacemaking has always been the priority of human

beings and they strived for it which makes it a possible dream to acquire.

Starting from a social contract theory, the world has designed international law and regional legal frameworks to achieve peace. Unquestionably, the history is full of wars and tensions. Similarly, it is full of peace making efforts like formation of International Human Rights Law, Humanitarian Law, Prevention of Genocide, torture, and war crimes to mitigate the brutal implications of wars. It is a biggest step ~~too~~ towards peacemaking. With reference to peace-keeping, the role of European Union<sup>(EU)</sup> and United Nations (UN) cannot be undermined. EU have successfully ended conflicts within European countries, which are secure and collectively progressing in terms of ~~its~~ economy and human development. To conclude, international legal frameworks are continuously thriving for peace-making and peace-keeping.

Just like international frameworks, at domestic level the democracies are saviour of the world from conflicts.

A democracy is a system of empathy, mutual harmony and checks and balances. It prefers negotiations and conciliations over armed conflicts.

There are roughly 100+ full democracies, flawed democracies, and hybrid democracies in the world - according to the Economist Democracy Index.

These democratic states have certain type of checks on its military and peacekeeping policies. For instance, Pakistan which is a democracy according to 1973 Constitution, have recently launched another military operation called Azm-e-Istehkam against terrorists. This operation was launched after consultation with government members. It admires the idea of consensus based operations which seek peace in the long run on the basis of short time military expeditions of a democratic country.

In democracies, war is a conscious choice of <sup>the</sup> its leaders.

They can choose between peace and war. Interestingly, most of the conflicts are ceased through peace talks just like 'war on Terror' was ended with signing Doha Agreement.

Ultimately, peace is the end product of any tension or conflict. In 1969, billboards in Times Square said that 'war is over, if you want it.' It is a conscious choice of a person at an individual level, and of a state representative at national and global level. It limits the overall possibility of conflicts either of armed and un-armed nature. Thus, war is not something which is imposed, it is a choice between peace and conflict that lit the ray of hope to achieve long-lasting peace.

This choice is also guided through religious teachings. Religion has a strong value in personal

and collective practices in general. Different states have/follow different religions and honor religious teachings in policymaking. Despite the fact that it's the religion of the state or only of its citizens. In Islam, Transgression is prohibited under Surah Baqarah. Likewise, in Surah Anfal, a human being is directed to "enter in peace." Other religions, like Judaism, Hinduism, and Buddhism, also guide towards peacemaking. In Judaism, killing of non-combatants is prohibited. In fact, it asks for resolving conflict through peaceful means before initiating military expeditions. Which means all the religions of the world teach peace to their 85% followers. It shrinks the way of brutal killings of humans and mass displacements. Therefore, peace is not a utopic dream, it is a reality that can be achieved through collective efforts.



Unfortunately world peace is not possible due to human nature, history and political choices, which are counted as means to achieve it. <sup>Firstly,</sup> It has become an elusive idea and history itself is a witness of it. Israel vs. Palestine war is a result of 75-years of failed peaceful talks. Russia vs. Ukraine war was brewing since 2012 and finally erupted in February 2022. Syrian civil war is a product of 12-years of unresolved matters that created a room for proxies. Kashmir is another unresolved territorial dispute that led to two wars in Asia region with frequent quarrels between Pakistan and India. It is quite evident that peace stands as a hope of humanity and not a reality.

Secondly, international platforms which are established to maintain peace are induced by world economic and nuclear powers speaking of UN,

it has miserably failed in resolving two on-going wars in Middle East and East Europe. It makes sense that such platforms receive funds from world's biggest economies to run its day-to-day functions. That also influence its decisionmaking and peacemaking operations. Since 1947, no significant reforms have been made in the structure of UN and for the enforceability of its resolutions. According to the UN Peace and Security Data hub, major powers<sup>like US</sup> have vetoed 89 Security Council resolutions since 1945. It was to serve the interests of Israel at the expense of poor palestinians. It is, therefore, transparent that international platforms are used to serve the interests of nuclear and economic powers and not to maintain peace.

Thirdly, democracies provide weaponary support with an excuse to maintain order. The idea that democracies promote peaceful negotiations

sound absurd in the realm of continuous or U.S. military and weaponry support to Israel. The world peace promoter US<sup>has</sup> approved sale of \$20 billion weapons to Israel to fight and commit genocide of armless Palestinians. Democracies prefer their economic interests over the value of human life and highlight the importance of peace through official statements to condemn the conflicts. To simply define, hidden interests are fed on the name of peace making and democracies are working as a backbone of a world full of wars.

Fourthly, role of religion is undermined by political will of warlords, and war leaders. Religion is there to guide at limited level. In case of Israel, religion is the prime reason of the conflict over Jerusalem - a sacred religious place for both Muslims and Jews. Standing

in 2024, the war began ~~with~~ <sup>due</sup> to religious reasons, now it is used as a tool to protect the political career of Benjamin Netanyahu. A perfect example of political "will" taking over the religious teachings.

Ex-Defence Secretary of U.S, Mr. Leon Pettea said that "the failure is not to recognize that Netanyahu is fighting for his political life." Hence, the sole of a religious is undermined with the help of political will and to serve political interests that do not guarantee world peace.

Fifthly, it is also the psychological inclinations of leaders that fuel wars and conflicts. Conflicts are actually the product of psychological inclinations of the leaders.

In Columbia University, a neuro-psychological study was conducted by professors in 2023, that reflected "the need for power" in war lords and war leaders. George W. Bush is

a perfect example of such character, who chased power and did not care for peace and collective prosperity. Hence, world peace does not seem like an idea which can be achieved given the current state of affairs.

To close the discussion, peace is an ideal many strive for, but it remains difficult to achieve. A long-standing history of wars, development of nuclear stockpiles, structural violences, competing interests of the states, and clash of civilizations have made it an illusive dream.

Though, human beings established international peace-making organizations and legal frameworks, however all of this is being manipulated by the nuclear and economic powers. Democracies despite protecting and instigating peace deals are providing military and weaponry support. Conscious choices are made in favour of

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restlessness, serving the political interests of few individuals. Peace is not about having a world with no conflicts and wars, in fact, it is a world that does not have economic inequalities. It is a world, in which peace is maintained for a long run and not wars are won just to top the power show - as clearly defined by Aristotle.

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