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Who Keeps Score on Shooting Wars?

WHAT'S the score? That depends on what you're talking about.

In baseball, statisticians can tell you the batting average of a switch hitter against left-handed pitchers on rainy Thursday afternoons, with runners on base, at home or away.

In football, somebody tallies the number of passes thrown by quarterbacks, percentage of passes completed, either to teammates or opponents, and yards gained or lost thereby.

Businessmen keep score on raw materials available, costs, productivity, inventories, markets and prices. So do oil men, farmers, labor unions and consumer activists. Bankers keep score on your deposits, loans and withdrawals.

But who keeps score on the three dozen shooting wars now going on in the world? We keep tabs in the war on poverty, in the war on inflation, and in the war against high taxes, but not on shooting wars where nations are "playing" for regional or world championships.

Most of us couldn't name the conflicting parties in half of the present

wars, much less locate the countries and tell what they are fighting about, or who is winning. Most of the world's 140 or 150 nations are affected, directly or indirectly.

If the United Nations had any gumption it would be a likely place to keep score on wars of the world, but it is doubtful if delegates could agree even on league classifications.

World powers, of course, include the United States, the Soviet Union, China, Japan, West Germany, a combination of European nations, and some of their allies. In keeping score, we ought to have goals identified, economic resources, population and military might measured by the same standards. This would not be easy.

Central American and African nations ought to be classified as minor league for war purposes. However, points should be scored when big league nations recruit an ally for communism or for freedom. Overthrow of totalitarian government should count big.

Victories should be scored in terms of food, oil and consumer goods, as well as for military personnel and equipment.

If a peace conference were held between warring nations, each should receive, say, 1,000 points. If the peace conference accomplished anything worth mentioning, make that 10,000 points.

If the war resulted in freedom for the winners, score 10,000 points. If the winners turned out to be losers or if the winners have to subsidize and feed the losers, subtract 5,000 points.

A nation that starts an unscheduled war, such as invading a neighboring country, should be fined and suspended. Civil war and terrorism should count against the place where it occurs.

If somebody would devise a "World War Scoreboard" with flashing lights and firecrackers maybe we would become less concerned with imaginary star wars and pay more attention to the numerous bloody conflicts now going on here on earth.