

Unfolding of the Great War

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WORLD WAR 3

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Preface

The world has seen wars in some part or the other during the past seventy five years after end of World War II. But by and large, the world has been peaceful. While there was peace on the surface, developments were taking place which were setting the stage for a new global conflict.

In the past seven and a half decades, technology and paradigm of war have changed drastically. Players have also changed. A new global conflict (whose foundations were laid decades ago) is going to be entirely different in character and shape from the two World Wars. It is for this reason that it is better to call it by a new nomenclature – the Great War and not World War III.

Technology of fast travel by sea and gunpowder enabled the First World War. Air travel formed the backbone of World War II which ended with the use of nuclear weapons. Information technology and biological weapons are the foundations of the present war which may be smarter and may be more technology driven than ever before. It may also make use of arms and ammunition that could not have been imagined a century ago. Hackers, software, bio-technology, medicines, microbes and small microprocessor controlled machines may achieve strategic objectives without having to use large scale firepower.

A century ago, military operations started and ended with big bang. No longer! Now, an attack may begin softly and may end quietly. Nation states are no longer isolated islands. Interconnectivity and interdependence has made each country vulnerable from inside. This is the new world whether you like it or not. Welcome to the harsh uncomfortable reality of the Great War!

History is usually written after the end of war by the victor. It is most difficult to draw up a picture of an ongoing war. It becomes more difficult by the fact that each player in the war unleashes propaganda which puts truth under layers of clouds.

This mini-book is an attempt to understand the key players, the dynamics, the tools and the goals in the Great War which is unfolding across the globe.

There is no denying that my perspective is shaped by my nationality, my beliefs and my biases. The views presented in this mini-book are not objective. At the same time, there is no attempt at propaganda or catering to some specific interest. I have tried to be intellectually honest to myself and to my readers within the limits of my own mind and being.

Hope that you enjoy reading this mini-book and also that it changes or adds to your perspective of the world and on-going conflicts. Hope also that the mini-book helps the

present as well as future leaders of India to develop a global strategic perspective beyond their day-to-day domestic inter-party fights.

Look forward to your comments on the mini-book.

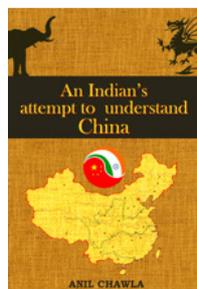


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Readers of this mini-book may also like to read the author's "**An Indian's Attempt to Understand China**" available for free at <http://www.samarthbharat.com/files/china.pdf> and also in e-book format for a price at <https://books2read.com/u/bP551J> .

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A. Key Players

A1. People's Republic of China (PRC)

Often People's Republic of China (PRC) is referred to only as China. This feeds into the narrative of PRC who claim that there is only one China. The reality, which many countries deny, is that there are two Chinas – People's Republic of China (PRC) and Republic of China (commonly known as Taiwan). PRC consists of mainland China and Tibet, which was annexed by PRC. It is also important to mention here that Hong Kong, though officially a part of PRC, is struggling to retain a separate identity while PRC is aiming to tighten her grip.

PRC is strange mix of communist ideology, capitalist ambitions and memories of glorious imperialist history. In addition, there is Confucianism, Daoism / Taoism, Legalism and a strong tradition of ancestor worship. Chinese also believe in the Kingdom of Heaven. They believe that their rulers are blessed by the Mandate of Heaven and thus have a divine right to rule. The faith in divine sanction runs deep and gives the rulers of PRC much freedom and rights over the population. Chinese had always looked upon the King of China as the emperor of the world. This belief has not gone away. The present rulers of PRC seem to be convinced that PRC has a divine right to rule over the world. Becoming a global imperial power is not a dream for the rulers of PRC, it is (according to them in their heart) their right and almost divine duty ordained by their ancestors.

One needs to look at the list of countries with whom PRC has fought since 1950 – South Korea, Republic of China (Taiwan), Burma (Myanmar), India, Soviet Union (Russia), Vietnam, Northern Mali. There are hardly any countries with whom PRC shares a border and has no disputes.

Of course, there are countries like Pakistan and North Korea which can best be described as vassal states of PRC. In fact, the PRC-Pakistan relationship is the model which the rulers of PRC have for every other country in the world – be subservient and bow to the emperor of the world. The Chinese world-view is extremely hierarchical. Even though the country moved from monarchy to a

communist society, the change is superficial. Deep within, the belief system has remained unchanged.

Any discussion of China will be incomplete without some discussion about totalitarianism, which forms foundation of the mindset of people as well as elite of PRC. Totalitarianism has been defined as a political system in which the state recognizes no limits to its authority and strives to regulate every aspect of public and private life wherever feasible.

In case of China, the trio of Confucianism, Daoism and Legalism have provided the framework for totalitarian society for more than three thousand five hundred years. The Emperor has always represented the Heaven on earth and anybody questioning the Heaven surely deserves to be punished in the harshest possible manner.

The **Mandate of Heaven** has been a Chinese political and religious doctrine used to justify the rule of the emperor of China. According to this belief, heaven – which embodies the natural order and will of the universe - bestows the mandate on a just ruler, the Son of Heaven. If a ruler is overthrown, this is interpreted as an indication that the ruler was unworthy, and had lost the mandate. While Communism does not recognize the Mandate of Heaven, the way the people of PRC behave towards their rulers and also the way the rulers behave are strongly influenced by the doctrine of Mandate of Heaven.

Rulers of PRC can take harsh decisions; can subject their people to extreme hardships without having to worry about reactions. That is a luxury that the President of the USA will surely love to have.

Let us also look at some key features of PRC that are likely to prove critical in the Great War:

- a) **STEM Graduates** – PRC is second in the world (closely following India) in number of Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) graduates with more than 78 million STEM graduates. In comparison, the USA has only about 67 million STEM graduates.
- b) **Research Expenditure** – It is estimated that PRC is now one of the leading countries as far as expenditure on research and development is concerned.

- c) **Manufacturing Strengths** – PRC has become the manufacturing hub of the world. There is practically no country in the world that can do without leaning on PRC for some product or the other.
- d) **Efficiency & Speed in Public Projects** – No country in the world can match PRC in terms of speed and efficiency in public projects. The country can execute a large project in a matter of weeks where other countries take years. If PRC decides to double its crude oil storage capacity to take advantage of low crude prices, she can do it in a matter of weeks. For most other countries, it is likely to be a five year or longer project. The strategic advantage that a country gets from this is too obvious.
- e) **Acceptance of Death** – A country that can accept and live with the death of her own citizens can be a formidable enemy in any war. After Second World War, no other country has killed as many people as PRC has done. Chinese Civil War resulted in the death of between **1.8 million and 3.5 million** people between 1927 and 1949. The Great Leap Forward (1958-1962 CE) is estimated to have caused somewhere between **18 to 60 million** deaths. Cultural Revolution (1966-1976 CE) led to large number of deaths – estimates vary from about **400,000 at the lower end to 10 million at the higher end**. There can be no doubt that no other major country of modern world comes anywhere close.
- f) **Largest Creditor** – PRC has become the world's biggest lender. Exact estimates are not available. But it is estimated that after adding portfolio debts (including the USD 1 trillion of U.S. Treasury debt purchased by China's central bank) and trade credits (to buy goods and services), the Chinese government's aggregate claims to the rest of the world exceed USD 5 trillion in total. In other words, countries worldwide owed more than 6% of world GDP in debt to PRC as of 2017 and it is growing every day. Without doubt, PRC has surpassed traditional, official lenders such as the World Bank, the IMF, or all OECD creditor governments combined. For many developing countries, debt owed to PRC exceeds 20% of their GDP.
- g) **People's Anger** – In a country like PRC this may not matter in usual circumstances. The rulers of PRC can put down any protests with barbaric cruelty that cannot even be imagined in any other part of the world. But when a country is at war, internal tensions can provide an opportunity to enemies to enter the country under the cover of liberating the people. Hong Kong is

simmering, some would say, burning. Tibet is a part of PRC only due to brute force and not due to any emotional connect. PRC claims Taiwan as part of China. Most countries deal with Taiwan as an independent country while playing to the sensitivities of PRC. This playing to the sensitivities of PRC may not continue for long as the Great War unfolds.

A2. United States of America (USA)

USA has enjoyed unprecedented prosperity after Second World War. The country has been used to looking at herself as the most powerful country which can call the shots in every part of the world. It is difficult to sum up the situation of a country like the USA in a few points relevant for our discussion. Nevertheless, a few points that seem important are as follows:

- a) **Individualism** – In contrast to PRC, the USA believes in individualism. Every individual must have the freedom to do whatever he / she wishes. This makes it impossible to take hard decisions that adversely affect even a small section of the population. There can be no ordering. A corollary of that is the way school education system of the country has evolved.
- b) **School Education** – No child should do what he / she does not like. So, if a child does not like to study mathematics, there must not be any pressure on the child to study mathematics. Net result of the do-as-it-pleases-you education policy is a broken school education system. Much of the school graduates can barely write their names. As a result, the country has a severe shortage of people with proficiency in science and mathematics.
- c) **Dependence on Labour Import** – Shortage of skills is endemic in various sectors of economy in the USA. So, on one hand the country has unemployment and hungry people on the streets, on the other the country has to depend on migrant labour for everything from picking apples to running computers.
- d) **Manufacturing Collapse** – One can analyze the reasons for it and each one can come up with different answers. But, no one can deny that manufacturing industries of all types are almost dead in the USA. Dependence of the USA on China, Taiwan, South America and various other countries is too strong. US corporations are strong in branding, marketing and such other functions but

not in manufacturing. In a war this can be a big handicap as is already evident.

- e) **Dollar Exports / Largest Debtor** – This is a bubble that has been becoming bigger and more vulnerable to a pin-prick every year for the past three decades. The country's total debt is estimated to be more than USD 24 trillion. Japan, China, United Kingdom, Brazil, Ireland, India are some of the large holders of US debt. It is estimated that Japan and China hold approximately 1.1 trillion each of the US treasury paper. From 1989 to 2019, the US debt has increased more than 800%. Currently, the US national debt is greater than what America produces in a whole year. Debt has become an easy way of financing federal deficit.
- f) **All Imports, No Exports** – Besides exporting dollars, there are only two large exports that the USA is still known for – armaments and aircraft. Even in these two exports, the USA is losing her edge fast. US aircraft manufacturer, Boeing, is almost on the verge of bankruptcy. Of course, there are agricultural exports like wheat, corn, almonds, pistachios, prunes etc. But, such exports cannot help the country to maintain the sort of lifestyle that Americans are used to.
- g) **Fear of Death** – While the USA has been at war with some country or the other during the past hundred years, she has not seen large-scale deaths. The ability of the country to stomach large number of deaths is fairly low.
- h) **Racism and Social Tensions** – Racial tensions in the USA are running high. On one hand are the White Supremacists who do not wish to consider anyone other than a Caucasian as a human being. On the other hand, frustrations and anger of African Americans and other communities are rising up. Reducing economic opportunities and increasing unemployment have added fuel to the explosive nature of the racial divide.
- i) **Trigger Happy Cowboy Culture** – American films have fed this image of a macho cowboy who shoots from his hip at the slightest provocation and sometimes without provocation. This myth or historical reality has been fed so strongly to the American people that it is now part of their mindset. At the domestic level it finds expression in the gun culture. At the global level, we see a country willing to go into armed aggression anywhere in the world on some pretence or the other or even without pretence. Wide prevalence of

guns in the USA threatens to make any civil unrest much worse. But more worrying is the tendency of her leaders to take to guns instead of diplomacy in every crisis. Earlier, the President of USA made efforts to take all allies along in any warlike situation. But, now the allies are seen as a bother. The macho man that the POTUS is, he wants to be seen as a lone cowboy shooting and bringing home the victory all by himself.

A3. Russia

Understanding Russia is extremely difficult. Russia is both, Europe and Asia. Russia is the only country with a long (4,200 km) land border with China and also a maritime border (49 km) with the USA. Russia shares land border with North Korea on the east and also with Finland, Norway, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania on the west.

Russians look at themselves as Europeans. For those among Russians who think racially, favoring white Caucasian people comes naturally. Though it is rare, Indians, Chinese and other Asians (and of course, Africans) can be discriminated against by some Russians. I say this based on personal experience in a flight from Moscow to Delhi.

Russians share cultural bonds with India and countries of Central Asia. Russians do not see themselves as close to Chinese. At a people level, Russians wish to talk about how many of their religious traditions and rituals are common with Hindu or Buddhist practices. Indians visiting Russia have always experienced warmth. It seems that Russians do not have the same warmth for Chinese who are viewed with suspicion and mistrust.

With that short background about Russian people and their mindset, let us turn to history of World War II. On 23 August 1939 – shortly before World War II broke out in Europe – enemies Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union had surprised the world by signing the German-Soviet Nonaggression Pact, in which the two countries agreed to take no military action against each other for the next 10 years. Soviet leader Joseph Stalin viewed the pact as a way to keep his nation on peaceful terms with Germany, while giving him time to build up the Soviet military. German chancellor Adolf Hitler used the pact to make sure Germany was able to invade Poland unopposed. The pact also contained a secret agreement in which the Soviets and Germans agreed how they would later divide up Eastern Europe. The German-

Soviet Nonaggression Pact fell apart less than two years later in June 1941, when Nazi forces invaded the Soviet Union.

The love-hate relationship of Nazi Germany and Soviet Union finds its echo in the present day Russia-China relationship. Just as in 1939 Chancellor Hitler could not be trusted to honour his commitments; the People's Republic of China has demonstrated by annexation of Tibet that honouring commitments is not something that she believes in. Despite the untrustworthy nature of Hitler, Soviet Union decided to sign a Nonaggression Pact to buy peace for the short term. In a similar manner, Russia and People's Republic of China signed a Treaty of Good-Neighborliness and Friendly Cooperation in 2001.

Since 2001, Sino-Russian relations have been growing increasingly close, with both sides seeking to reduce U.S. influence around the world. In 2019, the two upgraded their relationship to comprehensive strategic partnership of coordination. This relationship has emerged out of resentment of American hegemony that the two countries share.

Russia is largely the junior partner in the relationship. The two have been making compromises to balance against the U.S. However, the unequal power dynamic in the entente is too obvious for anyone to ignore. The general impression is that where China leads, Russia follows. And that could well be the root of problems in the future.

In 1939, Soviet Union and Germany, both despised British imperialism and that had brought the two together. More than eighty years later, the characters have changed. It is now the intense dislike of American hegemony that has brought together Russia and People's Republic of China.

Hatred for someone can bring two persons together for a short while. Hatred cannot be the basis of long term friendship between two countries which have never been friends and who have a strong deep-rooted mistrust of each other. Pact between Soviet Union and Germany could not lead to friendship between the two countries. If history is any guide, we may see frictions develop between Russia and China soon enough despite the comprehensive strategic partnership of coordination.

Friction between the two giants is likely on different perceptions of each other's spheres of influence. Presently, in the relationship between PRC and Russia, PRC is acting as the big brother and Russia is following. This arrangement clashes with the world view of Russia.

At the beginning of the twentieth century, large parts of China were under direct military control of Russia. While leaders of PRC may take pride in their imperial past, the fact is that around 1900 China was seen by western powers including Russia as a country up for grabbing. In 1902, Winston Churchill gave a speech regarding the division of China by the great powers, where he declared that "*we shall have to take the Chinese in hand and regulate them*", "*I believe in the ultimate partition of China*" and "*the Aryan stock is bound to triumph*".

Though there is no denying that PRC today has economic clout and Russia must concede space to PRC in view of the same, at their heart Russians hate it. Russia considers not just parts of former Soviet Union but also every country that was in the past under her influence as legitimately Russian sphere of influence. This is bound to be in clash with the Chinese view where their emperor was the emperor of the world and every king from every part of the world must compulsorily lean before the emperor.

The Great War, as it unfolds, may lead to a clash in the world-views of Russia and People's Republic of China. Russia is least likely to happily concede to PRC a major role in global affairs especially in countries which Russia considers as her legitimate sphere of influence.

It is difficult to predict the event or country or time at which the two giants will break up. But, it can be said with fair level of certainty that the separation will happen sometime or other.

A4. European Union, Canada, Japan and Taiwan

European Union, Canada, Japan and Taiwan have been strong allies of the USA since World War II. However, an impression has been built up in the Trump years that the allies have been moving away from the USA. The President of the USA has spared no efforts to irritate and antagonize the allies.

Notwithstanding the isolationist voices made by President Trump, as the Great War unfolds, the allies are likely to come back close together with the USA primarily because all of them share common disdain for People's Republic of China.

Of course, some of the countries of the European Union have developed close business relations with PRC in the past decade or so. In some countries, intelligence

agencies of PRC may even be able to influence the political process. Nevertheless, dislike of the Chinese is so strong among the common people of the countries that after initial dithering these countries will also be forced to join their European brethren.

United Kingdom (Britain) is an old ally of the USA and will continue to be so.

A5. Shia Muslims

Muslim world is sharply divided along sectarian lines. Hence, it is not proper to consider the Muslim countries as one block.

Shia countries are led by Iran. Shia Muslims are in majority in Iran, Iraq, Bahrain, Azerbaijan and, according to some estimates, Yemen. There are also large Shia communities in Afghanistan, India, Kuwait, Lebanon, Pakistan, Qatar, Syria, Turkey, Saudi Arabia and the UAE.



Shias constitute about 10% of all Muslims, and globally their population is estimated at between 154 and 200 million. In countries which have been governed by Sunnis, Shias tend to make up the poorest sections of society. They often see themselves as victims of discrimination and oppression. Sunni extremists frequently denounce Shias as heretics who should be killed.

The Iranian revolution of 1979 launched a radical Shia Islamist agenda that was perceived as a challenge to conservative Sunni regimes. Tehran's policy of supporting Shia militias and parties beyond its borders was matched by Sunni-ruled Gulf states. Today, many conflicts in the region have strong sectarian overtones.

Given a chance, Shia Muslims and Sunni Muslims will not like to be on the same side in the Great War. The animosity and hatred between the two sects is too deep rooted to allow that.

Iran shares with Russia and People's Republic of China strong dislike for US hegemony. Iranian Revolution was as much against the USA as it was against the Shah of Iran. President Obama made efforts to make friends with Iran but the efforts have been undone by his successor. Of course, the friendship between the USA and Saudi Arabia will always prevent Iran and the USA to be friends.

In the last week of year 2019, Iran, Russia and People's Republic of China engaged in a trilateral exercise called Marine Security Belt which was their first joint naval drill in the Indian Ocean. Iranian authorities revealed that this was part of a broader naval collaboration between Iran and China, which also included production of destroyers and submarines. Iran directly said that the trilateral naval exercise was to send a strategic message that the three participating countries had *"reached a meaningful strategic point in their relations, with regard to their shared and non-shared interests, and by non-shared I mean the respect we have for one another's national interests."*

Some analysts have put Pakistan as part of this trilateral configuration. Pakistan is largely a Sunni country and is dependent in many matters on Saudi Arabia. There seems to be absolute no chance that Pakistan will join hands with Shia Iran and cross Saudi Arabia.

The difficulty in the trilateral configuration of Iran-Russia-PRC will arise as and when the entente between Russia and PRC comes to an end and the two giants clash over spheres of influence in Middle East.

Russia has been actively involved in West Asia conflicts. Russia has legitimate reasons to think that Iran, Syria, Azerbaijan and even Afghanistan are her domain. Russia has invested heavily in the region in terms of active military support.

In contrast, PRC has been hesitant in meddling in the matters of West Asia (Middle East or Persian Gulf). Except as a supplier of military equipment, PRC has largely adopted a hands-off approach in the region. Moreover, PRC's treatment of Uighur Muslims in Xinjiang is much talked about in the entire Muslim world leading to deep-rooted mistrust and dislike of Chinese in all Muslim majority countries.

If Russia and PRC were to go separate ways in the Great War, Iran and other Shia countries will have a major dilemma on their hands. On one hand will be an old friend and ally – Russia. On the other hand will be an unknown and unreliable partner – People's Republic of China.

The choice for Shia Muslims will become painful and heart-wrenching if Russia joins hands with the USA and the Allies of World War II come together again. In choosing Russia they will be going with their arch enemies – the USA, Israel and Saudi Arabia.

No one can predict the direction that the Shias (or Iran) will turn to. Russia has more boots in these countries than PRC. And that may give Russians strength which may be too strong for anyone to resist. Well, spheres of influence are not achieved merely by diplomats talking niceties. For centuries, Russians have built spheres of influence and they know how to get their way, while Chinese are new at the game.

A6. Sunni Muslims

The great majority of the world's more than 1.5 billion Muslims are Sunnis - estimates suggest the figure is somewhere between 85% and 90%. In the Middle East, Sunnis are the majority in Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Jordan, Yemen, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Indonesia, Turkey, Algeria, Morocco, and Tunisia.

Historically Saudi Arabia, a monarchy and home to the birthplace of Islam, saw itself as the leader of the Muslim world. However this was challenged in 1979 by the Islamic revolution in Iran which created a Shia challenge to the leadership of Saudi Arabia.

Unfolding of the Great War

Saudi Arabia is the heavyweight leader of the Sunni world. Saudi Arabia is also a major ally of the USA. Ruling family of Saudi Arabia has strong ties with the USA.

However, at the people level the Sunnis do not have any love for the USA or her allies. They will like to get a visa to either the USA or any country of Europe and enjoy the lifestyle of opulence. But that does not stop them from blaming the USA and her allies for all the ills and poverty in their countries. There is a strong victim narrative in these countries. The average Sunni believes (rightly or wrongly) that the Islamic world was extremely rich and full of all-round happiness till the western powers destroyed it all by their crooked ways which included imperialism, colonialism and the destruction of Islamic Caliphate after World War I. This belief takes the form of extremist violence or terrorism.

Estimated distribution of Sunni Muslims in the Middle East

5-20% 21-40% 41-60% 61-80% 81-100%



It is indeed ironical that even though Saudi Arabia and Pakistan are close allies of the USA, every terrorist attack on the USA had strong connection with either one or both of the two countries. This seems contradictory but is an undeniable fact.

Contradictions and internal conflicts are aplenty in the Sunni majority countries. Saudi Arabia has been described by some as "*the most fragile*" country in the world. Royal family of Saudi Arabia is beset with problems. Pakistan is a democracy run by and for the army.

While Saudi Arabia is clearly the leader of the Sunni world and by implication the Sunni world is aligned with the USA, the ground reality is not so simple. Pakistan and China claim to have "*all-weather diplomatic relations*" and a friendship that is "*unbreakable and rock-solid*".

As the Great War unfolds, different countries of the Sunni world may go different ways and may not follow Saudi Arabia blindly. Having said that, there is no denying that Sunni world will have natural inclination primarily towards the USA and secondarily towards Russia. Credit for the inclination to Russia must go to the dynamic leadership of Putin who has been able to build a reputation in the region for reliability, dependability and trustworthiness – something that the USA has lost in the past few years.

A7. India

After independence, Indian leadership loved to get on a moral pedestal and preach to the world. Nehru, who was leading India at that time, had a romantic vision of peace, non-violence and non-alignment. Needless to say that Nehru's vision was not founded on realpolitik.

India, under Nehru, made the historical mistake of not responding militarily to the annexation of Tibet by People's Republic of China in October 1950. India paid the price for her blunder when People's Republic of China invaded India in 1962. In the past six decades, India has lived with constant tension on India Tibet border. Notably, India shares a border only with Tibet and has no common border with the mainland China.

The Great War started in the backyard of India with the annexation of Tibet by PRC. Unfortunately, Indian leadership lacked and still lacks the strategic vision and

approach which are critical in the Great War. India's approach is essentially reactive and not proactive.

Russia is an old friend for India. Russia and India both term this relationship as a "*special and privileged strategic partnership*". On the other hand, India-U.S. bilateral relations have developed into a "*global strategic partnership*", based on shared democratic values and increasing convergence of interests on bilateral, regional and global issues. Simultaneously discussions have been progressing among United States, India, Australia, and Japan for a quadrilateral.

India is also a member of Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO), or Shanghai Pact, a grouping of eight countries including Russia, PRC, Pakistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan. It may not be proper to read too much into this membership.

India fought the two World Wars on the side of the USA and her allies as a colony of United Kingdom. But, that cannot serve as a guide for the future position of India. For long, Indian leaders used to swear by non-aligned movement. In the present situation of the world, the non-aligned movement is almost dead and has lost relevance. It seems likely that India will be forced to join the group against PRC largely because of simmering border disputes related to India Tibet border and also because of the general dislike of Chinese people among Indians.

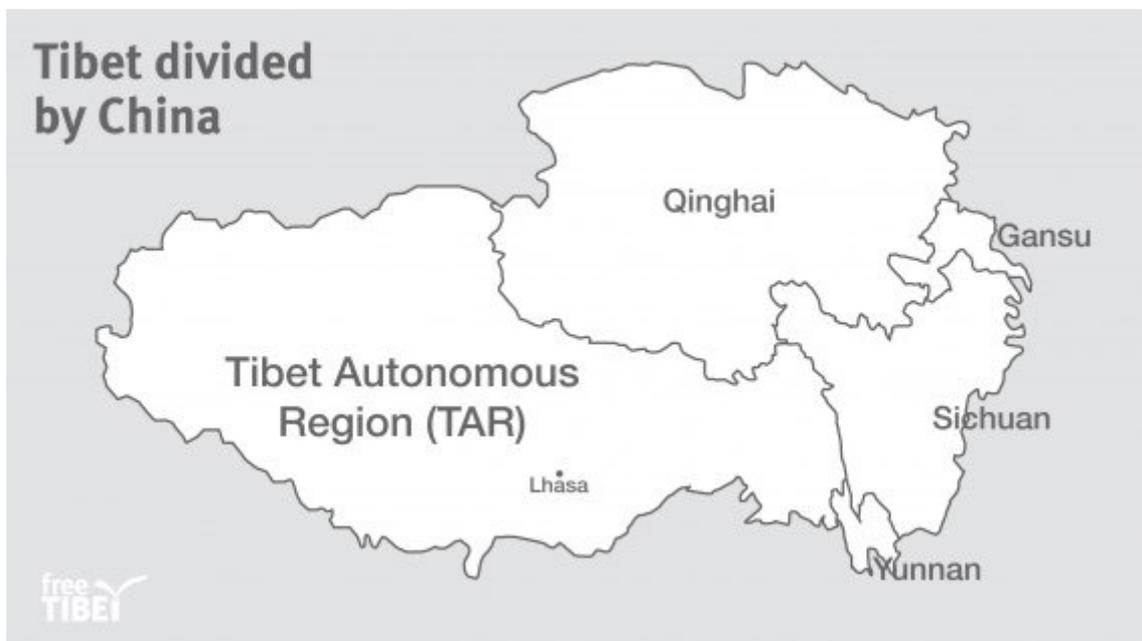
Nevertheless, there seems to be no strategic clarity among Indian leaders about the position of their country in the Great War. India is a country that loves to take the moral high ground without defining the country's interests, targets or strategic objectives.

B. The Initial Stage of War

B1. Annexation of Tibet

The Great War started on 6th October 1950 with the Battle of Chamdo. The battle ended on 19th October 1950 with the annexation of Tibet by the People's Republic of China (PRC). Before her annexation, Tibet was a protectorate of China as well as of Britain. It was the duty of Britain as well as her successor state in the region (India) to defend sovereignty of Tibet. And of course, PRC was duty-bound to defend Tibet.

World War II began on 1 September 1939 when Germany invaded Poland and captured the Free City of Danzig. The Great War began on 6th October 1950 when PRC invaded Tibet. There is, however, a big difference. When Germany invaded Poland, Britain and France declared war on Germany two days later honouring treaty obligations. In case of Tibet, Britain, India, France, USA and rest of the world sat quietly and a few years later were looking at ways to make friends with the invader.



Source: <https://freetibet.org/about/china-argument>

Unfolding of the Great War

Seventy years back leadership of PRC checked the international waters and found that the world had lost the appetite to engage in a big fight. It will be worthwhile to remember that before the annexation of Tibet, China had not won a war for more than two thousand years. Also that China did not have an air force in 1950 and that China was a poor country with widespread starvation and hardly any industry. Much of the equipment that PRC army (Red Army) had at that time was military hardware left behind by the retreating Japanese army.

A ragtag army could tear up a treaty and annex a protectorate country with geographic area almost half as large as the mainland was astonishing. It showed to PRC that the world had become weak. The so-called leaders of the world were busy enjoying the gains from World War II and could not be bothered to pick up arms to defend a poor country located somewhere far off. This was the first time that the dragon tasted blood, as the world looked away.

B2. Other Armed Conflicts Involving PRC



Vietnamese artillery pounds away at advancing Chinese troops on Feb. 23, 1979, during the Sino-Vietnamese War

By Source (WP:NFCC#4), Fair use, <https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?curid=47456596>

After the victory in Poland, Nazi Germany was emboldened to attack Denmark and Norway a few months later. A series of invasions followed. Germany was on a mission to build an empire. One can see the same pattern in case of PRC. Nazis of Germany had convinced German people of Aryan supremacy theory to justify their invasions. People's Republic of China has a similar theory based on the vision of grand imperial past of China.

Unfolding of the Great War

Just as Aryan supremacy theory was based largely on fiction, the Chinese version of imperial grandeur ignores the fact that almost all their great imperial dynasties were founded by invaders. Nevertheless, there is no denying that the ruling elite of PRC have convinced the people of their country about supremacy of their unique blend of communist ideology and imperialist history full of glories.

Any war begins in the mind of the people. The Great War that we are seeing unfold now started decades ago when the elite of PRC (like the Nazis) started believing that they could (or rather have a right) to rule the world. Just as Germany's victory over Poland had strengthened Nazis' belief in their supremacy, PRC's easy annexation of Tibet played a key role in their view of PRC in the global power structure. Becoming a global imperial power is not a dream for the rulers of PRC, it is (according to them in their heart) their right and almost divine duty ordained by their ancestors.

Annexation of Tibet by PRC was not an isolated incident. PRC has been engaged in a number of battles / wars in the past seventy years. A quick summary reads as follows:

War	Allies of PRC	Opponents	Result for PRC
Battle of Chamdo - 1950		Tibet	Victory - Annexation of Tibet into PRC
Korean War 1950-53	North Korea, Soviet Union	South Korea, USA, UK, Canada, Turkey, Australia, Ethiopia, Philippines, New Zealand, Thailand, Greece, France, Colombia, Belgium, South Africa, Netherlands, Luxembourg	Ceasefire - Chinese-North Korean invasion of South Korea repelled; Korean Demilitarized Zone established; little territorial change at the 38th parallel border, essentially <i>uti possidetis</i>
First Taiwan Strait Crisis 1954-55		ROC, USA	Ceasefire - Chinese withdrawal, <i>status quo ante bellum</i>

Unfolding of the Great War

War	Allies of PRC	Opponents	Result for PRC
Second Taiwan Strait Crisis - 1958	PRC	ROC, USA	Ceasefire - China ceases bombardment
Tibetan Uprising - 1959		Chushi Gangdruk	Victory - Uprising suppressed
China-Burma border Campaign 1960-61	Burma	Kuomintang	Victory - Kuomintang evicted from Burma
Sino-Indian War 1962		India	Victory - Complete Chinese control of Aksai Chin
Nathu La and Cho La incidents 1967		India	Defeat - Chinese withdrawal from Sikkim
Zhenbao Island Incident - 1969		Soviet Union	Tactical Soviet Victory - Status quo ante bellum; Strategic Chinese victory - China maintained control of territories. Final closure by Sino-Soviet Border Agreement - 1991
Vietnam War 1965-69	North Vietnam, Viet Cong, Khmer Rouge, Pathet Lao	South Vietnam, USA, South Korea, Thailand, Australia, New Zealand, Khmer Republic, Kingdom of Laos	Withdrawal - American-led forces withdraw from Indochina. Communist governments take power in South Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia. South Vietnam is annexed by North Vietnam. Breakdown in Sino-Vietnamese relations leading to the Sino-Vietnamese war.
Battle of the Paracel Islands - 1974		South Vietnam	Victory - China establishes control over Crescent Group of the Paracels; China controls the entire Paracels.

Unfolding of the Great War

War	Allies of PRC	Opponents	Result for PRC
Sino-Vietnamese War - 1979		Vietnam	Chinese withdrawal from Vietnam. Continued Vietnamese occupation of Cambodia until 1989. Vietnamese loss of territory.
Johnson South Reef Skirmish - 1988		Vietnam	Victory - China captures several reefs in Spratly islands
Third Taiwan Strait Crisis - 1996		ROC, USA	Ceasefire - China ceases bombardment
Northern Mali conflict - 2012-present	France, Mali, Benin, Ghana, Cape Verde, Gambia, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Ivory Coast, Liberia, Niger, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Senegal, Togo, Chad, Burundi, Gabon, South Africa, Rwanda, Tanzania, Uganda, Germany	ISIL, Ansar al-Sharia, Jama'at Nasr al-Islam wal Muslimin	Ongoing

PRC - People's Republic of China

ROC - Republic of China

Source: Wikipedia

When one looks at the long list above, it is clear that the PRC has been involved in more armed conflicts than most other countries and has fought with many of her neighbours. One cannot also ignore the fact that despite her large size, PRC more often than not has either lost or been forced to resort to some sort of face-saving. Besides, annexation of Tibet the most significant victory that PRC has bagged in the past seven decades has been against India in the year 1962.

India, under the influence of non-violence as a political principle, had made a historical mistake in not acting militarily in 1950 when PRC forces moved to occupy Tibet. India had a significant army and air force in 1950 (thanks to active participation in World War II). India clearly had a military advantage over China. Unfortunately, Indian leadership squandered away the advantage by their ideological misdirection.

PRC had tested the mettle of ruling elite of India of 50's and 60's before acting militarily in 1962. PRC knew that the gospels of peace had no inner strength to go into a war. Prime Minister Nehru was so mortally scared of escalation of war into a

long conflict that he was prepared to concede defeat but was not prepared to authorize Indian Air Force to play a role in the war. Use of air force would have clearly tilted the balance of the war towards India.

The victory of 1962 emboldened PRC. There have been border skirmishes every year since then on Indo-Tibetan border (there is one going on at the time of writing this).

While there is no denying that Indian leaders and forces have picked up some confidence since 1962, India seems to still suffer from a fear of the dragon on her northern borders. In the past five decades, no Indian leader has talked about independence of Tibet. India does not seem inclined to avenge the defeat of 1962.

Small countries like Vietnam, South Korea, Philippines and Republic of China seem to have stood up better to the threats and aggression of PRC than the relatively much larger India.

If one sums up the past seventy years as The Initial Stage of The Great War, one sees that PRC has not fared up too well in military terms. However, there is one front on which PRC has done exceedingly well.

B3. Currency and Trade Wars

Paper currency was invented and used by the Chinese at least five hundred years before it was used anywhere else in the world. So, it should come as no surprise that the Chinese know how to play with it and use the play to their advantage. Of course, it has helped that PRC is an opaque society where financial and macro-economic data can be tailored as per the strategy planned by the central leadership. Before we move to that, let us look at the global currency management system set up in 1944.

Until World War I, most countries were on the gold standard. That meant each country guaranteed that it would redeem its currency for its value in gold. In other words, it meant that a country needed gold reserves to issue currency. However, during World War I most countries decided to cut the tie to gold so they could print the currency needed to pay for their war costs. This caused hyperinflation, as the supply of money overwhelmed the demand. After the war, countries returned to the safety of the gold standard.

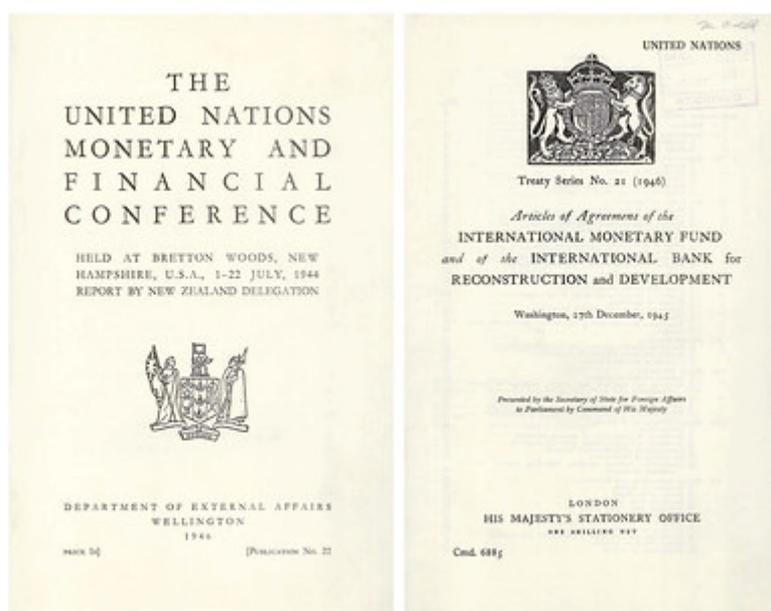
Unfolding of the Great War

After World War I, Britain owed the U.S. substantial sums, which Britain could not repay because it had used the funds to support allies such as France during the War; the Allies could not pay back Britain, so Britain could not pay back the U.S. Treaty at Versailles worked out a solution which was excessively harsh for Germany providing for huge reparations. The leading countries were following the so-called "beggar thy neighbor" policies which saw some trading nations using currency devaluations in an attempt to increase their competitiveness (i.e. raise exports and lower imports).

It is widely accepted that failure to coordinate exchange rates during the interwar period between World War I and World II had exacerbated political tensions. After the World War II, need was felt to create a system of global currency management to avoid major shocks and to have stability in the system.

The Bretton Woods Agreement of 1944 established a new global monetary system. It replaced the gold standard with the U.S. dollar as the global currency. The Bretton Woods Agreement was created by all of the World War II Allied nations.

Under the agreement, countries promised that their central banks would maintain fixed exchange rates between their currencies and the dollar.



Members of the Bretton Woods system agreed to avoid trade wars. In other words, they agreed to not lower their currencies to increase trade. But they could regulate their currencies under certain conditions. For example, they could take action if

foreign direct investment began to destabilize their economies. They could also adjust their currency values to rebuild after a war.

After Bretton Woods, each member agreed to redeem its currency for U.S. dollars, not gold. The justification for the peg to USD was that the United States held three-fourths of the world's supply of gold. No other country had enough gold to back its currency as a replacement. The dollar's value was 1/35 of an ounce of gold. Bretton Woods allowed the world to slowly transition from a gold standard to a U.S. dollar standard. While the world pegged their currencies to USD, the USA agreed to maintain the relation of the USD to gold reserves held by the country.

In 1971, the United States was suffering from massive stagflation — a combination of inflation and recession, which causes unemployment and low economic growth. As a result of pressures from domestic economy, President Nixon unhooked the value of the US Dollar from gold altogether. This officially ended the Bretton Woods system.

Despite end of the system set up by Bretton Woods Agreement, the USD continued to be the currency of global trade and also the preferred currency for all countries to keep their forex reserves. From 1971 onwards, all countries of the world have been free to print as much currency as it suited the country. However, any increase in currency of a country leads to inflation leading to erosion in the value of the country's currency. The inflation leads to loss of value for the currency as compared to currencies of other countries. The only currency that has been an exception to this is the USD. The world queues at the doors of USA to buy US Dollars and the US can print unlimited amount of dollars without bothering about inflation leading to loss of value for her currency. In essence, the world has been giving its savings or profits to the USA in return for the US currency.

The complexities of global currency flows are too complex to be understood and explained in this short book focused on The Great War. Suffice it to say that the USA by undoing the Bretton Woods system created a situation wherein the USA did not need to bother about its trade deficit with any country and also the President of the USA could announce any tax cuts or spend almost unlimited amount of money without having to bother about budget deficit. In essence, from 1971 onwards the biggest business that the USA was doing was printing of dollars and exporting to all countries.

Unfolding of the Great War

From the point of view of US citizens, nothing could be better. In the past five decades, US politicians have been competing with each other to announce higher level of welfare and also tax cuts. Country's debt burden has been increasing. But, why bother when all that one has to do was to issue more treasury bonds to repay against the old ones.

People's Republic of China saw an opportunity in this arrangement. China (not PRC) was part of the Bretton Woods Agreement. PRC inherited the agreement. However, PRC never accepted the basic tenets of transparency and market driven system that the Agreement had set up. PRC created her own system of semi-fixed foreign exchange rates. One can say in a nutshell that the PRC benefitted from and exploited the post-Bretton-Woods rule-less post-1971 currency management arrangement or rather lack of any arrangement. President Trump and the USA are now calling PRC a currency manipulator. Academicians in the USA (not in PRC) are debating whether that is indeed true. They are constrained by absence of any reliable data.

Without getting into the academic debates, let us look at the net result that the PRC has achieved. Let us look at the top countries with whom PRC had a positive trade balance in year 2018 and also look at countries with whom PRC had a negative trade balance.

Country With Whom PRC has +ve Trade Balance	USD Billion
United States	323.7
Netherlands	60.8
India	58.0
United Kingdom	33.1
Mexico	30.1
Vietnam	19.9
Poland	17.3
Bangladesh	16.8
Spain	16.3
Singapore	16.2
Countries With +ve Trade Balance	872.2

Data relates to year 2018

Source: AC based on WITS, World Bank

Country With Whom PRC has -ve Trade Balance	USD Billion
Korea, Rep.	-95.5
Australia	-57.5
Brazil	-43.4
Switzerland	-34.6
Japan	-33.2
Germany	-28.3
Saudi Arabia	-28.3
Angola	-23.4
Malaysia	-17.5
Oman	-15.9
Countries With -ve Trade Balance	-531.9

Data relates to year 2018

Source: AC based on WITS, World Bank

PRC had a positive trade balance of about USD 340 billion in 2018 with the world (excluding Hong Kong). In the same year, PRC had GDP of about USD 13,608 billion. If one compares the two figures, one learns that PRC has been running a positive trade balance with the world amounting to **about 2.5% of her GDP** almost every year for many years. One does not need to be an economist to understand that a country with such positive trade balance will see her currency becoming stronger. Surprisingly, this has not happened in the case of PRC.

From 2008 to 2020, Chinese Yuan has hovered at around 7 Yuan to USD 1 with minor fluctuations. This stability of Yuan in the face of strong trade surplus is a feat for which PRC deserves credit. But it is also the masterstroke in the initial stage of the Great War. This is what has made PRC manufacturing base of the world. This is what has made PRC the biggest lender of the world today (bigger than IMF and World Bank).

Modern history of trade between the USA and the PRC is about four decades old. In this short period, PRC has been able to emerge as the USA's biggest source of imports. Cheap imports from the PRC have broken the backbone of manufacturing industry in the USA and have also made PRC the largest holder of US treasury bonds.

The play with currency also helped PRC build her industry and infrastructure at a rate which is unmatched in recent history. The only parallel that one can see is from Nazi Germany led revival of German economy. Hitler appointed Hjalmar Schacht as President of the Reichsbank in 1933 and Minister of Economics in 1934. Hjalmar Schacht created a scheme for deficit financing, in which capital projects were paid for with the issuance of promissory notes called Mefo bills, which could be traded by companies with each other. This was particularly useful in allowing Germany to rearm because the Mefo bills were not Reichsmarks and did not appear in the federal budget, so they helped conceal rearmament. Schacht's administration achieved a rapid decline in the unemployment rate, the largest of any country during the Great Depression. One does not know whether PRC has learnt her lessons from Nazi Germany, but the resemblance is too glaring to ignore.

Surely, PRC has played her cards well in the battles of currency and trade using weaknesses of a currency management system which was set up in 1944 and was largely discarded by its central figure unilaterally in 1971. It appears to some that the USA has been lured into a honey trap. But it may be too early to pass a judgment on that.

There are some in the USA who believe that the USA may one fine morning confiscate all assets held by PRC. In other words, USA has the option of scrapping all the Treasury Bonds and other financial assets held by PRC and entities of PRC. USA has acted similarly in the past (for example with Iran). So, it should really come as no surprise. If the Allies of USA join their leader in confiscating PRC owned assets, the impact will be severe. It is extremely difficult to predict the outcome of such an action by the USA and her allies. But, it can be said with fair level of certainty that the move (as and when or if it happens) will shake up the financial world like never before and will herald the formal start of the Great War. And after that, nothing will ever be the same again.

C. Ideological Background

Both world wars of the last century were among greedy nations who fought to get a larger share of the global resources.

The Napoleonic Wars ended in 1815 with Napoleon's defeat at Waterloo, and the Congress of Vienna sought to rebuild peace and order in Europe. The dominant powers at Vienna were Austria-Hungary, Russia and Prussia, which were determined to re-establish the rule of monarchs across Europe. The Congress saw France as the main threat to 'peace and order,' so the map of Europe was redrawn to ensure France's power was limited while the powerful empires retained a balance of power.

The Congress of Vienna failed to halt two strong sentiments that were developing during the nineteenth century: nationalism and liberalism. **Nationalism** — or pride in belonging to one's country—was demonstrated in the Ottoman and Austro-Hungarian empires, where ethnic groups wanted freedom from their foreign rulers and the right to form their own nations. **Liberalism** — the belief that people should be equal under the law and have individual liberties— encouraged demands for a share in government.

Both, nationalism and liberalism, continued as dominating influences throughout the latter half of the nineteenth century up to and including World War I and World War II.

The first European colonies were established along the coastlines of Africa, Asia and the Americas from the sixteenth century, initially to provide ports for trade and replenishing food supplies. Over the next three centuries, these colonies were extended and the colonial powers moved inland. During the nineteenth century, this expansion concentrated on further parts of Africa and Asia (including China), and the Pacific. By the end of the nineteenth century, European powers controlled large areas on all inhabited continents and on numerous islands.

From 1880, Britain, France, Germany, Belgium, Italy and Portugal made a 'scramble for Africa', and in fifteen years they 'took' over 90 per cent of that continent. They were motivated by several beliefs: that Africa's raw materials and subsequent markets would greatly improve their trading power; that they had a moral or religious

obligation to bring 'civilisation' and Christianity to Africans; and that colonial expansion brought national power and prestige.

At the end of the nineteenth century, this **colonial expansion** created tensions. Each colonial power was anxious to improve— or at least maintain—its area of dominance and felt threatened by other European powers eyeing their areas of influence. For example, Britain and France wanted to maintain their colonies in Africa, and resented German attempts to establish its own 'place in the sun.' In the South Pacific region, Australia was concerned by German expansion into countries such as New Guinea.



'Bravo, Belgium!' Political cartoon showing a Belgian farmer standing up to the German aggressor; 12 August 1914;
Image taken from Punch, or the London charivari

On 12 August 1914, *Punch* magazine published the cartoon 'Bravo, Belgium!' showing a small Belgian farmer standing up to an aggressive German 'brute'. The British cartoon left the reader in no doubt that Belgium deserved support to resist Germany's attempt to apply its plan (the Schlieffen Plan) to invade France via Belgium. This event, ushered in World War I. However, the stage for the war was set by long-term tensions and disputes between European powers.

Most historians see the long-term causes of World War I as being **nationalism, imperialism, militarism and the system of alliances** between European powers. More than hundred years later, when one hears President Trump declare “*America First*”, one wonders whether much has changed in a century.

After World War I, many ideologies emerged in the world – communism being the most prominent among them. Socialism, Nazism, Racism, Militarism, Capitalism etc. were some others that attracted people. Surely, most of these were not new. As we look back over the hundred years since end of World War I, some of these ideologies have been discredited more than some others. But, each ideology still has its staunch followers. However, the ideological schism that defined World War II had totalitarian regimes on one side and democracies (mostly) on the other side.

Except for the democracy-authoritarian divide, World War II was largely an extension of the first, as far as long-term ideological causes are concerned. Germany, Italy and Japan came together under an alliance called Axis Powers. They believed, not unlike PRC in the present world, that they needed to get a bigger share of the global pie of the world. Nazi Germany had declared their ambitious and aggressive domestic and foreign policies which talked of acquisition of “living space” (*Lebensraum*) for German people and the hegemony of an “Aryan”/“Nordic” master race over “sub-humans” (*Untermenschen*). Italy had invaded Ethiopia and Albania while Japan had invaded much of East Asia. The objectives of Axis Powers were based on their conviction that they were superior and had a right to get riches by aggression and any person or country that stood in the way needed to be crushed most brutally.

It is easy to blame the Axis Powers for their aggression and greed. But the tone was set by the leading powers who later came together under the name of Allies. Dividing the world, colonialism, exploitation of human beings, racism, brutality on native people, and using treaties to impoverish people had been used for more than two centuries by the powers who had suddenly started talking of liberty, freedom, equality and democracy when faced by attack from the Axis Powers. The Allies wanted the world as their fiefdom available for unlimited exploitation. Axis challenged it and wanted a part of the booty.

It is well known that the Allies won the war and wrote the rules of the global financial system to their advantage. USA knew that they could not rule the world without cooperation from Western Europe and Japan. Understandably, USA led in helping Western Europe and Japan rebuild their economies.

A century back, the leading powers had a self-centered view where countries of Asia and Africa appeared either as slave suppliers or as raw material suppliers. They thought that their opulent life style was a natural and everyone else was born to either live life with basic necessities or die due to hunger / disease. While some change has indeed come about, but deep within there is hardly any change. The rich and powerful countries still have the mindset that they had a century ago. Key difference now is the challenge to their hegemony by Asians who are better educated, more savvy with technology and are more assertive than ever before.

Just as in World War II, the Axis Powers challenged the world order created by Britain and USA presently PRC is leading the challenge against the established order created for the benefit of the USA and the Western World.

Though it is purely incidental, it may be worthwhile to mention that the democracy-authoritarian schism of World War II is present in the same measure even in the Great War unfolding presently. On one side is PRC and her friends like North Korea, Pakistan and many others. Notably, none of these countries is a democracy.

Pitted on the other side are democratic countries. However, democratic countries face a peculiar weakness. In a democracy, leaders must promise more and more of freebies to the electorate to win elections. This needs constant supply of resources from outside the country to be sustainable. In the nineteenth century, democracy had flourished in countries that were imperial powers with resources flowing in from the colonies. In fact, in the five thousand years history of mankind, except for the past two hundred years or so, democracy has never survived in any country for more than a century. As the challenge from Asia and Africa is growing, the pressure is building in most democratic countries of the world. It is difficult to predict the political situation in the USA if the world queues up for redeeming their US Treasury Bonds and further subscriptions to the bonds stop completely. Economic hardships in the USA, in the wake of catastrophic economic collapse, may deliver strong shocks to the democratic system. The fragility of democratic institutions in leading democracies of the world is becoming obvious with each passing year.

Of course, the democracies are not the only ones facing internal tensions and strife. Totalitarian regimes also have their share of troubles. However, by and large, they are placed in a better situation to tackle such disturbances since they can be more brutal.

D. Myth of Strong Great Leaders

If one has to understand World War II, one must look on one side at leaders of the Big Three of the Allies (Britain, USA and Soviet Union) and on the other side at three key leaders of the Axis Powers (Germany, Italy and Japan). Personality traits of the six men (there were no women) help us look at the leaders around us today and see the similarities.



Leaders of the "Big Three" central Allies, (from right to left) Churchill, Roosevelt and Joseph Stalin at the [Tehran Conference](#), 29 November 1943. By U.S. Signal Corps photo. - http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.pnp/cph.3a33351http://teachpol.tcnj.edu/amer_pol_hist/thumbnail381.html, Public Domain, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=538831>

Winston Churchill, Franklin D. Roosevelt and Joseph Stalin – three giants led the Big Three of the Allies. All three were powerful men who believed strongly in themselves and did not hesitate in taking tough decisions (at least, they believed so and they made the world believe so). Among the Axis Powers were the Adlof Hitler of Germany, Benito Mussolini of Italy and Emperor Hirohito of Japan. The three shared their hatred for communism. The three believed in power and rights of the powerful.



Adolf Hitler, leader of the National Socialist German Workers Party,
By Bundesarchiv, Bild 183-H1216-0500-002 / CC-BY-SA, CC BY-SA 3.0 de,
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=63810460>



Benito Mussolini
Prime Minister and Duce of the National Fascist Party of Italy



Emperor Hirohito of Japan
By Unknown author - Public Domain,
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=2284344>

When one looks at the six key faces above, one sees leaders who were declared great and strong by their people. Each of these leaders believed that they were chosen by history and divinity to lead and save their respective countries.

None of the six above could be credited with being a great scholar or learned man. Without exception, each of them could deliver speeches that moved millions. It may not be an exaggeration to say that each one of them was a megalomaniac obsessed with his own greatness.

Now, move to the present day and look at the key leaders of today – Donald Trump, Xi Jinping, Vladimir Putin, Shinzo Abe, Boris Johnson, Narendra Modi, Ali Khamenei, and many others. Do you see the same personality traits that were present in the leaders of World War II era? Do you see the same cockiness? Do you see the same hollowness? Do you see the same faith in their machoness as can be seen in the above photographs? When a few years back, Narendra Modi said that he has a chest of 56 inches, he was boasting in a manner that is not unique to him alone. It showed a trait that is, unfortunately, common to all the leaders of our era.

Let us not blame the leaders. It is the people who are to be blamed. People expect their leaders to deliver magic and the ones who can promise the maximum magic are the ones who rise to the top. Intellectuals tend to be truthful and full of doubts while the hollow arrogant ones can declare and promise anything and everything. This was true eighty years ago and is true today.

E. Key Objectives

Key objectives in the Great War that is unfolding are no different from the ones in the two World Wars. Each country wants to grab more and more of the resources and markets. Political power is a tool for the ultimate goal of getting hands on riches.

Having said that, no one can deny that the world has changed in the past eighty years. The world is now more interconnected than it was a century ago or even half a century ago. As the world has moved closer with technology, there has been hardly any meeting of the hearts. Greed and selfishness have increased with every passing decade. We now have more smart phones, computers, machinery and other equipment than ever before in human history. But, human beings have neither become more generous nor more kind nor humane. The violence in human hearts and minds has increased to extremes.

In the harsh world that we have created, war is seen as a video game enjoyed on the screen. Most of the people living in the world today have not seen a big war in their lifetime. They do not even understand what a war means in real terms. They are the ones who are applauding and boosting the war sentiment in various countries. Emotional issues are being kindled like never before on television and social media.

It should come as no surprise that **the first key objective in the Great War is to control the narrative** of the War. It is the fight for the mind of man. Every major country is doing it in some way or the other. China and Russia have large teams to “manage” social media as well as the traditional media. In 1918 US Senator Hiram Warren Johnson is purported to have said: The first casualty when war comes is truth. The statement is more true today than it was in the two World Wars.

Capturing land was a key objective in the two World Wars. It may not be so important in the Great War that is unfolding. While skirmishes on borders may often escalate into full conflicts in some regions, the focus of the Great War will not be land grabbing. The focus will be to get hands on key flows of men, materials and most importantly information. Capture of **important shipping lanes, air routes, space satellites, undersea cables and vital raw material (for example, rare earths) sources** will be the aim of each major player in the Great War.

Currency and trade will receive much attention from each side. Breaking the back of the enemy either by making the enemy's currency worthless or by making it so expensive that it can no longer export will be a common strategy. If the USD-Yuan rate increases to 1 Yuan for 1 USD, PRC may find it impossible to export anything to the USA. On the other hand, if the USD loses its value drastically against all countries of the world, much of the population of the USA may not be able to afford food.

A run on the **banking system** of the USA and Europe cannot be ruled out. The disturbance that it will cause can well be imagined. Attacks on banking and other systems can occur by the traditional way of millions withdrawing their money or taking some such collective panic action. But it can also happen by sophisticated well-planned virus or malware attacks. In a situation, where much of population of a country has no paper money, collapse of all bank ATM's and payment systems can cripple a country for months.

Virus or malware attacks can be planned not only against banking system but also against other systems of a country. For example, complete electricity grid of a country can be destroyed without firing a single shot. Such damages to country's vital systems can bring a country on her knees almost instantly.

Talking of virus attacks, till a few months back, it meant only computer software. After the pandemic of Covid-19, a biological virus attack cannot be ruled out. Let us not forget that **biological warfare** is not new. Invaders from Europe had used smallpox virus against natives of America a few centuries ago. Biological weapons were used to some extent during World War II. So, it should come as no surprise that the Great War will see use of biological weapons. Of course, presently the use of biological weapons will be much more sophisticated and discreet. Purpose of the weapons may either be to kill or maim millions or may only be to deliver an economic impact, just as Covid-19 has done to many countries including India.

Any war is an extremely dehumanizing event. Human beings are reduced to the status of only parts of a large data picture. The Great War will be no different. Deaths and sufferings of millions will be recorded in nice charts and presentations. Key objective of leadership of each key country will be to draw up better and more impressive charts and presentations. Yes, that sounds sad and dastardly. But, that is what in the ultimate analysis the Great War will be.

F. Two Scenarios

Shape, form and results of the Great War will depend to a great extent on the role that Russia will play. If Russia decides to stick with her present friend People's Republic of China, the war will be very different compared to the situation of Russia dumping PRC and moving in with the Allies of World War II. Without making any guesses, let us look at the key players which are likely to be on the two sides in both scenarios. For the sake of convenience, let us call the side led by PRC as Axis Powers.

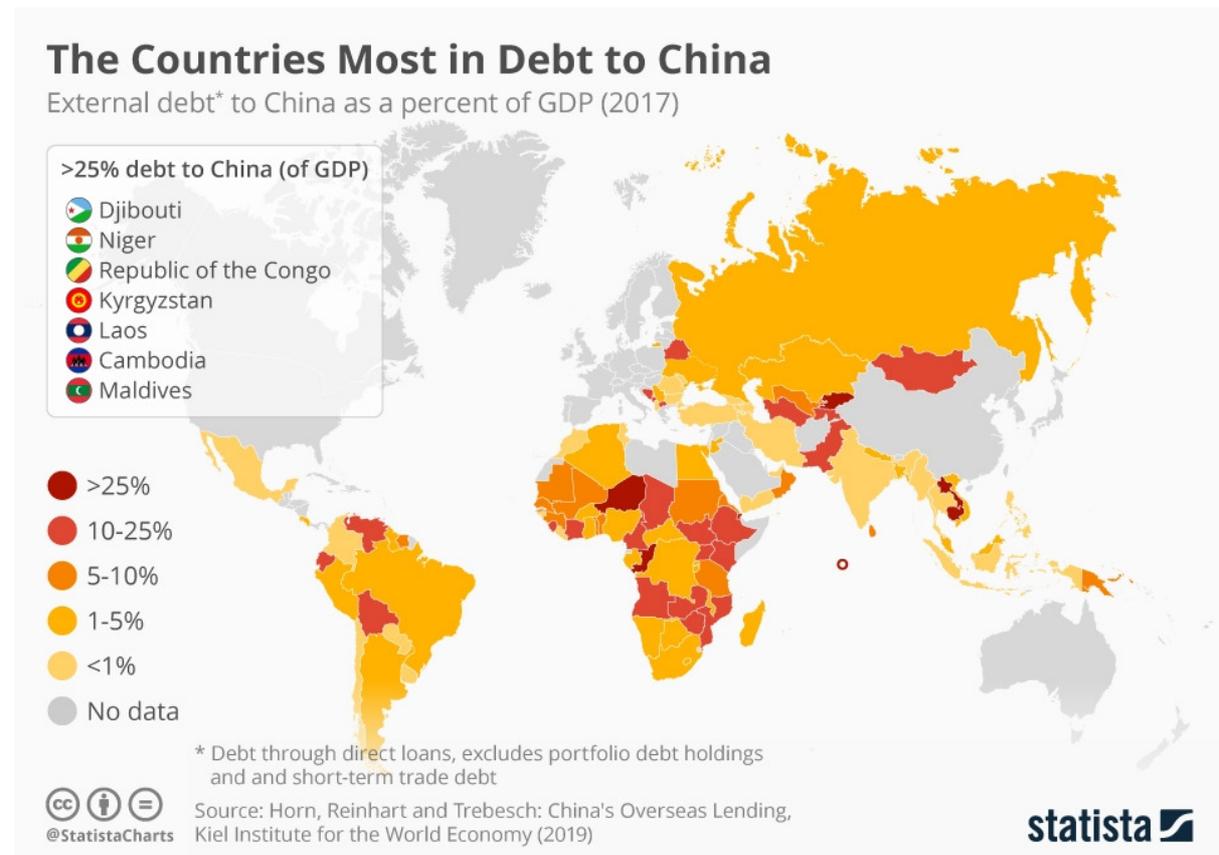
Scenario 1 – Russia with Allies

Allies	Axis Powers
USA, European Union, United Kingdom, Russia, CIS countries (with 1 or 2 exceptions), Australia, Japan, Canada, Republic of China, South Korea, India, Israel, Iran, Saudi Arabia, UAE, Oman, Vietnam, New Zealand, Philippines, Singapore	PRC, Pakistan, North Korea, Egypt, Myanmar, Nepal, Djibouti, Tonga, Maldives, Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia, Kyrgyzstan, Cambodia, Niger, Nigeria, Laos, Zambia, Samoa, Vanuatu, Venezuela, and Mongolia

Scenario 2 – Russia with Axis Powers

Allies	Axis Powers
USA, European Union, United Kingdom, Australia, Japan, Canada, Republic of China, South Korea, India, Israel, Saudi Arabia, UAE, Oman, Vietnam, New Zealand, Philippines, Singapore	PRC, Russia, CIS countries, Pakistan, Iran, North Korea, Egypt, Myanmar, Nepal, Djibouti, Tonga, Maldives, Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia, Cambodia, Niger, Nigeria, Laos, Zambia, Samoa, Vanuatu, Venezuela, and Mongolia

To understand the line-up on the side of PRC we should look at the countries which are in debt to PRC. The following chart shows the picture clearly:



There may be some countries which may swing to either of the two sides. Such countries may include Malaysia, Indonesia, Sri Lanka, Thailand, South Africa, Kenya, Bangladesh, some countries of Africa and some countries of South America.

Needless to say that the scenarios presented above are based on guesswork and perceptions. Some countries may shift from one side to the other at the last moment and even at advanced stage of the war.

G. Likely Strategic Goals for Allies

Strategic goals for the Allies, in case of victory, will differ based on the line-up on the Allies side. Let us for a moment assume that Russia joins the Allies. In such a case, the strategic goals likely to be adopted by the Allies may include the following:

- Liberation of Tibet
- Liberation of Hong Kong
- Global recognition of Republic of China (Taiwan)
- Merger of North Korea and South Korea
- Transfer to an international financial institution of all debt owed to PRC by all countries
- Take-over of all financial assets owned by PRC in every part of the world
- Taking control of all natural and artificial islands and other such assets presently controlled by PRC in oceans around the world
- Partition of Pakistan into three independent countries – Punjab, Sindh and Baluchistan
- Take control of all assets created in the name of the Belt and Road Initiative
- Take control of ports in various countries like Sri Lanka presently controlled by PRC as part of some debt arrangement
- Settlement of border disputes between PRC and all countries bordering PRC
- Installing a new democratic regime in the mainland China
- Ensuring that in future the mainland China (new regime installed in place of PRC) follows the principles of transparency and truthfulness in financial and macroeconomic reporting

The above is an indicative wish-list which may be modified by countries forming the Allies as the Great War proceeds further.

H. Likely Strategic Goals for PRC-led Countries

Strategic goals for PRC-led countries, in case of their victory, are also likely to change based on the countries that join hands in the grouping. However, based on the past behavior of PRC and the vision shown by the leaders of PRC, the following strategic goals seem likely:

- ❖ Merger of Republic of China with PRC
- ❖ Merger of Nepal with PRC
- ❖ Uniform governance system in the whole of PRC including Taiwan, Hong Kong, Nepal and such other newly annexed regions
- ❖ Annexation of Bhutan and Mongolia
- ❖ Snatching of Sikkim, Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland and Ladakh from India and making these part of PRC
- ❖ Snatch Kashmir from India and handing over the same to Pakistan
- ❖ Hand over control of South Korea to the dictator ruling North Korea
- ❖ Capture of all islands between Japan and China
- ❖ Complete control of South China Sea, Indian Ocean and Pacific ocean
- ❖ Removing USD as the currency of trade and replacing it with Yuan
- ❖ Creating civil war like situation in the Americas (both, North and South America)
- ❖ Set up and control the old silk route between Europe and Asia
- ❖ Get control of a large portion of the Arctic
- ❖ Unseat Europeans and Americans completely from Africa
- ❖ Install puppet dictators in countries of South America and Africa

As mentioned in case of victory of Allies in the previous chapter, the above strategic goals are indicative and there may be drastic changes in the goals depending on the shape that the Great War takes.

It may be also worthwhile to remember that about a century ago, Western powers with active support of the Church had led two wars against China to get a right to sell opium in China. If PRC led countries get upper hand in the Great War, the tables of free trade may be reversed. PRC may demand that the countries producing marijuana and opium must have a right to sell drugs produced by the two substances freely in Europe and America at reasonable prices without too much government controls.

Let it be clear that the goals mentioned in this as well as the previous chapter are based on conjecture and the author neither recommends nor supports nor opposes any of the goals.

I. Conclusion

It is difficult to say a final word about a war that is going on and is still unfolding. The only point that can be made without doubt is that we are living through a Great War. It can also be said with fair level of certainty that the unfolding Great War will be more terrible and more devastating than any of the previous World Wars.

Surely, the world will be a different place after the end of the Great War. We do not know when the war will end. It has taken about seventy years to reach the present point. But it is unlikely to continue for another seventy years. Events are taking place every week that are escalating the war.

This mini-book does not aim to be prophetic. On the contrary, I sincerely hope that the Great War is averted and sanity returns to the world soon.

Before I close, let me just raise and answer one final question – Who will win the Great War? Probably, no one! There may not be any clear victors in this war. It is a universal truth that both sides get hurt in any war and no one can escape unhurt from a war. The Great War is unlikely to be an exception. Human beings have collected so many ways of harming each other that mankind will be lucky to emerge out of the Great War.

Hope that acts as a sobering message! Hope there are leaders in the world who can pull mankind back from the brink! Hope there are preachers and teachers who can teach the world to move away from greed and desire for power!

Let us hope and pray in times even when there are dark clouds everywhere. Let us not give up hope. Let us have faith that there will be light after all the darkness. Let us have faith in humanity!