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 **Russia chose its
killing fields**
*(Is this the new
normal?)*

Steve Bakke  March 17, 2022



Dr. Seuss expressed his puzzlement about war – in 1942.

For decades mankind has been avoiding another “Big One” - another world war. Years ago, I watched a short “art” film focused on achieving wartime “solutions” without nuclear annihilation. On screen, two old men met in a garden. Off came their suit coats, and they commenced comical fist-to-fist combat for world domination. Right there, next to the tomato plants, the destiny of the world was being decided. Winner takes all. I wasn’t impressed by the short movie’s plausibility.

In a more recent video, warfare was conducted using computers. Programmers from feuding countries perched behind screens while their programs encountered each other. Quietly, battle by battle, a winner was decided, damage assessed, and the spoils of war printed out in triplicate. The implication was that each side was bound by agreement to allocate the computed damage and fatalities to the real world. That would make a great Twilight Zone episode (an old TV show – google it).

Forgive me for those examples. They’re simplistic and silly. But the productions were intended as sincere expressions of antiwar sentiment.

In the real world, alliances have formed which create high levels of military power. NATO is an example. And after decades of development, enough nuclear weapons exist to result in worldwide destruction if we had all-out warfare. If armed conflict is inevitable, how can we prepare ourselves to avoid mass annihilation?

Given the reality of possible annihilation, and with the tools of war at the ready, it seems like the leading world powers have just been staring at each other. For decades, Russia’s Putin threatened specific actions, but no one believed him, or didn’t want to listen. But Putin was serious. For months, Russia has been slowly building up military strength along the Ukrainian border. In February, Ukraine was attacked. Russia began aggressively destroying anything and anybody, including civilian targets – even maternity hospitals.

Despite incredible Ukrainian push back, the destruction and killing has been brutal, even genocidal. Fortunately, NATO allies decided they couldn't directly engage Russian advances over these battle fields because of the extreme risk of escalation and nuclear retaliation.

Among all the confusion, military strategists and political leaders may have stumbled on the nature of future world wars. Wartime protocols and strategies may be evolving before our eyes.

Russia's tyrannical leader chose Ukraine as a killing field for genocide and eventual domination of its natural resources, agricultural production, or technical capabilities. Because of the brutality and the worldwide shock wave, the Russia invasion qualifies as a "world war."

Any dramatic escalation could result in the use of nuclear weapons. Therefore, direct conflict between nuclear powers must be avoided. That's the rational behavior that NATO is trying to exercise. The new model for a "world war" recognizes that situations like this are inevitable and must be carefully managed.

Earning the label "world war" now and in the future will depend more on the worldwide impact of the conflict, than on the total landmass or number of countries involved. And as we're observing in Ukraine, future battlefields will be limited in size and perhaps in duration. Nevertheless, their worldwide cultural and economic impact will be massive.

Once conventional warfare is inevitable, the primary goal must be to avoid direct conflict of between nuclear powers. A responsible nuclear power can be most effective by supplying conventional weapons support to their embattled allies, as NATO is trying to "figure out" for this Ukraine situation. Our current process is sloppy so we must improve quickly.

We're watching and dealing with a situation we'll see again. Goal number one is to avoid nuclear conflict. Right behind that is to make the tyrants of the world own the situations they create. As we're seeing, non-military weapons are available that can be used to accomplish this. Right now, one of our biggest deficits is being prompt and decisive. We have no "wait and see" alternative.

We're experiencing a glimpse of the nature of future international conflict. Actions by "bad guys" will need to be carefully managed. It behooves us to pay attention and prepare. The U.S. must understand that independence in energy supplies and weaponry development are of utmost important. And we can't let other issues crowd out immediate existential threats.