

# What if Peace Broke Out?

- Reflections on War, Humanity, and Hope

Shishir Lakhani, B.Sc. PQS DTM

# Is war ever justifiable?

- Is it a human condition? (Biological, Psychological, Economic and Social factors)
- Wars have shaped nations and defended freedoms.
- Yet wars have also caused immense suffering and destruction.

# Can we learn from history??

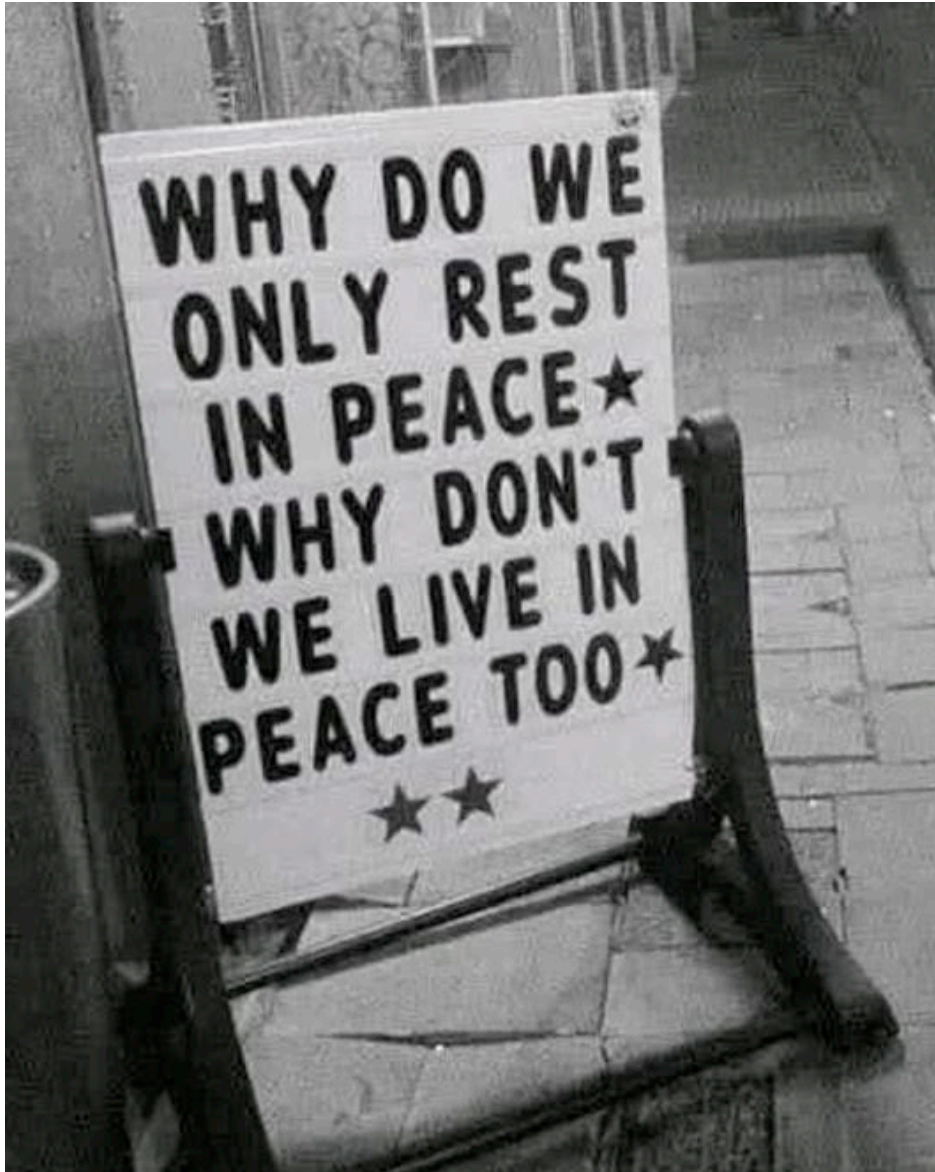
- What lessons has humanity learned—or failed to learn—from past conflicts?
- Can we evolve beyond war as a means of resolving disputes?



We learn from history that  
we do not learn from  
history

**HEGEL**

Can we learn  
from history??



Can we learn  
from  
history??

# Quotes on War and Peace

- *"To be prepared for war is one of the most effectual means of preserving peace."* – **Benjamin Franklin**
- *"It is forbidden to kill; therefore, all murderers are punished unless they kill in large numbers and to the sound of trumpets."* – **Voltaire**
- *"Peace is the ultimate goal, but it is achieved through justice"* - **Thomas Aquinas**

# Quotes on War and Peace

*“War does not determine who is right -only who is left”*  
– **Bertrand Russel**

*“If we don’t end war, it will end us”* – **H G Wells**

*“War has been won ... now to win the peace”* – **Einstein**

*“Any war that requires the suspension of reason as a necessity for support is a bad war.”* – **Norman Mailer**

*“I am sure that if the mothers of various nations could meet, there would be no more wars”* – **EM Forster**





Effects



# Justifications for War

- Philosophy: Just War Theory (cause, intent, last resort, proportionality).
- Self-defense and survival (e.g., WWII, Nazism).
- Defended freedoms and ended tyrannies. (civil war and slavery)



# Justifications for War

- ▶ The epic war Mahabharata frames war as a moral duty — a fight for justice and righteousness.
- ▶ The **Bhagavad Gita** arises from this conflict — exploring ethics, purpose, and duty in war.
- ▶ Defending freedom often demands confrontation with injustice.
- ▶ Conflict, though tragic, reflects a universal human struggle for meaning and right action.

# Positive Consequences of War!

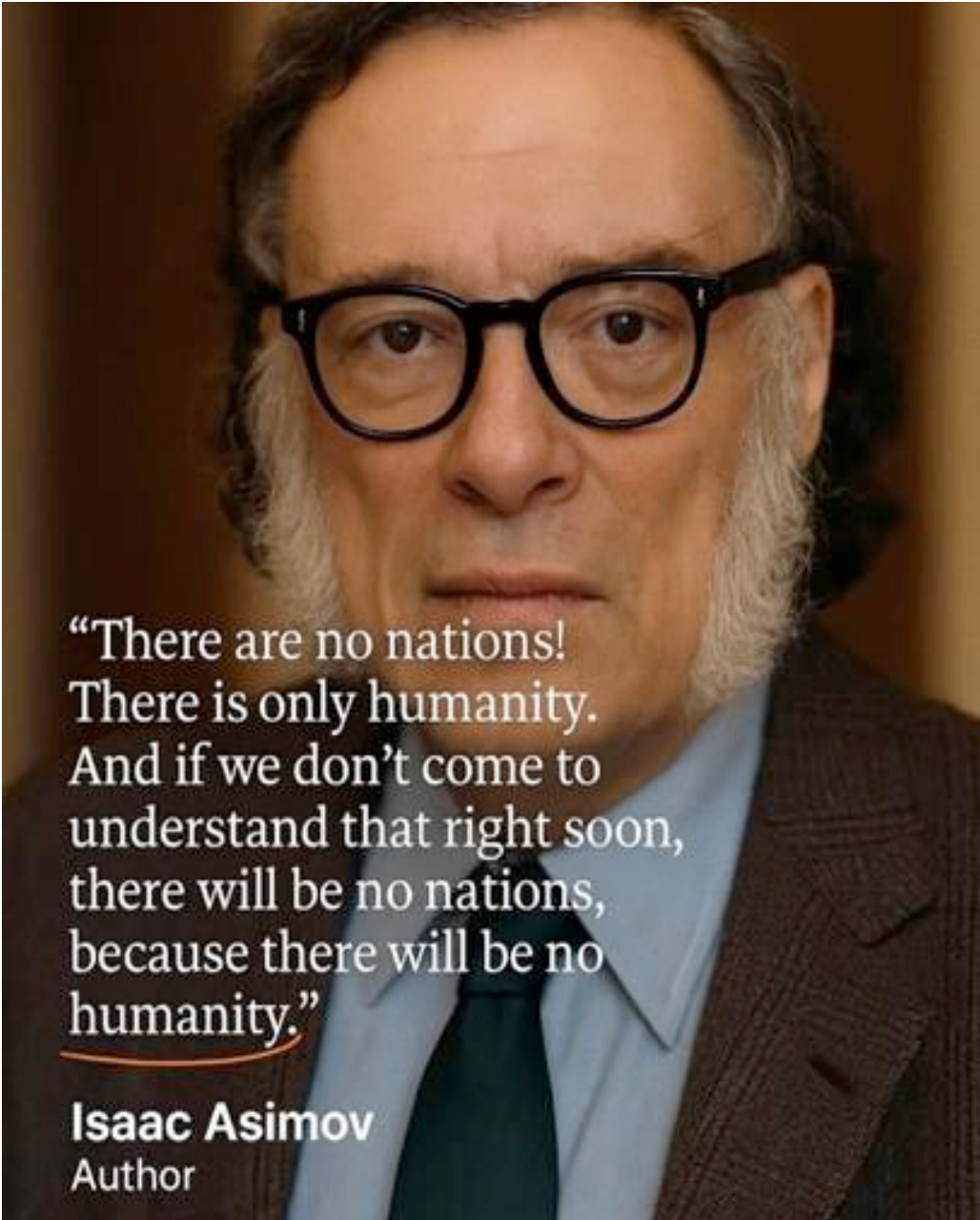
- Technological progress (radar, jet engines, Internet, nuclear energy, satellites, GPS, medicine -blood banks, Anti biotics)
- Decolonization
- National unity and identity.
- Political institutions (UN, NATO, ICC, World Bank)
- Societal restructuring (Women got into workplace) (Industrial Revolution)

# Case Against Wars - Human Cost and suffering

- *"War is hell."* – **William T. Sherman**
- *"When the rich wage war, it's the poor who die."* – **Sartre**
- Psychological trauma, PTSD, and broken families
- Genocides – Victimized minorities
- WWI: 10 million deaths | WWII: 50 million deaths.

# Case Against Wars - Moral & Environmental

- Pacifism (**Gandhi, MLK Jr.**): War is never justified.
- Nonviolent resistance achieves change (India, U.S. Civil Rights).
- Environmental impact: Agent Orange, oil well fires, nuclear winter.

A portrait of Isaac Asimov, an older man with a white beard and glasses, wearing a dark suit and tie. The background is a warm, brownish-gold color.

“There are no nations!  
There is only humanity.  
And if we don’t come to  
understand that right soon,  
there will be no nations,  
because there will be no  
humanity.”

**Isaac Asimov**  
Author



# Motivations vary

- Justifiable Agendas
  - Hidden Agendas (Provoked Wars)
  - Tyrannical aspirations of power and greed.
  - To the victors go the spoils
- 
- Recruit by lure of belonging ... patriotism
  - Fears of being outcast
  - 'Cowards' / 'slackers' publicly shamed  
WWII Americans who did not enlist





REMARKABLE  
BOOKS

"War is created by people  
too old to fight for those  
too young to die."

~°~  
African Proverb

# Case Against Wars - Erosion of Freedoms

- Wartime governments restrict rights (WWI, WWII).
- Post-9/11 Patriot Act expanded surveillance.
- *"If tyranny and oppression come... under the guise of fighting a foreign enemy."*

**James Madison**

# Balanced Reflection

Steven Pinker in his book '*Better Angels of our nature*' argues how violence from warfare to domestic has decreased - With better institutions commerce, literacy giving rise to empathy and subduing our inner demons



## Balanced Reflection

- ▶ Wars sometimes appear necessary but always come at a cost.
- ▶ Can humanity resolve conflicts without war?
- ▶ *"The supreme art of war is to subdue the enemy without fighting."* - Sun Tzu



A piece of weathered, light-colored wood or bark is shown against a dark blue background. The wood is curved and has a rough, textured surface. The background is a solid dark blue color.

Philosophy, Poetry, and Art

Life's tragedy is that we  
get old too soon and wise  
too late.

Benjamin Franklin - American  
scientist, writer, printer

# Summary

- War's justification is complex and deeply subjective
- Power dynamics and perception shape how “just causes” are defined
- The “fog of war” obscures truth and accountability mired in double standards
- Each side sees its actions as right — *“one person's 6 is another's 9”*

# Closing

Would it not be nice if peace were to break out?

"May peace be our default state, not our dream."

Thank you.

