**Wars and Political Economy. Part IV: UN and Conflict-The Final Chapter**

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The title “The Final Chapter” might be misconstrued, so let me clarify. As we have observed during the last many weeks, these subjects are dynamic and continue to change. They always will and, therefore, there can never be “the last word” on the subject. This chapter is my last effort in this series, at least for the time being. This chapter will end with a possible direction for the foreseeable future.

Soon after WW 1, the study of “Conflict Resolution” began. However, the League of Nations was not, as we observed, a very successful attempt, and consequently, Conflict Resolution did not progress. The emergence of UN post WW 11, charged expressly with the prevention of conflict, gave resolution as well as prevention of conflict added significance. Over time, today almost all major universities have the study of conflict resolution and prevention.

Theories of both, Prevention as well as Resolution, are very similar; virtually parallel. Both require a positive or negative motivation to prevent conflict or, once entered into conflict, to resolve it. A positive motive for avoiding or resolving conflict, is if the country [or individual] gains from avoiding or resolving. Whereas, a negative motivation is, if the country [or individual] loses something by failing toavoid or resolve conflict. Similarly, a positive or negative motivation results in entering a conflict or in refusing to resolve an existing conflict.

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As the study of Conflict Resolution progresses, one comes across increasing complications; the Escalation and De-escalation Theories; which depend entirely on reciprocity but, can become self-escalatory, if badly handled. “Red Lines”, the crossing of which means entering of a next level of warfare; and the more recently included concepts relating to control of Limited Wars.

Being pragmatic, though, we are surely, by now, aware that, if the global economy is running on the presence of unending conflicts, Conflict Prevention can never work; since that will kill the global economy. If we can get here and agree to accept this ugly fact, perhaps then we could start trying to do the “possible” i.e. Conflict Resolution and “Controlled Wars”.

Conflict Resolution is a subject we are all somewhat familiar with. Controlled Wars, a term I coined for lack of a better, are wars similar to Limited Wars, wherein we study how to control the conduct of wars and prevent further escalation, particularly, the crossing of Red Lines.

It was with this in mind that, after adverting to the emergence of Political Economy, that we wandered through the Cuban Missile Crisis, to realize that a face-off between two giants or, even of two relatively smaller sized states that, even if one of them is at a point of desperation, Political Economy could destroy itself and much of humankind.

Someone might inquire here, whether it is possible to “control” a war. I suggest that, if our ongoing study has brought us to the conclusion that the globe is now governed by Political Economy; which thrives only on wars and conflicts and, will continue to do so, we have no option. We must find the means of fighting wars and controlling them. If we don’t, MAD-ness[you will recall MAD-ness; Mutually Assured Destruction] will inevitably come visiting someday.

Can wars be controlled? You might recall that, in these musings, I also introduced you to the necessity of a political aim for wars. I also drew your attention to the fact that modern concepts of warfare have progressed far indeed. They now talk of Maximum Aims, Minimum Aims, even Limited Aims. Most importantly, they emphasize the necessity of a War Termination Strategy.

Given that the UN cannot prevent conflicts, could it control them thus? Could the conflicting states or intra-state actors be bound by the UN to a minimum aim and a War Termination Strategy? Could they, like pugilists of old be designated a “ring”; defined space, to confine their conflict to? And could an equivalent of the Marquis of Queensbury Rules be created for these pugilist nations?

I don’t really know all the answers here. But, I do know some of the questions and, I am very much afraid that, we desperately need to start looking for answers before its too late. I have been pointing out the uniqueness of the era we live in.

Never before has the world witnessed the emergence of a second global power getting ready to take over global control from a predecessor that has just started to rot. Not to mention the rot that is leading the rotting power. And, buying support for Israel, as a means to enhance the chances of a Trump victory is doing no good to the Middle East. The entire region is a powder keg, only needs a match.

Controlled Wars? Or anything better anybody can think of. Anything that could work.As a lifetime soldier, I am aware that impossible, remains impossible only if we fail to change the prevalent circumstances. Under modified circumstances, every impossibility can become possible

Next week’s essay will pick up from here.

Corrigendum: My staunchest critic, who is an internationally renowned mathematician, drew my attention to another error of mine, in last week’s essay. He pointed out that Mathematics is not a pure and exact science. One lives and learns.

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