

THE LOOMING LABYRINTH OF CROSS-COUNTRY CONFLICTS AND WORLD POWER ILLUSION

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ABSTRACT

The unending series of ongoing cross-country confrontations and boastful battles i.e. Russia and Ukraine, Israel and Hamas, India and Pakistan, and so on has sparked a dreadful question about secured cum shared future of the world. Subsequently, it has further fueled an augmented discourse on role of pronouncedly power-nations in exacerbating the situation than extenuating it. Many scholars and researchers are illusively misreading or wrongly adjudicating the horrendous and horrible massacre of humans, within ambit of such war series, as the situation of conflict. Simultaneously, they lambast or object world-power nations like USA and Russia being indirectly engaging on it as form of a proxy war. Despite overtly romanticized perception and understanding by most of the scholars, this paper bluntly opposes that faulty supposition then assertively claims that the ongoing mass murder and massacre can neither be conflict in ambit of any principle nor are the countries supposedly espousing this heinous offense world-power at all. Conclusively, this write-up draws an inference that the act of brawl and blatant garrison between countries is an offence and grossly a gory crime. Furtherance, the purported big power-nations like USA and Russia are no longer world power in recent equation and in emerging power-mapping matrix as they have been diligently defenestrated and far dispelled by many other nations, off-late.

KEY WORDS: Conflict, World Power, World-Power Mapping Matrix, Crime, World Order

INTRODUCTION

Currently, cross country confrontations between different nations of the world are becoming much media-heating, attention-rigging and headlines-hogging debates. The Israel-Palestine war, the Russia-Ukraine skirmish, and countless other such brute battles are haunting the entire human communities in both the warring and non-warring nations as well. But in the course of understanding and analyzing such regular series of unending confrontations, the galaxy of academicians and relevant fraternities are getting lost and grown up in mess at least in two misleading labyrinths and fallacious narratives both in terms of meaning and the lexicography. Unlike their inferences, it is now high time to critically examine: are these hostile contests really conflict and are the espousing/sponsoring nations indeed the world power?

Since World War II, a total of 56 series of various bilateral and trilateral fights have been reportedly fought however McDonald & Galambos (2024) consider it a 'dependent variable' (page: 181) given that such a military confrontation depends on decision or influence of other authoritative agencies or power-bolt of the nation instead of being an automated phenomenon. They further stress that "mostly greater ideological variance also drives down conflict rates" (page: 201). Should the arrogance and mutual fighting of

some European countries be called the World War or not? This is a matter for another debate, in row. Is it customary to call the football tournament played by most European countries the World Cup? Perhaps these are also examples of linguistic empire or hegemony. In the similar lane, the supposed and seen involvement of some nations as key players in recent events, which we have been calling cross-country conflicts or global conflicts, are also glaring examples of this kind of linguistic hegemony. Rightly assessing the perceived flaws, Van Tongeren (2023) calls it 'prejudices and false beliefs of prevailing opinion' (18). Unfairly accepting such a wrong adjudication 'of nations and to the situation' is responsible in eventually constructing mere a dominating deliberation forcing a large section of matured scholarship remain sorely silent or a mute bystander.

Ergo, this paper is apparently determined with objective of assessing utter and indisputable truth is that neither the recent cases of inter-state clashes are 'conflicts' nor are those sponsoring countries 'world power', in deed. Chowdhury (2018) strongly mentions that such stratification of world power is mere a myth as they have lost the gravity and been deposited into footnotes of the history book since long past. Both of these understandings are the faulty feeling of linguistic empire or hegemony that has been forcibly imposed. Such a flawed perception and reparably fractured propositions are the result of

the violence of knowledge done to us and the colonization over our minds, especially upon critical and independent scholars not favoring any biases. This work, unfazed of not embodying any empirical and experiential approach, is knowingly limited only on inputs and ideas based on secondary data generated from duly cited references. Recent most sources taken to cite are usually outsourced from key gateways and digital depositories i.e. Research Gate, Academia, Google Scholars, Science Direct and so on.

Unlike overtly romanticized aestheticization in form of conflict by few scholars, a good number of literatures infallibly unfold such confrontation-induced sordid and heart-rending crude atrocities and objectionable offence over civilians.

LITERATURE REVIEW

As found archived, 92 countries have been actively involved in 56 of these sorts of cross-country confrontations aftermath the World War II. Various researches and study institutions have made public some extensive and heartbreaking facts about the consequences and destruction of such violent so-called conflicts. Among many such confrontations, Russia-Ukraine, which is supposed to have been triggered because of provoking the first by the latter with NATO enlargement scheme (Haslam, 2025; Horton, 2024; Roberts, 2022), comes on the top of the list for recent discussions globally. In the year 2023 alone, 162,000 people are reported to have cost on lives unnecessarily due to the war. Devastating impact on the mental health and rapid rise to collective intergenerational trauma as Junior et al. (2022) confirm is alarmingly rising at the level of genocide scale. The projection of economic losses read approximate 193 trillion dollars painting a bleak picture and disgusting disarray ahead. Approximately, 110 million people have become refugees or displaced. Sajadi (2024, page: 40) states that about one-fourth to one-third of Ukraine populace fled to the other countries and have vulnerably trapped into objectionably meagre living. The United Nation was established in 1945 with the interest of permanent and unshakable peace worldwide. Kopytko et al. (2022) note severe economic loss and humongous humanitarian crisis thus urge in requiring utmost deeper scrutiny and robust policy responses on note of expecting a proactive intervention of UN. But, unfortunately, since its commencement, 108 countries have increased their military power and are still robustly intensifying it. About 40 countries have even used drones as well in various recent battles or confrontations ensuring additional advancement on super-sonic ammunitions. In the last 40 years, the rate of ending such cross-country confrontations by any of the countries winning a war has dropped from 49 to 9 percent, and the rate of ending battles through mutual agreement and dialogue has dropped from 23 to 4 percent. Such a sordid data unpacks an

unpleasant and a bleak finding that fights are becoming endless and eternal. Tanjim (2023) regards it as geopolitical traction whereas Pietrzak (2024) thus unfolds the changing landscape and unmasks otherwise nature or disguised reality of the confrontations. Even children are mercilessly victimized and molested in such brute events. In 2023 alone, 450 million children were reportedly at risk of killing, abducting, mutilating, conscripting into military forces, and sexually assaulting others as Mattern & Zarakol (2016) had made a rigorous study about it.

The entire world community has been suffering from such confrontations on a large scale whereas some are hit hardest as well. To encapsulate the pathetic and poignant reality, Zasiakin et al. (2025) write “wartime corpus conveyed emotional states: e.g., anxiety, fear, scary, horror, stress, hard, and panic” (page: 9). Poverty, energy crises, and the rising rate of inflation are getting almost out of control and enlarging the anxiety into new height. Chakraborty & Chakraborty (2022) highlight that the oil supply has been severely shunned resulting the cumulating restriction on concurrent requirements. Disruption in the supply of goods and services, and the breakdown of mutual trust and goodwill are its new dimensions. Tian (2024) presents a new fact that more than 10 thousand companies have voluntarily ceased or limited the regular manufacturing. He terms the reality ‘corporate exodus’ (page: 95) given the tension of confrontation which bluntly sabotages the corporate or professional career graphs and growths of thousands of people.

Mental anguish, a network of rumors, hate speech, fear, and trafficking are destabilizing the compass of quality life among visibly huge section of societies. Gawecka et al. (2022) note habitat and domicile destruction propelling a heart-rending nerve to the mass populace in respective zones. The world is being pushed from 'soft power' to 'hard power' again. In contrast to the wars in Vietnam and Angola, which was assumed as proxy war (Moghadam et al., 2024), a 'real war' nature of battle is manifested alike distanced past. But a large pool of the analysts is sowing a misleading maze by calling it 'conflict' or 'war'. Even the damage on environment is multifold and much pronounced. Kotsis (2024) has assessed it and writes, “historically inflicted profound and often long-lasting environmental damage, affecting ecosystems and communities in many ways. Throughout the 20th century and extending into the 21st century, wars have led to widespread deforestation, soil degradation, and extensive air and water pollution, all of which directly affect human health and agricultural productivity in the short and long term” (page: 91). Owing to the same ground, Certini & Scalenghe (2024) have found the ‘reducing soil availability for productive use and exacerbating the environmental crisis’ (page: 93). Drachuk et al. (2023) mark it

as an irreparable loss on sustainable development whereas Hapich et al. (2024) note that water sources like groundwater being much polluted and has heavily impacted to many people. To denote the situation diplomatically, Hough (2022) calls it military ecocide.

Despite accounting the motherloads of losses and brunt of damages in wake of such confrontations, scholars are either misjudging those as conflicts or objectionably failing to be vocal to present it as crime or gross offence against the humanity. Besides this scholarly inertia and apathy, researcher has felt a visible gap in real nature of those events and status of countries as well as the way they are fallaciously presented or taunted till today. Hence, an alternative analysis must be formed and forged ahead. These confrontations or battles, which have exacerbated and traumatized the globe in such a vast scale, are neither wars nor conflicts, but are highly complex and organized crimes based on five main principles elaborated beneath. Neither the countries, either engaging or supporting in war, are world power at all. Both these inferences i.e. 'considering the brute battle as conflict' and 'rating the espousing nations as world power' are epitome of extreme illusion and intellectual delusion. Analyses and discussions below will shed light on it and serves to address the aforementioned glaring gap remained unaddressed in the existing gamut of knowledge.

ANALYSES AND ARGUMENTS

a) Illusive Decoding of Crime as Conflict

The series of brutish battles and conceited confrontations can never be considered as conflict or has severely undermined and derided the underlying principles of conflict at least on five major grounds.

First, when a person kills another person, it is a serious cum punishable crime. That violates the law; it utterly insults democracy, signals an utmost crisis of the humanity. In the above discussed cases, the states are inhumanly and much mercilessly killing people. Murder committed by the state is also a crime, undoubtedly; it cannot be a sugarcoated as war or conflict in either of alibis or excuses. Further stressing on the issues, King (2019) strongly objects it and reminds the nation about minimum marginal leniency in their manners. Devastating deficit in their conducts and erosion in manner by murdering human lives is a serious crime rather.

Second, it is even more atrocious in nature as that it is not one or two people being killed. But a mass slaughter, a brutal and brute murder has taken place; new version of gas-chambering is felt across the globe. Encapsulating the horrible slaughter of human kinds, Murphy (2020) correctly calls it collaborative killing.

Third, the prime responsibility of the state, inter alia, is to protect the lives of the persons sans any condition and circumstance. The one who should be the protector is becoming the devourer, here. It was already a condemnable crime to deviate from the responsibility to protect; and by resorting to the crime of murder, the volume of crimes is being doubled. Discussing the deviation and detachment from designated duty, Kraev (2025) considers it double-fold crime caused by the states rather than only an associated crime. Calling these events war is grossly incorrect both in philosophy and lexicography whereas Galarza (2023) openly calls it war crime and mentions that such a mass killing of civilian attracts and comes under ambit of various international laws. Most countries are parties or signatories in those covenants at the time of promulgating those conventions and agreed in accepting them above the national laws. But abjuring the commitment, they are indulged on costing the lives of large number of populaces in self and others.

Fourth, in politics, three different phrases- often termed as agitation led demonstration, conflict and terror- have separate meanings and indications. The agitation is usually peaceful, and comes to a conclusion through mutual dialogue and agreement. Protesting or infuriated side presents demand and highest level of mutual agreement will be exercised and endorsed through an accord. Often demonstrations witness and experience this sort of dealing. Conflict is waged; and, the aim is to gain power by defeating or defenestrating the enemy through armed struggle. War is fought by targeting only the declared enemy or defined nemesis. But in terror, not only the enemy is attacked, but also the unarmed and ordinary people are recklessly targeted to spread the fear and cow the mass. Minko (2024) locates an unmatched and uncomfortable connection between the principle of conflict and lived nature of these confrontations. In the current so-called conflict aftermath, the surging suffering of the common people is million times greater than that of the designated enemies or declared foes. The line between terrorism and war is blurred here and faded fully. Thus, Zubrzycki (2019) also condemns this trend with deep resentment and reservation on the rapidly evolving situation in pro-confrontation state.

Fifth, it has also caused widespread suffering to those who are not involved or partaken in the confrontations or purported conflicts. Assessing the impacts and impediments, Ozili (2024) considers consequences not limited only to warring nations rather has stretched to all over the globe. Therefore, these incidents- which we have been confusingly understanding as conflicts- are rather collective and organized crimes. In-fact, these confrontations are shameless attacks and plundering on mass humanity as well as are deliberate damages on collective dignity of the people.

Moreover, the decoding of nations espousing these confrontations as Power Nations is another fraudulent fallacy and self-swindling synthesizing.

b) Fabricated Feeling of Power Nations

We are assuming the countries that come into confrontations- mostly in form of engaging or espousing in it- as power states or power nations. In such incidents since the completion of the World War II, America and Russia are directly or indirectly opposing each other and confronting to defeat them to the extent possible. This proposition is incontrovertibly inferred in most of studies and concluded in myriads of discourses or discussions. From Korea, Germany, Vietnam tensions in the annals of history to Russia-Ukraine stress right now, the plan is portrayed as of the American and Russian interest despite whatever is happening on the ground. Most of supposedly engagement or espousal by America and Russia in these types of cross-country confrontations is assumed as tussle between the first and the second power of the globe i.e. America and Russia. However, by considering these powers as world power with the first and second rank, another splendid palace of colossal confusion has been built. Weiss (2021) argues that advanced technological prowess and geopolitical ambition has ensured monumental change in well-matched adversaries. Based on enormous changes, existing world power presumption is itself preposterous and baseless pontification now.

Some arbitrary analyses that give the first and second rank to countries in the 'world order' or declare them as 'First World' and 'Second World' have been conspicuously corrupting strategic knowledge and consciousness for a long time. Unfolding the flawed finding, Foot and King (2019) remark and postulate that even Obama administration had acknowledged the faulty fact. To repair the misunderstanding, Zarakol (2017) recounts a faulty tradition of invoking such unscientific hierarchy in models of international politics. Such a conclusion has been drawn based on their military power alone.

Recently, a new concept of 'Global Power Assessment, Matrix 70' has emerged and is being convincingly assimilated by almost all schools of the scholars globally. The main 10 indices which should be used to consider any country as powerful one serially include: area, population, size of economy, average income per capita, level of happiness, purchasing power per capita, currency strength, nuclear status, investment in public welfare activities, and green economy-oriented initiatives, respectively. By making a table of these 10 indices, the first 7 countries from around the world are listed in each index, creating a matrix of 'Global Power Assessment'.

The counts on the issues i.e. area, population, size of economy, and nuclear status of the country have no significant relationship with the quality of life of its citizens. The countries

that we presume as world power are in the noticeable rank only in these determinants, which have now largely been non-embodiment parameters or non-performing indicators for the world power. Unmasking the crude reality, Abramson (2017) and Acharya (2018) consider economic strength and capacity as cardinal propelling factor for the global power and status. In addition, Hilton (2018) and Mazzucato (2013), in their separate studies, assess China's substantive rise and remarkable success on global growth ratio. Other six aspects such as: net income per capita, level of happiness, purchasing power per capita, currency strength, investment in public welfare activities, and green economy-oriented steps have a strong, close, and direct relationship with the quality of life of citizens in respective nations. However, the world power that we have mistakenly mentioned so far are nowhere in these indexes, not only in the first seven, but also most of them are not even in the first 15 to 20.

Among those six indicators, which indeed unfold the real strength and capacity of the country, given to the recent urgencies and desideratum to global challenges, China, India, Norway and UK top on four measurement indicators, UAE and Switzerland stand on three respectively but Russia and USA rank on top only on two indicators. Besides these countries even so many others i.e. Japan, Germany, France, Luxemburg, Singapore, Ireland, Qatar, Canada, Brazil, Denmark, and Finland also have rank on two indicators making it equal to purported world power: USA and Russia. Acknowledging the updated paradigm, McConaughy et al. (2018) urge that conventional wisdom no longer works now; and, believes that states are audited as economic organization and adjudicated on capacity of offering protection to the people and the earth. Thus, a pressing and compelling question is posed. Should we consider the nations standing in the first seven on the index that cause to destroy citizens' lives as world power or those in the first seven on the index that unleash close and direct input to assure quality of life to citizens as world power? Should we attribute and accredit the world power in terms of the ability, intention and proven experience to destroy lives and destroy the earth, or should we award it based on the practices and cautious envisioning and attempts that are done to save lives and preserve the earth, and ensure happiness or strength of living populace? Obviously, a big no to the first and hearty welcome to the second 'grouped parameters' based on immediate previous sentence. America and Russia have seldom any significant ranks in this search cum quest. Expressing his propositions, McDonald (2015) stresses the need of assessing downward effect of rate of military conflict and broader need to move beyond dyadic restrictions. Lake (2016) and Kaspersen et al. (2017), in their separate publications, question the quest of state and strongly advocate that state should work for welfare of people, grapple and strive for collective growth of people but no

longer wage war or choreograph confrontation. Such scholarly discourses too thoroughly invalidate the stereotype of deliberating states as world power only based on their geographical status or military measurement.

Thus, we must get rid of this confusion. The nations which were tagged as world power are responsible only for stress, anxiety, cost on human lives and damage. Their visible contribution in collaborative destruction should not be overlooked. Other countries, except America and Russia, are remarkably setting exemplary status on rest of several indicators which indeed undermine such stress then unleash wishes or emanate inputs for shared happiness and collective strengthening of the people. Besides beautiful beginning, they have even left the purported power-nations miles backward in such pious mission and umpteen positive signals to the globe. However, a gross unjust is applied accrediting unaccountable nations as the first and second power based on counter-productive classical calculation. The real truth is uncovered; and ferocious false are presented in frame in fictitious way.

CONCLUSION

Therefore, both assertions i.e. projecting the USA and Russia as the world power nations and mapping their activities in cross-country confrontations as conflict are not valid deductions or sound reasoning. Rather, these are fatally misleading illusions. The world power nations that we have been talking about so far are not world power but dangerous cum destructive forces and damaging agents. Even the series of confrontations that they are showing skill in are not wars or conflicts in any way; but a serious, punitive and organized crime series against humanity.

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