**Russia-Ukraine Standoff and the Third World War**

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It is an often-quoted fact that a spark may trigger inflammation. At the same time, some barring blocks can have the capability to inactivate the inflammatory spark. Such a metaphorical conceit can be dragged down to gauge the would-be decisive and turning point of the Russia-Ukraine standoff. It has been more than a year that Ukraine has become a battleground both for traditional scuffle and proxy among the powerful players in the international arena. Such a deleterious standoff raises some serious concerns regarding its future.

The analysis of world war first at individual, national and state levels indicates the behind the scene currents which triggered the war. The rise of German power and its alliance with the axis threatened the balance of power regime in the prevailing international order. The established powers felt fear as they were seeing their interests at stake. They thought it would challenge the status quo and their established positions in the international system. This was why the allied fought to undo the emergence of German-like powers.

This is an analysis at the state level and might well be encapsulated under Thucydides’ Trap and neorealism: the former propounds that a rivalry erupts when an emerging power starts challenging an already established power, while the latter opines that the international system is anarchic wherein one needs to ensure one’s security via maximizing one’s power. Thus, in the case of World War 1, the emerging German power threatened the established position of the established power, which might have turned into a major shift in the international balance of power dilemma.

Global powers wrestling over Ukraine might inflame another world war.

At the national level, the desire for promoting and standing superior to all races largely contributed to the eruption of world wars. For instance, the desire to ensure the superiority of the German race by Germany and of English and Western races by the allied largely triggered the war on a wider scene.

The same reasons went for the eruption of the second world war, The world war second, though immediately triggered by the belligerent and imperial fascist and Nazist approaches, was dragged down by the possible imbalance in the international power corridor. This might be fairly explained by referring to the Thucydides’ trap once again. This shows that though there might be several reasons behind the deadly two world wars, there are reportedly a few which stood out unchanged: balancing the international balance of power structure, preventing the hegemonic position, barring the new emerging power to challenge the existing ones and maintaining the unchallenged and unquestioned global position of the established powers.

The Russia-Ukraine skirmish is very well explained in this way, thereby, unfolding its future. Though the war is fought between Russia and its next-door neighbour Ukraine, it has been serving the global competition and key powers rivalry. The core reason for this scuffle was the continual extension of western influence into the Russian World or Russian sphere of influence in the form of NATO’s membership extension to Ukraine and some other Baltic states or those of the Caucasus and EU membership to Ukraine. Russia keeps harping on that NATO must not take the risk of mongering its nose in the Russian sphere of influence, but in vein and thus, Moscow presents this reason behind its attack on Ukraine.

The Russia-Ukraine standoff unveils the West-Russia wrestling for the maintenance of their unchallenged positions towards each other. Putin’s Russia wants the erstwhile Soviet exalted status to have an undeniable say in world matters, as was mentioned in the 6000 words document at the end of the Xi-Putin meeting last year. Whereas, the US-led West has planned to have the whole Eurasian region under its influence in addition to weakening Russia.

Therefore, these global powers wrestling over Ukraine might inflame another world war as the war has been triggering the erstwhile cold war rivals and contemporary east-west rivalry. This is enough to get into a worldwide scuffling just like the forgone two world wars erupted as a result of the global power rivalry. Russia might have an orbit of supporters among which Beijing takes the main seat though it negates it publically. Similarly, the US-led West is also a muscled alliance which can give tough times to its arch-rival.

As an inverse logic, it might be argued that the ongoing Russia-Ukraine scuffle has been blocked by many bars from getting worst. This cannot be a world war since the warring parties and the perpetrators are of immense strength and the intensity might be devastating if they unleash a full-fledged war. Putting it simpler, when the proxy turns into traditional, the cost might be unbearable. Similarly, the constraints by international law, global peace and global trends exercise a strong check on the going skirmish, which might be preventing it from turning into a full-fledged worldwide scuffle.

While giving an ending note, the ongoing Russia-Ukraine standoff may turn into a world war if its intensity gets worst since it is hosting the world’s powerful entities fighting for, in accordance with their views, some forcible reasons: balancing the power shit or power imbalance, maintaining hegemony while denying the same by other and the desire for a un denying say in international affairs among others. However, some forces might prevent it from turning into a third world war. The latter approach is conditioned to a responsible and new liberal thought, whereas the former is to the new realist thought. It is solely the choice of the warring parties, which one to choose while keeping durable consequences in view.

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