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Political Science- Final Term Paper

# Introduction

World War I which is often referred to as the Great War is the first deadliest incident of the twentieth century. This catastrophe began in the year 1914 and lasted for four years, with its cessation in 1918. During these years the world witnessed immense destruction and disease eruption. Some estimates suggest that around 9 million people faced death and those injured critically were numbered many(Ferguson). Some historians argue that the causes of this war emerged in the early 90s in the previous century. They base their reason on the pretext that the world was witnessing hunger, diseases, and expanding capitalism, therefore a major outbreak of war was not out of sight.

There were several participants in this mega military conflict. Many of the participants formed alliances to subdue their opponents. These alliances were also formed to grab more power and ultimately for expanding the colonies that were already in control of some might powers. Germany was considered first to ignite the war causes and went into it with many of its alliances. This war was fought majorly in the European continent, with the U.S being also affected. The rise of nationalism, the influence of imperialism, the alliance systems and many other major conflicts were the reason for such magnanimous destruction in war(Ferguson).

# World War I 1914- 1918

The most interesting aspect of analyzing this war is nationalism. Historians believe that it was the primary initiator. During the last decades of the nineteenth century, many groups of people in different areas of the world were getting together for a similar cause. Nationalism was than coupled with the increasing demand for food, wealth and resources. Just as mentioned above that because of the capitalist kind of economic infrastructure of that time, people considered their resources as occupied by some wealthy classes. A feeling of despair and disgrace slowly reached to a point where war became inevitable.

Sarkees mention that since the war erupted in Germany, it was quite evitable that it will take into its fold the other countries of Europe too(Sarkees and Wayman). These all economies were based on capitalist infrastructure and in protecting their economic interests, they favored being part of the conflict. Woodrow Wilson is the President of the United States, closely observed the unfolding and suggested some peace negotiations too, but it was too late. Sarkees has also argued that the United States was too late in offering the peace deal, as Germany on other hands in the same year announced major submarine warfare against all its opposing participants(Sarkees and Wayman). Such conflicting turmoil during the passage of war turned it into the biggest humanitarian catastrophe of the twentieth century.

# Concepts to the War

## The socio-political concept of war:

The socio-political concept of war is about how politics and society play a role in driving a state into war. According to International law, war could be fought between two political and sovereign entities and not involving their population(Van der Dennen). This is how then the political states act as. Normally for the sake of maximizing the political stakes in international affairs and for analyzing the popularity of the ruling elite among masses, the political elites strive states into war. This is what the social concept of war is. The social concept can also be seen in the manner restricts public access to state resources and expanding ills of the society. In such ways, the society became interested in grabbing the resources from the enemy states and become an active participant of the war. This socio-political amalgamation is the classic and most observed concept for war initiation.

Conflict experts and war historians have a different interpretation of this concept. Some believe that war must be prevented at this step and both people and the political elite could be convinced for not initiating any conflicting step(Braybon). But others believe that once the political elite decides to explore and grab resources by violent means, they cannot be barred from doing so. The best way of understanding the socio-political concept of war is to understand how society and politics are interlinked with each other and drive each other. These both are the primary constituent of any country and their rise for conflict is in other terms the declaration of war.

During World War I, the restrained food supplies and prolonged conflicts changed the social structure of many societies. Many social groups started fighting over small areas of land and over mainly the food supplies. With time, as the war was getting elongated, these conflicts started erupting. The societies generally feared that they will soon run out of the resources and ultimately they will have to starve. Therefore, protests for more equal distribution of wealth and for the upbringing of a justifiable economic system started erupting. Some notable from the societal setups started emerging as prominent faces and their struggle started gaining attention. Such notables finally started categorizing themselves as the political elites or the representatives of the poorest classes of those societies.

These social conflicts were too sewer that even the victors of minor conflict often some time felt helpless and degraded. Other affected social aspects of the World War I were decreased housing facilities, inflation and lack of male population (which is observable still today). The political class which rose from this time of crisis soon started taking hold of the affairs and a political vacuum so abruptly filled with people having zero senses about the societal affairs. During World War I, such as the socio-political atmosphere. The deprived ones in such atmosphere were the poor with having no money to pay for the expensive goods which caused resentment against the better off people in different communities. The period of World War I provides an interesting case study of how socio-political aspects in society are important and shape the future course for societies and countries.

## The judicial or legal conception of war:

This is a wide and continuously searched about an aspect of war. This entails that there must be some equal conditions for war initiation and equal damage be inculcated upon the parties involved in a war. The terms equal condition is debatable and opened for wide interpretation. For example, one may consider the pre-war military and economic statistics as standard terms for war initiation and some just might think in terms of geographic landmass or contiguity(Van der Dennen). For example, the United States should just attack Russia because Russia is bigger in land mass compared to the United States, and similarly India or Pakistan should attack each other just because they are geographically contiguous. This judicial concept being much debatable is also considered unethical too, as it does not provide a substantiated reason for war initiation. Some policy expert believes that although unethical this is what the driver in major conflicting in world history remains.

The judicial concept of war is also referred to as a definite period of time during which the interstate relations are conducted in a violent manner and no care is carried in terms of destruction and damage(Van der Dennen). This lay the basis for uninterrupted conflict and undefined damage. Such happens unconsciously and states that take on the presumption that calling for peaceful settlement might leave them non-credible among the committee of nations. To avoid such confluence and being ready for engaging anytime in war, states, therefore, build their military capabilities. So in fact, one may argue that the judicial conception provides a *kind of* legal basis for war preparation in term of military means.

World War I was the first of its kind magnanimous conflict of the twentieth century. At that time there was no prominent international regulatory mechanism that would have restrained the states from going to war. Similarly, there was no mechanism of interstate relation. As like the declined military-industrial complex, there were no international obligations or bindings that would have forced states to opt otherwise. Every modern concept about the war was not present at that time. These were the reasons that war went over to such high scale. During the war, the battles were mostly fought in hands to hand or with the inclusion of some experienced tactics. During the last years, after the involvement of President Woodrow Wilson, and with some news leaks of American weapon building, it became apparent that the countries involved in war will now decide something otherwise. This is how the war conception during the periods of war started. It involved making clear what are the interest in hands are, and which weapon to be used in which battleground.

These all set the basis for weapon manufacturing and lawmaking pertaining to termination of future wars. The establishment of the military industrial complexes in major states of the world was also proof of the facts that war conception has started. New and state of the art weapon manufacturing and inclusion of new warfighting strategies are all the results of the conceptions made during the World War I. American President Woodrow Wilson played an important role in bringing the conflict to an end. The fourteen points he presented to Congress played a significant role in this direction. These fourteen points called for political independence and set the course for negotiations. Finally, the signing of the treaty of Versailles and the establishment of a league of the nation were the final stamps of the legal or judicial conception of war. At present, such conceptions have taken over a more refined form. The establishment of the United Nations and the presence of state of the art military industrial complexes are all the proofs of this conception.

# Conclusion

The eruption of World War I brought new dynamics into international politics and significantly altered the course of history. It introduced such dynamics into the international political and social sphere which were not experienced before. It also made apparent that what is the value of weapons and war readiness. Since this war changed the course of history, therefore, every new concept in the domain of warfighting, weapon manufacturing and legal definition of war till date is associated with this war(Ferguson). World War I is therefore interested in studying how the war concepts are defined and are practically implemented.

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