

Trade wars or Territorial wars, the next global battle

Introduction

Today the world is no longer bipolar with only two significant dominant power, we are looking at a more multilateral power distribution and the historic power houses are becoming more and more reliant and linked to these powers economically and geopolitically. There is a paradigm shift in the typical super powers we were looking at in the 60s or the 70s era. Now the world has given rise to new dominant powers who are the new players in the geopolitical race to spread their global dominance. In order to understand the next major global battle we need to analyse how the world has changed over the decades and how the needs of nations have changed.

Karl Marx in his *Conflict Theory*¹ has suggested that the society is in a state of perpetual conflict in competition for limited resources. It further states that social order in the society is maintained by domination and power, rather than conformity and consensus. The various needs of human civilisation and conflicts have been evolving with the human race itself and can be categorized into various stages. In the first stage the primarily needs of early human civilisation was survival and this continued until industrial revolution begun. During this stage the main objective of human being was survival and thus they engaged in systematic violence just to gather food and resources. This stage was largely disorganised and primitive in nature. But as the human society progressed the needs of the same gradually changed from survival to accumulation of resources and conquering of territories. Thus the next stage of conflicts were more centric towards controlling territories and resources like precious metals. The groups and clusters started forming their own armies and fought against other groups to gain territorial control and controls over resource.

The civilisation started taking more definite structure and gradually various empires started taking shape. This is when the colonisation era begun, the advanced empires now were resource hungry and in order to expand their capabilities, started their military conquest. This was primarily because the resources within the confines of their territory was falling insufficient to suffice the demand. The military conquest during this stage of colonialism span across the globe into all the continents and all corners of the earth. Along with the colonialism the era of

¹ The Conflict Theory – <https://www.investopedia.com/terms/c/conflict-theory.asp>

Industrial Revolution set in fuelling the global conquest even further. Thus the next stage of needs set in, the need to control various trade routes, consequently the military action was extensively used to attain these objectives.

It is pertinent to understand that gradually the needs of the various empires started becoming complex and multidimensional. Along with the Colonial era this stage was particularly long and the rise and fall of various major powers have taken place during this period in history. Gradually the wars started overlapping with economics, the repercussions of economic measures of one power could greatly influence the strategy and steps of another power even without direct armed conflict. Thus the needs and conflicts started becoming all the more interlinked to economics and politics. The conflicts in the next era became all the more different when the rise of various government ideologies started gaining popularity. Now the conflicts were more united on front of same ideologies and opposing the other ideologies. Thus entering the modern era as we know it today, now the needs of the nations and powers are not only territorial in nature but it is more essentially linked to trade, resources, dominance as a reckoning force in the regional or global geopolitical scenario. The economic warfare came into existence during the being of this new stage of needs and conflicts.

The economic warfare became a separate dedicated structure only in the early 1900s during the World War I when the allied forces realised that fighting a war in the battle fields was not enough to attain victory over the allied forces. Thus they devised various economic and non-armed measures to retaliate the axis forces. A French note sent to the attaché of the United States in Paris aptly describes the concept of Economic Warfare.

“After the battle of the Marne, faced with the new movement from the war the high command understood that it would be long and it would not be enough to fight the enemy on the field of battle but it also had to be fought on their own terrain; preventing enemy armies having material available, morally and physically undermining the entire population, cutting off the necessary raw material supply for their industry, collapsing the economy, blocking their finances, even affecting the food supply. These are the basic ideas on which economic warfare is based”.²

²A study on economic warfare and associated problems - Christian Harbulot

https://www.academia.edu/31388253/Christian_Harbulot_A_study_on_economic_warfare_and_associated_problems <last accessed 03-03-2019>

The power balance of the world has shifted from the United States of America (US) and Russia paving way for a number of new entrants in the round table of global dominance, they are India, China, Brazil and Japan. These countries have become global forces to reckon with and are shaping the future of the world in a whole new light of circumstances. Today the Territorial War in itself has been much less relevant, and can be called the subset of economic wars between several of these power houses. In order to understand the next global battle, we need to analyse the needs of various nations around the world, the various resources and the nature of conflict associated with it in light of the political, economic, geological and any other aspect relevant to draw an appropriate conclusion.

Before proceeding further into the comparison of trade war and territorial war it is important to understand the meaning of the two terms. According to the Oxford English dictionary the word war has been defined as a state of armed conflict between different countries or different groups within a country, this is primarily the definition of a territorial war. However, in order to understand the proper definition of Territorial War we need to refer to the ‘Correlates of War’ (CW) Project by Michigan University which described that *a war is any violent conflict with at least 1,000 killed combatants per year. To exclude genocides and sporadic massacres from this definition, both parties to the conflict must have organised themselves to commit collective violence, or the party with the least combatants must have inflicted at least five percent of their own losses on the opponent.*³ Overall we understand that Territorial war referred to here which has the potential of becoming the global conflict it would be safe and rational to consider CW definition to factor in the global scale and magnitude referred to in our discussion. Whereas, according to the Oxford English dictionary a Trade war has been defined as a situation in which countries try to damage each other's trade, typically by the imposition of tariffs or quota restrictions. Throughout the length of this essay we are going to discuss various factors which influence territorial war and trade war.

Control over Middle East

The Middle East has been one of the strategic centres of international attention and conflict. The Middle East controls the Petroleum supply cartel with two major influencer to the region the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and Islamic Republic of Iran. The two countries don't get along with their conflicting interests. These two countries have constantly engaged themselves in conflict to gain control over the Gulf region, however these two countries have never directly

³ <http://warpp.info/en/ml/articles/definitions-of-war-and-conflict-typologies> <last accessed 02-03-2019>

engaged in wars and mainly resorted to proxy wars. They have targeted smaller and weaker countries of the region supporting the Autocratic Governments and rebels Groups opposing the government and backed each sides with ammunition and funding.

Saudi Kingdom with its support from US has been constantly engaged in efforts to maintain control over the crude oil cartel in this region the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC). This will ensure unrestricted control over the international petroleum market. The US has extended several economic and diplomatic ties with Saudi Arabia. As a result of the ties US has been selling ammunition and military technology in huge proportions in exchange of crude oil trade with the Kingdom and its allies in the region.

On the other hand the US have made several economic sanctions on the primary rival of the Kingdom in the region Iran. These economic measures have been hurting the trade and economy as a whole. The primary concern with Iran has been its nuclear program, wherefore it was suspected that Iran has been engaging in development of nuclear ammunition despite being a signatory to the Non Proliferation Treaty. This has led to sanctions like embargo on ammunition trade with Iran, severe trade ties with Iran, boycott of Iranian Oil supply by many countries in the world. The most recent economic measure by US on Iran has been the attack on Iranian currency wherefore the Iranian Rial plummeted significantly against the US Dollar (US\$). However, amidst all the sanctions against Iran, Russia has been the primary trading and military ally of Iran. Russia has been consistently supporting the nuclear programme of Iran along with being one of the largest supplier of ammunition to the country. India also has been a trading ally of Iran and ranks as the second largest importer of Iranian crude oil also there are talks of establishing pipelines between India and Iran for the supply of Petroleum Gas and Oil between the two nations.

The major crisis in the region comprises of Syrian Civil war, Yemen Civil war, Iraq war, Lebanon crisis and the Israel-Palestine crisis. The conflict and proxy wars of the region are primarily fuelled by the ethnic and ideological differences between Saudi Arabian monarch and Iran government. The Iranian ideology is disruptive and change making, their monarch was overthrown with a democratic government and they seek to dominate the Middle East as the supreme Muslim state of the world. The Saudi Arabian monarch on the other hand believes in status quo in the region and is also in its best interest in order to retain power, their primary fear is uprising similar to the one in Iran which can overthrow the monarch to instate a democratic government which has been the recent trend in the region.

Both Saudi Arabia and Iran form strong strategic allies of US and Russia in the region. Thus, the instability of the region is also partly attributed to the influence of the United States of America and Russia waging proxy war against each other directly or indirectly through the major powers of the region. The crisis in the Gulf region is not going to resort anytime soon considering the militant up rises like the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) and the Al Qaeda, and the major powers fuelling the rebel groups and the governments of the various civil war ridden countries of the region.

In this region we observe that though there are several ongoing active wars, all these wars are embedded with economic sanctions and measures, trade wars and none of the major countries are actually exposed to full-fledged territorial war. It is only the smaller countries which have been actively engaged in civil war within the country and there are no such regional conflict which has the potential of taking a Global Conflict nature. The potentials conflicts are usually addressed using economic and trade sanctions.

Conflict over the share of Manufacturing Sector

China and US have been engaged in constant skirmish with each other over various trade and investment measures. There has been a long trade war between the two countries, were each one is trying to hurt the other's economy. This trade war is a battle between the largest and the second largest economy in the world. US has not only been the largest economy but they have also been the largest importer of Chinese products thus giving rise to this extreme delicate interdependent relationship between the two countries. China has been the world's favourite manufacturing hub for the greater part of 21st Century and enjoys huge foreign reserves. However the conflict arises on account of the huge trade deficit between US and China to the quantum of US\$ 382 billion for the year ended 2018⁴, this has been the cause of major concern for the Congressmen of US. Further, China has low standards of Intellectual Property protection rights and US accuses the country of theft and malpractice in respect to the use and exploitation of intellectual properties of US. Further, the growing concern over shift of manufacturing jobs from USA to China due to cost advantage in China coupled with subsidies provided by Chinese Government on various manufacturing process essentially rendering American produced goods uncompetitive against Chinese goods, has further escalated the conflict.

⁴ United States Census Bureau – Trade in Goods with China - <https://www.census.gov/foreign-trade/balance/c5700.html>

<last accessed 03-03-2019>

The US has for years now imposed various tariffs on Chinese goods, but the conflict escalated when US administration started imposing tariffs aggressively on Chinese commodities. The Chinese administration on the other has taken measure to retaliate back and imposed several tariffs on US imports and this has been moving to and fro for a while with either sides hurting each other's economy. As per the latest available data the Chinese and the American administration have imposed exclusive tariffs on imports from each other to the quantum of US\$ 110 billion and US\$ 250 billion respectively.⁵ Further the US administration is aggrieved with the limited access to the investment opportunities in the Chinese manufacturing and technology sectors.

There has been certain economic and political disputes between India and China. The Chinese Government has taken up some of the most ambitious projects of the century in order to reduce its economic reliance on the US markets and to further become the largest manufacturing, trading and innovation destination of the world. They have launched the One Belt One Road (OBOR) Initiative. This has been an ambitious project to link China with Europe, Middle East and parts of Africa via a combination of road, railway and interconnected ports with seaways. This in itself has been a big initiative in terms of an economic progress and plans to connect more than 60 countries, the Chinese Government has planned investments worth US\$ 1 trillion⁶. However, this has not been only an economic initiative, the Chinese funded ports in the neighbouring countries in Indian Ocean and Arabic sea has been also used as naval bases for docking of Chinese Navy ships and military facilities. Thus essentially surrounding India in all water fronts with its fleet of Navy war ships, this has been a cause of grief for India. This ports are collectively called the *String of Pearls*. India on the other hand in order to counter this measure has come up with its own set of String of Pearls in the South China Sea and surrounded China's water frontier with Indian Naval Power. India has entered into several strategic alliances with the neighbouring countries of China including military and naval alliances. This strategic connection of ports created by India is referred to as the *Necklace of Diamonds*.

The conflict between China and US has been a severe crisis but it has been in the nature of economic warfare and trade war, and neither of the nuclear powered nations have actually

⁵ China Briefing – The US-China trade war timeline - <https://www.china-briefing.com/news/the-us-china-trade-war-a-timeline/> <last accessed 03-03-2019>

⁶ The Guardian – What is China's Belt and Road Initiative ? - <https://www.theguardian.com/cities/ng-interactive/2018/jul/30/what-china-belt-road-initiative-silk-road-explainer> <last accessed 03-03-2019>

engaged in any sort of direct armed conflict with one another. On the other hand India has also waged trade war against China for dumping of subsidised Chinese commodities in Indian market essentially adversely impacting the Indian manufacturers. Further China and India has been undergoing dispute with regards to territory and military presence in each-others water frontiers. However, here again we see one common feature that despite the severe dispute and crisis these nations have never engaged themselves in severe armed conflicts over the past few decades.

Dispute in the Continent of Africa

The continent of Africa is witnessing as many as 25 conflicts and wars mostly civil wars with extreme human right violations, famines and genocides. The main conflicts are concentrated in the Northern Nigeria, South Sudan, Somalia, Libya and Republic of Central Africa. The conflicts in Northern Nigeria is one of the most dangerous region, where the Boko Haram militants have occupied the region and are being fought against by the Nigerian Government along with support from neighbouring countries. The region of the north central Africa called the Sahel which is primarily the poorest regions of the world has seen up rise of extremist Islamic militant groups like Boko Haram and branches of the ISIS, Al Qaeda and Islamic State of West Africa. These militant groups have easily captured the region due the land being primarily ungoverned territory coupled with extreme poverty with presence of impoverished Muslim population having severe ethnic conflicts and shortage of food. The neighbouring countries of this region along with troops from United Nation (UN), United States of America and France are in constant conflict with these militant groups. The next big conflict of Africa is the Somalian conflicts where various warlords and militia groups are constantly engaging in conflict and war to gain control over the country. The country didn't have a proper government until 2012, and even today it is inflicted with extreme violence and war. The country of South Sudan which is the newest country of the world gaining independence not until 2011, has been ravaged by sever civil war between several ethnic groups. The country of Libya is also under a second civil war wherefore various rebel groups backed by super powers around the world are engaging in war to gain control over the country. Similar type of conflict have been taking place in Egypt, Ethiopia, Republic of Central Africa, Democratic Republic of Congo, Tunisia, Algeria and Mali. These conflicts are a result of failed colonisation attempts of Europe which was followed by instable governments. Much of Africa has been unstable due to similar ethnic, religious and extremist militia conflicts.

These conflicts are mainly country specific and internal in nature. Here we observe that the government and the rebel groups are engaged in armed conflict over various issues along with some external forces. The international community has been trying hard to provide humanitarian aid to the impoverished regions of the continent however significant success is yet to be achieved considering that the governments are trying to block the aid from reaching the territories under the control of rebel militia groups. This is one of the common tactics followed by the governments of this region to internally erode the rebels by starving them from access to any food supplies. However, one will understand that internal conflicts of African countries do not have the potential of launching a global scale territorial armed conflict between the major nations. But we can expect humanitarian intervention in the civil war affected countries from the United Nation and some prominent countries of the United Nation Security Council like France and US.

North Korean Crisis

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea, or North Korea though not engaged in active war currently, there is a rising tension between the country and the rest of the world mainly due to its active nuclear programme. North Korea being an autocratic dictatorship regime which is in constant fear of losing its power in the country due to foreign interventions similar to the ones in Libya and Syria, has resorted to development of its own nuclear program to act as a deterrence to such foreign aggression. The country has already developed several short range nuclear missiles and has also successively developed an Inter Continental Ballistic Missile (ICBM) capable of attacking soils of United States of America.

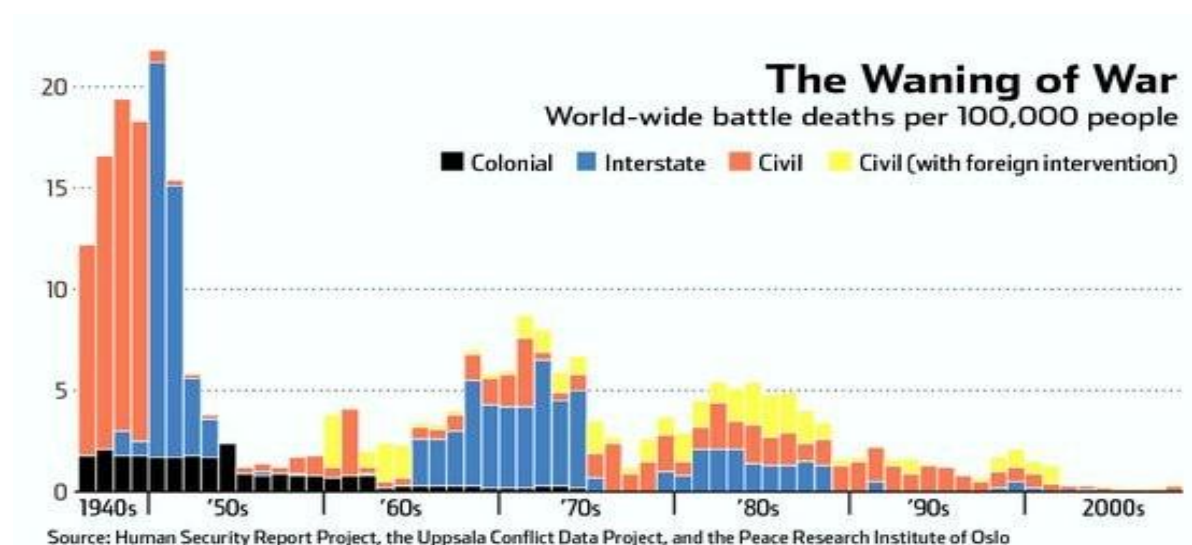
The United Nation along with majority of the European, Asian and American nations have put an embargo on trade with North Korea. In fact North Korea is the victim of one of the world's worst economic warfare. The only two countries which maintain active trade relations with North Korea are China and Russia. Thus it is evident that bitter US China relationship has fair role play in this conflict. Though it is not an active war zone as of today but it is definitely a catastrophe awaiting trigger.

A war with North Korea would be what analyst describes as *Opening the Gates to Hell*. The North Korean regime apart from having an arsenal of nuclear warheads, has the most advanced array of chemical and biological weapons at its disposal. However according to the researchers studying the North Korean regime and Kim family have concluded that the regime and specially Kim Jong Un despite being a harsh violent and vindictive dictator is a rational leader.

The regime is more concerned about protecting its own control in the country and have successfully expanded its nuclear programme despite all the sanctions without any conflict with the US. In fact the historians are of the opinion that a war between North Korea and US is unlikely given their recent development of ICBM missiles capable of attacking the mainland of US. This gives rise to a peculiar situation wherefore the US administration would be more interested to protect its own soil and effectively ignore an aggression by the North Korean regime in the Korean Peninsula. Thus a full blown armed conflict is not a probable outcome in the near future and the world would rather wage economic measures against the regime to corner it and limit its ability to grow.

Armed Conflicts on a large scale is Going Away

The world specially the continent of African and the Middle East has been particularly torn apart due to severe civil war. However the rest of the world comprising of America, Europe excepting parts of Eastern Europe, rest of Asia and Australia is not witnessing any forms of severe war. In fact contrary to our generic analogy based on the regular instances of war that the world is becoming a more violent war prone place to live in, studies suggest that the world is becoming a peaceful place, and we are living in one of the most peaceful eras of mankind. According to the Global Peace Index Report 2016 the indicators are showing significant reduction in the indicators of war. The data published by the Peace Research Institute Oslo (PRIO) shows that casualties due to battle has dramatically dropped since 1940s. The summary of this data has been published in the Wall Street Journal under the Title ‘The Waning of War’ and the same has been provided in the graph here under. This signifies that the world to a great extent is understanding the wastefulness of wars.



The instances of territorial war and armed conflicts are particularly reducing due to the following key factors. The researchers of International Relations have studied and observed various international behaviours which have been the primary contributing factors to the current geopolitical peace.

The Democratic Peace: This concept comes from the famous International Relations theory known as the *Democratic Peace Theory*. This theory talks about how democratic nations usually find it ethically wrong to engage in armed conflict in the nature of war with other democratic countries. This is because firstly democratic governments are bound to accept the culpability for war losses to the voting public, this public accountability compels the statesmen to establish and use alternative diplomatic institutions for resolution of International tensions. Further the democratic countries are not inclined towards viewing other policies and governing doctrines as hostile rather they are viewed as legitimate institutions of governance. It has been observed that the democracies hold greater public wealth than other states, and therefore they try to avoid war to preserve infrastructure and resources. Considering that majority of the world nations are democratic nations with legitimate governments the implications of this theorem of International Relationships persists.

Nuclear Deterrence: Thomas Crombie Schelling's an economist and professor of University of Maryland, famous for his work on deterrence had inferred that the concept of military strategy no longer restricted to a science of military victory, rather he presents that it is also an art of coercion, intimidation and deterrence. He states that the capacity to harm another state is used as a motivating factor for other states to avoid such actions thus influencing the behaviours of such other states.

The nuclear deterrence is just an advanced use of deterrence tactics wherefore countries develop and maintain fleet of nuclear arsenal as a measure to threaten any act of aggression against them by foreign states. This has been particularly working out to make the world more peaceful place since every country around the world is aware of the far reaching consequences of a nuclear attack and thus fear the use of such warfare. There is the Nuclear Non Proliferation Treaty wherefore the signing countries pledge to not transfer or develop nuclear weapons, commit to gradual disarmament of nuclear weapons and use nuclear energy for peaceful causes only. There are only seven recognised nuclear armed countries. These are United States of America, Russia, United Kingdom, France, China, India, Pakistan and North Korea. It is believed that the existence of nuclear weapons is making the world a much more peaceful as

well as violent place at the same time. This idea was coined in the famous Stability–Instability Paradox.

The *Stability–Instability Paradox* is a famous International Relations Theory which talks about the effect of nuclear weapons on the International Relations between countries. The theory states that when two countries possess nuclear weapons, the probability of a direct or major war between them greatly reduces, whereas the probability of indirect or minor conflicts increases. This is because a rational state would deploy every means to avoid a nuclear war due to the devastating consequences, and thus they neither engage in major conflicts nor will they allow minor conflicts to escalate to major conflict. Thus further reducing the chances of major territorial war.

National Sovereignty: The sovereignty means the full right and power of a governing body over itself, without any interference from outside bodies. The United Nation grants the sovereignty rights and status to all the member states. Thus we have witnessed over the past decades that there has been no successful breach of sovereignty or intervention into internal matters of any country by foreign nationals or conquest for annexation of parts of any foreign land, consequently war has been avoided to a great extent. Probably the only exception is the war in Ukraine wherefore Russia attacked and annexed Crimea into its territories. However, the United Nation allows interventions of sovereign states on humanitarian grounds to avoid catastrophic events like the mass genocide in Rwanda. But then again that is rather a lengthy process and a difficult ground to implement. Thus further strengthening the case for global peace.

Territorial War vs. Trade War from the view point of Democratic Populism

The Democratic Populism is one of the critical factors determining the willingness of a democratic government engaging in territorial war or trade war with another nation. The success of any democratic government depends on the quantum of support it enjoys from the masses of the country. Thus essentially a government would be more inclined towards taking up measures against another country only if it results in increase in popularity of the government. Two of the classical examples of Democratic Populism are Russian aggression in Ukraine and conflict between India and Pakistan.

The Ukrainian crisis is primarily comprising of Russia and East Europe fighting against the Western Europe in a proxy war. The country of Ukraine was a part of Russia in the 18th and 19th century and currently forms a buffer zone between the Western and Eastern Europe. The

Ukrainian Government was inclined towards joining the European Union like the neighbouring countries in the buffer zone, however subsequently subsided with Russian for support. This event created a major agitation in the country and overthrowing the country's president. The Russian Government seizing this opportunity attacked and annexed Crimea into its country fuelled by its own internal political agenda and also as a measure to prevent the European Union from extending its economic alliances into its region. Russia has also extended support to the militant groups in the Eastern Ukraine to fight its government resulting in a civil war in the region. Here Russia's conquest endeavours in the 21st century has been primarily fuelled by Democratic Populist ideas of the Russian administration.

On the other hand the tension between India and Pakistan has built up significantly over the past few months. The two countries have constantly engaged in skirmish with one another for decades over various issues like the control over the disputed territories of Kashmir or the alleged terror group operations from the soils of Pakistan which has carried out attacks on Indian soil. The Indian as well as the Pakistani administration have taken several measures primarily economic in nature to condemn such causes or showcase their opposition against such causes. However, if we look at the situation from the popularity perspective for the individual governments, it is often observed that the economic sanctions or trade wars waged by the respective governments have not really enjoyed a great support from the masses. Whereas on the contrary an armed conflict in a micro scale like a surgical strike or any other minor armed action has garnered great popularity for the government among the masses. Thus one can understand that from a democratic populism perspective it well suits the government's agenda to engage in such minor armed conflicts. Though democratic populist ideas can motivate the governments to engage in minor conflicts, the rational leaders of these states would not let any of these minor conflicts escalate into a major conflict and will take every possible action to deescalate the situation. Thus even in the near future we will witness minor armed conflicts along with several economic measures.

War and Arms industry

The dark reality about armed conflicts and territorial wars is that irrespective what the consequences are, it is essentially a booming industry and few countries benefits more than any other as a result of such conflicts in any part of the world. The industry in question is Arms and Ammunition Industry and US is the undoubted leader of this Industry. The arms industry is humongous and one can estimate the sheer size when we take a look at the cumulative global

military expenditure of the world which was near about US\$ 1.7 trillion in 2017 and it has witnessed an year on year growth of 1.1%⁷. The US accounts for the highest military budget on the planet and also they are the largest exporter of arms in the international arms market. Together the US and Russia account for more than 60% of the international arms trade and these nations benefit hugely due to armed conflicts anywhere in the world. It is in fact evident because the arms trade globally amounts to approximately US\$ 100 billion⁸. This is particularly visible in the conflicts in Middle Eastern countries of Syria and Yemen. The Saudi Arabia is the largest importer of ammunition and as already discussed has been a passive influencer of the conflicts of the region.

Somewhere one can draw a conclusion that armed conflicts or the territorial wars are not going to go away any time soon. The primary reason being the huge industry it supports. Further, this industry has been fuelled by the dispute between US, Russia and China over various economic and political levels, also one must note that protection against terrorism has been a major reason for increased arms trade globally. However, despite the rise in the arms trade and global conflicts, Africa has witnessed a sticking drop in arms import in the region by as much as 22% between 2008-12 and 2013-17. Thus the analogy that armed conflict will continue just to support the industry is not adequately justified given that there has been huge rise in conflicts in the region.

Conclusion

The phrase *global battle* has been interpreted as a conflict similar to the World Wars and the Cold Wars, wherefore there will be significant number interested nations engaging in acts of economic or military action with one another to truly justify the literal meaning of the phrase. Having cleared the stand on interpretation of *global battle* we can proceed to analyse the various arguments and draw an appropriate conclusion.

Today the international community has become a more responsive and empathetic in general towards global affairs. We understand that there are several international conflicts especially in the Middle East and the continent of Africa. However on further introspection based on

⁷ Global spend on weapons and military increased to \$1.7 trillion in 2017, arms watchdog says -

<https://www.cnbc.com/2018/05/02/global-military-spend-rose-to-1-point-7-trillion-in-2017-arms-watchdog-says.html> <last accessed 11-03-2019>

⁸ Which country dominates the global arms trade? - <https://www.bbc.com/news/business-43873518> <last accessed 11-03-2019>

available data and evidences it becomes abundantly clear that none of the major powers are directly engaged in any armed conflict with one another. In the Middle East the intervention has been more on ground of terrorism one major concern for the Western nations, on the other hand as already discussed the conflicts are taking shape of regional conflict between regional powers engaging in skirmish to consolidate power in the region none of which seems to pose a great threat of territorial war of the nature of global battle. However what we do observe in the conflicts of Middle East is that the large Western and Asian economies like US, Russia, China and India having stake in the stability of the region imposing economic sanctions or taking up economic measures much in the nature of Trade war in a broader perspective against the nations having conflicting interest like Iran or Qatar. Further, there is intervention from the United Nation Security Council acting as the moderator trying to limit the armed conflict and bring about stability, but the UN also has sorted for economic sanctions on certain nations in the region.

The conflicts of Africa are more internal in nature and we have observed active intervention from the US, France and UN forces. This is a special case given that the International community doesn't want to witness another catastrophe like the Genocide of Rwanda. The intervention here are as pointed out by Kofi Annan in his famous address are of the nature of *Humanitarian Intervention*⁹. The primary objective of the interventions from the International community in the region is to prevent the autocratic governments and the militia groups from resorting to extreme violence and mass slaughter of innocent lives. Thus these armed conflicts of Africa again do not impose threat of provoking a territorial war taking shape of a global battle.

The UN in general has been the biggest factor internationally for maintaining the global peace and has been successful in attaining the same over the years. This is so especially because member nations have so far been successful in amicable resolution of disputes. The UN on the other hand has been imposing economic sanction on nations not compliant in general with the order of things globally. We have seen several such actions against Iran, North Korea and so on. These economic measures though not essentially in the nature of trade war but rather trade blockades which are subset of the same large genre of economic sanctions. The economic

⁹Two concepts of sovereignty – Kofi Annan, UN Secretary General, Annual Session UN General Assembly, 1999 - <https://www.un.org/sg/en/content/sg/articles/1999-09-18/two-concepts-sovereignty> <last accessed 13-03-2019>

measures as already witnessed are more effective measures of addressing dispute rather than outright armed conflict in maintaining global peace.

The leaders of the modern nations are increasingly becoming sceptical about war and are more peace seeking with their international relation strategies. This trend is evident from the various international relation theories and strategies followed by nations around the world. The best example is North Korea. The North Korean regime under its leader Kim Jung Un has successfully carried out its nuclear programme for over a decade now without risking a major armed conflict with any nation. Further, the UN and some of opposing western nations have not waged military actions or any armed conflict against the dictatorship regime rather they have resorted to economic measures and severing of trade relationships.

One might argue that territorial war is never going to stop considering that it is a huge industry and large defence contracts lobbying the Congress or the other Parliaments of various nations would push their agenda. This is indeed true and an undisputed reality, we can agree that these territorial wars will never be the thing of the past. But the main question here is whether it is imposing significant influence as to become the next global battle, well that is not true given the surrounding circumstances and facts.

Concluding it is worth noting that the world as we know it today will be more interested in resorting to economic measures to resolve disputes and occasionally might resort to minor armed conflicts in the nature bullying or minor wars, but none of these armed conflicts are actually going to end up being the next global battle. Every government is aware that the economic cost of engaging in a full-fledged territorial war would far out way the benefits ripped from it, thus the next global battle is going to be economic warfare which essentially includes Trade wars and other economic measures.

Bibliography

- China Is Losing the Trade War in Nearly Every Way – Forbes – Author Kenneth Rapoza - <https://www.forbes.com/sites/kenrapoza/2019/01/14/china-is-losing-the-trade-war-in-nearly-every-way/#4d0423a97f03> <last accessed 03-03-2019>
- A study on economic warfare and associated problems - Christian Harbulot - https://www.academia.edu/31388253/Christian_Harbulot_A_study_on_economic_warfare_and_associated_problems <last accessed 03-03-2019>

- Definition of War - Correlates of War Project by Michigan University - <http://warpp.info/en/m1/articles/definitions-of-war-and-conflict-typologies> <last accessed 02-03-2019>
- Vox Media - Here's what war with North Korea would look like - <https://www.vox.com/world/2018/2/7/16974772/north-korea-war-trump-kim-nuclear-weapon> <last accessed 04-03-2019>
- Vox Media - The recent spike in tensions between India and Pakistan, explained - <https://www.vox.com/world/2019/2/26/18241327/india-pakistan-airstrikes-escalating-tensions> <last accessed 05-03-2019>
- The Guardian – What is China's Belt and Road Initiative? - <https://www.theguardian.com/cities/ng-interactive/2018/jul/30/what-china-belt-road-initiative-silk-road-explainer> <last accessed 03-03-2019>
- United States Census Bureau – Trade in Goods with China - <https://www.census.gov/foreign-trade/balance/c5700.html> <last accessed 03-03-2019>
- China Briefing – The US-China trade war timeline - <https://www.china-briefing.com/news/the-us-china-trade-war-a-timeline/> <last accessed 03-03-2019>
- Indefensible – Seven Myths That Sustained Global Arms Trade – Paul Holden
- The Guardian - Shock tactics: how the arms industry trades on our fear of terrorism - <https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2017/mar/20/how-the-arms-industry-trades-on-our-fear-of-terrorism-book-paul-holden-indefensible> <last accessed 06-03-2019>
- Global spend on weapons and military increased to \$1.7 trillion in 2017, arms watchdog says - <https://www.cnbc.com/2018/05/02/global-military-spend-rose-to-1-point-7-trillion-in-2017-arms-watchdog-says.html> <last accessed 11-03-2019>
- Which country dominates the global arms trade? - <https://www.bbc.com/news/business-43873518> <last accessed 11-03-2019>
- Two concepts of sovereignty – Kofi Annan, UN Secretary General, Annual Session UN General Assembly, 1999 - <https://www.un.org/sg/en/content/sg/articles/1999-09-18/two-concepts-sovereignty> <last accessed 13-03-2019>
- Conflict Theory - <https://www.investopedia.com/terms/c/conflict-theory.asp> <last accessed 14-03-2019>