

Violent Conflicts and ‘Early Warning and Risk Analysis’ in Post Covid-19: An Analytical Framework

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Abstract

Covid-19 has exacerbated violence in Kashmir, Syria, Palestine, and Afghanistan. Direct and structural violence, through discriminatory policies, has increased the risk of the humanitarian crisis in Africa, the Middle East, and South Asia. A few examples of this include the communication blockade in the Indian occupied Kashmir [IOK] and Palestine, supply of expired Covid vaccines to Palestine by Israel, and no provision of vaccination for the Balukhali Rohingya refugee camp in Bangladesh. During Covid-19, these communities have also been suffering due to insufficient health care facilities besides violence. Considering that the international community invests substantially to develop Early Warning and Risk Analysis (EWRA; such as *hotline* communication between rival states) to gauge the ‘traditional military threats’ related to the nuclear states. This study focuses on developing a customized EWRA that can help countries prevent the vulnerabilities of violent conflicts during Covid-19. It argues that EWRA only helps prevent a violent conflict but does not aim to provide solutions to the conflicts. The article takes a generic approach to violent conflicts, building on how Covid-19 has increased direct and structural violence in those areas. The study, with a qualitative exploratory approach, offers unique contribution to the literature. First, it is an original contribution to the literature on conflict prevention as no EWRA is suggested to deal with the combined threats of Covid-19 and violent conflicts. Second, it evolves a discussion on paradigm shifts from geo-politics/geo-economics (during post 9-11 era) to geo-humanism in the post-Covid-19 period.

Keywords

Early Warning and Risk Analysis (EWRA), Covid-19, violent conflict, security, geo-politics, geo-humanism

Introduction

Security paradigms tend to shift from time to time. In 16th century Europe, wars, invasions, and conflicts were pervasive while internal oppression and persecution of peasants resulted from feudalism spurred in the backdrop of nation-state systems

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evolution towards the mid of the 17th century. The end of the Second World War entailed traditional conflict patterns, security threats, and conflict management. The world also witnessed the Cold War era where global politics primarily revolved around bipolarity, the arms race between the United States and the former Soviet Union, proxy wars on behalf of superpowers in South and Southeast Asia, and arms control and disarmament regimes. With the post-cold war era (1991-2001) and the following post-9/11 time (2001 onwards), the two world orders entailed diversity in conflict patterns, definitions, and actors; most of which have been related to traditional security threats and paradigms such as the conflicts in Indian occupied Kashmir, Afghanistan, Iraq, North Korea, Syria, and Yemen.

With the outbreak of Covid-19, not only a new world order seems to emerge but it is also worsening the existing violent conflicts around the world. On 17 November 2019, the first patient was diagnosed with Covid in Wuhan, China, — this very much changed the international politics with the wide and quick spread of the virus throughout the world (The Guardian, 2020). As per the World Health Organization (WHO) Corona Virus Dashboard, globally, there are 179,686,071 confirmed cases of COVID-19 and 3,899,172 deaths (as per June 25, 2021). In addition, a total of 2,624,733,776 vaccine doses have been administered throughout the world till June 24, 2021 (World Health Organization, 2021).

Similar to historic pandemics (such as Spanish Flu-1918), Covid-19 has encapsulated the world with fear of unknown threats and ways to manage the pandemic related conflicts along with the political, economic, racial, and ethnic dynamics of the existing violent or armed conflicts. The question remains, how Covid-19 is increasing the risks and challenges in inter- and intra-state political/territorial conflicts and how the states and international humanitarian organizations should prepare to respond to those multiplied security threats. To respond to these threats, it is the time for the international community and organizations to design an Early Warning and Risk Analysis (EWRA) system to predict, confront, and analyze the intensity of the security threats along with the pandemic related complexities.

An armed conflict already has grave consequences, including physical violence, human and material cost, economic decline, inflation, poverty, ethnic or religious riots, internal displacement, or the refugee crisis. With all this, COVID has worsened the situation while bringing more miseries to the conflict-ridden contexts (such as IOK, Afghanistan, and Palestine). Similarly, the conflict zones, such as Syria and Yemen, were not only suffering from civil wars, sectarian strife, and state-sponsored terrorism but the communities were also vulnerable due to dwindling war-ravaged economy, poor health infrastructure, and discrimination with regard to Covid-19 vaccinations from their respective governments. In this backdrop, a customized EWRA system is needed to identify the multiplying security threats due to Covid-19 and to quantify their intensity in the existing violent conflicts. The discourse of EWRA provides informed opinion and scenario building based on predictions to avoid or prevent potential crisis after the emergence of its initial symptoms.

This study is of innovative nature that contributes a general perspective on the increasing intensity of violent conflicts doubled with pandemic related issues. It dwells upon three dimensions. The first section presents the conceptual framework. The field of conflict prevention refers to EWRA as an essential part to alarm countries for any potential conflict in the near future. This section takes up the concept of EWRA, proposed by John Clarke (2005), to be applied to the violent conflicts in the

post-Covid-19 world order. The second section deals with the security paradigm shift post-9/11 to Covid and post-Covid-19 in 2020-21. This section briefly discusses how the post-9/11 paradigm of geo-politics/economics still exists and continues to transition to post-Covid-19's geo-humanism, where conventional security threats may be increased with the pandemic. The third section presents an EWRA framework to identify the increasing risks and intensity of threats in conflict zones and how effectively the governments respond to them. It also throws light on the existing conflicts and issues and how they may worsen with the pandemic.

Early Warning and Risk Analysis (EWRA)

Conceptual Framework

Conflict prevention offers a multidimensional process to prevent conflict before it goes violent. It is a wholesome approach that prepares states and conflict actors — through EWRA — before the conflict occurs. In 1999, the Carnegie Commission on the Prevention of Deadly Conflict defined conflict prevention in the prism of following: it prevents eruption of violent conflict by supporting and encouraging non-violent prevention. It stops the geographical expansion of the conflict and violence and its recurrence (Carnegie Commission, 1997). Conflict prevention is applied at the latent stage where symptoms of the conflict have started occurring. At this stage, peacebuilders may treat the symptoms through a diagnosis known as 'Early Warning and Risk Analysis'.

EWRA is the first step towards conflict prevention and is being practiced by several international and regional organizations (including relevant think tanks, local organizations, and institutions). EWRA is based on the information and analysis to chalk out and predict the geographical location of imminent crisis, foresee its intensity, and suggest modus operandi to prevent it (Clarke, 2005). It requires in-depth knowledge of the country or area; observation and comprehension of the early indicators and predictions are based on thorough knowledge and skill set of conflict prevention. Moreover, the analyst needs to be capable enough to design a multilayered prevention process or suggest strategies to cope with humanitarian crises effectively and efficiently.

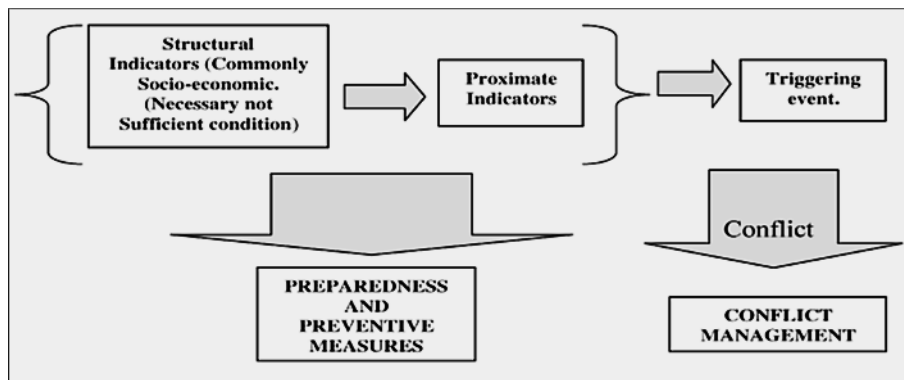
Clarke (2005) has developed an EWRA framework that can be prepared to identify risks for any impending crisis in the future. He further argues that since conflict prevention is part of the social sciences domain, one cannot expect accuracy in the predictability of the crisis, nor can one expect ideal results after employing various strategies to prevent the conflict. However, the practical aspect of EWRA is to prepare the organizations, countries, and people to handle the crisis, and it lessens the chances of panic and anxiety within the society. Once having a framework, it is easier for policymakers, governments, and organizations to respond to the crisis proactively. Clarke (2005) has identified the following three variables that explain the type of the potential crisis (see Figure 1):

- a. *Structural conditions* (e.g., socio-economic and political) of the potential crisis zone: These are not overnight changes or conditions but some factors and policies that took time to be developed or have affected the portion of society or population.
- b. *Proximate factors*: These are the happenings that took place almost prior to the possible conflict.

- c. *Triggers*: They serve as fuel to the structural and proximate factors that escalate the conflict instantly.

For an effective EWRA, peacebuilders may focus on structural and proximate factors to gauge the possibility of the conflict. Triggers² occur almost at the time of the conflict emergence and require active response to prevent its further spread, whereas structural and proximate factors give enough time to think and prevent it proactively.

Figure 1. From conflict to preparedness and prevention



Source: Early Warning and Risk Analysis (EWRA) Framework (Clarke, 2005).

Many organizations have prepared their EWRA to cope up with looming natural disasters as well as violent conflicts. For example, UNDP had developed an EWRA to cope with climatic disasters in Africa in 2016. It primarily discusses tools, methods, and strategies for effective implementation of EWRA and elaborates the dissemination mechanism (UNDP, 2016). However, it is important to consider that the mere adoption of EWRA cannot ensure an ideal outcome; nevertheless, it offers a policy-driven decision-making framework aligned with the necessary preparations. Therefore, the framework has to be flexible and customized to adjust factors and indicators as per the needs of society and the nature of the potential disaster. Clarke (2005) delineates seven main areas; (1) socio-economic conditions, (2) state and institutions, (3) regional/international dimension, (4) security, (5) public disclosure, ideological factors, and elite behavior, (6) human rights, and (7) civil liberties and actors (see Table 1).

The risk patterns for structural, proximate, and triggering factors are determined through quantitative and qualitative analysis. Socio-economic conditions may involve social dimensions existing within society, such as the pre-existing divides based on religion, ethnicity or racial identity, and linkages with particular political actors. Economic conditions include availability of resources, uneven distribution of resources, per capita GDP, underprivileged communities, and groups living below the poverty line. Socio-economic conditions are referred to as ‘structural

² As per Clarke’s views, ‘triggers’ are referred to those incidents or events that may fuel the structural and proximate factors and escalate the conflict instantly.

variable(s)' because they take time to reach the outbreak stage. State and institutions are taken as risk factors because they move towards a failure due to their political structure, failing judicial process, and being more vulnerable to violent conflict.

Indicators such as regional, international, and security dimensions elucidate the probable expansion of the crisis to the neighboring regions and how regional and international actors can help or take advantage of the crisis. When the violent conflict expands to other regional geographies, it ultimately threatens the security of other states. The role of diaspora in furthering security risks are also to be taken into consideration. The indicators of public disclosure, ideological factors, and elite behavior are not only proximate but also structural patterns. The mass support for violence and its ideological grounds coupled with negative behavior from political elites may further escalate the conflict. Political elites find a potential crisis an opportunity to exploit the already existing ethnic and ideological divides (Clark, 2005). Moreover, human rights and civil liberties are always at risk whenever a conflict erupts. Therefore, a peace-building approach needs to incorporate the aforementioned indicators in a highly contextualized manner (refer to Table 1 for further details).

Table 1. Early Warning Analysis Framework

<i>Factors</i>	<i>Risk/Trends</i>	<i>Interpretation</i>
1 Socio-economic conditions		
2 State and Institutions		
3 Regional/International dimension		
4 Security		
5 Public disclosure, ideological factors, and elite behaviour		
6 Human Rights and Civil Liberties		
7 Actors		

Paradigm Shift

Before presenting a customized EWRA framework for post-Covid-19 world order, it is imperative to see the trends of global politics in the last phase of post 9/11 and pre Covid-19 times.

From Geo-Politics and Geo-Economics to Geo-Humanism

Several scholars have recognized a major paradigm shift from post 9/11 to post Covid-19 world order. Noboru Yamaguchi (2021) has established the link between Covid-19 and the form of political systems that proved effective to control the spread of the virus. According to him, authoritarian regimes such as China emerged as an effective system to impose strict lockdowns and, therefore, control the spread of Covid-19. He further argues that democracies such as Japan and Taiwan could contain the virus and improvise public health facilities. Covid-19 has also been impacting international trade and economies. Lukasz Gruszczynski (2020) predicts a significant decline in the global economy and trade due to the ongoing pandemic and foresees temporary closures of non-essential manufacturing facilities. International

tourism, civil aviation, and the hospitality industry are a few of the many affected sectors due to Covid-19, causing socio-economic turbulence in many countries. The changing patterns seem to be shifting to a virtual world.

Epidemics are not a new phenomenon. Ebola has killed almost 2200 people in Congo since August 2018 (The Express Tribune, 2020). Chemical and biological agents such as Anthrax, typhoid, aids, tuberculosis, Congo virus, foot and mouth disease, bird flu, Severe Respiratory Syndrome (SARS), and dengue virus have been affecting humanity for decades. Africa is the worst hit where epidemics sustain for a long time because of other existing socio-economic conditions. With contemporary global public health concerns, one cannot deny the importance of ‘human security’ measures against epidemic (or pandemic) related crises in future. However, the post 9/11 conflict trends — under geo-politics and geo-economics — will continue at their pace, but human security threats will further complicate the environment. In the post-9/11 era, ‘a-traditional’³ trends involve transnational threats like terrorism with its ripple effect in Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iraq, Syria, and Sri Lanka; civil war turned into regional/international battlefields as in the case of Yemen and Syria; and sectarianism in Yemen and Syria.

Similarly, we are also noticing the rising right-wing politics and white supremacy in Europe, Islamophobia and anti-immigrant policies in North America, racism-related issues in the west and Europe, minority rights issues and internecine struggles in India, heavy militarization of IOK, and continuous violence in Palestine-Israel conflict. The global community did not prepare any EWRA to avert the potential traditional and non-traditional security risks in all these circumstances. Though Middle East, Africa, and South Asia have been devastated due to the grip of violence in the wake of internecine struggles and armed conflict, Covid-19 politics brought a relatively new dimension such as human rights movements or religious congregations being the source of Covid-19 spread in certain areas, minority hate-crimes and political rallies, and protests against the government due to its inability to deal with the worst pandemic crisis in under-developed countries such as India. Hence, the future threats are related to both traditional and non-traditional security.

Violent Conflicts and Covid-19

Traditional violent conflicts are part of world politics. Realpolitik seems to exist with the pandemic in the coming years for two reasons. One, violent conflicts are usually deep-rooted and protracted and therefore are likely to continue in future also. Two, policies of many countries revolve around the traditional paradigm of security. On March 23, 2020, the U.N. Secretary-General António Guterres appealed to armed groups for a global ceasefire, to cease all violent activities due to the rapid spread of the pandemic (United Nations, 2020).

However, the Palestine-Israel conflict turned more violent during the month of Ramadhan (i.e., during May 2021). The violent crisis was escalated with rocket fires of Hamas and Iron Dome Defense of Israel with air, land, and sea strikes.

³ ‘A-traditional security paradigm’ is a term coined by author herself, explaining those security threats which are combination of both traditional and non-traditional such as terrorism, transnational threats such as maritime piracy, CBRN – chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear weapons, women and drug trafficking, wars and military operations etc.

According to the Health Ministry of Gaza, 253 Palestinians, including 66 children, were killed and 1900 individuals were injured on Gaza Strip. The rockets fired by Hamas killed twelve individuals, including three foreigners and two children (Al Jazeera, 2021). This triggering violence on the Gaza strip awakened the regional community, and led to hundreds of demonstrations around the world, especially in the Middle Eastern countries. Hence, the violence in Gaza, with technology and electricity blockade, and low supply of food and water, medicines and continuous internal displacement of Palestinians were an additional layer of problems to the prevailing pandemic situation. According to Patrick Kingsley (2021), the violence continued until May 21, 2021, when a ceasefire was established between Israeli forces and Hamas.

Even at the beginning of Covid-19, paranoia and threat perception continued between the (international) archrivals. China blamed the officers from the U.S. Army for bringing Covid-19 to Wuhan and asked for an explanation (Pickrell, 2020). Similarly, an Indian surveillance drone was caught and shot by Pakistan Army in the second week of April 2020; further escalating the tension between the two nuclear-armed countries. According to the Inter-Services Public Relations Pakistan, the quadcopter “intruded 600 meters into Pakistan’s territory to conduct surveillance”. This blatant act was aggressively responded to by Pakistan Army shooting down [the] Indian quadcopter (Dawn, 2020, para.4).

Furthermore, the violence in IOK is both direct and structural. A new repressive tenure from August 5, 2019, after revoking Article 370 and 35 (A), was shortly followed by the Covid-19 in IOK. Political, economic, and social suppression to demographic change, domicile policy, constant curfews, stationing of increased Indian forces, and brutal human rights violations make the conflict in IOK more complicated. Paul Staniland (2020) argues that if the pandemic continues to spread rapidly, it will create more frustration among the Kashmiri leadership and youth. For instance, there has been a complete media and technology blackout in IOK that already restricts people from internet usage, resulting in limited access to the information concerning Covid-19. The situation in IOK has equally impacted the political struggle or activities of the local population. The political leadership of IOK was detained in 2019-2020, which severely affected the public mobilization. On the other hand, the pandemic ‘lockdowns’ helped India on multiple fronts. The Indian government is continuously introducing repressive policies, and Kashmiri leadership cannot react or respond through protests, political rallies, and campaigns (Staniland, 2020). Therefore, the Covid-19 helped India to escalate structural and direct violence through discriminatory policies (Ray, 2020).

The conflict in Afghanistan has a similar situation. Peace Process is under way between the United States and the Taliban, and there have been negotiations since February 2020 at inter- and intra-state levels, yet no progress towards peace has been observed in the past one year. The current situation in Afghanistan does not promise any hopes for the future. Taliban are making significant territorial gains in the wake of the withdrawal of the U.S. and NATO troop’s, which have been promised to vacate the country by August 31, 2021 (Pettypiece & Egan, 2021). There seems a chance of a civil war situation between Afghan forces and the Taliban in Afghanistan. Against this backdrop, the pandemic and ideologically driven Taliban’s approach is a

double-edged sword besides the regular spouts of violence in Kabul and other areas in Afghanistan. While the Taliban were critical of polio vaccinations and the related health workers were targeted in the past, it was apprehended that Covid-19 and its treatments and health workers would also expect a reaction from the Taliban.

However, interestingly, they accepted the vaccinations against Covid-19 and cooperated with the international health programs (Kapur, 2021). Regardless, suicide bombing and attacks on medical facilities and public health infrastructure kept on hampering the state to deal with the pandemic. In the first quarter of 2020, continuous attacks on Afghan National Defense and Security Forces (ANDSF) averaging 55 attacks per day took place, killing both ANDSF and Taliban combatants while also resulting in civilian casualties. Almost 533 were dead and more than 700 individuals were injured during the first three months of 2020 (Safi, 2020). While the peace process continued with rounds of talks between the US and Taliban (during February 2020) and between the Afghan government and the Taliban (during September 2020), the attacks from both sides continued. In the year 2021, the war-ravaged country seems to grapple with intense internal security issues, violence, and regional political complexity.

Besides all the conventional existing conflicts of geo-politics and geo-economics, there may be a variety of looming issues under geo-humanism: the concept that is extracted from the discourse on 'Humanistic Geography'. Geo-humanism may be referred to as the study of the effects of human-related issues on politics. Humanistic Geography is already a well-established discipline, developed in the 1970s (Humanistic Geography, 2012); it refers to "bringing human beings in all of their complexity to the center-stage of human geography" (Cloke, Philo et al, 1991). Humanistic geography dwells upon the behavior and relationship of human beings with nature, their geographical behavior with space, place and environment, and this interaction between humans and nature gives further clarity to the results of their actions (Humanistic Geography, 2012). While humanistic geography is already a field of research, combining it with the effect of human actions on the environment and politics may give birth to a new philosophy of 'geo-humanism'. With regards, the following dimensions can be characterized at the state-level:

- a. Due to continuous violence, states and organizations may lack the capacity/capability to provide sufficient medical care and facilities to a larger group of sufferers. Iran has been facing an acute humanitarian crisis during Covid-19 due to the U.S. sanctions on Iran, bringing the health care system to the verge of collapse. Only in April 2020, 5000 people died of Corona, with 80,000 active cases (Aljazeera, 2020).
- b. Urgent need for quick conversion from manual to e-governance; hence resulting unemployment for a massive number of people in the world. The United States saw a remarkable rise in unemployment in April 2020, i.e., 20 million people lost their jobs due to Covid-19 (Elliot, 2020).
- c. Surviving pandemics along with livelihoods of low-income groups in the country.
- d. Covid-19 has affected minorities all over the world. Some religious communities were blamed for having spread Covid-19 because of their religious festivals or congregations. In India, a significant Muslim minority is subjected to

discrimination for this reason. They are being blamed for spreading Covid-19 due to the religious congregation known as Tableeghi Jamaat (Bajoria, 2020).

- e. Greater reliance on the internet and communication technology may result in serious cyber-crimes (including accessing the data sources of the security-sensitive organizations). World Health Organization (WHO) has experienced cyber-attacks twice during the ongoing Covid-19 episode (Firdaus, 2020). Furthermore, states engaged in traditional territorial or military conflicts are more vulnerable to 'cyber-security' risks (Siddiqui, 2020).

Early Warning and Risk Analysis Framework in Post-Covid-19

This paper presents an EWRA framework based on John Clarke's model, suggesting risk trends and situations in a possible pandemic. It can be adjusted as per the specific security dimensions for the imminent crisis in different countries. Technically, the EWRA framework is not meant to provide solutions for potential problems; instead, the purpose is to identify risks and evaluate the intensity. These threats are both, of newer as well as of existing nature. In addition, other factors may also be included depending upon the contextual dynamics. Before presenting the EWRA framework for a pandemic, it is imperative to explain its indicators:

1. *Factors*: They are the already existing elements that may have chances to be worsened in case of a pandemic, such as socio-economic conditions, human life and livelihoods, infrastructural capacity, state and institutions, state's preparedness to respond to pandemics, and politics.
2. *Risks or Trends*: It is a measuring indicator through which one can identify the intensity and type of risks that 'factors' may entail. Factors can be structural, i.e., based on policy or political or economic structure of a state. For example, poverty is a socio-economic condition, and it can be referred to as a 'structural' risk or trend. Factors may be proximate which might have happened in the recent past and have incited more fear or violence.⁴
3. *Interpretation*: It is an explanation of both Factors and Risks/trends of the EWRA framework to evaluate their intensity to affect a country.

⁴ For example, unresponsive attitude of the states to handle a pandemic crisis may be referred as a proximate risk. Similarly, some other factors can be triggering such as protests or demonstrations during Black Lives Matter campaigns became a trigger for an increase in the Covid-19 cases in USA and Europe.

Table 2. Early Warning and Risk Analysis Framework for a Pandemic

	<i>Factors</i>	<i>Risk/Trends</i>	<i>Interpretation</i>
1.	Human Life and livelihoods	Structural, Proximate and Triggering factors with high-risk trends.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. State’s resources to prevent citizens from both violence and pandemics and sustain its economy during a possible economic halt. b. Capability to respond to political, sectarian/ethnic, and economic crises faced by daily wagers and labor community.
2.	Socio-economic conditions	Structural factors with medium to high-risk trend in terms of economic sustainability of the violent conflict zones in a pandemic breakout.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Conflict fault lines in case of ethnic movements, insurgencies, terrorism, religious/racial/sectarian conflicts, And survival of vulnerable communities as violence/riots occur in the presence of a pandemic. b. Specific socio-economic conditions of countries, global north and south, contain or spread pandemics; such as ratio of people below the poverty line, hygiene, GDP, nature, and cultural context of communities that may be affected, i.e., how many times they visit worship places in a day, the Eating habits, availability and affordability of hygiene products, and chances of survival ability
3.	Infrastructural Capacity	Structural and triggering factors with medium to high-risk trends.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Armed conflicts produce refugee crises and internal displacements. Are states capable enough to cater to refugees and prevent the rapid spread of infections in the camps? b. This includes a residential and commercial structure in urban centers (Health and medical facilities in both rural and urban areas). c. How vulnerable communities live in Informal settlements, slum areas or additional areas in a city or a village? d. Close neighborhoods, slums and informal settlements with underprivileged people living in greater numbers in a household double the risk of getting infected.
4.	State and Institutions	Structural if the state and institutions are failing in political system. (High-risk trend because any preventive or management system will be developed by state and institutions).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. State: armed conflicts and violent ethnic and religious movements are state’s domain to deal with. What could be state’s response to contain violence and terrorism during a pandemic? b. How does state become a perpetrator by not having enough vision to anticipate a pandemic that has occurred in other parts of the world or neighboring countries? c. Institutions: Are institutions discriminatory towards a particular group or minority for treatment or relief in an impending pandemic crisis?

5.	State's preparedness to respond to Pandemics in violent conflict zones	Proximate and Triggering factors with high-risk trends	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. The state's capacity and capability to deter the threat of traditional rivalry from other states or non-state actors and to prevent the population from both bullets/bombings and pandemics. b. Does the state have enough hospitals and health facilities to treat pandemics especially during a continuing civil war? c. What is the state of scientific research to explore pandemics and their cure or collaborate with other countries? d. Economic cost and disaster analysis e. Manpower at various levels in different fields f. State's capacity and capability to adopt and implement virtual methods and operations at various levels to run the country.
6.	Politics	Proximate and triggering factors with medium low risk trend.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Local politics and competition among political parties during a pandemic may cause further damage and polarization of the society. b. In case elections are due, is the country technologically advanced to go for electronic voting?
7.	Regional/International dimension	Structural and proximate factors with medium to high-risk trends	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. State's regional and international risk assessment to gauge the geographical expansion of violence and pandemic to neighboring countries. b. How quickly the pandemics can be spread regionally and internationally? c. Regional and international capacity to respond to the human rights violations and pandemic globally. d. Regional and International Resource pool to invest wisely for deterrence of human security threats.
8.	Security	Structural, proximate, and sometimes may be a triggering factor with medium to high-risk trend.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. What is the primary approach to perceive both traditional and nontraditional security threats? b. Capability to initiate a combination of governance through political, economic, and human centric approaches to deter those threats. c. State's responsiveness to deter traditional and human security threats equally and effectively.
9.	Public disclosure, ideological factors, and elite behavior	Proximate to triggering factors with medium to high-risk trends.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. How cooperative or non-supportive public can be for the pandemic crisis management? b. Ideological groups: how they affect state's crisis prevention efforts? c. How empathetic or conflictual elite behavior could be towards conflict prevention of a pandemic?
10.	Actors	Structural and proximate and occasionally triggering factors with medium to high-risk trends	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. State and non-state actors in case of armed conflicts, rebel groups, insurgents, terrorists etc. b. Virus as a main conflict actor. c. State, national and international organizations/institutions are the conflict managers. d. Carriers and sympathizers are common people, ignorant individuals, and ideologically motivated people who do not understand scientific reasons and impact of a pandemic.

The primary objective of proposing an EWRA framework is to identify and streamline emerging and pre-existing threats that may affect the populations in the long run. Here is the explanation of the factors outlined above in the framework by clubbing them together:

Human Life and Livelihoods, State's Preparedness to Respond to Pandemics, and Traditional Security

Pandemic affects human life for its fatality and uncertainty costing livelihoods. According to National Herald (2020), "an approximated 147 million full-time positions were lost and loss of \$2.1 trillion in wages and salaries and global consumption loss of almost \$ 3.8 trillion were caused due to Covid-19 till May 2020" (para. 1). In another data by International Labor Organization (ILO), "in the second quarter of 2020, working hours lowered to 14 per cent which means the loss of 400 million jobs (full time)" (UN News, 2020, para. 3). Covid-19 affected livelihoods and the economy devastatingly. How efficiently was the international community equipped to respond to this crisis? The United States and Europe introduced unemployment insurance benefits and adopted hybrid relief strategies (such as PPP-Paycheck Protection Program) but mostly proved inadequate due to the rising unemployment rate and fatality due to pandemics (Rothwell, 2020).

In Canada, 39 per cent of people applied for unemployment insurance benefits at the country's Emergency Response Benefit, but they were not suitable for sustainable livelihoods (Rothwell, 2020). The global community, international organizations, and states tried to cater to unemployed population; yet, Covid-19 directly challenges the capacity and capability of the states to sense the human security threat perception in coming years. The pandemic brought many other risks such as food security, economic security, and environmental security. This is barely one side of contemporary international conflicts in Syria, Kashmir, Afghanistan, Yemen, and Palestine. None of these active violent conflict zones had any efficient public health care system, and communities were more prone and vulnerable to the easy spread of Covid-19. The question remains how the governments of these countries and international organizations can go for ceasefire and stop human rights violations during a possible pandemic spread in the future.

Socio-economic Conditions, Infrastructural Capacity, Ideological factor, and Elite Behavior

These four factors are interrelated. Pandemics affect communities not only in terms of their health but also due to persisting socio-economic conditions such as their accommodations, standard of living, religious and cultural inclinations, and how elites (states and institutions/political leadership) respond to the crisis. South Asia is home to a large population living below the poverty line. India makes the most impoverished country, with 21.2 per cent of the total population living below the international poverty line of 1.90 U.S. dollars. For Bangladesh, 18.5 per cent of the population; for Nepal, 15.0 per cent; for Pakistan, 6.1 per cent; for Maldives 7.3 per cent; for Sri Lanka, 1.9 per cent; and for Bhutan, 2.2 per cent of the population falls below the poverty line (Deyshappriya, 2018). Countries with people living below the poverty line do not have the luxury to adopt Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs)

such as social or physical distancing. Infrastructural incapacity, slums, and squatter settlements in urban areas where large families live together in smaller households are regular features in many underdeveloped countries and regions. One in six urban residents in India lives in a slum, which is unfit for human habitation (CBC, 2013). Congested informal settlements have poor hygienic environments and their residents often lack the financial resources to go through medical tests for diagnosis and treatments in case of any illness, including the pandemic. How do political leaders and elite behavior help these low-income communities in such circumstances? EWRA may enable states to efficiently foresee these risks.

Ideological and cultural inclinations also contribute to the spread of a pandemic. The politicized case of Covid-19 brought racial/ethnic and sectarian/religious dimensions to the already suffering and marginalized communities (particularly in the conflict zones). Pakistan emerged as an example to have controlled the spread of the first wave of Covid-19 effectively through smart and strict lockdowns. However, there have been continuous political differences between and among federal and provincial governments, e.g., between the Federal government and the Sindh provincial government which constantly disagreed with easing the lockdown in June 2020 (Mahar, 2020). Having political differences may be an old trend of usual conflicts in a country, yet having political differences in times of medical emergency may be lethal for people and the economy. Religious, racial, and ethnic discrimination are also not new risks or conflicts, but pandemics may further aggravate the situation.

India is already pursuing radical policies against its Muslim minority. In India, Muslim minority was reported to have spread Covid-19 due to their religious congregation through missionary groups (Tableeghi Jamaat). About 4,400 cases were reported due to the annual 'Tableeghi Jamaat' congregation in New Delhi where Muslim worshippers were gathered to offer prayers (Bisht, 2020). In Pakistan as well, Covid-19 cases were increased due to the Shiite pilgrims who travelled to different cities from Iran. Somehow, the sectarian, religious, and ethnic divides deepened in the wake of Covid-19. This highlights the importance of EWRA in a crisis as that of a pandemic.

The world is still experiencing another wave of Covid-19 with different types of variants. Seemingly, it shall linger on for a while resulting in a long-lasting impact. Countries have to manage pandemic related crises through coordinated efforts, instant ability to adapt to newer systems, speedy logistics, and regional or international cooperative measures. Politically hostile countries or neighborhoods (such as India and Pakistan or India and China) or countries with existing violent conflicts (as in Syria, Yemen, Palestine, and Kashmir) require timely and effective diplomatic pressures or humanitarian intervention by the international community and organizations such as the United Nations.

The behavior of the public and elite to respond or deal with pandemic related crises also matters. How do masses deal with the health crisis? How effectively do they adopt the new normal during Covid-19? How are the governments responding to deal with multiple challenges of a deteriorating economy, increased violence and riots in conflict zones, and insufficient health care for the patients? EWRA is required to respond to these questions. In the United States, Black Lives Matter (BLM) movements took place amidst the peak of Covid-19. In Pakistan, political rallies and

demonstrations were being held during the same time. In the same pandemic, the New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern took a 20 per cent cut from her as week as her cabinet's salary for the next six months to help daily wagers in the country (Yee, Cheung, & Reynolds, 2020). Different states responded differently to the Covid crisis. The newer challenge to deal with the crisis is to have coordinated efforts and international humanitarian response, for which EWRA is ultimately needed. The EWRA for such conflict fault lines with their specific cultural references may need major contextualization and adjustment in the framework presented through this study.

Conclusion

This paper argues that though there seems to be a paradigm shift towards geo-humanism, geo-politics will remain at the center stage in contemporary and future global politics. The international conflicts and issues of the global economy are going hand in hand. However, a newer challenge of human security, environmental politics, and pandemics and their rapid spread with lack of capacity and capability to adopt modern high-tech lifestyles and working systems require states to invest equally in non-traditional security arrangements. At the same time, age-old traditional conflicts — related to Chemical, Biological, Radiological, nuclear weapons (CBRN), internationalized civil war in Syria, regionalized civil war in Yemen, seven decades-old conflict in Kashmir, and continuing violence in Palestine — will remain equally valid and merit attention and effective conflict resolution. Nuclear weapons and robust military and defense mechanisms are already considered suitable countermeasures for preventing any security threat, yet such measures are unable to ensure the 'human security' agenda (particularly in the backdrop of the given pandemic). It is, therefore, suggested to invest equally well in sensing human security threats. The first step is to prepare an early warning and risk analysis system. This study is a humble effort to present an ERWA framework catering to both sides of the security, which can be replicated by the governments and organizations for policy-relevant research and measures to identify potential risks and challenges related to armed conflicts during a pandemic and how pandemic worsens any violent conflict in future. While dealing with direct physical violence and the power struggle between or among states, the world has changed within almost two years of Covid-19. The more adaptive communities embrace newer trends of global pandemic politics, the better it would be to sense early signs of the new threat before it breaks out and results in devastation for humanity.

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