

Is War really inevitable?

Throughout the history of mankind, wars and conflicts had arisen numerous times among all civilizations. Be it the huge Chinese Empire, the British Empire or the Spanish Empire, armed conflicts had always flared up no matter what forms of government, democratic or a dictatorship, a country belongs to. Strangely, it is only in humans do we see such large-scale slaughtering of each other. The reason for this is because we are sociable organisms and live in groups instead of individually. Humans also create distinctions within themselves and this is the origin of inequality. Being unequal, humans fight and reign supreme over each other on the basis that they are different. Humans also fight over resources with one another. Therefore, due to these reasons, war is inevitable among humans.

Think back ten thousand years ago and you would find mankind still in a primitive state. They are unable to comprehend terms such as 'language', 'town', 'agriculture' or 'government'. This time period was what Jean-Jacques Rousseau would have called the 'natural state' of humans in which the concept of society did not exist. Humans in that time period had to fend for themselves and only the strongest would survive. In this state, war could not have developed due to the fact that humans could only satisfy their basic needs and act according to their instincts. However, when humans start to gather to form towns and later, cities, there was a sharp increase in the amount of violence occurring within and between these settlements. This is due to the appearance of greed and selfishness in humans because they no longer had to meet their needs themselves. They are able to obtain clothes, food, and house from various merchants and other types of professions. Quarrels between the residents of the villages could turn into riots and eventually, war. This is only possible owing to the formation of social association among humans. War is the result of society and it could occur in any social association. In the 'natural state', grudges can only last for as long as it takes an organism to meet its basic living requirements. However, grudges in society can leave a deep imprint on both sides of the conflicts (e.g. U.S. vs. Soviet Union) lasting decades or even centuries long. An individual is not capable of starting a war but a collective group of people such as those present in nations have the power and influence to cause large-scale conflicts. Since all humans presently live in societies, war is not preventable because society is the origin of all wars.

With the formation of society come fractions and differences among humans. This will result in prejudice, discrimination and violence. Inequality among humans will cause discord and war with one another. The source and origin of inequality resides in the very

characteristics that defines and distinguishes us as a human. The amount of diversity and distinction exists more in humans than any other species. Nationality, gender, race, social status are just some of the many things that are attributed to humans. ▲ All of this has helped each human being to be unique but it has also caused segregation and groups to form. In the past, nations had been created or destroyed by those whose citizens were different from them in respect to religion, culture and languages. Countries such as Britain (Protestants) and France (Catholics) had fought each other on numerous occasions during their history. Humans instinctively recognize our close blood relations as kin, while differentiating them from others. When humans start to live close together, 'kin' would extend to areas such as sharing a common language or religion. We can all learn from history the various mass killings or the horrific genocides that occurred during wartime. Many of these genocides happened because of the simple reason that the two conflicting sides had different beliefs and cultural practices. The Bosnia war in Yugoslavia, the genocide in Rwanda, the Nazi persecution of Jews and the massacre of ethnic Chinese by Japanese forces in WWII illustrated my points clearly. The very attributes that made us human beings had brought pain and suffering onto countless people.

Despite the benefits of society and the characteristics that labeled us as separate individuals, humans still requires the basic items that can only be obtained from nature. ▲ Among these things includes food, water, oil etc. These natural resources assisted in the growth of the human civilization and we would not be present today had these necessities not been present. Regardless of large quantity, there is a limit to the amount of natural resources that are present at any given time. By considering how much each human being consumes everyday and the enormous population; it is no wonder that global warming is taking place at an ever-increasing rate. One raises the question of how the resources should be distributed amongst the 180+ nations around the world. Unfortunately, there are only limited resources available and war is the only solution to decide who gets them. Many nations had fought over control of natural resources and draws up boundaries for their water channels, forests and oil fields. The Iraq invasion of Kuwait and the aggressive policies of the U.S. to meet its demand for oil had gave rise to various conflicts centered in the Middle East. Nations worldwide had often fought over mineral ores and in some extreme cases in some ▲frican nations, even water. Technology has also further enhanced the amount and ways that resources are found and harnessed. From simple tools such as a plow to high tech computers, these technological equipments had brought agriculture and industrialization to humans. This has a dramatic increase in the amount of valuable output from lands and other natural resources. In spite of these developments, humans consumed limited resources at a faster rate than the environment that could renew it. Thus, war is the only way to determine who could acquire these precious resources.

Some people argue that war is preventable because the choice to go to war lies in our own hands and many people does not want to go to war. However, as mentioned in the above stated arguments, that choice lies beyond the hands of an individual. The need for living necessities such as food and water and our instinctive tendency to be people similar to us had drove us closer to war. Of course, as civilized individuals, we would rather mediate and reach a decision by consensus. In any nation, the general will and interest of the people have always been directed towards the good and peace. However, this general will is fallible and it could be distorted and twisted in accordance to the interests of an individual or a group of people. It is very easy to broadcast propaganda and radical ideas through the media to influence and 'brainwashed' the way a citizen thinks. This was seen commonly in Nazi Germany in WWII and in the Soviet Union during the cold war. Once again, spreading propaganda through the media (e.g. newspaper, radio etc.) is only possible as a result of the close association that humans had established for each other in the 'civilized state'. Despite the efforts of peace-loving groups such as the anti-war demonstrations around the world, they are not capable of challenging the aggressive policies and dictators of nations around the world. Despite the efforts to stop racial discrimination and other forms of bias, we have seen recently an increase in the number of racial violence in the world. Even in a peacekeeping nation such as Canada, it had been plagued with violence such as 'the Bloody Sunday', 'The FLQ crisis in 1970' and participations in the world wars, the Korean war and the Iraq war. For the people who think that war is preventable, let it be known to them that there is not a single country in the world that did not go to war.

Try as we may, there are no solutions to prevent war erupting in the human race. We could postpone it, mediate it, or discuss alternatives to war, but in the end, war would still fall on our heads. Society is the cause of it and it does not seem realistic that we would return to the 'natural state'. The differences among humans such as race or religion would only quicken the pace of war from happening. Technology and competition for resources only reinforces my thesis and arguments further. ▲At the present moment, we should continue to inform and educate ourselves to prepare for the time when the inevitable arrives.