

Historians & analysts seem to be reluctant in reusing the term 'WORLD WAR'. However, it is very much in vogue. Comment in comparative settings.

1) INTRODUCTION:

'RELUCTANCE IN REUSING THE TERM 'WORLD WAR''

The term World War carries significant historical, political and psychological weight.

Its reuse in contemporary discourse, while often fashionable in popular narratives, is met with caution by historians and analysts.

The two World Wars of the 20th Century - unprecedented in their global scope and devastation - established a sui generis historical framework. In modern times, the term World War has resurged in discussions about global conflicts, particularly amidst rising tensions in multipolar world. However this reluctance stems from historical precedent, definitional complexities and evolving geopolitical realities.

2) UNDERSTANDING THE TERM 'WORLD WAR'

As the term indicate World war requires direct involvement of multiple nations across continents, with high level of military and civilian casualties and its systemic impact would be significant reordering of global political, economical and social systems.

A world war is characterized by
 Global Participation,
 Recurring World Wars,
 Intense Conflict.

3) COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS:

1) Historical Context vs. Modern Conflicts:

(i) World War I & II:

World War I (1914-1918) & II (1939-1945), both wars involved extensive mobilization of nations, economies and ideologies, fundamentally reshaping global power structures that is emergence of the U.S and USSR as super power post World War II.

(ii) Modern Conflicts:

Current conflicts, such as the Russia-Ukraine War, Palestine-Israel war, while significant, are largely regionalized, but they involve the global powers indirectly as military assistance is provided to Ukraine and Israel by U.S.A and China is supporting Russia despite of the sanctions. Russia is facing by the global powers like US and European states.

2) Nature of Warfare: Traditional vs. Hybrid and proxy wars:

Traditional Warfare:

The World Wars were dominated by large scale battles and clear alliances.

Hybrid & Proxy Warfare:

Modern conflicts involve cyber warfare, economic sanctions, trade wars and proxy wars such as trade war between U.S.A and China where USA bans China's electronic devices and China is trying to make alternate routes for economical domination through BRI to access global market, saving time and expanding its trade.

3. Multipolarity v.s Bipolarity: World Order

Multipolarity lead towards Bipolarity:

During World War I, there were multiple super powers and they had their alliances. After World War I, still multiple powers existed and that too was a factor leading towards World War II. During Cold War, however, there were only two super power remained i.e. U.S.A and USSR.

Unipolarity leading towards multipolarity:

After the end of cold war in 1991, USA emerged as the victorious super power and the world's order reemerged as unipolar. But today this unipolarity is challenged by China, Russia and these countries are striving towards a multipolar system in which every one should have a say and opinion.

4) Geopolitics:

(i) Realism in World Wars:

Realism theory, emphasizes the anarchic nature of the international system, where states act as rational, unitary actors pursuing their national interest primarily through power and security. In Realism, war is often seen as an inevitable outcome of power struggles. The two world wars exemplify these power dynamics, where systemic shifts and hegemonic ambitions led to widespread conflict.

(ii) Cold War:

In cold war era, they never escalated into confrontations between super powers, despite being proxy wars in Vietnam and Korea, due to the deterrence provided by nuclear weapons, a key concept in Realist deterrence theory.

(iii) Realism in Modern Conflicts:

The balance of power is ~~existing~~ destabilizing hegemony in modern times has prevented conflicts from escalating to 'World War' levels. The United States, despite its dominance, face checks from China and Russia, maintaining a precarious balance. The Nuclear weapons and economic interdependence act as deterrents to full scale wars, a phenomenon consistent

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with the realist argument of power dynamics shaping state behavior. Unlike the bipolarity of the cold war, today's multipolar world complicates alliances and reduces the likelihood of a global conflagration. This explains why even intense regional conflicts fail to achieve the scale of world wars.

5) Nationalism and Ethnic cleansing:

(i) World Wars:

World wars were due to rise of nationalism and secret alliances. The major events of WWII is the holocaust by Hitler, where he killed millions of Jews with some other ethnic people and claimed it to be an ethnic cleansing in Germany.

(ii) Modern Conflicts:

Today, the Israel is also carrying out a massive elimination of Palestinian Muslims and claiming the "Jewishness" of the land. The rise of different nationalist groups are also an example of the nationalism in the modern day conflicts. For example; the Russian nationalist group in Ukraine wants to remerge with the Russian states.

6) Ideological Perspectives:

(i) World War - I & II:

The rising militarism and the imperialism ideology triggered the world war. Nationalism rise and the system of secret alliances were also main reason the wars happened. Political and economic instability in Germany due to harsh conditions and fine imposed on Germany triggered the second world war.

(ii) Cold War:

Cold war was basically the war of ideologies and dominating the international political economy. Like USA was in favour of capitalism while the second super power Russia was in favour of communism so it was a capitalists vs. communist war. USA also formed NATO (North-Atlantic Treaty Organisation) and as a counter reaction Russia formed Warsaw pact.

(iii) Modern Conflicts:

The expansionism of NATO and the Trade war between US and China also the rise of ethnicity and nationalism in Middle East, while the expansionist Israelism doctrine can be the same reason as before the dynamics are changing but the story is the same. The formation of blocs like AUKUS, QUAD and SAARC, SCO, BRICS+, also the military expansion of US as well as China and Russian

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Parameters	WW-I	WW-II	Cold War	Modern Conflicts
Ideological Perspective	Militarism Nationalism Fascism Ex: Germany, Britain France expansion of military and navy. fleets	Nationalism. Expansionism. Ex: Political & economic instability of Germany. German nationalism.	Capitalist vs Communists. Ex USA; Truman doctrine of spreading capitalism.	Expansionism, Nationalism Ethnicism. Trade war. Ex: Russia-Ukraine war, NATO expansion Russian nationalism. US-China Trade war.
Mode of war.	Traditional: Military conflicts btw states.	Traditional + biological warfare. Military conflicts.	Proxy War. Wars of ideology	Hybrid warfare Proxy war, Trade war
Regions involved	Europe, America Asia, Africa.	Europe, America Asia, Africa.	America, Europe Asia	Regional Conflicts Ex: Russia-Ukraine
World order	Multipolar	Multipolar	Bipolar	Multipolar.
Alliances	Alliances Axis powers vs Allied Powers	Alliances. Axis vs. Allied.	NATO, Warsaw Pact.	AUKUS, QUAD BRICS+, SCO, SAARC.
Security Dilemma	Secret alliances. Rise of Nationalism Expansionist approach	German nationalism Political and economic instability.	Expansion of either of the ideology Capitalist or commun-ist.	Russia fear of NATO expansion, Hamas fear of Israel expansion and ethnic cleansing of Muslim. US fear of rise of China and Russia.

4) Conclusion:

The term world war remains a powerful but historically contingent concept. Through the lens of realism, the reluctance to reuse this term is rooted in the differing scales, systemic impacts and geopolitical realities of contemporary conflicts compared to their historical counterparts. While popular discourse may revive the term for rhetorical purposes, the theoretical and empirical distinctions underscore its limited applicability in modern conflicts. The caution for using this term is therefore, not an evasion but a nuanced recognition of evolved global dynamics.