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## IMPERIALISM & WAR: A THREAT TO GLOBAL PEACE

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**Abstract :** “War is a continuation of Politics”<sup>1</sup> Human societies hitherto have witnessed wars either for the expansion of the regimes or for the show of their might and strength. With the advent of Capitalism and further imperialism, market expansions became an inadvertent and inevitable aspect in the functioning of the nation states and have thus created wars to protect their own interest. The powerful nations have dominated the world and tried to control the other nations by means of war. Hence the market driven conditions determine the extent to which a nation plays a vital role in international politics. The imperialist forces of today have taken this important aspect into cognizance and are trying to expand their hegemony by influencing on political, social, economical, cultural structures of a nation which has ultimately led to the new world economic crisis. The recent attacks on Syria, the undeterred stand taken by North Korea against USA, stand testimony to this. This article emphasizes on how imperialism of today has brought about human devastation through its expansionist policies.

**Keywords :** Capitalism, hegemony, imperialism, inadvertent, market driven.

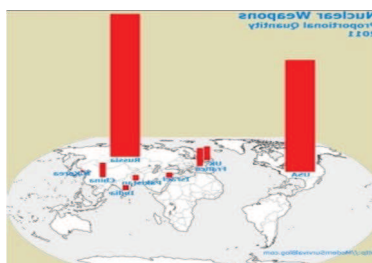
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**Introduction :** With the advent of Capitalism new independent nation concept came into existence. Capitalism in its earlier form had in fact helped the nations to attain independent status and all round emphasis for development of market forces as well as science and technology was given. In political sphere also the powerful nations by the virtue of their influence in international politics tried to control the smaller and weaker nations by expanding trade relations with them. The “Great War” of 1914-18 brought into force a new “age of imperialism” which resulted in the great powers to establish their hegemony over the world. Imperialism – a class driven ideology As V.I.Lenin puts it, Imperialism is the highest stage of Capitalism wherein there would be monopoly finance; export of capital and the nations would be indirectly under the control of big nations. To simplify, Imperialism is the outcome of capitalist state and the monopolistic capitalist states would try to establish their dominance over developing/under developed nations through economic aid or through support provided through its agencies. Imperialism is not just a change in the foreign policies of the governments but a change in the over all production relations. To put it in the words of Lenin, it is the ‘monopoly stage of Capitalism’. As Capitalism grew, it no longer could contain itself to one particular country and hence necessitated the growth of monopoly finance. Large scale production was controlled by few monopoly capitalists and export of finance became inevitable not to provide ‘aid’ to nations but to protect its own interest. As a result, wars were waged to capture such fertile markets. Lenin further emphasized that the “industrialized states exploit the poor countries and buy off their own working class with profits. Through this globalization of class relations, profits are concentrated in the rich

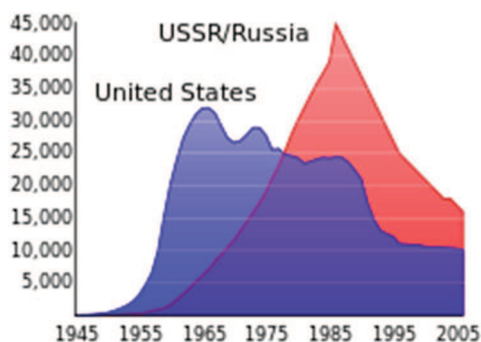
nations as against the poor.” As a result, the share in the market by big super powers led to wars. The beginning of 20<sup>th</sup> C witnessed such devastating wars which ultimately saw the beginning of nuclear war.

**Impact of Nuclear Weapons :** With the dropping of atom bombs on the twin cities of Japan, Hiroshima and Nagasaki by the USA, the Second World War came to an end and a new atomic era ushered in. Like any technological advancements, the invention of nuclear bomb had also social, economic and political implications. More than any other aspect, the political purposes became more important. The relations among different countries assumed new dimensions. According to Bilgrami, “the first atom-bomb also symbolized” the “ever widening gap between man’s dynamic progress in the attainment of the destructive capacity through science and technology and his corresponding lack of progress in the area of peace and security”<sup>2</sup>. This contradiction dominated the international relations in the post world war II scenario and continues to exist till today. The barbaric, heinous deceitful attacks of US Imperialism on Iraq, the support extended to Israel against the Palestinian people of Gaza, Sanctions against North Korea, and attacks on Afghanistan are some of the issues that have put all peace loving nations in shame. The aggression on Iraq on the false pretext of Iraq producing and possessing Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) and the then Iraq President Saddam Hussein, having links with fundamentalists and terrorists was a falsehood that was investigated & exposed by UN inspecting team, which later became clear of US Intentions i.e. to grab the ‘oil rich’ reserve of Iraq. The attack of the Zionist Israel against Palestinians in the Gaza Strip, with the support of US Imperialism in particular and other imperialist powers exposes the ruthless massacre. In order to overthrow the socialist North Korea, US led imperialist has been making an all out effort by imposing sanctions and waging wars. The recent attacks on Syria and Mali further substantiate the role of Imperialist forces to extend their market over the territories of the underdeveloped nations.

**Some impacts of Nuclear Weapons on International Relations of nations :** It caused cold war situation: The dropping of nuclear bomb on the land of Japan became one of the main reasons for suspicion between the US & the Soviet Union which later intensified the cold war tension and distrust. The US monopoly over the possession of nuclear weapons was broken by USSR when it finally acquired nuclear weapons in 1949. USSR mainly used it as retaliation and became a threat to its opponent. This led to arms race in the future years.



Problems of Proliferation: More and more number of nations joined the hub of 'nuclear club' by successfully conducting the nuclear explosions. Britain, France, China, India, Pakistan, North Korea, etc., joining this.



The above statistics reveal the intensity with which these two super powers tried to establish their regime over others.

1. Arms Race between USA & USSR: Having acquired the mastery over the production of nuclear
2. weapons, both the super powers engaged themselves in aggravating the international politics and influencing them in their favour. The intensity of arms race was so much that 95% of all nuclear weapons were in the hands of the two super powers.

Even before the United States of America started the nuclear club in 1945, some countries (most notably Nazi Germany) unsuccessfully attempted to build nuclear weapons. The statistics reveal of themselves the nuclear weapons piled up by the imperialist which they believe are to protect their interest from the increasing threat they face by smaller nations!!!!!!!!!!!! What an irony!!!!!!

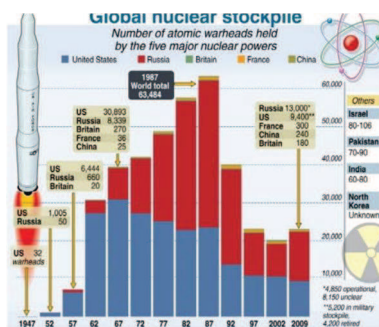


table 1.1

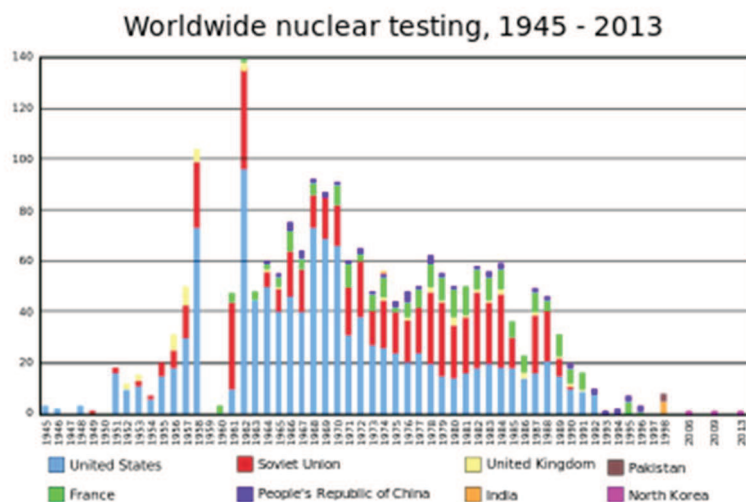
Global Nuclear Weapons Stockpiles (1945-2025)															
Country	45	50	1955	1960	1965	1970	1975	1980	1985	1990	1995	2000	2005	2013	Future projection
 USA	2	29	2,422	18,638	31,139	26,008	27,519	24,104	23,368	21,392	10,904	10,577	8,360	7,700	3,620 (for 2022)
 USSR	0	5	200	1,605	6,129	11,643	19,055	30,062	39,197	37,000	27,000	21,500	17,000	8,500	3,350 (for 2022)
 UK	0	0	14	42	436	394	492	492	422	422	422	281	281	225	180 (for around 2025)
 France	0	0	0	0	32	36	188	250	360	505	500	470	350	300	
 China	0	0	0	0	5	75	180	205	243	232	234	232	235	250	150-220 (for 2020)
 Israel	0	0	0	0	0	8	20	31	42	53	63	72	80	80	65-85 (for 2020)
 India	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	3	7	14	28	44	90-110	50-70 (for 2020)
 Pak	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	13	28	38	100-120	150-200 (for 2021)
 North Korea	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	01	0-2	0-2	8	6-8	28-48 (for 2016)

Table 1.2

Number of Nuclear Weapons Tests by Country (1945-2013)															
Country	1945-49	1950-54	1955-59	1960-64	1965-69	1970-74	1975-79	1980-84	1985-89	1990-94	1995-99	2000-04	2005-09	2010-13	Cumulative total
All countries	9	63	228	362	344	277	273	265	174	43	14	0	2	1	2,055
 United States of America	8	43	145	198	230	136	96	84	71	21	0	0	0	0	1,032
 Russia/The Soviet Union	1	17	65	147	85	101	126	116	56	1	0	0	0	0	715
 United Kingdom	0	3	18	4	1	1	4	8	4	2	0	0	0	0	45
 France	0	0	0	12	19	32	37	51	41	12	6	0	0	0	210
 China	0	0	0	1	9	6	10	6	2	7	4	0	0	0	45
 Israel	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
 India	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	3
 South Africa	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
 Pakistan	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	2
 North Korea	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	1	3

The above figures also enumerate the rate at which the nuclear tests were/are being conducted by the major powerful countries.

Figure 1



**Threat to world peace and peace movements :** Threat to world peace increased after the proliferation of nuclear weapons started and the very idea of the devastating effects shuddered the world. Though there was no major direct confrontation between the super powers, yet the smaller nations became pawns in the hands of these Big Powers. The devastating effects of nuclear weapons frightened the people of both big and small countries and the threat to world peace “has made many people in the west restless, alienated, mentally sick and tormented. To put an end to this agony and pain, they have been agitating hard to make their voices felt at the power centre’s of the North”, 30observes, Baral. Several groups and organizations in the west have opposed these tendencies of the super powers by launching peace movements. Through such peace movements they were and are able to spread the potential dangers and threats of nuclear weapons. It was very difficult to imagine the consequences of a nuclear conflict. Some predicted that a rate of one million dead per megaton. In terms of destruction it was pointed out that one single nuclear weapon was enough to level the larger part of almost any major city in the world. Civilian victims would be greater in number than military ones, even if sincere efforts were made to avoid such collateral damage. Socially, economically, morally millions of lives would have lost in the process. Radio active residues could be a serious problem in countries adjacent to the belligerent countries and would have affected both the present as well as future generations. M.Zuberi explains the destructive capability of nuclear weapons, “One modern strategic weapon has between a hundred to a thousand times the yield of the Hiroshima or Nagasaki Bombs. A single B-52 strategic nuclear bomber can deliver more explosive power than that used in all wars in history. A Poseidon submarine has 160 independently targetable warheads with an explosive yield of 6.4 megatons and can destroy 160 cities – more than the total

number of German and Japanese cities subjected to strategic bombing during the Second World War” 4.

Besides these the economic conditions of the nations under attack would be disastrous and might lead to political instabilities causing civil and regional wars. Thus, in the post-second world war though there was no direct war between the two super powers due to this nuclear balance, the kind of atmosphere it created was quite sufficient for a nation to stop waging war against the other. ‘Balance of power’ came to be replaced by ‘Balance of Terror’ and peace thus became a byproduct of ‘mutual vulnerability’.

Nuclear Disarmament Measures initiated : Being aware of the socio-economic-political consequences of the devastating effects of the use of nuclear arms and ammunitions, the super powers began to take concrete steps to lessen the likelihood of the nuclear war. They tried to avoid confrontation and started negotiations in this direction. As a result, some significant measures were taken:

1. Partial Nuclear Test Ban Treaty (1963)
2. Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), (1968)
3. SALT -I (1972)
4. SALT-II (1979)
5. INF TREATY (1987)
6. START (1991)
7. START -II (1993)
8. NPT Review (1995)
9. CTBT (1996)
10. IAEA (1994)

Though the cold war is long over and major changes initiated in the international functioning of nations, yet we see that the nations in order to establish their control over world politics continue to test nuclear weapons and have become a threat to the world peace.

**Conclusion** : It is crystal clear to the world that the use of nuclear weapons by the imperialist nations is a devastating blow for the social-economic development of smaller nations. Can these nations resist the threats of the super powers? Can the millions round the globe feel so helpless, so perturbed for mounting onslaught of the imperialist powers? Can the nations ever come out freely from the shackles of these nations? Can over all development ever take place in these underdeveloped nations take place? These are some of the pertinent questions that are required to be answered by the powerful nations. However it is no denying fact that it is the inalienable right of any sovereign independent nation to defend its freedom from territorial integrity against any foreign invasion. Therefore, so long as Imperialism exists and so long as their power mongerness exists, peace cannot be ensured in the world. Hence it becomes the need of the hour to see that all peace loving nations/people come under one common platform and save humanity and human race from further destruction.

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