**Conflicts: Myth and reality**

[**Najm us Saqib**](https://nation.com.pk/Columnist/najm-us-saqib)

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As opposed to private-sector conflicts or disputes between people and organisations, an international conflict between nation states entail deaths, destruction, famine, displacement of millions of people and sometimes a change in the world map. The continued trend of creating and winning wars has lasting implications and destructive consequences. This approach has generated long-term uncertainties thereby leaving humanity’s negative imprint on the global stage. The direct and indirect economic impact of prevailing tensions in the world needs to be realised and understood if the ultimate objective is to achieve lasting peace. Otherwise, this perfectly delimitted situation may end up destroying the very essence of existence in the coming years.

The prevailing political unrest and economic injustice is making it increasingly difficult to visualise a comparatively peaceful future for the human race on planet Earth. Whether economic injustice breeds political unrest or vice versa, the unfortunate fact remains that advancement in technology has further widened the yawning gap between the rich and the poor besides quietly taking away the most important facet of existence–life.

[Pakistan logs 10 Covid deaths, 270 fresh cases in 24 hours](https://nation.com.pk/17-Nov-2021/pakistan-logs-10-covid-deaths-270-fresh-cases-in-24-hours)

Rather than trying to address and resolve the existing conflicts and work towards global peace, precious mental and material resources are being used to find ways of subduing the enemy through innovative ways and means. Centuries’ old cause of conflict relating to the thought ‘this is mine’ still remains relevant when one looks around and closely observes what is happening around the world. The irony is that the majority of these conflicts are being addressed by those who actually were involved in creating them in the first place, sometimes openly, other times from behind the scenes. The situation gets even more complicated when the locals claim a war imposed by foreigners as their own.

Presently, there are several war-zones wherein human and economic loss has become a routine matter. Socio-economic grievances and ethno-nationalism have resulted in the killing of hundreds and displacing of millions, bringing Ethiopia perhaps on the verge of becoming another Yugoslavia. Yemen, being the critical fault line in the Middle East rivalry between two Muslim states has already claimed more than 100,000 lives with local, regional and international involvement. Ever since Qaddafi was overthrown in 2011, Libya is split into two parallel administrative units. The tribal clashes and other factors have made it another area of outside competition amongst at least four Muslim countries.

[Sheikh Rasheed’s elder brother passes away](https://nation.com.pk/17-Nov-2021/sheikh-rasheed-s-elder-brother-passes-away)

Militants are waging insurgency in Burkina Faso, displacing over 500,000 people and bringing the country on the verge of collapse. Presence of local IS and Al Qaeda elements are further aggravating the already gloomy political and social scenario. Syria, a story of broken promises and false hopes, has become a coliseum for international show of force, killing more than 400,000 people since 2011 while displacing millions. Seven million people of the oil-rich Venezuela need humanitarian aid after experiencing crushing poverty, controversial elections, two governments at the same time and a possible collapse of public services. Ukraine’s over seven-year-old conflict with separatists in the country’s eastern Donbas region is awaiting a comprehensive ceasefire and further disengagement at front-line positions.

The simmering tensions amongst Iran, Israel and the US particularly after the Trump administration’s decision to withdraw from the 2015 nuclear agreement and impose mounting unilateral sanctions against Tehran and ending already-limited exemptions on Iran’s oil sales add to the existing tensions in the Persian Gulf region. Then there are military tensions in the Himalayan border, Taiwan and the South China Sea. Add into it the threats of nuclear annihilation, stepping up short-range ballistic missile tests and the ongoing US-North Korea deadlock; Israeli military strikes inside Syria, Lebanon & Palestine; Jammu and Kashmir dispute and unending tensions between India and Pakistan and one could clearly see a number of flash points ready to explode by design or by accident. The Sino-US race for global governance and dominance has made it perhaps the most important area of future conflicts. As if it was not enough, the sudden conquering of Afghanistan by its own people has added a totally different dimension to the nature of existing conflicts.

[Govt to table 22 bills in Parliament’s joint session today](https://nation.com.pk/17-Nov-2021/govt-to-table-22-bills-in-parliament-s-joint-session-today)

Not that the world is unaware of different approaches, techniques, processes, mechanisms or strategies to resolve an international conflict. Neither is there any dearth of regional and international frameworks of interaction to forestall or effectively deal with any conflict. There exists a wealth of general as well as usable knowledge of addressing intrastate and interstate conflicts, from structural prevention to operational prevention to normative and formal to multilateral peace process to establishing Truth Commissions, an array of institutionalised frameworks is available to successfully deal with international disputes. Not only will the powerful international actors be able to efficiently address an existing international dispute, but they are also able to prevent a conflict beforehand. One wonders at the extreme wisdom with which they move, employing discreet or open means to bringing out the most ‘desirable’ outcome and that too with lightening speed such as a regime change in any third world country.

[EU aims at reinforcing global security with new defense strategy](https://nation.com.pk/17-Nov-2021/eu-aims-at-reinforcing-global-security-with-new-defense-strategy)

The world’s attention is accorded more to ‘conflict of interest’ rather than ‘conflict resolution’. Furthermore, the world’s attention span on such ‘routine’ matters as the  assassination of President Jovenel Moïse of Haiti and removal of Tunisian PM Mechichi in July is not more than a few minutes. The world’s attention may momentarily be diverted to any other emerging event next day before coming back to the prevailing conflicts in its fervent bid to exhibit willingness to contribute to the maximum to address these permanently and completely.

Even if we know that such disputes would remain as such and the announced efforts would not go beyond mere lip service unless some powerful actors’ national interest was brought into it seeking support for undertaking rectifying measures, we unconsciously express ‘surprise’ while still holding firm opinions on each and every international conflict. The presence of ‘hope’ and ‘surprise’ is apparently keeping us moving forward. Otherwise, the ever-increasing indifference and psychological helplessness would have long consumed us.

[Man killed, two injured in Bahawalnagar road mishap](https://nation.com.pk/17-Nov-2021/man-killed-two-injured-in-bahawalnagar-road-mishap)

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