

Test Code: 2123

Essay Test

1.2 There never was a good war or a bad peace

At the time when world is going through a polycrisis - geopolitical, economic, environmental, the G20 communique embodied Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi's comment that "this is not an era of war" while it is absolutely apt in present context at the same time history provides us important lessons that no era should be an era of war and no matter how tough it may be peace must be negotiated.

This essay will analyse several historical events through time and space to conclude that war cannot be good and peace can never be bad. In the end we will find its implications for our present and future.

We first establish what is good and what is bad before dwelling into aspects associated with war and peace.

Good vs Bad

Ethics and morality are said to be relatively permanent. While what is good and what is bad can be contextual but there are always established boundaries to their relativeness.

Certainly no good can never be achieved from a decision to merely satisfy haughtiness of one's ego. When Hitler established a Nazi regime to regain lost German glory his decisions leading up to world war II epitomises their worseness.

Similarly, anything done for the welfare of the masses no matter how tough it may be cannot be bad. After Sri Lankan protests last year, new President

said negotiations with IMF would involve taking tough decisions for the country and may lead to sacrifices in short term.

Having established the boundary conditions on good and bad in context of war & peace, we analyse how there was never a good war or a bad peace.

Can a war be good?

Consider the quintessential dilemma of Arjuna on the battlefield of Kurushetra in Mahabharat. He asks Lord Krishna how can any good come out of killing one's kith and kin. While it was a 'Dharam Yudha' itself (fight of good vs bad) yet it cannot be denied that it led to massive destruction of life & property. Kuru and Panchal Mahajanpads went back ages in regressiveness.

The Mahabharat war though necessary was certainly not a good war. The world lost stalwarts like Karna, Dronacharya who could have otherwise led to reestablishment of Dharma if peace was negotiated.

In ancient India, Ashoka in order to become chakravartin samrat led one battle after another. It was only until the Kaling war that he realized how his wars only led to mass suffering.

Third battle of Panipat euphemised the lack of nationalistic spirit when Marathas had to face Rajputs, Rohillas, Nawabs on side of Abdali. It decided who was not to rule India and paved way for British imperialism. While Marathas sought to remove foreign threat, the war only proved to be inconsequential.

Similarly, there are examples across the world which further brings home this point. World war I and world war II

are the right examples to show how heightened sense of nationalism led to world witnessing nuclear bombings of Hiroshima & Nagasaki. Even the cold war led to sufferings & destruction in Third world countries - Hungary, Cuba, Vietnam. Some countries like Afghanistan are still reeling from its aftermath.

Even the so-called French Revolutionary wars of Napoleon led to him becoming a monarch from a liberator. It led to massive turmoil not only in Europe but even in France with dictatorial rule of Bonaparte.

Can a peace be bad?

Contrast the war-time images with those of peace. Kashmir is the living proof how hard negotiated peace

ultimately leads to progress and development. That the valley wants peace and not war was clearly evident in the recently held G20 Tourism meeting there.

Today, United Nations particularly led by US and Saudi Arabia are trying to bring a ceasefire in Sudan. While the country & its people already suffer from COVID, conflict & climate crisis, peace through negotiations is the only way forward.

India has always emphasized on principles of non-violence & need for debate and dialogue over freedom struggle. Showed the world how we established Swaraj without getting into a situation of civil war. Contrast it with civil wars in Russia, China, Malaysia to chart the future course of nation. We realized on the power of ballot and not on bullet.

Sometimes peace-time can be

tough as it involves a reform process and undertaking strong decisions. Japan, for example, after defeat in world war II took series of such steps and accepted pacifism as a state policy. Today, it's a leading Asian economy.

It is said that those who never learn from history and analyse the implications for current times fail and repeat the mistakes. We thus analyse the statement's relevance for today.

Current relevance

While today many countries have come to realize the importance of peace negotiations we also witness a catastrophic crisis in Ukraine. We have Arab world accepting Syria, Iran and Saudi getting rid of age old rivalry,

Japan and South Korea forging a new partnership. At the same time there is rise of cold-war era bloc mentality manifesting itself in form of refugee crisis, food crisis, economic repercussions particularly for Global South.

It is thus important to get back at the negotiating table. Both the sides have to take some measures in form of compromises and they have to realize that it need not be a bad peace agreement.

While a country can and should fight in its self-defense, yet it must also look at long term repercussions of the same. As it not only deprives the citizens of their fundamental rights to life and liberty but also pushes back the nation several years behind. For example, Pakistan has failed to realize that in an

unidirectional policy of bleeding India into
thousand cuts, its only Pakistan which has
bled and continues to bleed.

Similarly in Ukraine, both the
sides have to realize the importance
of mediation and conciliation. Further
it is also the right time for reforms
of multilateral institutions.

Shift to reformed multilateralism

India has constantly been
advocating for reforms of not only UNSC
but also of institutions like WHO, IMF,
World Bank etc. Pole mentality will only
increase risk of mutually assured
destruction — a lose-lose situation

Further, it has to noted
that future wars need not be fought
only on ground. we need to

incorporate pandemics, terrorism, cyber-attacks and even subversion activities as 21st century wars. Hybrid warfare is a reality.

This requires a larger resolve for fighting the battle at its principal roots of ideological conflict. These new age wars are equally devastating. Consider the possibility of attack on critical infrastructure of a nation. In the digital world there cannot be a worse war.

Thus, it needs to take tough reforms and capacity building programmes both internally and externally during the peace-time, and avoid possibility to getting into war-like situation.

When Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam was asked about India acquiring nuclear weapons, he remarked that peace can only come from a position of strength. Thus as we leapfrog into era of Amit Kal

it is important to strengthen our
resolve for Amanisbharata and fulfilling
the five pledges of being developed, shedding
colonial baggage, respect for culture,
diversity & spirit of duty.

Peace is good and war is
bad. Period. Yet, we must always be
prepared to fight one.

Section-B

⑥ The world of reality has its limits; world of imagination is boundless.

50 years ago, Indian constitutional organs seemed to be at loggerheads upon Article 368 with never ending tussle between legislature and judiciary. Be it Golaknath case or subsequent 24th Constitutional Amendment Act - there seemed to be limits to what Indian polity could achieve. Then came the Kesavananda Bharti judgement which imagined the basic structure doctrine, as a judicial innovation.

Since then, we never looked back. It gave not only constitutional bodies to explore the boundless in transforming India but also inspired other nations - Bangladesh, Malaysia, Uganda.

This essay with the help of more examples like above will explore the limitless powers of imagination and analyse how reality can have its own limits.

Finally, we will conclude with relevance for our present times & how to look beyond.

First, we analyse differences in real and imaginary.

Reality vs Imagination

Simply put, whatever we can hear, see and feel is real. whatever generates a stimulus response using complex network

of muscle and nerve cells is reality.

Anything physical happening in present and whatever that has happened in

the past for which we have evidence, either archaeological, literary, anecdotal is reality.

Imagination means to look beyond. It means to dream. As Martin Luther King famously remarked - "I have a dream". It is often associated with a prospective future situation. It's also associated with hope. To imagine means to brake the shackles of fear and take the liberty to explore the unexplored.

Consider the 19th and 20th century social reformers in India. The reality for them was a divided India marred with superstition, animism, caste and gender divides without a spirit of nationalism. But they imagined a future with great ideals of liberty, equality, fraternity and justice.

We now analyse why world of reality has its limits from various dimensions.

A limited reality

Mathematics is believed as the language of our universe. Simple equations be it Newton's laws or Einstein's energy mass equivalence can explain complex phenomena around us. But mathematicians

too realized the limits with the tools they were operating. Real numbers ($\mathbb{R}$) alone could not lead to solutions of

problems, for example a quadratic equation with negative discriminant does not have real roots. Mathematicians realized something was missing.

8th century philosopher Adi Shankar explained the concept of Maya and

how we are constrained by it. He explained how Minansa school of thought which practised merely vedic rituals was limited in the goal of achieving true salvation.

A society which is content by its current reality will lead to stagnation.

Thiruvalluvar, sangam poet, remarked that true wisdom lies living in tune with the changing world. Consider the medieval India, where rulers were only content in fighting battles, gaining territory and ruling masses. Not thinking beyond the reality about emerging colonial threats ultimately paved ^{way} ~~route~~ for British rule.

Similarly, new emerging trends about climate change induced disaster can only warn us about impending hell. But our status quo in terms of climate action reflects our limited thinking.

that climate change is not real. IPCC
sixth assessment reports highlights the
limited actions both developing and
developed world is taking in this regard.

Further, reality could also be
constrained by the lens we are
looking at or the shoes we are in.
For example, a conservative society that
thinks same-sex is taboo and may
take away fundamental rights of
LGBTQIA+ community. Consider, Simone
De Beauvoir, magnum opus 'Second Sex',
which highlighted differences between
sex & gender and how they are
mainstreamed in our thinking.

It is thus evident that
there are limits when we don't look
beyond & explore the boundless world

Imagine a boundless world

Lord Hanuman, forgot about his powers but when he was reminded to think beyond of what he is actually capable of, led him to even take up the Sanjeerni mountain with bare hands.

At the tryst of midnight hour, when the world slept, India imagined a new order and awakened to dream on 15th August 1947. First Prime Minister said that the "greatest man of our generation sought to remove tears from every eye, that may be beyond us, but as long as there are sufferings, our work will not be over." It's clearly evident in the progress we made in past 75 years & becoming fifth largest economy in past colonial world. Swami Vivekananda, gave the

mantra of Arise, Awake and stop not
till the goal is achieved. At the Chicago
conference as he remarked participants as
"brothers and sisters" he ushered the
world to become a global village beyond
the limits of hyper-nationalism

Dr. A. P. J. Abdul Kalam, the
missile man of India, asked children
to believe in power of dreams and
to achieve the unachievable. His own
life is a testament of power of looking
at beyond.

There are myriad of examples
across some & time of people who led
the world with their power of imagination
& looking beyond. Be it thinkers like
Chanakya, Nagarjuna, Aryabhata or rulers

like Ashoka, Akbar, Krishnadeva Raya
or scientists like C.V. Raman, H.J. Bhabha
or greatest reformers like Raja Ram
Mohan Roy, Vidyasagar, Saritri Bai Phule,
all inspires us to challenge status quo.

We now conclude with finding
its relevance in our life and looking
at some ways to get into world of
imagination.

Into the beyond

Often, we are asked to think
out of the box. Yet, we are unable to
do so. We may get bogged down by
lack of courage or limited critical
thinking powers.

It is thus very important
to have a spirit of enquiry and
self-reflection, as envisaged in Article 51A(h)
of our constitution. Critical thinking

and challenging status quo is the very first step in the journey towards the beyond. An education system should support it so that it is developed in a early stage itself, as envisaged by NEP.

Next step, is to develop courage to accept the findings and put it out for the world. Example, even Vidyaagar was ostracized for widow remarriage campaign, he always persevered.

Finally, have an open mind, be ready for iterations. The road not taken has its own ups & downs.

Having a rigid mindset is anti-thetical to idea of getting into world of the imagination. Example, Economic Survey talks about Barbell strategy of analytic data-driven objective decision making.

Edmund Burke said that no one made a greater mistake than one who didn't do anything merely thinking that he could only do so little. Thus, acting upon one's ideas and not giving up while on the unexplored path is the ultimate thing while being in the beyond and making difference.

As Robert Frost said —

"Two roads diverged into woods,
And I took the one less travelled by;
That has made all the difference."