

COVID 19- WORLD WAR C

TWENTY TWENTY, a year described as the future back when we were in school in the 90s. Stretching it to a little further, people also speculated the emergence of Artificial Intelligence, Mission to Mars and even flying cars. Not so long ago, a group of people predicted the end of the world in 2012 and yet, here we are, in a new decade that brought with it huge expectations in terms of technologies, innovations, money and standard of living. The pace of the human race evolution surged in such a way that even the 90s arguably seem like stone age. Medical science progressed and the cure for diseases that back then seemed hopeless, is now attainable. Global average of the life expectancy of humans raised from 42 years back in the 50s to an incredible 72 years in the 2000s. Production and exploitation of the earth valuable resources are in full swing. The human race has produced the largest army, weapons, fastest means of travels and communications, the fastest computers. Humans are now the ultimate invincible race. Slow down ! says a tiny, unarmed and brainless micro organism - the new corona virus. In the Avengers Endgame, 2019, a group of alien tries to invade earth. "Sorry, earth is closed today" says Iron-man. Seemed like a joke, right? But guess what, its not, not really. Forget about the flying cars, even the planes are grounded. Welcome to Twenty Twenty and with it, the World War C !

The history

11th March 2020, the World Health Organisation declared the new corona virus a global pandemic. The highly contagious virus spread in a logarithmic manner and infected over three million people causing up to 250,000 deaths in 212 countries and territories around the world. Up until May 2020, the virus originated from the city of Wuhan, China, forced almost half of the global population into a strict lockdown. A measure taken by the government of several countries to prevent the contagion from spreading. A global pandemic every 100 years or so? Well so says history. In 1720, there was an outbreak of the great Plague of Marseille causing more than 100,000 deaths. In 1817 up until 1824, the Cholera spread from India to South East Asia. Then came the "Spanish Flu" in 1918 to 1920; the H1N1 virus that killed more than 50 million people. A century later, another pandemic, the Covid-19.

Is a Global Pandemic really a curse?

"If anything kills over 10 million of people over the next few decades, it will be most likely a highly infected virus rather than a war. Not missiles but microbes. We are not ready." This was predicted, not by the Simpsons, but Bill Gates in 2015 in TED talk. A Hollywood movie named Contagion, released in 2011 also envisioned more or less the exact scenario. There are no missiles, but this is war. Like President Macron said "We are at war, a healthcare war. We are not fighting an army, nor are we fighting another nation but an invisible elusive enemy which is spreading." Humans invested trillions in weapons, military army, artificial intelligence and yet today, it is not a military force or a bunch of robots that are fighting for the survival of humanity. Our front liners are healthcare officers, doctors, cleaners and police officers amongst others. We can finally highlight the importance of these often ignored people in our society. The production lines have stopped, industries and offices are closed, more than 216 airline companies have grounded their planes, stock markets are crashing, the world economy is down and economist are predicting an unprecedented economic crash, even worse than the one in 1929. Mass unemployment and recession are hovering upon us. This is war and the human race are on the losing side.

However, the other side of the coin tells a different story. The shutting down of human activities allowed Mother Earth to regenerate. The level of pollution decreased drastically. Our beaches are cleaner, the sea and rivers are free from the boats and ships and the fishes can swim freely. The birds can fly from tree to tree and chirp as loud as they can with no one to shoo them away. NASA came with satellite images showing that the ozone layer above Antarctica is healing. Less trees are being cut and less animals are being slaughtered for food. The planet is blossoming, once again. Covid 19 is a highly dangerous virus to human beings but at the same time, a vaccine to Mother Earth. Its high time that we grasp, this planet does not need humans, instead we need it to survive.

Intelligence and Greed

Evolution of homo sapiens made man the most intelligent race of the planet. We have made progress in every possible field, medical science, engineering, commerce, you name it. Nonetheless, we are now being taught how to wash our hands, properly. While everyone is in race to earn as much money as they can, somewhere in the holy scriptures mentioned "you shall have money but no food to eat." Well this is what happens when everything is closed. Even with the most advanced medical technologies and intellect, the wait for a vaccine is very much real.

Quarantine: An opportunity or time to kill time?

The enemy needs hosts to spread and what better host can it find than humans, over seven billion of them. It took time, but eventually, with some help of legal measures imposed by governments, people realised that the only way to flatten the curve is to stay at home. While all other species were roaming free out there, humans, the most powerful race of the planet, were locked down in their homes, mastering the art of doing nothing and all they have is time. Is this a message to all of us, to slow down from our daily hectic schedule and spend quality time with our family and our pets? Your dream trip to the Bahamas can wait, work can wait, studies can wait. Many realised that real ecstasy is not really when you receive your pay cheque at the end of the month but when you find that the bread you baked is as delicious as the one you buy or when you draw or sing or dance and doing all the things you never did cause you 'did not have time'. Coming out of this quarantine with no new skills, more knowledge or a better version of yourself only means that you never lacked time, but discipline and will.

This is war and yes we, the human race are losing but there is one thing we know, we will rise again from our knees and take command, again. However, being the most intelligent and the most powerful certainly does not mean being invincible. The next time we might not be so lucky, so we have to be ready and we have to protect what we have, our Earth, the only habitable planet, atleast until now and earth is not only humans but mother nature too. Investing trillions of dollars in weapons or space race or artificial intelligence might not help because the next war may not be between nations but against another deadlier pandemic or a fierce natural calamity or as Elon Musk stated, against artificial intelligence itself. History will witness that when human race was at stake, military force did not matter, religion did not matter, being rich or poor did not matter, handshakes and hugs were banned, yet we stood together and fought. We do not know what is in ahead for us but the least we can do is to heal the world, make it a better place, for you and for me and the entire human race.