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Table of Contents

PAKISTAN

Reconvening Dialogue Editorial	7
Boosting Clean Energy By Syeda Hadika Jamshaid	8
South Asia: Need For Common Regional Approach By Shahid Javed Burki	12
Effects of Climate Change Editorial.....	15
Ties with Iran Editorial	16
Will India and Pakistan Ever Grow up? By Aijaz Zaka Syed.....	17
Frayed Pak-US Relations Editorial	21
Pak-India Relations Editorial	23
The Need For Pak-Afghan Cooperation Editorial.....	24
Why The Census Is Important For Pakistan By Saad Amanullah	26
Pakistan’s Foreign Policy Predicaments By Ghulam Noor Jehanian	30
Building Pak-Iran Bridges By Arhama Siddiqua.....	38
Cracks in Trump’s Af-Pak Policy By Ali Rafi	40
How to deal with Trump’s Emerging Afghan Policy By Muhammad Ali Ehsan	43
China, Russia Defend Pakistan Against Trump Criticism.....	46
China and Pakistan after Trump By Sultan M Hali	47
The Afghan War and Pakistan By Rasul Bakhsh Rais	51
Donald Trump’s Flawed Foreign Policy By Munir Ahmed.....	53

ECONOMY

CPEC: Whose Project is this? By Dr Ashfaq H Khan	60
Building an Economy for the Future By Dr S Akbar Zaidi.....	66
Mutually Beneficial CPEC By Dr Ahmad Rashid Malik.....	69
A Fraught Partnership Editorial.....	72
Rupee Depreciation Editorial	73
CPEC And Policy Initiatives By Durdana Najam.....	75

EDUCATION

CSS Papers of 2016: FPSC Report Finds Poor Level of Scholarship By Riazul Haq	78
Education Spending in Pakistan By Dr Pervez Tahir.....	81

Higher education Woes Editorial	83
Educating Pakistan’s Next Generation By Mosharraf Zaidi	85
Pakistan’s Education Crisis: The Real Story By Salman Ali	88
Education Spending and Mr Jinnah By Dr Pervez Tahir	91
Access to Education Editorial	93

WORLD

Trump and Russia By Eugene B. Rumer, Richard Sokolsky, and Andrew S. Weiss	94
China, The New Global Leader? By Dr Kamal Monnoo.....	105
Nuclear Deterrence in South Asia By Maimuna Ashraf	109
Sino-Indian rifts on Doklam By Reema Shaukat.....	112
Russia and China’s Enduring Alliance By Jacob Stokes	115
US-North Korea Reckless Rhetoric By Asif Haroon Raja	120
Donald Trump Has no Grasp of What it Means to be President	123
Why the U.S. Needs Its Envoys By Arsalan Suleman.....	131
India’s Crisis of Secularism By Syed Mohammad Ali.....	135
A Dangerous Liability By Rizwan Asghar	137

Reconvening Dialogue | Editorial

The recurrent issue of the water dispute between Pakistan and India has been in talks since 1948 with little significant development. The Indus Water Treaty was signed in 1960 with the help of the World Bank as a signatory, and provided the two nations with a framework for irrigations and hydropower development. But disagreement on the construction of the Kishengana and Ratle hydroelectric power plants being built by India led to a failure to draw up a resolution that would benefit both the nations.

Islamabad fears these plants could severely deplete its water resources as they will be built on a tributary of the Jhelum and Chenab rivers, water flow from which has been allocated to Pakistan according to the treaty. If this happens it would result in a major setback for Pakistan as it is primarily a 'water economy' with 65 per cent of the population having agriculture as their only means of subsistence. With Pakistan already facing existential problems — an increasing water demand owing to the growing population, climate change and mismanagement of water for industrial and agricultural consumption — the construction of the projects would not only further strain its water resources but also lead to a food shortage.

Although the treaty has survived the test of time, last year, Indian premier Narendra Modi used the water conflict as a diplomatic weapon when tensions between the two nations were escalating. He issued a statement that said 'water belonging to India cannot go to Pakistan'. However, it comes as welcome news that Pakistan and India displayed cooperation during recent talks hosted by the World Bank to resolve the pending issue with them agreeing to discuss it further in September. Over the years, neither the democratic nor the military leadership has been able to provide Pakistan with a formal water policy to resolve the increasing water shortage. Reconvening the dialogue on Indo-Pak water conflict could be a step in the right direction.

Source: <https://tribune.com.pk/story/1473248/reconvening-dialogue/>

Boosting Clean Energy By Syeda Hadika Jamshaid

Developing countries like Pakistan are least responsible for greenhouse gas emissions, but due to their geographical location and socioeconomic fragility, most of these countries are extremely vulnerable to the threats posed by climate change. Pakistan is no exception and ranks seventh in the 10 countries that are worst affected by climate change.

During the past two decades, Pakistan has suffered over 130 events including floods, droughts and heatwaves in various parts, with losses costing up to approximately \$4 billion. One of the ways Pakistan can contribute towards mitigation of greenhouse gases is through adaptation of clean and renewable energy sources, through its resources like solar, wind, hydro and biomass.

Although the government realises the use of clean energy, the implementation has been limited due to high upfront capital expenditure involved, limited access to practical knowledge and expertise, and operational demands and constraints. There is a need to ensure rigorous efforts at local, provincial and federal levels to encourage the concept of clean energy through public-private partnership. This may require policy interventions to reduce the existing fossil fuel-based energy mix and switchover to a renewable energy-dominated mix to ensure cost effectiveness, availability, stability and sustainability in Pakistan's energy sector.

The energy mix in Pakistan is sourced majorly by thermal fuels, which are expensive and have high maintenance cost. The potential of hydropower reported by Nepra is about 41.7GW whereas only about 6GW is being harnessed. In comparison, India has constructed more than 3,200 small, medium and large dams since 2012. By building these, it not only produces electricity but also impacts the agriculture sector by reducing the risk of floods.

There is approximately 50BW of wind energy potential only in the Sindh corridor, of which Pakistan uses about 600MW only. One of the major issues Pakistan faces is a high volume of fine dust accumulation which effects UV factor in trapping solar energy. These problems can be sorted by anti-dust and high-temperature versions of solar and wind power equipment. The solar and wind

energy power plants will cater to the non-grid areas of Balochistan and Sindh. Moreover, local industry should be promoted to manufacture the clean energy equipment and made a part of government policy. These actions will help in reducing capital cost, increase foreign investment, build the capacity of local workforce and consequently, reduce the cost of energy.

Currently, Pakistan faces significant energy deficits. It is producing 23,000MW of power, but due to increasing population, there is a high gap between supply and demand. To bridge this gap, the government is planning construction and installation of approximately a dozen coal-based power plants over the coming years under CPEC.

The major investments are being made in coal-fired power plants, expected to be fuelled primarily by imported coal. Due to the low calorific value of Thar coal, it seems that its use may not prove to be efficient. Furthermore, it requires a process that is water intensive which degrades local soil quality. However, a detailed feasibility study of the Balochistan coal reserve may yield a better quality local coal option with more cost-effective results.

The estimated budget for these energy and infrastructure projects amounts to around \$57 billion, which is expected to help end Pakistan's energy crisis. The government is not only filling the deficit but plans to generate excess energy to export electricity and deal with any future energy crisis caused due to economic development. A policy intervention to make this process sustainable is required.

In addition to this, CPEC also contains some renewable energy projects which are expected to generate over 1,000MW. Through these projects, around 10,000MW of energy is planned to be added to the Pakistan electricity grid by 2020. These energy projects will, of course, aid in addressing one of Pakistan's major issues but the fact that it will have serious repercussions on the environment cannot be ignored. The world is moving towards decreasing carbon footprint, while Pakistan is talking about increasing it.

It is commendable that some of the projects under CPEC are focused on clean energy. However, Pakistan needs to have a strategic plan regarding its energy emissions and sources, like the UK which has announced that coal-powered plants will close between 2023 and 2025. Investments should be made in

promoting clean energy in the long run, and coal-powered plants should not be used beyond the need to meet immediate energy deficit.

Pakistan has geophysical prospects favouring the solar and wind power based energy. Having a better return on investment, wind energy is more suited for the private sector through effective government facilitation. More than 600MW of energy is being provided to the national grid via the Gharo-Jhimpir wind corridor, and according to experts, it has the potential to generate more than 50,000MW of electricity through wind power. Since Balochistan covers more than 70% of the coastal belt of Pakistan, it is expected to have more wind power potential than Sindh. Therefore, the government should install wind masts at potential locations and carry out a wind energy assessment of the regions.

The private sector has a lot of potential regarding investment in clean energy in Pakistan. World Bank Group member International Finance Corporation (IFC) has initiated provision of funds amounting to \$238 million to help build wind power projects in Jhimpir, Sindh. Tricon Boston Pvt initiated this project and is a perfect blend of the public-private-donor triangle required for implementation of such projects.

Although solar energy has great potential in Pakistan and recently there has been a rise in the use of Solar Photovoltaics (PV) and LED-based lighting solutions, not only in the urban centres but also in the rural non-grid areas, average consumers are facing major power shortages, and solar panels provide an easy solution to individual households. A policy level focus on on-grid wind power and off-grid solar power initiatives may help improve the energy sector crisis and mitigate the environmental risks.

In 2006, the first-ever renewable energy policy was formulated, under the ministry of water and power. The policy comprised three phases: short, medium and long term. The short-term policy covered a period up to June 2008 and focused on attracting private sector investments for power projects. Currently, National Power Policy of 2013 is in effect, devised by the PML-N government. It focuses on efficiency, sustainability and competition. Furthermore, it highlights the wind and hydro projects that the government aims to complete in the coming years.

Fossil fuel industry is endangering our society in countless ways. Some of the externalities are easier to observe like pollution and land degradation and more often than not the consequences are less obvious like increasing cases of cancer, respiratory diseases, loss of agricultural productivity and livelihoods are neglected. Unfortunately, the fallout of these policies is borne by the population that is not aware of these issues and therefore, unable to voice their concerns. There is also a cost accrued at every point of fossil fuel supply/value chain and even the waste material is hazardous to society.

Hence, Pakistan needs to make clean energy a priority. Well-researched, strategic and implementable policies and measures are required which focus not only on enhancing clean energy emissions but also side by side take steps to decrease the use of fossil fuel.

Published in The Express Tribune, August 5th, 2017.

Source: <https://tribune.com.pk/story/1474146/boosting-clean-energy/>

South Asia: Need For Common Regional Approach By Shahid Javed Burki

The United States remains unsettled while the administration headed by President Donald Trump is engaged in finding its feet on which to stand. The process is taking much longer than was expected by even those who did not have much faith in the ability of the new man in the White House to lead the country and the world. The world is figuring out how to act when the 'America First' approach advanced by Trump means that his country is unwilling to play the role it had accepted in the context of the new world order it helped to shape in the post-Second World War era.

Then and after the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, America had emerged as the preeminent power. It had the world's largest economy. It was the strongest military in the world. And, it had evolved a political system that was admired around the globe. It was prepared to guide the world in an order in which countries followed accepted principles and wrote rules based on them. Trump and most of his associates seemed eager to go alone.

Those in opposition to him interpreted his winning slogan of 'Make America Great Again' to really mean 'Make America White and Christian Again'. This represented a fundamental change on what the Americans had always regarded as their mission in the world. This change of the American heart will have consequences for all parts of the world. How would the Trump America work for South Asia?

To answer that question we need to go through the way the South Asian region has evolved since it gained independence. The area's two largest countries — India and Pakistan — became independent almost 70 years ago. The third largest, Bangladesh, went through its third partition when it separated from Pakistan to become an independent state. The previous two partitions for what is now Bangladesh were in 1905 and 1947. The first took place when the British administration responded to the pressure of the Bengali Muslims and partitioned Bengal into two provinces. One in the East, with its capital in Dhaka had a Muslim majority. The second in the West had a predominantly Hindu population with Calcutta (Kolkata) continuing to be its capital. The Indian National Congress

agitated against the move by the colonial administration and the British annulled the partition and reunited Bengal. The second partition was in 1947 when East Bengal became a part of Pakistan, a union that was uneasy and lasted for less than a quarter century.

Bangladesh, in other words, has a 112-year history of attempting to find the basis of nationhood. It has oscillated between using religion and ethnicity to define Muslim Bengal's identity as a nation. After 1971, it has settled on ethnicity and a common language as the criteria for keeping together its citizens within the boundaries of one country. Bangladesh is South Asia's most ethnically and linguistically homogenous state. That it is also a predominantly Muslim country is now regarded as incidental, not a defining feature. That is no longer the case in India and Pakistan.

While Pakistan in the 1970s and 1980s decisively moved towards Islam for defining its identity, India until now was able to keep religion largely out of politics. Since the rise of Narendra Modi and the Bharatiya Janata Party that he leads, Hinduism is seen by many as the defining element of their identity. That the leadership of Uttar Pradesh has been turned over to a committed Hindu nationalist as the state's chief minister could signal the beginning of a drift towards the religious right. That that is happening in the country's largest and religiously most diverse state, goes against what the historian Sunil Khilnani had called the idea of India — the idea that economic, political and social systems could be devised to satisfy the different aspirations of very diverse people. Religious identity, ethnicity — even language — would not be the basis of nationhood. But India has deviated from that idea. It has created a number of states on the basis of language. Sometimes languages overlap with religious identity.

Pakistan has had an even more chequered history. Muhammad Ali Jinnah, the country's founding father, initially wanted to secure the rights for his Muslim community that was in minority. He wanted a political status for his people to that that was equal to the majority Hindu population. But that was clearly not acceptable to the Hindu leadership. Politics and demography came into conflict. At the time the British left the subcontinent, India had a population of 400 million people of which one-fourth, or 100 million, were Muslims. Those who came to

Pakistan were divided in the country's two wings, 40 million in East Pakistan and 32 million in West Pakistan.

In a study done for the Singapore's Institute of South Asian Studies to commemorate Pakistan's 70th birth anniversary, I asked the question whether South Asia's Muslim community that has increased five-fold, from 100 million to 500 million over the last 70 years, would have been better off had the British not partitioned their colony. My conclusion is that the Muslims of Pakistan and Bangladesh have done better than their forefathers compared to those who remained behind. Even after 70 years, South Asia has not yet settled down in ways that it could act as a region as do, say, the Europeans, the East Asians, the Latin Americans. The challenge posed by the rise of Donald Trump in the United States will only get handled if the people of South Asia develop a common regional approach.

Published in The Express Tribune, August 7th, 2017.

Source: <https://tribune.com.pk/story/1475566/south-asia-need-common-regional-approach/>

Effects of Climate Change | Editorial

Climate change is a global issue and even though developing countries like Pakistan are least responsible for global greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions – Pakistan currently contributes to less than one per cent of GHG – its effects on such countries are devastating, pushing lives into near extinction. The floods of 2010, 2011 and 2012 that inflicted severe damage not only incurred human cost but also an economic one, resulting in an economic growth on average at a rate of 2.9 per cent instead of its potential rate of 6.5 per cent. These floods were one of the many ways Pakistan has been affected by the global climate change. The country's geographical and socioeconomic fragility puts it in a vulnerable situation.

Weather conditions of not only Pakistan but also South Asia have become extremely volatile. A new study by researchers at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology corroborates this. According to the research which is based on computer simulations, the impact of climate change in the South Asian region by 2100 will make it impossible for human survival. The heatwave of 2015 that caused the deaths of about 2,000 people in Pakistan alone can become a frequent occurrence if changes at the policy level aren't made immediately. Currently, Pakistan ranks seventh in the 10 countries that are the worst affected by climate change.

In the past two decades, Pakistan has suffered from over 130 events due to climate change – floods, droughts and heatwaves in various parts of the country. On top of that its technical and financial capacity isn't enough to tackle the adverse impacts. Limited approach by the government to ensure clean energy can worsen the situation, especially when Pakistan is already hit with an ongoing water crisis which is expected to get much worse soon. Extreme climate conditions leading to lower agricultural outputs in the country call for urgent adaptation reforms to counter the adverse effects of climate change.

Published in The Express Tribune, August 7th, 2017.

Source: <https://tribune.com.pk/story/1475560/effects-climate-change/>

Ties with Iran | Editorial

In the larger context of Pakistan's regional tensions with Afghanistan and India, it is the potential of a long-standing partnership with neighbouring Iran that gets ignored. Our relationship with Iran has never been a simple one. The possibility of a genuine friendship that goes beyond strategic interests has been explored often, but as with international relations, has not been managed well. Pakistan and Iran became allies in the 1950s through their alliance with the US in the cold war. The possibility of long-term relations continued to be explored even as Iran faced US-led sanctions over its nuclear programme. Pakistan continued to remain committed – at least on paper – to the Iran-Pakistan-India gas pipeline despite US opposition. The fact that it never became a reality remains one of the key reasons why Iran continues to view Pakistan in a more sceptical light. Relations between Iran and Pakistan soured earlier this year when militants attacked Iranian border patrol from Pakistani soil. The Iranian army chief threatened to cross into Pakistani soil but better sense prevailed. Tensions between the two countries have been under ridden by Pakistan's concerns over Iran's attempt to develop the Chahbahar port as an alternative trade hub to Gwadar.

Pakistan's relations with Iran have slowly returned to normal but normal in our context has begun to mean that they have reached a non-confrontational nature. The unfortunate fact is that the real potential of fully exploring our relationships with our neighbours has never been much of a priority. In this context, the visit of Senate Chairman Raza Rabbani accompanied by a parliamentary delegation for the swearing in Iranian President Rouhani is a step in the right direction. Rabbani has reminded the two countries that they must do more to achieve the target of \$5 billion in trade. Trade remains one of the pillars of international relations and underpins mutual interdependency. The potential for trade with Iran has been rich since Pakistan was formed but it has rarely been explored. The need for bilateral meetings between politicians on both sides is obvious, but there are lots of nagging issues to resolve. Pakistan's participation in the Saudi-led military alliance for the Middle East has been a cause for concern, even though Iran has not publically made such a declaration. The Iran relationship is one that has a lot of potential for Pakistan. But it is one that is easy to sour. More work is needed on this end.

Source: <https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/222406-Ties-with-Iran>

Will India and Pakistan Ever Grow up? By Aijaz Zaka Syed

India and Pakistan have been celebrating their independence from the British and separation from each other for 70 years. Farewells are never easy. The stronger and older the bonds, the more violent and painful is the separation.

Not surprisingly, the partition of the Subcontinent 70 years ago had been so overwhelming in its nature and impact that it took generations on both sides to recover from it. In many ways, the two nations are still recovering from it. Toxic bitterness and acrimony still lingers on in their engagement and the daily skirmishes along the border and perpetual war of words.

A great deal has been written to make sense of the chaos, trauma and suffering on both sides. From Khushwant Singh's classic *Train to Pakistan* and Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children* to Qurratulain Haider's *Aag Ka Darya* and Manto's *Toba Tek Singh*, a whole new genre came into existence to capture the searing experience of history's greatest migration. The unprecedented carnage and stories of betrayal and human depravity as well as heroism also gave birth to some of the finest and most powerful poetry in Urdu, Hindi and Punjabi.

The inimitable Faiz wrote in *Subh-e-Azadi* (Dawn of Freedom):

Yeh daagh daagh ujaala, yeh shab gazeeda seher/Woh intezaar tha jiska, yeh woh seher to nahin

(This stained, pitted first-light, this day-break, battered by night/This dawn that we all ached for, this is not that one)

But all said and done, no words can perhaps ever capture the true pain and loss of those who not only had to flee their homes and the land of their ancestors overnight but also had to lose their loved ones along the way.

According to most conservative estimates, the communal violence on both sides claimed at least two million lives, not to mention the multitudes who lost their homes and everything they had before moving to the other side.

Millions of families were torn apart, mirroring the great divide between the two nations and communities. Doubtless, the greatest casualty of Partition had been the historical relations between the Hindus and Muslims. Close friends became strangers and bloodthirsty enemies overnight.

The schism survives and festers to this day. The perpetual bickering between India and Pakistan over Kashmir and other assorted issues and the recent rise of the extremists on both sides have been only adding fuel to the fire.

All this could have perhaps been avoided if the British had not been so incredibly inept and clumsy in their final transfer of power and the division of the Subcontinent into two dominions. The whole thing had been handled so haphazardly and crudely that it prompted many to wonder if there had been a deliberate method in the madness.

British barrister Sir Cyril Radcliffe, who had been assigned the unenviable task of redrawing the map, had never been to the Subcontinent, let alone understand its historical and geopolitical complexities. He had exactly five weeks to do his job. No wonder he just drew a line across the map – literally – imperiously condemned millions to a fate they had little say in choosing.

British American poet W H Auden captured Radcliffe's predicament well in his 1966 poem, Partition:

Unbiased at least he was when he arrived on his mission,
/Having never set eyes
on this land he was called to partition

Between two peoples fanatically at odds,
/With their different diets and
incompatible gods.

He got down to work, to the task of settling the fate
/Of millions. The maps at his
disposal were out of date

And the Census Returns almost certainly incorrect,
/But there was no time to
check them, no time to inspect

Contested areas. The weather was frightfully hot,/And a bout of dysentery kept him constantly on the trot,

But in seven weeks it was done, the frontiers decided,/A continent for better or worse divided.

For better or worse, indeed. Interestingly, both Indians and Pakistanis to this day accuse the departing empire of being biased in favour of the other side. While in India, the Raj is seen as the sole architect of Partition and thus the creator of Pakistan – especially by the Hindu right– most Pakistanis view the British as having been soft on India, especially in view of Pandit Nehru’s proximity to Lord Mountbatten and his wife Edwina Mountbatten.

In their unseemly haste to cut and run, the British messed up the whole rites of passage big time, plunging the Subcontinent into chaos that was never witnessed before, forcing many to question the whole logic and wisdom behind the division.

Ruing the staggering loss of life on both sides, Pakistani columnist Mahir Ali wonders if the leaders who sat down with the last viceroy on June 3, 1947 to agree on the accelerated split would have proceeded with their compromise had they any inkling of the holocaust that would ensue:

“Nehru and Jinnah were very different personalities, yet they also had much in common – and neither of them was an enthusiast for genocide. Foreknowledge of the bloodbath that lay ahead would have concentrated their minds, possibly persuading them to revisit the options that had been available just a year earlier”.

Indeed, the catastrophe might have been averted if the two sides had demonstrated greater foresight and forbearance with each other. But then history is full of such ‘ifs’ and ‘might-have-beens’. On the other hand, given the decisive right turn India has taken and the shenanigans of Hindutva extremists over the past few years, many in Pakistan have been thanking their founder for earning them a separate homeland – albeit at a huge cost.

Whatever the historical causes and whoever may have been responsible for it, Partition is a reality today and the sooner India and Pakistan accepted and came to terms with it, the better for everyone.

What is perhaps even more tragic than the tragedy itself is the path of perpetual confrontation and conflict that the two countries have followed since their split.

Imagine the difference India and Pakistan could make in their people's lives by bringing down political temperatures and living less dangerously. The billions of precious dollars that are being currently spent on expensive, outlandish arms and plotting against each other could transform hundreds of millions of lives in a region that is compared to Sub-Saharan Africa in terms of poverty and backwardness.

The only people to benefit from their constant hostilities – apart from the manufacturers of arms in the West – are the militaries and militants on both sides.

Even as they remain handcuffed to history, in Rushdie's memorable words, the neighbours have refused to draw any lessons from the past. Defying the strong bonds of culture, food, sports, language and much else that bind them, they remain the prisoners of their past.

Across the world, countries that share far less and have fought the bloodiest of wars have benefited by reconciling with their past and looking to the future. Look at Europe, the battlefield of history's most catastrophic wars, which has emerged as a great economic power in no time by doing away with borders and walls.

Look at Southeast Asia or the miracle of Asean, which is celebrating its 50th anniversary. Countries like South Korea, Malaysia, Singapore and Thailand have emerged as powerful economies by accepting each other and working together. India and Pakistan – and other countries in the region for that matter – can achieve even more, given their rich pool of human resources. The question is: are they willing to? Will India and Pakistan ever let go of the past? Will they ever grow up?

Source:<https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/223070-Will-India-and-Pakistan-ever-grow-up>

Frayed Pak-US Relations | Editorial

Need to clear the air through meaningful dialogue

Since the Trump administration has taken over there has been little insight into its policy towards Pakistan. During the latter part of the Obama administration aid to Pakistan had been reeled back and by the end of his presidency it had reduced by almost 73 percent.

Keeping in line with this policy the Pentagon withheld a tranche of \$ 50 million in the form of the CSF (Coalition Support Fund) citing their usual mantra of accusing Pakistan of not doing enough to counter the Taliban-affiliated Haqqani network.

US Secretary of State Rex Tillerson called up our Foreign Minister Khwaja Asif to offer felicitations on our 70th Independence Day expressed his desire to work with him to achieve common objectives and accepted an invitation to visit Pakistan.

Whether this is a softening of America's current stance on Pakistan is up for debate considering only days later Tillerson warned of the increasing contraction of religious freedom in Pakistan an observation also made about Saudi Arabia and Iran in the same report.

However there was progress in military-to-military relations with a three day visit (ending yesterday) by Lieutenant General Michael Garrett, Commanding General of United States Army Central Command who met the Pakistan Army's top brass.

Garrett is quite a busy man so fitting in Pakistan to that schedule suggests that the US still very much relies on our strategic military support. But there is still no clarity on this new administration's Afghan policy.

Although the US cannot completely abort Pakistan as a necessary ally in the Afghan war it certainly is playing hard to get by refusing promised aid for our efforts.

Pakistan is well aware of its importance to the US but should not push its luck especially with an erratic unpredictable US president at the helm. Both sides need to realise that bringing the Afghan war to its logical end can only be achieved by working together.

In order to achieve this, a meaningful dialogue has to begin to clear the air, reduce the trust deficit and remove misconceptions.

Source: <https://www.pakistantoday.com.pk/2017/08/18/frayed-pak-us-relations/>

Pak-India Relations | Editorial

Under an ominous nuclear overhang

India unilaterally called off parleys with Pakistan last year. According to Indian Foreign Minister Sushma Swaraj, New Delhi closed the window for talks when Pakistan declared Burhan Wani a martyr of the independence movement. What Islamabad did was in line with its policy of lending political and moral support to the Kashmiris fight for self-determination. India's harsh tactics that include large scale arrests and torture, imposition of curfew, frequent bans on social media and use of pellet guns to suppress a peaceful and totally indigenous movement have led people to take up arms. Riding a nationalist wave Prime Minister Modi and BJP hardliners think they can isolate Pakistan and insist on a dialogue on their terms only. What Modi government wants in particular is to force Islamabad to abandon its support for the Kashmiri's struggle. This is simply not going to happen. Kashmir is a disputed territory and recognised as such by the international community. Even the Trump administration calls the occupied Valley "Indian administered Kashmir."

Pakistan and India are both nuclear powers. They must not allow their disputes to spiral out of the manageable limits. A situation has to be avoided where a border incident leads to a surgical strike, the later to massive reprisals, with everything ending up in a war with unconventional weapons. Diplomacy and crisis management alone can stop this from happening.

There is still sufficient goodwill between the people of the two countries. On Independence Day, a group of singers from the two countries jointly sang the national anthems of Pakistan and India. A popular Pakistani cricketer wished India while advocating peace and mutual tolerance. A Pakistani patient suffering from a peculiar kind of cancer was admitted to an Indian hospital. The gestures need to be encouraged though they may take time to produce the desired effect. What is needed meanwhile is to keep the channels of talks open at all levels. Instead of putting up preconditions India needs to agree to initiate talks on all issues from Kashmir to terrorism.

Source: <https://www.pakistantoday.com.pk/2017/08/16/pak-india-relations-6/>

The Need For Pak-Afghan Cooperation | Editorial

The National Security Committee (NSC)'s decision to cooperate with the Afghan government on the elimination of terror support networks in Afghanistan and prevention of cross-border attacks is a welcome move. Pakistan's support to the Afghan-led peace process is critical and it goes without saying that peace in Afghanistan is in Pakistan's own interest.

Both Pakistan and Afghanistan are victims of terror and this menace cannot be completely uprooted until there is meaningful coordination and collaboration between the two countries. Sadly, the track record of Pak-Afghan cooperation has been poor. Leaders of both countries have been accusing each other of carrying out selective action against militants and playing double games. It is about time we addressed the issue at hand rather than indulge in more rhetoric.

While Pakistan's pledge to collaborate with Afghanistan is laudable, we should also come clean on allegations of differentiating between the good and bad Taliban. As a matter of fact, Pakistan's policy vis-à-vis terrorism had been flawed in the past with the military only acting against groups that targeted Pakistan and sparing those that use the country's soil to launch attacks in other countries. But we did see a shift in that long-held policy after the country's leadership decided to form a new anti-terror plan in the wake of Army Public School (APS) attack.

If Pakistan is acting against all groups of terrorists indiscriminately in Operation Radd-ul-Fasaad, it ought to respond to the allegations of differentiating between 'good and bad Taliban' by highlighting as to what action was taken against groups such as the Haqqani network that were previously considered as the state's strategic assets.

Afghanistan should also act responsibly and refrain from blaming Pakistan after every terror attack. The Afghan leadership should also address Pakistan's grievances about supporting terrorists such as the groups that refer to themselves as the Pakistan Taliban. Both countries need to talk to each other on

a regular basis. Pakistan and Afghanistan must realise that it is the time to unite against the common enemy. We have wasted enough time. *

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Why The Census Is Important For Pakistan By Saad Amanullah

For any developing country, one of the most important responsibilities of the government, in addition to maintaining law and order and economic growth, is to make sure the citizens of that country have proper access to water, sanitation, transportation, hospitals and schools amongst other things. In order to plan for the future for any city or country, one needs to know what the expected population levels would be at a date in the future. But to do that one must know the size of its current population otherwise all planning or economic forecasting tools are useless.

Pakistan's last census was held nearly 20 years ago (1998) when the population was tagged at 132.4 million. You will be shocked to know that people of the subcontinent have been conducting censuses every decade since 1881 during the Colonial Raj. Post-independence census has been conducted five times in 70 years, none in the last 20 years. The table below shows the years the census were conducted:

The estimate of Pakistan's population for 2017 being used by different organisations has been ranging from the World Bank at 193.2m to CIA Factbook at 202m. Population growth rates ranges from 1.45% per annum as per CIA Factbook to as high as 2.0% by the World Bank. A half a per cent wrong estimate in population growth rate could throw future estimates out by as much as 20m to 40m people. What if our population is more than 220m and our growth rate is higher than 2.5%? In that case, the government's existing planning would be deemed impractical.

In addition to the proper distribution of resources across the country/provinces, the political representations in the national and provincial assemblies are also allocated as per the population, according to Article 51(5) of the Constitution. It states, 'the seats in the National Assembly shall be allocated to each province, the Federally Administered Tribal Areas and the federal capital on the basis of population in accordance with the last preceding census officially published'.

If a country has not conducted a census for nearly 20 years, the political representative may not reflect the ground reality. The census ensures that each community gets the right number of representatives in the government and informs your socioeconomic development planning. The Federal Budget, Vision 2020 or 2025 launched by our government are based on shaky foundations since they are based on population estimates rather than actual numbers and population distribution across provinces, cities and districts.

The uses of census data are never-ending in the development of a proper and equitable society. Here are some of the reasons why a population census is important for any country:

Population density: Once we know the density of our population across districts, it will enable the government to properly plan education, health and infrastructure projects.

Population demographic: Helps identify sex, age, geographical and occupational distribution of the population which is used in socioeconomic studies and projects.

Economic planning and development: Based on figures from population census, economic growth planning as well as development of the country is carried out properly and effectively.

Income distribution: Identifying level of poverty across the country and how to properly plan an equitable management of income distribution.

Employment planning: Census provides statistics on employed people which helps the government to know how many employment opportunities needs to be generated.

Government revenues: The government finds how many are taxable adults which will help in estimation of the expected revenue across the country.

Education: Critical to know literacy rates across the country so proper planning and expansion of primary, secondary and tertiary educational institutions can be carried out.

Health services: For an effective healthcare system one needs to have a working knowledge on the number of doctors, nurses, hospitals, health centres, hospital beds, etc, to ascertain where the real need is for expansion and investment.

Labour access: Census helps provide availability of labour across rural and urban divide. It helps in setting up vocational training centres as well as in planning future industries and mills.

Special needs people and minorities: Critical to know and help manage the needs of people with disabilities and other physical challenges. Also helps in identifying various minorities and help with their transition into mainstream activities.

Security high as first census in 19 years launched

Housing: Using census data government can do better planning of housing needs and associated amenities.

Transport: Census helps the government in planning the type of transport facilities required in different cities and across the country.

Recently, there has been news that the authorities are thinking of not publishing the census results anytime soon. Unofficial figures suggest that the population is expected to have exceeded all estimates and has reached 217m, a whopping 2.6% population growth (during the same period the world population has grown by less than half or 1.2% per annum), and cities like Karachi have disproportionately increased in population. This is shocking as all the estimates we are using for economic planning are much lower. Hence, these plans need to be scrapped.

Census is the only tool which can help us plan effectively and accurately for our collective future. The results were to be released by August 2017 but there appear to be unexpected delays in releasing the same — this can only be due to mounting political pressure to protect their electoral representation. We need to take a stand as citizens of this country — the census procedure were paid by our

money and we deserve to see the results. They are in the interest of the public and failure to reveal them is almost criminal.

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Pakistan's Foreign Policy Predicaments By Ghulam Noor Jehanian

The concept of nation states stems from the Peace of Westphalia, 1648 – the convention which came into effect after the thirty-year war among the Central European powers, and introduced territoriality, sovereignty and autonomy. However, the etiology of international diplomacy, world politics and foreign policy dates back to the time of Thucydides – the famous Athenian historian and general of 5th century BC.

The world then saw the Greek City States ascend to the forefront. In particular, the Peloponnesian wars between Athens and Sparta were glaring examples of state interaction and foreign policy – an atmosphere of animosity, contempt and savagery was rampant. The Roman (Large territorial holdings around Mediterranean Sea in Europe, Asia, and Africa) and the Byzantine (Continuation of the former) empires followed suit. 570 AD saw the rise of the Islamic empire. All these societal manifestations interacted with the outer world in one way or the other.

As the world moved from the dark ages to the middle ones the concept of foreign relations developed in sophistication and became the hallmark of world politics. During the modern age, the two World Wars along with the Cold War between 1900 and 1990, and the dynamic alignments, emboldened the concept further. In a nutshell, the importance of foreign interaction cannot be ignored anymore.

Besides a robust and efficacious foreign policy, wise diplomatic maneuvers are the cornerstones of a nation's success in today's world community. Apart from enabling states in achieving national interests, a well-directed, well-built foreign policy is the precursor to survival. Today, states are subjected to international sanctions – both economic and military. Hence, their subsistence becomes dependent on imports. Seclusion no more remains a viable option. The states of North Korea, Cuba, Syria, Iran and Burma, remain largely on the brink of impoverishment because of the heavy sanctions imposed – a result of their failed foreign policies.

Even world powers like the USSR bear the brunt of world politics, crumbling on their own structural weights of inwardly, and protected economies. 'Perestroika and Glasnost' were desperate, yet failed efforts by Gorbachev to save the USSR. Seclusion is a curse. The importance of a swift foreign policy cannot be stressed further. As the American figurehead John F. Kennedy once opined: "Domestic policy can only defeat us; foreign policy can kill us."

The case of Pakistan's foreign policy is a peculiar one. The country practices a more than independent foreign policy when it comes to nuclear issues – formation of nuclear reactors, foreign military purchases and development of warfare. However, particularly after 1977, it has plunged into a farce foreign policy when it comes to economic independence – Pakistan remains dependent on aid from foreign donors, and the resulting austerity. As of today, it has become a client state.

Historically, Pakistan's foreign policy has been a confusing mix of alignments with the West yet with hints of entanglements with the East. Not only is it a major non-NATO ally of the United States (US lawmakers have recently moved to remove the tag) but also an all-weather friend of The People's Republic of China – USA's bitter foe in the race to world hegemony. It is the only nuclear power in the Islamic world, yet remains unable to take the lead between the KSA-Iran feuds. It remained a part of SEATO, CENTO, while most of the nations from its region were part of NAM. Having said that, the space designated to me, makes it impossible to focus on the historical blunders of Pakistan's foreign policy, so I will try to focus on the current scenario.

With India:

Pakistan's relations with India have been hampered by the three wars, an ever resilient water feud, the Kashmir paradigm, secretive nuclear arms race and terrorism proxies. An ever-present, mutual distrust and animosity have dented the relations. The modus operandi and means to realise the national interests keep changing according to the demands of national and international situation, the perception of national leaders, the long and short term goals and the nature of the crisis faced by a country. However, in India's case, our foreign policy seems to be dormant.

The recent spate in indigenous self-determination movements, in Kashmir, after the death of Burhan Wani in July 2016, and the Indian state's counter measures – which have resulted in the blinding of thousands by pellets and the killings of hundreds – have worsened the situation. With no immediate solution to the issue, and the world powers turning their faces away (Like always) from the real issues, Kashmir remains a flashpoint, with the potential of becoming the centre of a full-fledged nuclear war. New Delhi will keep fostering its narrative of 'dhood mango gey kheer dengay Kashmir mango gey cheer denge' and Islamabad will keep chanting 'Kashmir Pakistan ki shah rag hai.' If Pakistan is to win Kashmir, it can only be through flawless diplomacy and a smart foreign policy.

Modi, while addressing world leaders during the BRICS summit, Goa, called Pakistan the 'mothership of all terrorism' – the Uri base camp attack, September 2016, was once again blamed on Pakistan. Fast forward to June, 2017, and the Modi-Trump joint statement from Washington, took Pakistan to task, voicing Indian concerns on the CPEC – the flagship of One Belt One Road (OBOR) initiative.

Meetings took place in Washington this month to discuss the ever-lingering water feud between India and Pakistan. Though the World Bank has its hopes up, the issue of illegal Indian dams does not seem to go away.

Furthermore, the recent LoC debacle remains persistent, where both military and para-military personnel lose their lives every other day in incidents of shelling and inordinate firing.

In April, Pakistan sentenced Kulbushan Jadhav, the Indian spy to death, bringing in scores of protests from Sushma Swaraj – the Indian FM. India has moved the ICJ which has asked Pakistan to halt the capital punishment – another diplomatic failure on our side.

Last but not the least, the everyday visa issues do not seem to end. Recently, India has put the visas of Pakistani citizens seeking medical help in India, on a hold, and has made them contingent on a visa for Jadhav's mother.

If these are not foreign policy failures, one can't think of what are.

With Afghanistan:

Pakistan's relations with Afghanistan have remained chequered. The 1979 Soviet invasion and Pakistan's resistance kicked off the bumpy ride. The relations are still cold and do not seem to elude the cold war emblem.

President Ghani and the northern alliance-led government has openly accused Pakistan of backing the Kabul bombings of last month. Afghanistan blames Pakistan of providing safe havens to Hekmatyar's Hizb-e-Islami, Jallaludin's Haqqani network and Mullah Muhammad Omar's Taliban. A failing state blames a nuclear power, yet no sufficient response is triggered among the foreign policy heads residing in Islamabad.

The landlocked Afghanistan has always been ungovernable, given its rugged terrain and inherited wars. The Afghan intelligence and armed forces seem to be helpless against insurgents, especially after the recent NATO pull-out.

History still haunts Pakistan – the aimed strategic depth in a 'no man's land' has only given strategic headaches.

New Delhi's proxies within Kabul, against Islamabad, are also a case to ponder. Just last year, Modi gifted a new parliament building to Afghanistan, and this year he started air trade with Afghanistan, bypassing the forbidden Pakistani territory.

Pakistan's obsession of installing a pro-government in Afghanistan is not unknown. As Hillary Clinton once remarked: "Snakes in your backyard won't bite only your neighbours." The case is again of failed diplomacy and fissured foreign policy. Thanks to the flawed policy, even a mismanaged, misgoverned country like Afghanistan has been shaming Pakistan in the world community.

With USA:

The most perplexing case is of Pakistan's relations with the USA. The US sees Pakistan through an Afghan Prism – the term Af-Pak, coined in 2009 by US foreign policy circles, still irks many Pakistani leaders and public alike.

However, the heads of USA's foreign policy remain unfazed in deploying a carrot and stick policy when it comes to Pakistan. Recently, a bill was moved within Senate to curtail the already curtailed aid to Pakistan. In USA's war against terrorism, Pakistan has faced a loss of 108 billion USD, however the reparation from USA was not even one-third. On the top of it, the ubiquitous demand 'do more' never halts.

Moreover, the USA sees CPEC with eyes of contempt as the project envisages China's rise in the region and the world.

The protectors of Pakistan's foreign policy have failed abysmally, to gain leverage, even at the helms of incidents like Raymond Davis' arrest and Salala Airbase attack.

The case of American drones hovering over Pakistani territory and hitting the 'so-called' terrorists is particularly startling. The former Foreign Minister Hina Rabbani Khar openly condemned the drone attacks, while the then President Asif Zardari openly acquiesced to the attacks and labelled the casualties 'collateral damage.' These are not the only examples, the Pakistani top hierarchy is still not able to provide a unified stance on drone attacks.

On the other hand, India has gained momentum with the USA. The 2008 Indo-US civil nuclear agreement has backed IAEA standards, but has preferred India for an NSG membership as opposed to Pakistan's appeal.

This shows the double standard on the part of USA and diplomatic incompetence on the part of Pakistan. As a matter of fact, Obama visited the south Asian region many a times during his 8-year tenure, which included multiple visits to both India and Afghanistan, but he completely neglected even the idea of a visit to Pakistan.

With China:

Since 1961, when Pakistan signed a territorial agreement with China, the bilateral relations between the two countries have remained warm. China is considered as Pakistan's all-weather friend.

Though we champion CPEC, it has its predicaments. China knows, and has recently urged the politicians to overcome their political altercations and put heads rolling to ensure the speedy completion of CPEC projects. However, the politicians do not learn their lesson.

Moreover, there is an ever-going tussle between the government officials and OGRA regarding the tariff of electricity being produced by the early-harvest energy projects of CPEC. Adding to that, there is the muddle of security issues. Chinese personnel have recently been murdered, kidnapped or tortured across areas of Pakistan.

Although Pak-China relations have moved on to a strategic paradigm as well as an economic one, these issues if not solved, may dint the relations somehow.

With KSA, Iran:

Through a joint parliament sitting, it was ruled that Pakistan will not be a part of the Saudi-led coalition against Yemen, however it became a part of the 'so called' 39-nation military alliance (Which is spearheaded by the KSA and GCC, but does not comprise of Iran – the other regional power) in its fight against terrorism. Albeit the announcement of neutrality, KSA has many a times insisted and sometimes included Pakistan in the list of its notorious West-savvy allies. This replicates the extent to which our foreign policy, rather naively, favors KSA, sometimes over Iran.

The recent stint of Raheel Sharif, to head the alliance, has further nudged Tehran's fears over Pakistan's dwindling neutrality.

Incidents with Iran have also surfaced: In May 2017, Pakistan claimed that Iranian mortar fire killed its civilians: the recent firing down of Iranian spy drone 'deep inside' Balochistan is also not unknown.

Pakistan is confused of whether to align itself with its neighbour, or with the Middle Eastern Kingpin KSA, in which it has its more than 1.5 million expatriates (Those who have faced their own issues of food shortage, and deportation, and have never seen their state diplomats come to their rescue).

There is a third option: of remaining neutral. However, the question of how to achieve the neutrality eludes our policy makers.

With Russia:

Moscow is a world player, and its importance for Asia cannot be neglected. The joining of SCO, the successfully conducted Druzhba 2016 (even after India asked Russia – its longtime friend – to abstain from the military exercise, in view of the Uri base camp incident), the Aman exercises of January 2017, and the mi-35 helicopter deal, has warmed up the bilateral relations among Pakistan and Russia.

However, the recent India-Russia summit has again reinforced the old friendship between the two at the expense of relations with Islamabad. Why can't there be a Russo-Pak summit? Where is our effective, active foreign policy?

What caused such failures?

Islamabad's foreign policy successes are outnumbered by its failures. The reasons of the failures are several: the civil-military tussle, the abysmal state of lobbying, the leadership void, dependence on West, and India centrism, to name a few.

Who controls Islamabad's foreign policy?

Shortly after 0100 hours on May 2, 2011, when Osama bin Laden was killed during a US operation in Abbottabad, the US president neither called his counterpart Asif Zardari, nor the country's Premier Yusuf Raza Gillani, rather a call was made to General Ashfaq Pervaiz Kayani, the then COAS.

This shows the sorry state of affairs at Islamabad's FO. It is also evident how the Pak army and the intelligence has fiddled with the political history of the 70-year old country. The frequent military coups still haunt the country's progress.

When it comes to Pakistan's external relations, the army has always sought to sever trade ties with India and have ensured a favorable attitude toward the Taliban-led insurgents in Afghan. The recent Dawn Leaks also brought into the limelight, the civil-military scuffle, which becomes apparent in foreign policy prerogatives.

The ex-PM Nawaz Sharif may be blamed for not appointing a full-time foreign minister, but never has anyone wondered why it was so. What was Nawaz's

obsession with heading the portfolio himself? Did he feel threatened at the foreign policy front by the military?

The way forward:

There are many avenues Islamabad could undertake to emerge successful, and out of the crossroads. Smart diplomacy is one of those – Pakistan should develop a dynamic foreign policy, especially with regards to India and Afghanistan, the historical, ideological shackles of monotony must be broken.

Secondly, there is a dire need for the institutions (army, intelligence) to take a back seat – let the ‘civies’ do their job. The ‘separation of powers’ must not only be the notion limited to the constitution, it must be applied in spirit.

Thirdly, Pakistan’s diplomatic clout must hire lobbying groups to pursue the country’s interests more vividly. Track-two diplomacy must sometimes take the lead in pursuance of national interest.

Moreover, Pakistan needs a leader. In my view, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto was one, who was taken away. The American foreign policy saw Wilson, Monroe and the Roosevelts, shape the course of things. They always led from the front. Likewise, Pakistan needs a full-time pioneer, an iconoclast with a vision to reshape foreign policy.

Last but not the least, Pakistan needs a stable internal political dynamic. A house is as strong as its weakest brick. A strong foreign policy can only be borne out of a favorable culture of sovereignty and democracy. A house in order seems to be the most apposite, pertinent way out.

Source: <https://www.pakistantoday.com.pk/2017/08/19/pakistans-foreign-policy-predicaments/>

Building Pak-Iran Bridges By Arhama Siddiqa

THE ties between Iran and Pakistan run deep, and have shifted over time from a deep dislike to regional rivalry and proxy conflict. Underneath it all has been the two countries' pragmatic self-interest. For both Iran and Pakistan, bilateral closeness was always meant to reap something strategically larger. But over the past seven decades, since Pakistan's inception, their relationship has been struck by a number of things; global and regional competition, the Cold War, the scramble for Afghanistan, and recently the Iran-Saudi rivalry.

These two regional powers, with a combined population of around 300 million, have been historically dovetailed in various cultural, religious, and political ways. Iran was the first country to recognise the emerging independent state of Pakistan in 1947 and the Shah of Iran was the first head of state to visit the new nation. While this relationship shifted following the 1979 Iranian Revolution, and tensions do exist between Sunni Pakistan and Shia Iran, the history of cooperation between the two countries in fields of great strategic interest such as Afghanistan, nuclear proliferation, and terrorism remains largely unexplored. It has been time tested that connectivity is the foundation stone of regional integration and cooperation- something which is animated and includes several aspects such as economic, social, political and strategic cooperation. Governments will come and go but if bilateral ties are grounded on firm economic linkages, the snowball effects of sudden political disruptions can be kept in check. There are several ways for both countries to go about this.

Both Iran and Pakistan are members of the Economic Cooperation Organisation (ECO). The basic facilitation tool for infrastructure capacity is the ECO Transit Transport Facilitation Agreement (TTFA) under which the Islamabad- Tehran- Istanbul Road Corridor- which was mandated in the 8th meeting of the ECO Transport ministers in Ashgabat- falls. It is proposed to be built along the same route as the existing ECO Container Train Route from Islamabad passing Tehran and ending in Istanbul. The 6543 km route began operations in 2010. Moreover, during the 9th High Level Working Group Meeting of the ECO Container Train on the 13th of July, Afghanistan has agreed to cooperate in the Islamabad-Tehran-Istanbul container train. Earlier, Afghan transit trade was being done through Karachi port but completion of this project would facilitate Afghanistan with

another trade route. The highlight being how economic cooperation is bringing the countries in the region closer together.

The current security issues such as smuggling, drug trafficking and frequent incursions by non-state actors along the border needs to be managed through collaborative endeavours such as joint security exercises both on land and sea on a regular and structured basis. A border commission has already been set up in July which will hopefully set up measures to trammel these issues. Moreover, both the countries must develop trade relations by holding trade fairs and exhibitions and increasing trade delegations. The bilateral trade between the two countries has the potential to increase exponentially. Iran could help Pakistan in infrastructure development and in building of roads, dams, railways and the like while Pakistan could export textiles, sports goods, agricultural products and pharmaceuticals to Iran. Gwadar and Chahbahar should not be rivals but rise like sister ports. The two ports should complement each other in promoting trade in the region by enhancing connectivity through rails, roads and shipping links. The trade cooperation between Gwadar and Chahbahar would open economic prospects and job opportunities for both the countries. There are already talks of starting a ferry service between Chahbahar and Gwadar and Karachi.

The Iran-Pakistan (IP) pipeline has become a contentious issue for both countries. Now that the menace of sanctions have been lifted, the project must be completed as soon as possible. This is in the best interests of Pakistan, where day by day the energy situation is deteriorating. The bonds of brotherhood, cooperation, and economic survival still remains strong in both countries. The encumbrance of economic sanctions are no longer an excuse. Hence, the two countries must move swiftly to ensure a strong economic relationship, one that supports the future of not only both the countries but the region at large.

— The writer is Research Fellow, Institute of Strategic Studies, a think-tank based in Islamabad.

Email: arhama.siddiq@issi.org.pk

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Cracks in Trump's Af-Pak Policy By Ali Rafi

The sixteen years of US involvement in Afghanistan have been marred with an inability to completely dismantle terror networks in the region. These failures have often been plastered-over by shifting the blame to the Pakistani government. Pakistan has been constantly told to 'do more' in its bid to fight terror. This is rhetoric that became routine during the Bush and Obama administrations.

However, the political landscape has changed significantly since those administrations. The American policy of asking Pakistan to do more to earn its foreign aid may no longer be feasible. Pakistan has already made progress in uprooting domestic terrorists and has alternative foreign policy options.

Pakistan has waged significant military and civilian sacrifices in the war on terror. Undeniable gains have been made in eradicating domestic terror networks from Pakistan. The ISPR claims no organized terror networks exist in Pakistan today. The US State Department released a report, in July of this year, admitting terrorist activity in Pakistan had sharply declined for the second year in a row.

The number of attacks has decreased, the security apparatus has been upgraded and various networks have been dismantled. While acts of terrorism are still weekly news, they are no longer daily news. There has been renewed resolve to fight terrorism through a national consensus, political support and military might.

Such evidence suggests that the days of training camps and militancy safe-havens in Pakistan's tribal regions may finally be coming to a close. For the Trump administration to not mention the gains Pakistan has made in eradicating terrorism in the prime-time address is a gross disservice to its ally.

Pakistan is also no longer isolated in its foreign policy. Pressure on Pakistan to accept US Aid may not be as applicable as it was when the War on Terror started. Efforts are already underway to seal the Pak-Afghan border which could significantly stop the inflow of proxy terror groups from neighboring territory.

Pakistan also has a pivotal regional ally in China. An ally who has invested far too heavily in the country to allow domestic policy to be dictated through US interests in the same way it used to be. United States pressure on Pakistan also comes at a time when hopes of a Russian-US reconciliation have evaporated and Pakistan is already looking north to a potential ally in Putin.

The Trump Administration has also taken two other problematic, yet important, policy initiatives. It has called for more troops in Afghanistan and has invited India as a stakeholder in the Afghanistan peace process.

The call for more troops will please Pentagon. It is a signature move for a Republican president at a time of crisis. Yet, the addition of nearly 5,000 troops will do little to change the balance of a war in Afghanistan that has proven to be all but unwinnable. It is perhaps another effort to reverse any policy that the Obama administration held dear.

However, given the lack of achievements hundreds of thousands of troops have made in the region in the past, there is little hope for the United States or its allies to conclude the effort with more troops. It is only through a comprehensive political dialogue that peace can be restored to Afghanistan.

It is also of note that the Trump administration has finally and formally accepted Indian ambitions to become a stakeholder in the Afghanistan peace process. This may be the most problematic policy declaration from the Trump speech for Pakistan.

Indian involvement in Afghanistan will destabilise the security balance in the region. It will further rejuvenate the use of Afghan territory to lodge proxy war in the Af-Pak region. Pakistan has already made formal complaints against Indian agencies using Afghanistan to plan attacks in Pakistan. The United States' eagerness to include India shows a clear signal that it is ready to sideline Pakistan from the Afghanistan end-game. Yet, any long-term solution in Afghanistan can only be successful with Pakistan's support given its decades-old involvement in the conflict and strategic ambitions.

India's involvement in Afghanistan will also strengthen Chinese resolve to become a key stakeholder in the Afghanistan end-game. While news of a Sino-

Indian border conflict continues to pour in, the deteriorating relationship between the two regional powers will embody itself through conflict in Afghanistan.

There is little doubt that the Trump administration has sought to pressurise Pakistan by making India a stakeholder in Afghanistan and ignoring Pakistan's counter-terrorism efforts. Yet, even the deployment of additional troops will be unfruitful if Pakistan is excluded from any sustainable peace effort in the region.

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How to deal with Trump's Emerging Afghan Policy

By Muhammad Ali Ehsan

Pakistan is eagerly awaiting the imminent announcement of the Trump administration's new Afghan policy. There are compelling fears that it may not be Pakistan-friendly. So will the announcement of this policy and its implications for Pakistan take us by surprise?

Unlike the United States where the National Security Council constitutes the forum formally undertaking the ownership of any policymaking, Pakistan is devoid of any such formal policymaking forum where the civil-military leadership can debate and develop a comprehensive response strategy. Even before the policy is revealed some noticeable Pakistan-specific characteristics of it are becoming apparent. Donald Trump is reportedly frustrated on the alleged role of Pakistan in preventing the US in winning the 16-year war and to turn things around Islamabad may be forced to change its behaviour; Pakistan's alleged 'paradoxical policies' of fighting the militants inside its own borders but allowing them to operate across the border may no longer be tolerated; bases in Pakistan where militants allegedly regroup and reorganise themselves before returning to fight in Afghanistan may no longer be safe from external military action.

In essence, the policy presumably may have one clear Pakistan-specific objective: "stop alleged cross-border terrorism in Afghanistan or face the consequences".

While there are dark and threatening clouds looming on the horizon of our national security and the new Trump administration's Afghan policy is increasingly looking to 'back up its threats with actions' our political leadership in a non-professional approach is hardly giving any indication that it anticipates any such US course shift. Even if it is so, there are no signs on the ground that demonstrate the seriousness and urgency of the civilian and security establishments to hold joint meetings to discuss the likely vulnerabilities to which Pakistan may be exposed if such a policy is implemented.

Even if the US security team led by National Security Adviser General H R McMaster sidesteps from recommending a conventional option against Pakistan

(that may take into account our interests and our preferences as well) and instead recommends choosing a controversial option and insists on 'full and complete compliance' by Pakistan then what is our preparation to combat it?

As we all know politically things are not working out well in Pakistan and as the politicians have surrounded themselves in a heap of domestic issues our response to this vital issue smacks of political neglect. Three key ministries related to national security have been handed over to politicians who do not boast of any experience in the fields that they have been chosen to lead. The new defence minister (Khurram Dastgir) has previously been commerce minister who has never been associated in any capacity with the armed forces of the country. Although the interior minister (Ahsan Iqbal) previously heading the planning and development ministry has a brilliant academic record, he has nothing to show when it comes to managing national security. Foreign Minister Khawaja Asif has no diplomatic experience and if repeated failed negotiation efforts have put the Afghan policy in a very awkward state one wonders how someone like him can make any substantial difference to change its course.

In any case the civilian government and its ministers are busy firefighting the loss of government's credibility post-Panama judgment. Taking joint positions together with the military to counterbalance against this developing threat doesn't seem to be a government priority — not at this stage. Unfortunately for Pakistan even if the current civilian government takes any position on the review of Afghan policy and its implications for Pakistan nobody will take it seriously as it will come from a government that is stuck knee deep in a political quagmire. Seen in this context would it be a surprise to know that devoid of political patronage the military in Pakistan alone is spearheading the development and designing of Pakistan's response strategy to the new Afghan policy.

Ideally, the new Afghan policy should bring a balanced US commitment to the region. It should not push one country's agenda at the cost of the other. Being herself a victim who else can understand better but the US itself the meaning of 'how it is to be affected by what happens beyond your borders'. India, Pakistan and Afghanistan continuously and consistently point fingers at one another for what happens outside their borders and then what happens inside them for their insecurities. All have evidence to prove one another's participation in the

ongoing, destabilising proxy wars but none is ready to act as a responsible stakeholder and end the proliferation of this insecurity through negotiations.

In a regional environment devoid of mutual trust many threats are exaggerated, many accusations ill-founded and many vulnerabilities self-created. Countries in this region have now for long avoided direct war and invested too much and for too long in fighting proxy wars to destabilise and weaken one another.

Any US action that demonstrates selective treatment of benefiting one country at the cost of the other will result in the introduction of more radicalisation and contribute to further destabilisation in the region. If the US seeks a 'change in behaviour' it must remain cautious that it does not end up doing something so damaging to the national prestige and national pride that it encourages even worst behaviour.

Countering terrorism collectively should ideally continue to be the hallmark of the new US Afghan policy. More importantly the policy should encourage interdependence and seek to economically integrate the countries in the region so that all countries have too much to lose and have high stakes in keeping their relations normal.

Pakistan, on its part, must do everything it can to continue to remain a US ally in the war on terror and address all the US apprehensions on our alleged 'paradoxical policies' and build a strong case of a nation that is a victim of terrorism itself and thus does everything to combat terrorism and not contribute to it.

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Source: <https://tribune.com.pk/story/1476904/deal-trumps-emerging-afghan-policy/>

China, Russia Defend Pakistan Against Trump Criticism

KARACHI: In a fast changing geo-political scenario, Pakistan find itself in a strong position after US President Donald Trump's scathing comments against Islamabad in Afghan policy statement earlier this week.

Trump, unveiling his Afghanistan strategy this week, said Pakistan was playing a double game by accepting American aid while giving safe haven to "Agents of chaos" who kill Afghan and NATO troops.

Soon after Trump's criticism, China issued a strong message defending Pakistan's role in Afghanistan and asked the global community to acknowledge Islamabad's sacrifices in war against terrorism.

Reinforcing its stance, China's top diplomat Yang Jiechi in a phone call told US Secretary of State Rex Tillerson to 'value Pakistan's role in Afghanistan and respect its security concerns'.

"We must value Pakistan's important role on the Afghanistan issue, and respect Pakistan's sovereignty and reasonable security concerns," Chinese media quoted Yang as saying.

Russia echoed a similar sentiment. Russian Presidential Envoy to Afghanistan Zamir Kabulov lambasted Trump's Pakistan strategy and insisted that Islamabad is "a key regional player to negotiate with."

"Putting pressure [on Pakistan] may seriously destabilize the region-wide security situation and result in negative consequences for Afghanistan," the Russian presidential envoy to Kabul said.

Pakistan is mulling a formal response to Trump's statement and new Afghan policy in a high-level security meeting at the Prime Minister House.

Source: <https://www.thenews.com.pk/latest/225691-China-Russia-defend-Pakistan-against-Trump-criticism>

China and Pakistan after Trump By Sultan M Hali

Pakistan's all weather friend and strategic ally China was quick to come to Pakistan's defence after US President Donald Trump unfairly castigated Pakistan during the unveiling of the long awaited US strategy on Afghanistan. China defended Pakistan after Trump declared unequivocally that the United States could no longer be silent about Pakistan's "safe havens" for militants and warned it had much to lose by continuing to "harbour terrorists".

Taking a U-turn from his much touted position on the issue, Donald Trump committed the United States to an open-ended conflict in Afghanistan, signalling he would dispatch more troops to America's longest war and vowing "a fight to win". Trump insisted that others – the Afghan government, Pakistan, India and NATO allies – step up their own commitment to resolving the 16-year conflict, but he directed harsh derision for Pakistan. Senior US officials warned security assistance for Pakistan could be reduced unless the nuclear-armed nation cooperated more in preventing militants from using safe havens on its soil.

Some Indian backed observers in the US opine that Pakistan perceives militants such as the Taliban as useful tools to limit the influence of arch rival India. Pakistan denies allowing militants refuge on its territory, saying it takes action against all groups across the board, without distinction.

Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Hua Chunying was unambiguous in her declaration at the daily news briefing that Pakistan was on the front line in the struggle against terrorism and had made "great sacrifices" and "important contributions" in the fight. She urged the international community that China believes that the world should fully recognize Pakistan's concerted anti-terrorism efforts. China reiterated that it appreciates that Pakistan and the United States carry out anti-terror cooperation on the basis of mutual respect, and work together for security and stability in the region and world.

China has its own security concerns in the region, in particular, any links between militants in Pakistan and Afghanistan and Islamist groups China blames for violence in its far western region of Xinjiang. It is a stakeholder for peace in

Afghanistan. Numerous Chinese projects including the One Belt One Road and China Pakistan Economic Corridor are affected negatively because of conflict in Pakistan. Earlier China had joined the Quadrilateral Coordination Group along with the US and Pakistan to secure peace in Afghanistan. Unfortunately, the efforts had come to naught because after the first round of talks at Murree in Pakistan, detractors of the peace process had leaked the news of Taliban Emir, Mullah Umar's demise. Pakistan and China were trying to convince the Taliban leadership to join the peace talks again but the US scuttled the process by successfully targeting Mullah Umar's successor Mullah Akhtar Mansour, with a missile launched by a drone when he was returning after talks in Iran.

There are two other aspects regarding Trump's new Afghan strategy, which should worry China.

Firstly that Donald trump pointed out that Afghanistan was rich in minerals and China was taking advantage of the situation to establish mining development centres while the US was busy fighting wars. Secondly that the US would no longer involve itself with "nation building" in Afghanistan but instead focus on killing terrorists.

As far as the first aspect is concerned, it has come to light that the US was fully aware of the presence of rich mines in Afghanistan and that was its clandestine rationale to invade it in 2001 so that it could control the natural resources. Subsequent US presidents failed in securing peace in Afghanistan so that they could exploit Afghanistan's mineral wealth but they are not willing to let go either and would like to maintain their foothold so that they may benefit from Afghanistan's affluence in subsurface possessions. At the end of the day, Donald Trump is a trader and weighing profit and loss has made him overturn his election campaign promises of swiftly ending US presence in Afghanistan in favour of supporting an open ended conflict and dispatching additional troops to the battle weary zone.

By declaring that the US is no longer interested in nation building in Afghanistan, Donald Trump has negated the earlier stated principles of the US government that it owed it to the Afghan people to rebuild their war ravaged country and give it a modicum of stability. Firstly, even when the US forces were at their full complement of 100,000 in Afghanistan, following President Obama's troop surge,

the US and NATO forces failed to subdue the Taliban. Sixteen years after the invasion of Afghanistan, the Taliban have regenerated and regrouped to not only control more than fifty percent of Afghan territory but have become a force to reckon with. Its current troop strength of 8,400, augmented by an additional 3,900 will be cannon fodder against the well-equipped and battle-hardened guerrilla forces of the Taliban. The much-touted Afghan National Army (ANA), trained and armed with state-of-the-art weaponry have been no match for the Taliban. More than 2,500 soldiers and officers of the ANA have been slaughtered in one year by the Taliban. A sizable number have deserted with their weapons to join the Taliban. In such a dismal milieu, US forces hold little chance of success. They should instead focus on seeking peace with the Taliban and perhaps Pakistan can facilitate the process but the US should stop using Pakistan as a scapegoat for its failures in Afghanistan.

While acknowledging Pakistan's efforts and sacrifices in War on Terror as a US ally, Trump said that Pakistan has "much to gain" from partnering with the US, but also warned "it has much to lose by continuing to harbour criminals and terrorists." However the State Department came up with a much more practical and diplomatic statement. Rex W. Tillerson, Secretary of State highlighted key elements of the Trump's policy as: New integrated strategy for the U.S. approach to South Asia will require diplomatically engaging Pakistan, Afghanistan and India to create the conditions for stability in the region. It signals clear support for the Afghan people and government and security forces in their fight against terrorists and prevent the reestablishment of safe havens in the country.

The signals emanating from White House, Capitol Hill and mainstream media on 'US policy on Afghanistan' point to a rather frustrated and confused mindset. Trump made a speech as the C in C of US military and expected rhetoric should be seen in that perspective, his speech also addressed a divided domestic polity; however it is expected that some Pakistani, Indian and international media outlets would use cherry picking to assault Pakistani military and ISI, we should be ready to bear the heat and develop a counter narrative. Pakistani media should also come forward to support Pakistan's position on Afghanistan. International community should also ponder on the prolonged Afghan conflict; If US led military alliance of 46 countries could not stem the tide of insurgency after spending almost one trillion dollars over a period of 16 years, what do they expect from Pakistan? On its part Pakistan Army has done a tremendous job by

successfully combating against terrorists on its own soil. Time has come to appreciate the strategic environment in Afghanistan and find a political solution to the imbroglio by taking all stake holders on board, there is no other way.

Source: <https://www.pakistantoday.com.pk/2017/08/26/china-and-pakistan-after-trump/>

The Afghan War and Pakistan By Rasul Bakhsh Rais

There is much debate and controversy about the much awaited, and now quite public, 'new' American Afghan policy in political, intellectual and diplomatic circles in Pakistan and abroad. The central presumption of this policy is that the US and its allies can win the Afghan war by military means. Those who support this belief argue that the prevailing stalemate in the war will eventually tire the Afghan Taliban out and force them to come to the negotiating table. The Taliban are more resilient and control more territories today than ever before. They are not tired; rather, they are on the rise due to many failures of the Afghan government and American policy choices.

The American and Afghan military strategy rests on holding on to the cities and towns, as they have done very successfully over the past 16 years, and expand control from there to the countryside. Whenever the Taliban have captured a district town anywhere in the country, they have been evicted by force, but at an enormous material and human cost.

Trump's Afghan strategy doomed to fail, says PM Abbasi

Incidentally, the Afghan Taliban have a similar assumption of their war against the 'puppet' government in Kabul and its foreign backers, chiefly the US. Being part of local populations, overwhelmingly from the Pashtun ethnic groups, they believe stalemate will weaken the resolve of foreign powers fighting war in Afghanistan, forcing them to consider withdrawing from the country. If the lessons of history can be of some help to anyone reading and understanding them, the Afghans forced colonial Britain twice in the 19th century and the Russians about two decades back to leave Afghanistan. The Americans don't want to suffer the same fate as did the other two great powers of their time. If they do, many myths about their power, global influence and hegemony would become subject to questioning. Worse, the success of the Afghan Taliban might encourage similar radical Islamist movements throughout the region, including Pakistan.

Washington is in a serious fix because it cannot take incalculable risks of losing the longest war it has ever fought, but at the same time it cannot win by the military means it has employed at will and in excessive abundance, costing it a trillion dollars and thousands of lives. The Afghan and Pakistani lives hardly matter to anyone, but when the clouds of the Afghan war leave their opaque cover, harsh truth of hundreds of thousands of lives, mostly innocent civilians will emerge. Therefore, the Trump policy is not new in emphasising the role of the military, but different in a sense that the President is going to leave a lot at the discretion of local commanders to get things done.

As usual, the new policy and its rhetoric put lot of blame on Pakistan for the failure of the US to win the war in Afghanistan. The policy fails to reflect on its own flawed policy of courting and gentrifying the Afghan warlords, corruption, drug-production and civilian casualties as being the factors working in favour of the Taliban.

Pakistan's paths beyond US-Afghan hysteria

How should Pakistan respond to a quirky and confrontational President Trump? As the rest of the world leaders have learnt, the best thing is to ignore him. But being at the crossroads of a complex geopolitical tangle and vulnerable to domestic challenges, Pakistan doesn't have the luxury of ignoring American threats or acting like the former Arab radical states. Nor would it be prudent to accept dictates uncritically. While exploring a regional solution to the war, it needs a balanced bilateral approach towards the US centering on both diplomacy and dialogue.

Source: <https://tribune.com.pk/story/1494223/afghan-war-pakistan/>

Donald Trump's Flawed Foreign Policy By Munir Ahmed

'No more' is the voice of Pakistan. It is hoped that President Donald Trump has heard loud and clear the slogans enchanted by the participants of various rallies in Pakistan against his new foreign policy for the region. This is not the first extreme tilt in the US foreign policy on Pakistan and out of proportion trust on India. Undoubtedly, Pakistan had been a best market for the cultivation of US interests over the last 70 years. It is indeed unbelievable truth that Pakistan preferred US friendship over the neighbouring countries — the arch opponents and rivals of the US in the global game of economic and political vested interests.

Before saying anything against Pakistan, the US should realistically count the sacrifices of Pakistan and the dead bodies we have buried, the loss of infrastructure and the economic recession we suffered from. Let's not discuss the US betrayal to Pakistan in 1965 and 1971 wars against India. Shall we not speak about the US turning blind on the atrocities and human rights violations in the Indian Held Kashmir?

Pakistan is still fighting the monster of Taliban and jihadis that the US created against the USSR. The wounds of US attacks on Iraq and other countries, and the US's active engagement in the Arab Spring for their strategic vested interest are still fresh.

Despite the fact that Pakistan is clearly aware of the hegemonic behaviour of the US and out of proportion support to India, the apologetic and soft response to the new US foreign policy in the region is not understandable. Perhaps, we lack the courage to respond in the same tone despite clear messages from China, Russia and Iran in favour of Pakistan.

It is about time Pakistan took a bold step to be trustworthy partner of the newly emerging bloc comprising the regional partners including China, Russia, Turkey, and Iran. This bloc certainly would help reduce the undue American and hegemonic influence in the region, and unbelievably boost the economic growth.

Pakistan has taken a good breathing space by 'requesting' the US to postpone the scheduled visit of Alice Wells, acting assistant Secretary of State for South and Asian Affairs.

Alice Wells had to reach Islamabad on Monday. This would have been the first high-profile visit by a US official since Trump's Afghan policy speech on August 21.

The new date of the visit has not been decided, while US Embassy spokesman said that Wells' visit to Pakistan will be rescheduled after mutual understanding of both countries.

Though the decision may be an alert to the US to check and review their new policy framework for the region, it could also be an indication that Pakistan is going to review the master-slave relations.

The fact that President Trump has been threatening every other country of significant importance for one reason or the other says a lot about his state of mind. Perhaps he deliberately wants to prove himself as a war-monger in any case

The fact that President Trump has been threatening every other country of significant importance for one reason or the other says a lot about his state of mind. Perhaps he deliberately wants to prove himself as a war-monger in any case. His aggressive plans such as clearing the way for the deployment of thousands more US troops to Afghanistan would further escalate security concerns in the region. His act of backtracking from the promise to rapidly end America's longest war, while pillorying ally Pakistan, would open a new plethora of doubts on the sacrifices that Pakistan has made over the years to protect and safeguard the American interest in the region.

The world never expected that the sane and wise people of the USA would select a President who would keep engaging America into conflicts with other countries. And this is not the first time, nor the last time. The realistic people worldwide think who actually selects or elects the US president, the American people or someone else? Why does the US always opt for the war-economy, why not peaceful economic coexistence? It should be the general concern of the

Americans that despite all grants and aid to developing countries, America and Americans continue to be hated.

The American people cannot stay indifferent to the imposed political and strategic decisions. They need to spare some time to realise the reasons behind the hatred and accept the harsh conspicuous realities.

The writer is an Islamabad-based policy advocacy, strategic communication and outreach expert. He can be reached at devcom.pakistan@gmail.com. He tweets @EmmayeSyed

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ECONOMY

Tax System & Radiant Pakistan By Muhammad Nadeem Bhatti

Government of Pakistan collect taxes from its people in order to spend the collection on the welfare of its people which includes national defense, debt servicing and other welfare related issues. While designing the tax policy a country should account the equity and justice for its people because a system is most effective when it is designed on the bases of equal and fair treatment of each tax-payer. But in case of Pakistan the situation is bit different, as a nation we are in debt by the foreign and domestic lenders which is due to our extra expenses incurred due to recent war on terror, our habit of corruption at national and international level and we are also tax averse society in which we don't feel ourselves responsible to pay taxes. Our current tax collection system is very weak which comprises of loopholes in the system accompanied by the corruption of Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) officers which speaks about the justice and equity of our government officials for their people. After analyzing the height of corruption, special favor given to government officials or their friends, (Their Detail of Curruption will be discussed later on with their names). Our undocumented economy and failure to increase tax net it has become necessary for any lender to set the target in order to continue the money lending and to make sure that their borrowed money can be repaid by the borrower.

Initially the foreign lenders did not set any targets for us because they somehow believed in our commitments and also felt that we will pay them back their money as per the signed agreement but after the several failures of debt servicing, lenders started to analyze the root cause of this issue in which they found our tax collection system complied with old methodology of taxation i.e. General Sales Tax (GST) in which all the tax collected at the last stage which makes them aware of the fact that as a corrupt nation and low tax net economy it will become more difficult for them to collect their lent amount from us which lead IMF to set targets for us.

The Indian economy is the 2nd fastest growing economy of the world and 12th largest in term of exchange rate. Although, India does not have impressive track record in the growth of revenues, rising from 6.8% of GDP in 1950's to 10.3% in

1990's and maximum of 12.9% in 2009. But the important thing is that the tax-to-GDP ratio is increasing constantly from 2004 onward. On the other hand, tax-to-GDP ratio in Pakistan has a declining trend from peak 13.2% to 8.9 in 2009. Sri Lanka has been facing a worsened law and order situation since early 80's and economy of Sri Lanka showed a very low GDP growth. Although, tax revenues as compared to GDP has decreased in Sri Lanka but still they have high rate of 14.3% which is higher than Pakistan. Sri Lanka has coped with the problems in economy by focusing on its Tea exports, Tourism sector. Furthermore, government has also tried to improve the revenue collection. Sweden is considered to have highest tax-to-GDP ratio in the world. Tax revenues in Sweden have touched a highest level over 50% of GDP. The personal income tax rate is highest in Sweden which is about 56.4%. Tax rate is progressive for the personal income in Sweden while in Pakistan we are facing a regressive taxation.

There are several reasons why we are unable to collect the tax. Corruption is one of the important aspects which are casting great hindrance in taxation system. Other important reason is low literacy rate, which is very low as compared to many countries in the world. Demography of a country also play an important role in the tax to GDP ratio. Pakistan has about 36.7% population which is 14 years of age or below. Hence working class is not growing to generate taxes. Terrorism, law and order situation, poverty and unemployment are also playing important role in low tax collection.

Tax base in Pakistan is stable at 1%, on the other hand tax base in USA is about 24% and it is 20% in Malaysia. Tax policy is also not suitable in order to generate taxes and to extend the tax net. Another problem that we are facing is documentation of economy; nearly 52% of our economy is undocumented. Audit and enforcement is so weak in Pakistan that the audit agencies themselves are involved in corruption. Looking at different sectors, we can see agriculture has above 20% share in GDP but tax collected from this sector are only 1% of total tax collection. In this way contribution of different sectors is not properly distributed. Political influence is also a big hurdle in the taxation system. (According to sec 38) departments are molesting the respect of the person which are paying taxes.

One of the reasons Pakistan has not been able to progress as much as other emerging countries have is because of the lack of proper infrastructure, low quality of education, and lack of government's ability to spend on public welfare. Almost all of the tax collected by government is spent on either defense or on debt servicing. The stage has come when Pakistan needs loan to pay its loan payments. With VAT the state would be able to collect more taxes with which Pakistan will be able to repay its loans sooner. Once Pakistan pays off all the loans it will be able to spend on infrastructure and improve quality of education. Better infrastructure and education would attract foreign investments which will increase GDP and eventually increasing the tax base; there has been a decrease of more than 3000 million \$ from fiscal year 2007-2008 to 2009-20010 in FDI see exhibit 6.

According to VAT law there is no difference between retailers and wholesalers. It also does not define manufacturer or manufacture. Every person, who is part of the production supply chain, is required to get registered with VAT if he/she is engaged in carrying out business activity of making supplies of taxable goods/services. Under GST only some of the industries are charged tax. For example, cellular services account for more than 80% of the total GST collected, rest of the country's industries pay less than 20% of the GST revenue. Now one problem could be that organizations tend to avoid taxes especially when VAT is practiced in the economy.

But with the negative effects, payment of taxes has positive consequences as well; paying taxes improves the credibility of organization. People tend to purchase from organization that are ethical enough to pay its due taxes, it is most beneficial for small companies. If small organizations mention on their sites that the company is a regular tax payer, it will not just improves its credibility but will also enhance its ability to compete with larger firms.

Tax refund is also a major problem under GST regime, VAT, however has a solution to it. Under VAT system refunds will be paid through speedy Refund Payment System.

The system has already been set-up for exporters from the tax period April, 2010 onwards. Under this upgraded system electronic refund payments will be made

directly in the bank accounts of the taxpayers. This new refund system will be expanded to cover all other classes of refund claimants in due time.

Thus, VAT is the most appropriate tax system for Pakistan as it has the ability to deal with tax refunds without taking much time, its ability to track un-registered business entities, and its ability to increase government revenues and reduce tax gap.

—The writers is Chairman Pakistan CoulmistCouncil figure 786 @ hotmail.com

Source: <http://pakobserver.net/tax-system-radiant-pakistan/>

CPEC: Whose Project is this? By Dr Ashfaq H Khan

The current regime which took charge of the state of affairs in June 2013, has been claiming to have launched the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). The then Prime Minister has even called the CPEC as a gift from China to his government. The CPEC has been regarded as a flagship project and one of the greatest success of this regime in strengthening Pakistan's economy.

How far is this true? What is the reality? Whose project is this? This is the subject matter of this article. Before I delve into the detail, it is pertinent to note that the CPEC is one of the six corridors of the greatest Chinese initiative-the One Belt one Road (OBOR). Over 65 countries accounting for 60 percent of the world's population and 40 percent of GDP are connected through infrastructure development under the OBOR. A project like OBOR or CPEC requires decades of preparation, planning and hard work. Such gigantic project is not launched in a week or a month's preparation.

Pakistan tested its nuclear device in May 1998 but its preparation started in the 1970s, that is, after the first nuclear test of India in 1974. Decades of hard work, planning and preparation enabled Pakistan to successfully test its nuclear device in May 1998. One government alone, therefore, can not take credit of making Pakistan a nuclear power. All the governments that ruled the country during 1974 to 1998 have contributed to the success of making Pakistan a nuclear power.

As it is said, "Rome was not built in a day", a project of OBOR or CPEC's scale could not be launched in a week or a month. This article presents the factual position in a chronological order of the journey towards the launch of the gigantic project-the CPEC-based on official documents of both the countries as well as the published articles of the scholars from within and outside Pakistan. The basic idea is to straighten the facts.

Pakistan-China strategic alliance has been one of the defining features of the relations between the two countries since the early 1960s. The relationship has been tested for decades and now blossomed into an "all-weather strategic

partnership” and more recently to “Tie Ge Men”, which means “Real Iron Brothers”. On the other hand, the economic relationship between the two countries has not been consistent at all with otherwise deep and strategic nature of relationship between them.

It has long been felt by the leadership of both the countries that economic relations must be made consistent with the type of strategic relationship that the two countries have maintained for decades. It is in this perspective that a development was made during the visit of President Pervez Musharraf to China on January 17, 2000-right after his assumption of power (see AP Archive, January 17, 2000). During Musharraf’s meeting with Chinese Premier Zhu Rongji, he emphasized on stronger economic ties between the two countries.

The two sides signed an agreement on economic cooperation and sowed the seed for expanded economic relations between the two countries. During the visit of Chinese Prime Minister Zhu Rongji to Pakistan in May 2001, six agreements and one MoU were signed in the areas of railways, tourism, telecommunication, petroleum and mining. President Musharraf took up the matter with the visiting Chinese Premier and requested his support for the construction of Gwadar Port. The Chinese Prime Minister reiterated his support for the Gwadar deep sea port construction and gave assurances towards the continued strengthening of economic relationship between the two countries.

Following Zhu Rongji’s reiteration of support for the Gwadar deep sea port, the Chinese Vice Premier Wu Bang Guo visited Pakistan and on March 22, 2002, along with President Musharraf, attended the ground breaking ceremony of the Gwadar Port. This ceremony was held under the banner of “Pak-China Friendship Journey from Karakoram to Gwadar” (DAWN, March 23, 2002).

At the invitation of the Chinese President Hu Jintao, President Musharraf visited China in November 2003. During his visit, both the Presidents signed a Joint Declaration on the Directions of Bilateral Cooperation on November 4, 2003 which spelt out the new focus on economic cooperation.

The Joint Declaration included several aspects of economic and trade relations including the Preferential Trading Agreement with ultimate goal of establishing Free Trade Agreement; agriculture, industry, tourism, transport to expand trade

through Karakoram, strengthening of China-Pakistan Business Council etc. (see Joint Communiqués, Beijing, November 4, 2003).

During Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz's visit to China in December 2004, seven agreements pertaining to trade, communication and energy cooperation were signed.

This visit was in line with ongoing efforts to further strengthening economic ties, including cooperation in the field of energy. After the signing of Joint Declaration in November 2003, the year 2006 will be remembered as the defining year for the ultimate launch of the CPEC in 2013 for two reasons: Firstly, at the invitation of President Hu Jintao, President Musharraf visited China during February 19-23, 2006. During the visit, a Framework Agreement on Energy Cooperation was signed.

Chinese side agreed to assist in the development of oil and gas sector in Pakistan. The two sides emphasized that overland trade through the Karakorum Highway should be promoted and that they were ready to adopt measures to facilitate such trade. In this context, both sides agreed in principle to upgrade the Karakoram Highway (Joint Statement, February 23, 2006, Beijing).

Secondly and most importantly, at the invitation of President Musharraf, Chinese President Hu Jintao visited Pakistan during November 23-26, 2006. Most important developments pertaining to the ultimate launch of the CPEC took place during this visit. These included: i) the signing of an FTA between the two countries; five year Development Programmed on Trade and Economic Cooperation was signed; and iii) financial support for the up gradation of the Karakorum Highway among others (See Joint Statement, November 26, 2006, Islamabad).

The Five year Development Program was the integral component of Pakistan-China Strategic Economic Partnership/Cooperation program. The Pakistani side proposed Pakistan-China Trade, Transport, Energy and Industrial Corridor, commonly referred to as NTC. The NTC was an essential component of the Strategic Economic Partnership/Cooperation. China keenly supported Pakistan's National Trade Corridor (NTC) project. Both sides agreed to intensify joint study

in the various aspects of the NTC (See Dr Akram Sheikh, Blue Chip, April – June 2016)

In summing up, the scope of the corridor/strategic economic cooperation discussed between the two countries during 2004-2007 included: i) the development of Gwadar as a Deep Sea Commercial Port, Oil city with world class refining and petro-chemical facilities; ii) development of Gwadar (by enhancing its port handling capacity) keeping in view that it serves as an alternative port for China;iii) it was envisaged that in twenty years, Gwadar could be developed like ‘Shenzhen’ port city of China; iv) development of Special Economic Zones throughout Pakistan; v) development of appropriate road and rail links from Gwadar and Karachi to Khunjrab and Kashgar (German pre-feasibility study for railway link from Havelian to Khunjrab was presented to President Hu Jintao in April 2008); vi) widening and up-gradation of KKH to accommodate oil and gas pipelines and optical fiber link;vii) development of all aspects of the energy; and viii) strategic oil reserves and oil and gas pipelines from Gwadar to Kashgar (See Dr Akram Sheikh).

The above listed items were part of the discussion between the two countries during 2004-08 under the China-Pakistan Economic Partnership/Cooperation, which also included the concept of corridor. Dr Akram Sheikh, the then Deputy Chairman of the Planning Commission had remained involved in this discussion during 2005-2008. Anyone who has doubt about what I have stated in this article can confirm with Dr Sheikh.

The work on NTC remained dormant with the change in government in April 2008. The momentum that was generated during 2004-2008 was slowed. China, on the other hand, continued to work quietly on their side. Besides other work, they continued to develop their human capital which were to be needed for OBOR initiative.

Yet another momentous development took place towards the ultimate launch of the CPEC in January/February 2013. Pakistani cabinet of the previous regime (PPP) approved the transfer of Gwadar Port Operation to China from Singapore on January 30, 2013. The formal ceremony of the transfer took place on February 17, 2013 in Islamabad (See Express Tribune, February 18, 2013). Pakistan described the deal as an energy and trade corridor which would not

only benefit Pakistan but would also connect China to the Arabian Sea and Strait of Hormoz via the expanded KKH.

The current Chinese President Xi Jinping took charge of the state of affairs on March 14, 2013 and formally announced the launch of the historic One Belt One Road Initiative in September 2013, CPEC being an integral part of it.

In the meantime, Chinese Premier Li Keqiang visited Pakistan during May 22-23, 2013. The Chinese Premier and his Pakistani counterpart (the caretaker Prime Minister Mir Hazar Khan Khoso) reached an important consensus on building the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor and decided to jointly prepare a long-term plan on CPEC. The central role of the CPEC was clearly defined in April 2015, when President Xi Jinping visited Pakistan during which 51 MoUs/agreements worth \$46 billion were signed.

This is the brief journey of the CPEC stretched over 13 years (2000-2013). During 2000-2008, the seed of strong and extended economic cooperation were sowed and nurtured; the CPEC was virtually formalized in the shape of Pakistan-China Trade, Transport, Energy and Industrial Corridor, known as NTC in 2006; the journey towards CPEC continued, albeit, at a slower pace during 2008-13, yet a major development took place with the transfer of Gwadar Port operation to China. During the transition to the next government (May 2013), consensus on building the CPEC was reached. The formal launch of the CPEC took place in April 2015 with signing of several MoUs/agreements during the visit of President Xi Jinping.

It is clear that no single government can take credit for launching CPEC. Several governments contributed to the preparation, development and finally launching of the project. This is a project for the people of Pakistan, for the future of Pakistan and does not belong to a single individual or party.

How much Pakistan will benefit from the project will depend on its preparedness. Bureaucratic hurdles in terms of lethargic and non-serious attitude, lack of understanding of the complexities of the project, little flow of information from Pakistani side and petty politics have all served as headwinds thus far towards the completion of the project in time.

Simply making noises like “game changer” or “fate changer” and claiming the ownership of the Project will not serve the objectives. We need to prepare ourselves by developing relevant skills, strengthening bureaucracy, and training manpower, particularly in Baluchistan. Thus far we have been talkers only. We need to join the league of doers.

(The writer is Principal & Dean at NUST School of Social Sciences and Humanities, Islamabad. Email: ahkhan@s3h.nust.edu.pk)

Source: <http://fp.brecorder.com/2017/08/20170823211718/>

Building an Economy for the Future By Dr S Akbar Zaidi

In the late 1960s and early 1970s, the term 'Asian Tigers' became synonymous with high economic growth based on the achievements of four East Asian countries — South Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong and Singapore. All four countries focused heavily on manufacturing and industrialisation, and all four were largely authoritarian and undemocratic, either under military rule or strong civilian leadership. In the 1990s, other countries in the region, notably Malaysia, were also accommodated in this broad category of miracle economies. The biggest tiger of all was, of course, China, followed by other smaller countries, including Vietnam. The term 'Asian Tiger' became an aspirational term, connotating an ideal to be replicated by other countries. On many occasions from the 1960s onwards, Pakistani leaders, both elected and otherwise, pledged to make Pakistan an Asian Tiger. As is apparent, not only has Pakistan not become an Asian Tiger, it still lags behind other South Asian countries in key economic and social indicators. Back on 18 January 1965, the New York Times wrote that 'Pakistan may be on its way towards an economic milestone that so far has been reached by only one other populous country, the United States', a view which was endorsed by the Times from London a year later, stating that 'the survival and development of Pakistan is one of the most remarkable examples of state and nation building in the post-war period'. Clearly, things have been rather different since.

One can identify numerous reasons for why the potential and prospects of Pakistan came undone. A reason often cited is the dominance of the military in Pakistan, making it a praetorian state, not allowing economic and social development to take place, but this argument fails to explain why other military-dominated and authoritarian states have developed markedly. Ethnic and regional imbalances, with the freedom of East Pakistan from a largely (then) Muhajir and later Punjabi dominated bureaucracy and military is an explanation which is often given, where the dominance of a Punjabi military-bureaucratic set-up undermined the development aspirations of Sindh, Balochistan and Khyber Pukhtunkhwa, keeping them underdeveloped. Constant changes in systems of governance, with the military dominating even elected civilian governments, is yet another explanation given, as is the fact that the elite in Pakistan, both

military and civilian, have never reached a consensus on how to govern and implement an inclusive economic programme. One cannot also ignore Pakistan's geostrategic borders and the fact that there have been contentious and often conflictual interchanges on both Pakistan's borders from as early as 1948, becoming more complex and intense since 1979.

Without greater regional economic integration, Pakistan will continue to remain an outlier — dependent on foreign aid and politically-motivated economic projects. Perhaps all these, and many other reasons, offer a partial explanation of why Pakistan has failed at achieving any fulfilment of its promise. Yet, there has also been progress, albeit clearly insufficient and unacceptably little, in terms of the diversification of its economy, through modernisation, with per capita incomes rising, the buoyant growth of a middle class, with women becoming increasingly prominent in the economic, social and political sphere, and as other indicators suggest. Still, compared to other countries in South Asia, particularly Bangladesh and India, Pakistan continues to trail. Pakistan seems to be caught in a low equilibrium trap, both economically and socially, compared to many other countries which are fast progressing and in the process of development.

One can give a long prescriptive to-do list for policy makers to look differently at the near and distant future of Pakistan, but such wish lists are often quite simply based on wishes rather than informed by Pakistan's political economy considerations. Only those policies are found to be workable which are contextualised and derive from existing and emerging economic transformations and political settlements. Some, even, partial consensus amongst the elite, despite party affiliations and institutional differences, is a key starting point. How do members of this elite envisage Pakistan's future? Some interventions, even though difficult, must be agreeable to all, such as raising Pakistan's taxation collection based on income and wealth earned, must surely be one such item on anyone's list. Far greater stability and better relations with Pakistan's neighbours, has also to be on the agenda, even of the military. Without greater regional economic integration, Pakistan will continue to remain to be outlier, continuing to be dependent on aid and politically motivated economic projects. Greater and more substantive democracy is also bound to hold elected representatives more accountable, and with increasing political and democratic competition, perhaps make elected representatives more eager to demonstrate an inclusive development paradigm. The emerging middle classes and women, the latter as a

separate economic and social category, also require focused attention, although with growing inequality, numerous social protection measures, including the right to work, a decent and enforceable minimum wage, and more aggressive redistributive measures, from land, to opportunities, must focus on Pakistan's underprivileged. The distributive nature of growth must form part of a revised and appropriate social contract to include regions, gender, individuals, and the excluded.

While a list can be as fertile and endless as one's imagination, real and practical measures will need to work on what can be done, what ought to be done, and how these goals will be achieved.

(This essay was first published by Jinnah Institute's Independence Day special feature)

The writer is a political economist based in Karachi, and teaches at Columbia University in New York

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Source: <http://dailytimes.com.pk/opinion/22-Aug-17/building-an-economy-for-the-future>

Mutually Beneficial CPEC By Dr Ahmad Rashid Malik

Trade is mutually beneficial to Pakistan and China. For Pakistan, it is a learning process to develop fast and competitive values to capture global markets and to become global traders. Pakistani businessmen are far behind of China, Korea, and Japan, just to speak of these three Asian dynamic traders. Pakistan accumulates trade-deficits with all these three countries. Before China, Japan used to be the largest trading partner of Pakistan but trade balance remained in favour of Japan since the 1960s. Still, it cannot be said that this was one-sided trade and that Japan denied opportunities and incentives to Pakistani exporters.

Pakistan traders did not capture the Japanese market because of their own fault – a lack of innovation. Now, China presents a large consumer market and it is up to Pakistani traders, exporters, and businessmen to capture the Chinese market along with other competitors. Access into the Chinese market would be as difficult as that of Japan and South Korea for Pakistani traders if they do not learn global competitiveness and develop innovation technologies.

Not only is the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) is target of critics, they leave no stone unturned about the growing relations between Pakistan and China. A report was published in local newspapers that trade between the two countries “runs one way”. The report presented the picture that trade is not beneficial to Pakistan and the corridor will only promote China’s exports to Pakistan. This is a highly misleading impression and there is a need to present a correct picture of Pakistan-China trade.

China is Pakistan’s largest trading partner. Mutual trade has crossed the \$20 billion mark this year. There are such huge opportunities for Pakistan under the CPEC whether it is industry, agriculture, or the services sector. The recent imports from China consists of primary goods such as construction machinery and power generation equipment to build the essential infrastructure of the CPEC.

The CPEC projects under the Early Harvest Program will be completed next year. Many projects are to be completed this year. This was the first step toward building the infrastructure essential for industry. In the next phase, nine industrial zones will be created in different parts of the country. With this set up, the country's reliance on imports will decrease and its capacity for exports will be enhanced.

Opportunities for the agricultural sector are huge. China has a large population of 1.3 billion and it has a huge agricultural market, over US\$ 1 trillion, for exporters around the world. Demand for agricultural produce is ever increasing in China because of rapid urbanisation. Being a country on China's border with an agricultural base, Pakistan will receive huge benefits to capture Chinese agricultural market through the fast land route of the CPEC. The United States, Brazil, and Australia dominate China's agricultural market already. Being a strong agricultural economy, Australia maintains a huge trade surplus vis-à-vis China. Moreover, South Korea and Japan also maintain surplus exports to China.

Pakistan also has to develop its agricultural and industrial base to increase exports to China like these countries. The basic aim of the CPEC connectivity is to build Pakistan agricultural, industrial, and services capacity so that Pakistan not only increases its exports to China but to many other trading partners.

Pakistan's fisheries and seafood are a highly profitable export to China. The distance is shortened to 10 days instead of 30 days via the Karakoram Highway. In January, Mufeng Biological Technology Cot shipped 7.46 metric tons of seafood, including squid, shrimp, pomfret and bonefish, from Khunjerab to be sold at local markets in Urumqi, Karamy as well as Beijing and Shanghai. China buys over 75 percent of Pakistan's shrimp products.

Regular shipments started in April this year. It was reported in the media that two tons of shrimps were sold in one hour in Xinjiang. The CPEC land route became a profitable source for poor fishermen in Balochistan and Sindh and a source of national income for Pakistan. Around US\$ 276 were added in the national kitty this year of which 75 percent earned from China alone. This is one example and many more would come.

China is an easy and a friendly market for Pakistani exporters and small businessmen. The exporters can double the market in few years from the current US\$ 20 billion to US\$ 40 billion, making the Chinese market most lucrative for Pakistani businessmen. Purchasing power is increasing in China. Pakistani small and medium size entrepreneurs could capture that market. The CPEC route is rapidly providing that opportunity, which was not available in case of Japan and South Korea, for instance.

CPEC is a capacity-building project. Pakistan would set up as many as 46 industrial zones with nine already prioritised. Over 700,000 million jobs will be created. The unemployed educated and un-skilled youth has greater chance to be engaged in various projects by making youth bulge as an asset for CPEC projects that would ultimately result in a boom for Pakistan's exports to China.

Source: <http://nation.com.pk/columns/10-Aug-2017/mutually-beneficial-cpec>

A Fraught Partnership | Editorial

Pakistan needs to choose its friends carefully. Currently it is committed to finalising a free trade agreement (FTA) with the Gulf Cooperation Council in an effort to increase trade between ourselves and the GCC member states. The GCC is in some disarray as a result of the internal dispute between some member states and Qatar which has stopped short of military conflict but which has soured relationships and increased tensions far beyond the area it covers. There is to be a third round of negotiations after the conclusion of a ministerial level meeting between the GCC countries that is presided over by Bahrain, and the commerce ministers of the GCC will meet again at the end of August with the FTA between Pakistan and the GCC high on the agenda.

The GCC is committed to moving away from economies that are oil-based and all are heavily dependent on importing agricultural products that they cannot produce for themselves. This works to the favour of Pakistan which has a comparative advantage in respect of meat, most fruits and another staple — rice. All are products we produce in volume and have the capacity to expand production. The GCC states are committed to liberalising and promoting bilateral trade and agro-processing plants are expected to be developed in Pakistan following the trade agreement.

All this is positive, but there are a number of flies in the ointment. The aforementioned internal GCC dispute involving Qatar is one of them, another is the essentially neutral position that Pakistan has maintained regarding relations with the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. There is also the matter of just how stable GCC regimes are given that they are all monarchies, and that oil revenues are dropping globally as oil loses value and the world generally veers in the direction of greener fuel solutions that do not include oil. This is going to quicken over time and despite massive reserves the Gulf States and the GCC that sits on much of those reserves is going to become an increasing irrelevance. Trade by all means. Just let us be careful who with.

Published in The Express Tribune, August 6th, 2017.

Source: <https://tribune.com.pk/story/1475039/a-fraught-partnership/>

Rupee Depreciation | Editorial

The currency depreciation debate is back in the market as soon as the political crisis has hit the country.

The last time that the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) depreciated the value of the rupee from Rs108.

25 to Rs104.

8, it was quickly stabilised at Rs 105.

40 in the market.

The reasons for the move were pretty apparent.

Foreign reserves in the SBP are lowering by the day and the external deficit is increasing.

At the same time, when you overvalue your currency, exports are affected badly.

However, at that time the finance ministry labelled this move as an agenda of those trying to take advantage of the political difficulties of the ruling party.

However, this time around there is no denying that debt over these last four years has increased.

There is a decrease of \$3.

9 billion in the reserves of SBP.

Commercial borrowing of \$4.

4 billion was supposed to give the economy a push but the move has produced no significant results.

The increase in Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) of \$2.

4 billion has not managed to get the country out of the debt cycle because a lot of foreign companies have opened up.

They are not registered in the tax net and that results in them making unmonitored profits off of Pakistani markets.

In the last fiscal year, they sent around \$201 billion in reverse remittances.

The amount is almost equal to the FDI that we get every year.

Commercial borrowing has already put the economy under pressure and it is more harmful than international borrowing because commercial rates are usually higher than ones offered by bilateral and multilateral sources.

The government has still not issued an exact figure of debt servicing required on external loans.

The amount, however, for the first three quarters is over \$5.2 billion.

This means that the government would have to indulge in more commercial borrowing in the next fiscal year, and an appreciation in the value of the dollar should be expected.

Hence, the increasing debt is one of the biggest economic challenges that Pakistan is facing right now.

The answer does not lie in presenting a pleasant scenario; the situation is actually difficult to deal with.

The government, for the longest time, has been denying the gravity of the situation.

Rupee depreciation is on the cards and must be used to offer the market and the economy some stability.

Source: <http://nation.com.pk/editorials/03-Aug-2017/rupee-depreciation>

CPEC And Policy Initiatives By Durdana Najam

The former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif said in a party meeting he chaired to choose his successor, that the Chinese government initiated CPEC project in Pakistan because of him. Considering the pressure, in the wake of his unceremonious ouster, one can ignore this beguiling of self for the time being. However, since the PML-N government is still in control of the parliament with a new prime minister, the misconception about CPEC being a special favour to Nawaz Sharif needs to be addressed and possibly stripped out. The CPEC project could have begun in the Nawaz Sharif era, but its seeds were sown much earlier. The PPP too, had its share of effort in the fruition of the project. It is a typical tendency, in Pakistan, to take credit of owning the whole pie, if someone happens to make a substantial last minute contribution to complete the product. Just as Nawaz Sharif takes the credit for making Pakistan a nuclear power, only because he ordered the explosions in response to India's audacity to do so in the late 90s. Coming back to CPEC, let it be known that the Chinese government has also said that Nawaz Sharif's departure would make no difference to the project, that CPEC is a national asset with regional implications and has nothing to do with the dynastic politics of this country. The internal political dynamic of Pakistan and the threat emanating from India makes CPEC a matter of concern. The real taste of CPEC could have been better savoured had mindful and Pakistan-oriented policies been devised. Not that Pakistan will have any fewer benefits, but besides becoming a security providing country and a co-builder of the economic corridor, Pakistan's indigenous business interests could have been linked to the project as well. Such thoughtfulness could only be summoned to serve in an atmosphere of political stability. Since its creation, Pakistan is fighting an unending war against corruption. The ball of accountability had been set rolling many times before, but the latest style of taking out the elected prime minister on corruption charges has no precedent in the history of Pakistan. Only time will tell if this was genuine accountability, or just another witch-hunt to deepen ulterior motives.

In the meantime, CPEC is a reality that Pakistan needs to guard and make as useful as possible.

Pakistan-India relations have been based on mutual enmity. And because Pakistan's political structure has supported the military narrative more than the

political one, India, because of its hostile regional presence towards its neighbours, became Pakistan's archrival and biggest enemy. India has had reservations on CPEC on many counts and has openly objected to the project on many occasions. CPEC passes through Gilgit-Baltistan; a region, which India claims is part of its territory. This has caused a commotion in Indian circles, and a complaint in this regard has been lodged many times in China. The unrest in Balochistan and the arrest of Kulbhushan Yadav, the Indian spy who had openly confessed being deputed in Pakistan with the sole agenda of sabotaging CPEC, confirmed India's restlessness on seeing Pakistan making economic headways in the region. On the flip side, India is also part of the One-Belt-One-Road (OBOR) mega project of which CPEC is just one part. Therefore, whether one likes it or not, OBOR, with its inherent ability to connect, would sew in India as well in this mega regional connectivity project. The beauty of this initiative, however, lies in its potential to connect the regional states even those having an inherent bias against one another within the security paradigm. If taken up sensibly and with a mission to iron out differences, the Kashmir dispute could find a solution as well, given the economic dimension that CPEC bestows. For Pakistan, the task is especially humongous if seen through the security prism. The real challenge lies in making CPEC beneficial for Pakistan.

There have been many criticisms against CPEC, some factual, while others are in place only to create misconceptions. One area that does need attention and has been neglected so far is the deployment of the Chinese managers, skilled and technical staff throughout the project. This not only raises the unit cost of labour after taking into account other expenses such as housing, wage premium, security and so on, but it also takes away the opportunity to put to use Pakistan's talent pool in the project. Had the government been planning, these professional positions could have been transferred to Pakistanis by having them trained by Chinese trainers. Such an initiative demands coordination and above all the development of vocational and technical training institutes both in the private and public sectors.

So far, no such initiative has been taken, and the general grievance that Pakistan would in fact, be more burdened with debt and Chinese domination carry weight. Embroiled in domestic politics, with corruption at the centre of all allegations against the politicians, any policy initiative in making CPEC become more Pakistan-oriented does not seem to be the priority of the leadership in Pakistan.

Be it CPEC or any economic foray, if comprehensive benefit is to be accrued, Pakistan's internal political dynamics matter more than the external security situation. In this context, Pakistan is in dire need of a clean, responsible and dedicated leadership and bureaucracy, not only in the centre or provinces, but also in every institution. Ultimately, it is the institutional framework of a country that takes the mission forward on the back of the vision the leadership provides at the helm of the affairs.

Source: <http://nation.com.pk/columns/01-Aug-2017/cpec-and-policy-initiatives>

CSS Papers of 2016: FPSC Report Finds Poor Level of Scholarship By Riazul Haq

ISLAMABAD: The Federal Public Service Commission's (FPSC) recently published report – comprising observations of examiners who evaluated written papers in the Central Superior Services (CSS) exams of 2016 – paints a dismal picture of candidates' level of scholarship as well as educational institutions' level of instruction.

“Below average, unnecessary details, attempting paper without preparation, poor writing skills, lack of critical thinking, inappropriate expressions and failing to understand the question(s),” are some of the common observations of the examiners who went through answer sheets of candidates.

The report released earlier this week discusses the discrepancies and failures of the education system besides offering its suggestions.

In 2016, as many as 9,643 candidates sat the CSS written examination. However, only 202, or 2.09% of them, qualified which is the lowest percentage of successful students since 2011.

Most public varsity students come up short in CSS

The subject of English continued to haunt the candidates as the examiners found it to be the hardest nut to crack. Among the three compulsory subjects – Essay, English (précis and composition) and Islamic studies – the first two turned out to be seriously disappointing for the examiners.

About 7,841 candidates or 81% of the total candidates failed In English Essay.

“The performance [of candidates] was unsatisfactory; ideas were random and the argument was without any logical reasoning or research-based facts,” the report says.

The examiners also observe that neither there was any coherence nor creativity in answers and the candidates were not able to build argument from multiple angles with substantiated facts.

In English Composition, some basic mistakes were made related to tenses, capitalisation, punctuation and spelling. About 8,894 (92%) candidates could not pass the paper.

Court orders holding CSS exam in Urdu

The examiners underline that it was imperative to communicate to institutions of higher education to take appropriate measures to enhance English language proficiency at the graduate level.

Most of the candidates attempted the Agriculture and Forestry without any preparation and scored zero out of 80 marks. “Many [candidates] could not write even a few lines on grain management or environmentally controlled poultry houses”.

In Balochi, performance of 70% of candidates was weak. They lacked analytical and creative writing skills while the candidates had done selective study in the case of Chemistry and had given unsatisfactory answers.

Interestingly, most candidates performed well in Anthropology and Criminology. Candidates had, however, poor understanding of European History. They used inappropriate expressions and demonstrated poor writing skills.

“Some of the deficiencies were that the candidates either did not know how to attempt the question paper or lacked in-depth knowledge and understanding of subject,” it says.

It notes that most candidates could not establish connection between the ideas of French philosophers and the French revolution and they rarely touched the real point.

In the paper of Economics, 80% candidates fared poorly; their approach was non-serious and they appeared in the paper without serious preparation. It says they mostly relied on their general knowledge instead of understanding nature of questions.

The evaluators of English Literature paper observed that there was a tendency in majority of the candidates to reproduce summaries of specified texts. “Many candidates despite having understanding of the subject were not able to express themselves.”

With regard to Governance and Public Policy paper, the examiners recommend that candidates should consult proper text or recommended books instead of relying on their own observations or analyses or just the newspapers.

Interestingly, any candidates did not understand what was meant by ‘rational’ in the context of International Relations while commonality of content and similar mistakes indicated that a number of candidates had attended coaching classes from specific centres.

Source: <https://tribune.com.pk/story/1479542/css-papers-2016-fpsc-report-finds-poor-level-scholarship/>

Education Spending in Pakistan By Dr Pervez Tahir

This is the last piece in the series on education spending. The earlier pieces analysed the budget estimates 2017-18 and budget and revised estimates 2016-17 for all the provinces, the federal government and all of the federal territories. It is now time to put things together and present an overall picture of education spending in Pakistan.

In the 2017-18 budgets, all these governments allocated Rs902.7 billion for education. As the budgeted amount in the previous year was Rs776.1 billion, this shows an increase of 16.3 per cent. However, the revised estimate for the previous year was Rs622.1 billion, a 19.8 per cent reduction in utilisation. This was mainly the result of massive underutilisation in Punjab and Sindh, 37.5 per cent and 30.2 per cent, respectively. Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa, Balochistan and the federal government utilised more than the budgeted allocation. As a percentage of GDP, the allocation in the budget 2017-18 is 2.5 per cent compared to 2.3 per cent in the budget 2016-17. It was 1.95 per cent in the revised estimates of 2016-17. In view of this performance, the budget target of 2.5 per cent of GDP, not high by international standards, seems optimistic.

The GDP estimates include the household incomes and the incomes of for-profit and non-profit organisations. They now spend large sums on education, which should be added to the public spending on education to get a fair idea of the total spending on education by society. This should be the numerator when using GDP as the denominator. For public spending, the ratio considered appropriate is the proportion of total budgetary expenditure. For the budget 2017-18, it is 9.8 per cent, compared to the revised estimate of 7.3 per cent and the previous budget estimate of 9.1 per cent. Again this is rather low for a country the size of Pakistan.

With the devolution of the subject of education to the provinces, the share of the federal government in total public education spending is only 14.6 per cent. It will come down drastically after the Higher Education Commission becomes a regulator rather than the largest spender on higher education. In the event, it makes more sense to relate consolidated provincial spending on education to the

consolidated provincial budgetary expenditure. This ratio was 22.4 in the budgets for 2017-18, down from 22.6 per cent in the budgets for 2016-17. In the revised estimates of the same year, it was extremely low at 17.6 per cent.

With 25 million out of school children, a significant percentage of those enrolled not retained, gender imbalances and generally poor quality of teachers and student learning, even the provincial education/expenditure ratios paint a sorry state of affairs. Politicians see more visibility in announcing universities than in schools as their priority projects. What would they say to the Quaid-i-Azam to whom the “greatest stigma on the Government,” is “to show that after your 150 years of rule,you have not given knowledge and light, nay even the three R’s to more than 6 or 7 per cent of the population in this country” (Legislative Assembly, March 1925).

Speaking on Gokhale’s elementary education bill in April 1912, he made five key points that should act as reminders in this month of independence celebration. First, it was it the business of the state to provide basic education, and by compulsion not through the voluntary system. Secondly, resources had to be found somehow for free access. Thirdly, the Quaid would brook no nonsense on the question of girls education. Fourthly, the Quaid was for mass education not elitist education, particularly the British public school system. Finally, he was for producing skills rather than clerks.

Published in The Express Tribune, August 26th, 2017.

Source: <https://tribune.com.pk/story/1490941/education-spending-pakistan/>

Higher education Woes | Editorial

Pakistan's secondary schools are producing pupils with three distinct subjectivities — depending on whether one passes out of an English-medium private school, an Urdu-medium public school or a religious seminary. The activities, habits, hobbies and outlooks on life of these graduates are vastly different.

One glimmer of hope in bringing together pupils from such diverse academic background was when we started regulating the higher education system through a Higher Education Commission (HEC). Whether or not the HEC has performed up to the par remains debatable but the commission has, nonetheless, introduced quality assessment mechanisms that can be built upon for raising the standard of higher education in the country.

The HEC ranks universities according to their contribution in research, the qualifications and credentials of the faculty, and several other metrics of international standards. It also attests degrees and academic certificates offered by various institutes.

Recently, the commission has prohibited four varsities — PIMSAT in Karachi, Imperial College of Business Studies and Global Institute in Lahore, and Al-Khair University in Bhimber, AJK — from further enrollment of students. This means that those admitted for the academic year of 2017-18 will not be awarded HEC-recognised certifications; these 'universities' face the ignominy of being blacklisted by the HEC. They were continually approached by the HEC to improve their educational standards and instructional facilities since 2015, and were already under investigation by early 2017.

But this is merely the tip of the iceberg: the HEC reported in January this year that 79 private universities in Punjab have no physical existence; neither teachers, nor students, no infrastructure either. And while Punjab alone has nearly 101 discredited institutions, there are 36 such institutions in Sindh, 11 in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, four in Islamabad, and three in AJK.

Last September, the HEC closed 31 PhD programmes and 26 MPhil programmes across the country. It has also blacklisted a large number of university instructors — even professors — who have engaged in plagiarism. Not to mention the former HEC chairman, Dr Javed Leghari, who formally apologised in March 2016 for plagiarising a paper he co-authored with another SZABIST faculty member.

One good thing to have happened at the HEC is the development of the Pakistan Qualification Register (PQR) which will create a uniform standard for public and private institutions, as well as their affiliates, programmes being offered, skills and competencies to be acquired, instruments to be evaluated, and a list of approved supervisors, attested degrees, and awards of national and thematic research grants.

If the PQR is made effective, we will be well on our way to enforcing merit and setting high standards of academic integrity in higher education and this alone will secure a promising future for the country. *

Published in Daily Times, August 25th 2017.

Source: <http://dailytimes.com.pk/editorial/25-Aug-17/higher-education-woes>

Educating Pakistan's Next Generation By

Mosharraf Zaidi

There is little to debate about the state of education in Pakistan. At every level, and in almost every way, Pakistan's children have been failed by their elders, both within the state and across society. There is a robust debate about the value of education, but one of the widely accepted theories about the public sector delivery of education is that it offers among the clearest paths to establishing a level playing ground between society's haves and have-nots.

On Pakistan's 70th founding anniversary, we can choose to look back at the failures of public sector education, or we can establish a consensus on what is required to change the trajectory. I believe it is as important to look forward as it is to look back. In seventy short years, Pakistan has become one of the most populated and youngest countries on the planet. This poses a challenge of scale. Over the next three decades, before Pakistan turns one hundred years old, it will need to provide young Pakistanis with the opportunities and incomes that enable them to explore their potential and live with dignity. While the demographic dividend or youth bulge that Pakistan enjoys can be seen as an opportunity or a threat, it is primarily a responsibility. Pakistani decision-makers do not have the luxury of putting this issue on hold — the matter of opportunity and dignity for young Pakistanis is a question facing over 100 million people below the age of 25. Any debate about Pakistan's future that does not place these young people at the centre of the conversation is an incomplete one.

Traditional solutions to the question of opportunity for young people can help move the needle a little bit, but they cannot offer the transformational changes needed to adequately address the great responsibility on our shoulders. Low enrolment rates are already improving at the primary school level, but middle and secondary school enrolment still lags far behind. The classroom experience for any child not born to wealthy parents is nightmarishly bad — and poor learning outcomes in government schools and an unregulated private sector are proof of the nightmare. Vocational training, a red-hot trend for several years, represents an endorsement of unequal and separate tracks for the children of rich and poor, and should be reconsidered and reconfigured.

The future for the unskilled is bleak. Every forecast and projection suggests that many vocations currently offering gainful employment will be obsolete before 2030. Children for whom the only option is in a low-skilled profession are being cheated of a bright future, because low-skilled professions will witness an en masse obsolescence. Self-driving cars will make taxi drivers a novelty, whilst robotic arms and basic algorithms will render tens of millions of factory workers redundant.

The idea of Pakistan was rooted in avoiding a future of unequal and skewed opportunities. Cultivating a society where a level-playing field is a distant dream is a violation of Jinnah's Pakistan. In order to adequately address a bright future for all Pakistanis, regardless of how wealthy or poor their parents are, both Pakistani state and society need to reimagine the provision of education. Sir Syed Ahmed Khan's warning for the Muslims of South Asia continues to ring true today, over 125 years since he first propagated mathematics, science and rationality as critical instruments for both the spiritual and material uplift of individuals and communities.

The daunting challenge of a wholly transformed public sector education system is not insurmountable. Smaller countries like Finland and Singapore have identified the importance of level playing fields through government schools, and successfully demonstrated a way forward. High quality teachers is a vital first step, and since 2013, starting with the Punjab, every province has now adopted standardised testing as a litmus test for recruiting teachers. Today over 125,000 teachers in all four provinces' public sector are fresh recruits hired through the NTS testing mechanism. This trend needs to become standard practise, and the testing rigour of NTS must continue to be challenged and improved.

A focus on regurgitating facts needs to be supplemented, and eventually replaced by a relentless effort to equip children with cognitive skills and creative problem solving. This is not going to be possible in a top-driven, machine bureaucracy. Individual school leaders and teachers need financial autonomy to create classrooms that offer bespoke learning opportunities for children. This is not achievable in a short period of time and requires cross-party political consensus on the importance of cognitive skills and creativity, over and above narrow political interests.

Ultimately, the idea of Pakistan can be actualised only when all Pakistanis, from all religions, all genders, all ethnicities and all parts of the country feel like their children have a reasonable chance to fulfil their potential as human beings. That can only happen when every child goes to school, stays in school, and learns to apply her or his mind with confidence and dexterity. That ultimately is the surest path to the Pakistan of Jinnah's dream. On Pakistan's 70th birthday, that is a dream worth keeping alive.

This essay was first published by Jinnah Institute's Independence Day special feature.

The writer is an analyst and commentator

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Source: <http://dailytimes.com.pk/opinion/24-Aug-17/educating-pakistans-next-generation>

Pakistan's Education Crisis: The Real Story By Salman Ali

The convention on the rights of the child and many of the global education goals, including the Millennium Development Goals, aim at ensuring the right to quality education, which, unfortunately, millions of children and women around the world are deprived of. Globally, some 67 million children remain out of school. According to the EFA Development Index, Pakistan ranks 106 out of 113 countries only above Eritrea, Burkina Faso, Niger and Chad. Similarly, despite Pakistan's annual economic growth being 4.1 per cent, growth in expenditure on education is less than 2.5 per cent.

It is also mandated in the constitution of Pakistan to provide free and compulsory education to all children between the ages of five-16 years and enhance adult literacy. But an eye-opener annual report released by the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCP) provides a glimpse into the performance of the education sector in the country, during the year 2016. According to the report, the year 2016 witnessed tiny improvements in a few areas of the sector, but continued to see a decline in many. The official figures showed that the number of out-of-school children decreased from 25 million to 24 million, but the adult literacy rate went down from 58% to 56.4%. There was only moderate improvement in the learning outcome score – from 2015's 52.33% to 54.78% in 2016.

The report said that a large number of schools failed to get basic facilities. The most disturbing news of the educational year was that the federal and two provincial governments – Punjab and Balochistan – cut their budgetary allocations for the sector, despite showy claims of giving education a priority.

On the other side, the United Nations Global Education Monitoring Report 2016, released in September last year, claimed that Pakistan was 50-plus years behind in its primary and 60-plus years behind in its secondary education targets. That means the country is set to miss by more than half-a-century the deadline for ensuring that all children receive primary education. The report said that Pakistan had the most absolute number of children out of school anywhere in the world, including 5.6 million out of primary schools, around 5.5 million out of secondary

schools (48% of lower secondary school age children), and a staggering 10.4 million adolescents out of upper secondary schools. According to the HRCP report, in 2016 in Balochistan there was no record of 15,000 teachers, and there were over 900 ghost schools in the province with almost 300,000 fake registrations of students.

A study titled “Pakistan’s Education Crisis: The Real Story” noted that the United States, Britain and the World Bank poured money into Pakistan’s stagnating public education sector, but the number of children out of school is still second only to Nigeria. The data collected by Wilson Centre, however, noted improvement in teacher absenteeism, which dropped from 20% to 6% in Punjab during the past five years.

A detailed and comprehensive report titled “Pakistan District Rankings Report For 2016” published by Alif Ailaan, explained all the aspects of the education sector in Pakistan. The basic nutshell of the report is that where Pakistan is pitching in education.

The Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf led provincial government in Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa has always claimed giving top priority to education and health. However, the HRCP report revealed that most of the total 28,000 schools in the province lacked basic facilities. The Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa Independent Monitoring Unit said in its May 2016 report that 26% of the government schools did not have potable water facility, and 10% had no boundary walls, despite the province facing a sensitive law and order situation. Also, 11% schools have no toilets and 34% have no electricity connections.

Different districts’ performance across the country was reported very poor. In Balochistan, according to a report, released by the Academy of Educational Planning and Management (AEPAM), a federal government institution, more than 1.8 million children are out of school. The official data shows that there are 13,279 government schools in Balochistan. Of these, 84% are primary schools with only 16% schools offering middle and higher education to students. Almost 54% of the total primary schools operate with only one teacher. Almost 26% government schools in Balochistan function with only one classroom. And across Balochistan, the condition of 83% of government primary school buildings is “unsatisfactory”. Moreover, the HRCP report notes with concern that the federal

as well as provincial governments' priorities seemed misplaced in the field of education.

I think the state does not seem sincere to this sector. The education at primary level particularly in public schools is somewhat satisfactory in cities but in rural or remote areas of the four provinces and the Islamabad Capital Territory expose a dismal picture. The reason for this is that the tribal lords are still powerful and influential in their areas from where they get elected and reach the assemblies where they decide the common people's fate. They are not in favour that the children of poor people can get quality education in public schools and this is the reason why public schools wear a deserted look.

The other thing is that NGOs are working to get as many students as possible admitted to public or private schools but much of their effort goes in vain. First, we have to convince parents by delivering lectures to them through our motivated and well-groomed teams. Parents may be reprimanded by saying if they do not get registered their children in school strict action would be taken against them, might be this message change their mind but first we have to reduce the influence of feudal lords otherwise we may not be able to get the desired result in this regard and the situation would remain the same.

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Education Spending and Mr Jinnah By Dr Pervez Tahir

Speaking on Gokhale's Elementary Education Bill in 1911, Mr Jinnah said: "Now, so far as the principle of the Bill is concerned, it only seeks to do this, that it wants gradually to introduce compulsion into the elementary educational system of our country. So far as that part of the Bill is concerned, — so far as that object is concerned, — the Hon'ble Mr Gokhale has entire support from me. This question was discussed in the Council before on more than one occasions, but somehow or other I was not able to express my opinion ; but I felt that this is an occasion on which I should not give my silent support but I should say a few words. I am convinced that it is high time now to make a beginning in the direction of elementary education being made compulsory and free.

"Then, with regard to the provisions, I must confess that there is a great deal that requires consideration. I personally am not in a position at the moment to express my views on the provisions of the Bill having regard to the fact that the Bill was placed in our hands only a few days ago. On the one hand, it is said the Bill is too slow; on the other, it is said that the Bill carries us too fast. But all these questions and all these provisions of the Bill will be discussed in the Select Committee and in the country, as Mr Gokhale has already pointed out, and I shall have opportunity of discussing them at various stages of the Bill later on. There is one thing which I want to make clear, and that is this. It felt from the Hon'ble Sir Sassoon David, that the time has not come to introduce elementary education in India free and make it compulsory. It seems to me, Sir, that there is a great deal of misconception on that subject. Nobody, as far as I can understand, nobody, so far as I know, no advocate of compulsory education in India has said that it should be made compulsory and free all over the country at once. All that is desired is that the time has come when a beginning should be made gradually in that direction, and that seems to be the direct object of the Bill now before us. How that object is to be achieved is a matter of detail and provisions which I have no doubt will be carefully considered later on, as I have pointed out already. With these few words, I support the Bill of the Hon'ble Mr Gokhale."

In April 1912, Mr Jinnah spelt out his view on spending. “I ask, is it such an insurmountable difficulty to get three crores of rupees from the Imperial Exchequer? Is it such a great, gigantic feat to be performed for a country like India, with its three hundred million of people? I say, Sir, that there is nothing in that argument. I ask the government, I say ‘find the money — if necessary, tax the people.’ But I shall be told that the people are already taxed; I shall be told that we shall be facing great unpopularity....My answer is that you must remove the reproach that is justly levelled against British rule, namely, the neglect of elementary education. My answer is that it is the duty of every civilised government to educate masses, and if you have to face unpopularity, if you have to face a certain amount of danger, face it in the name of duty...”

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Source: <https://tribune.com.pk/story/1480850/education-spending-mr-jinnah/>

Access to Education | Editorial

ANNUAL State of Education Report (ASER) launched in Islamabad on Wednesday reveals some of the interesting facts and figures. It notes there has been progress in increasing access to education in Pakistan as the number of out-of-school children has dropped from 25 million to 22 million as per government data. However, more remains to be done. Without compromising on access to school, the focus should be on improving the quality. The education budget allocation is now 3.02% of GDP, up from 2.83% last year but is still short of the target. The down side of the situation is that 19% children aged 6-16 still remain out of school. The remaining 81% that are enrolled in the 6-16 age bracket are not learning much either. The seventh ASER survey report also highlighted as per past trends that children enrolled in private schools are performing better compared to those studying in government schools.

The number of children out of school should be a cause for concern for the entire nation and especially the Federal and the Provincial governments. It is quite obvious that poverty is the main cause that keeps children away from schools and forces them to do some work to help supplement income of their families. The problem can be addressed to a great extent if number of government schools is increased meaningfully. Government schools charge little or no fee but these are not enough to cater to the needs of growing population. The distance factor and involvement of unbearable travelling expenses also prohibit parents from sending their children to schools. Private schools have mushroomed both in urban and rural areas and they are catering to the need of middle and high income segments of the society but poor families cannot afford to get their kids admitted in these schools. Their owners should also realise they have social and national obligations as well and offer some percentage of total admissions to students from poorest of the poor families free of cost. There are also issues of facilities, qualifications of teaching staff and the quality of education being imparted and government should, at least, offer training facilities to all teachers including those employed by private schools.

Source: <http://pakobserver.net/access-to-education/>

Trump and Russia By Eugene B. Rumer, Richard Sokolsky, and Andrew S. Weiss

The Right Way to Manage Relations

Relations between the United States and Russia are broken, and each side has a vastly different assessment of what went wrong. U.S. officials point to the Kremlin's annexation of Crimea and the bloody covert war Russian forces are waging in eastern Ukraine. They note the Kremlin's suppression of civil society at home, its reckless brandishing of nuclear weapons, and its military provocations toward U.S. allies and partners in Europe. They highlight Russia's military intervention in Syria aimed at propping up Bashar al-Assad's brutal dictatorship. And they call attention to an unprecedented attempt through a Kremlin-backed hacking and disinformation campaign to interfere with the U.S. presidential election last November.

Russian President Vladimir Putin and his circle view things differently. In Ukraine, Moscow sees itself as merely pushing back against the relentless geopolitical expansion of the United States, NATO, and the EU. They point out that Washington and its allies have deployed troops right up to the Russian border. They claim that the United States has repeatedly intervened in Russian domestic politics and contend, falsely, that former U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton even incited antigovernment protests in Moscow in December 2011. And they maintain that the United States is meddling in Syria to overthrow a legitimate government, in just the latest example of its unilateral attempts to topple regimes it doesn't like.

The gap between these two narratives is dangerous. Not only do heightened tensions raise the risk of a military accident or confrontation in Europe and beyond; they are also largely a reflection of deeply entrenched resentments within the Russian national security establishment that are likely to persist well

beyond the Putin era. The differences between the United States and Russia run deep, and they are not amenable to easy solutions.

The challenge facing the Trump administration is to skillfully manage, rather than permanently resolve, these tensions with Moscow. Trying to appease Putin, perhaps by making unilateral concessions, would only convince him that he is winning and encourage him to continue wrong-footing the United States and the West. But a more confrontational approach would risk generating a provocative and dangerous response from Russia. So Washington will need to chart a middle path. That means both seeking ways to cooperate with Moscow and pushing back against it without sleepwalking into a collision.

Of course, that advice presupposes a U.S. administration that views Russia the same way previous ones have: as a problematic yet important partner on discrete issues that also poses a significant national security threat. U.S. President Donald Trump, however, appears eager to jettison established bipartisan approaches to dealing with Moscow. As he wrote on Twitter in January, “Having a good relationship with Russia is a good thing, not a bad thing. Only ‘stupid’ people, or fools, would think that it is bad!” And for months, he mocked the U.S. intelligence community’s warnings about Russian cyberattacks aimed at interfering with the U.S. democratic process and repeatedly praised Putin’s leadership.

Such antics suggest that Trump may attempt an abrupt reconciliation with Russia that would dramatically reverse the policies of President Barack Obama. It is hard to overstate the lasting damage that such a move would do to the U.S. relationship with Europe, to the security of the continent, and to an already fraying international order.

Trying to appease Putin, perhaps by making unilateral concessions, would only convince him that he is winning.

PUTIN’S GAME

Any consideration of U.S. policy toward Russia must start with a recognition of that country’s manifold weaknesses. The Russian economy may not be “in tatters,” as Obama once remarked, but the boom that allowed Putin, during his

first two terms in office, to deliver steady increases in prosperity in exchange for political passivity is a distant memory. Absent major structural reforms, which Putin has refused to undertake for fear of losing control, the economy is doomed to “eternal stagnation,” as Ksenia Yudaeva, a senior Russian central bank official, put it last year.

Following Putin’s return to the presidency in 2012, the regime has retooled the sources of its legitimacy. It has fostered a fortress mentality, mobilizing the public to defend Russia against foreign adversaries and mounting an unrelenting search for Western-backed fifth columnists. The apparent spur-of-the-moment decision to annex Crimea transformed the Russian domestic political landscape overnight, propelling Putin to unprecedented levels of popularity. And in Syria, the Kremlin has capitalized on its intervention to highlight Russia’s return to global prominence.

Unfortunately, tighter economic constraints are not likely to dissuade Putin from engaging in future foreign policy adventures. The collapse of oil prices that began in 2014 hit the Russian economy hard, as did the sanctions the West applied in response to Russian aggression in Ukraine that same year. Yet Putin has shown little restraint in the international arena since. His defiant approach appears to have strong support from the Russian elite, which faithfully rallies to the cause of standing up to the United States and reasserting Russia’s great-power status.

Indeed, Russia has always been much more than a mere “regional power,” as Obama once dismissed it; the country figures prominently in important issues across the globe, from the Iran nuclear program to the security of the entire transatlantic community. That will not change. But even if one accepts that Russia is a declining power, history shows that such states can cause considerable damage on their way down. And if there is one thing that can be said for certain about Putin, it is that he is a skilled and opportunistic risk taker capable of forcing others to deal with him on his own terms.

The United States must also reckon with another fundamental characteristic of Russia’s foreign policy: its desire for de facto control over its neighbors’ security, economic, and political orientation. Both Democratic and Republican administrations have long considered this unacceptable. Yet it constitutes one of the Russian regime’s core requirements for security.

Russia has always been much more than a mere “regional power.”

Absent an abrupt change in these fundamental realities, it will be hard to significantly improve U.S. relations with Russia. The country’s intervention in Ukraine has demolished much of the post–Cold War security order and, along with it, any semblance of trust on either side. And it would be irresponsible for Washington to turn a blind eye to the Kremlin’s reliance on hacking, disinformation, and Cold War–style subversion in its efforts to undermine the United States’ international reputation and to meddle in democratic processes in Europe and beyond. The best course of action is for the United States to stand firm when its vital interests are threatened, to expose and counter Moscow’s penchant for irregular tactics, and to carefully manage the rivalry that lies at the heart of the bilateral relationship.

THE BIG PICTURE

In recent years, Russia and the West have been heading toward something that looks a lot like a second Cold War. This confrontation may lack the geo-political and ideological scope of the first, but it still carries a high risk of actual conflict. The close encounters that NATO aircraft and warships have had with Russian jets are no accident; they are part of a deliberate Kremlin strategy to intimidate Moscow’s adversaries.

For now, the Kremlin is likely to try to downplay sources of tension, setting the stage for friendly initial encounters with the new U.S. president and his team. Assuming Moscow follows that course, Washington will have to proceed with caution as Putin, the consummate deal-maker, seeks to shape the terms of a new relationship. In negotiating those terms, the Trump administration should adhere to five overarching principles.

First, it must make clear that the United States’ commitment to defend its NATO allies is absolute and unconditional. To do so, the United States should bolster deterrence through an ongoing series of defense improvements and increased military deployments on the alliance’s eastern flank. It should also ramp up the pressure on fellow NATO members to spend more on defense.

Second, the United States needs to steadfastly uphold the principles enshrined in the 1975 Helsinki Final Act and the 1990 Charter of Paris for a New Europe—both of which commit Moscow to recognize existing borders and the right of all countries to choose their own allies. It may be hard to imagine a feasible scenario for returning Crimea to Ukraine, but the annexation remains a flagrant violation of international law that no country should recognize or reward. That means keeping in place the U.S. and EU sanctions that ban transactions and economic cooperation with Russian-occupied Crimea.

Third, as Washington reengages with Moscow, it must not run roughshod over Russia's neighbors. Appeasing Russia on Ukraine or caving in to its demand for a sphere of influence in its neighborhood would set a terrible precedent and undermine U.S. standing in the world. The inherent fragility of Russia's neighbors will create many openings for future Russian meddling, so the United States and its allies will need to remain vigilant and become more deeply engaged in such a complex region.

Fourth, Washington and its partners in the EU should commit themselves to supporting Ukrainian political and economic reform through skillful diplomacy and a generous flow of resources. It will probably take a generation or longer to turn this pivotal country into a prosperous, European-style state, not least because of Russia's undisguised desire for Ukraine's reformist experiment to fail. If Ukraine receives steady Western support based on clear and achievable conditions, its success will have a lasting positive impact on Russia's trajectory by demonstrating a viable alternative to the Kremlin's top-down approach to governance.

Fifth, as the United States attempts to support democracy in Russia and other former Soviet states, it should make a sober-minded assessment of local demand for it and the best use of limited resources. Russia's democratic deficit will hinder better relations with the West for as long as it persists. The same problem will continue to complicate U.S. ties with many of Russia's neighbors. But too often, Washington has overestimated its ability to transform these societies into functioning democracies.

In applying these principles, the United States needs to remain mindful of the risks of overreaching. That will mean making sharp distinctions between what is essential, what is desirable, and what is realistic.

NEEDS AND WANTS

Improved communication belongs in the first category. In response to Russia's moves in Ukraine, the Obama administration suspended most routine channels of communication and cooperation with the Russian government and encouraged U.S. allies to follow suit. As the crisis has dragged on, it has become harder to address differences, avoid misunderstandings, and identify points of cooperation in the absence of regular interactions at various levels. The Trump administration should entertain the possibility of resuming a wide-ranging dialogue, even though the Russians may well prove as unwilling to engage in a serious give-and-take as they did during the George W. Bush and Obama administrations, or may choose to use the talks solely to score political points. But even if the Kremlin isn't ready to engage forthrightly, the Trump administration should put four essential priorities above all else in its early discussions with the Russian government.

First, the Trump administration should respond to Russian meddling in the U.S. presidential election in ways that get the Russians' attention. As a parting shot, Obama imposed sanctions on Russian entities involved in the hacking and ejected 35 Russian diplomats from the United States. Yet much more needs to be done. A carefully calibrated covert response in cyberspace would send the message that the United States is prepared to pay back the Kremlin and its proxies for their unacceptable actions. Trump should also work to protect the large swaths of government and private-sector networks and infrastructure in the United States that remain highly vulnerable to cyberattacks. The lack of a concerted response to Russia's meddling would send precisely the wrong signal, inviting further Kremlin exploits in France and Germany, which are holding their own elections this year. In the meantime, the U.S. government should explore whether it can work with major actors in the cyber-realm, such as China and Russia, to develop new rules of the road that might limit some of the most destabilizing kinds of offensive operations.

In recent years, Russia and the West have been heading toward something that looks a lot like a second Cold War.

Second, the Trump administration should ensure that military-to-military channels are open and productive. Russia's provocations carry the very real risk of a military confrontation arising from a miscalculation. Washington should prioritize getting Russia to respect previously agreed-on codes of conduct for peacetime military operations, however difficult that might be. The situation is especially dangerous in the skies over Syria, where Russian pilots frequently flout a set of procedures agreed to in 2015 to avoid in-air collisions with U.S. and other jets.

Third, in Ukraine, Trump should focus on using diplomatic tools to de-escalate the military side of the conflict and breathe new life into the Minsk accords, a loose framework of security and political steps that both sides have refused to fully embrace. The existing package of U.S. and EU sanctions represents an important source of leverage over Moscow, and so it should not be reversed or scaled back in the absence of a major change in Russian behavior in Ukraine. At the same time, the United States and its EU allies must work to keep Ukraine on a reformist path by imposing strict conditions on future aid disbursements to encourage its government to fight high-level corruption and respond to the needs of the Ukrainian people.

The fourth and final priority for the Trump administration is to remain realistic about the prospects of promoting transformational change in Russia. As the last 25 years have shown again and again, Russia resists outside efforts at modernization. In other words, the United States should not treat Russia as a project for political, social, or economic engineering.

Then there are goals that, although not essential, remain desirable. In this category should go issues on which Washington and Moscow have a good track record of cooperation thanks to overlapping, if not identical, interests. These include cooperation on preventing nuclear proliferation, reducing the threat of nuclear terrorism, and protecting the fragile environment in the Arctic. Because these issues are largely technical in nature, they do not require the time and attention of senior officials. A great deal of progress can be made at lower levels.

On more ambitious arms control efforts, however, progress will require high-level decisions that neither side is eager to make. Such is the case with resolving the impasse over the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty, which the United

States claims Russia has violated, and securing further reductions in the size of both countries' strategic and tactical nuclear arsenals.

Even so, the Trump administration should keep the door open to further progress on arms control. The U.S.-Russian arms control edifice is in danger of collapsing: the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty and the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe are no longer in force, the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty may soon fall apart, and the New START treaty is due to expire in 2021. Neither Russia nor the United States is ready for a new arms control agreement, primarily because of conflicting agendas. Moscow wants to constrain U.S. deployments of missile defense systems and high-tech conventional weapons, while Washington wants to further reduce the number of Russian strategic and tactical nuclear weapons. But neither would be served by abandoning arms control completely. At a minimum, both would benefit from more conversations about their force structures and nuclear doctrines, with an eye toward ensuring stability, especially in crises.

FACT AND FANTASY

Of course, Washington's ability to achieve what is essential and what is desirable will be limited by what is realistic. In a perfect world, Trump would focus on keeping relations from deteriorating further. Instead, he and his team appear to be fanning expectations of a big breakthrough and a grand bargain.

Indeed, much of what Trump says he believes about Russia appears unrealistic, to put it mildly. For starters, he has made the mystifying choice to ridicule the U.S. intelligence community's finding that it was Russia that was behind the hacking of e-mails from the Democratic National Committee and the Clinton campaign. If Trump's and his advisers' statements are to be believed, even a brazen attempt originating at the highest levels of the Russian government to undermine Americans' confidence in their country's democratic process is less important than the poor cyber-security practices of the Democratic National Committee and Clinton's inner circle.

Trump appears to hold an equally unrealistic view of the Ukrainian crisis, saying of Putin during the campaign, "He's not going to go into Ukraine, all right?"—even as thousands of Russian troops were already there. When asked by The New

York Times on the eve of the election about Putin's behavior in Ukraine and Syria and the ongoing crackdown against Putin's political opponents, Michael Flynn, Trump's pick for national security adviser, called these issues "besides the point." He added, "We can't do what we want to do unless we work with Russia, period."

But as Trump will likely discover, reality has a way of interfering with attempts to transform relations with Moscow. Every U.S. president from Bill Clinton on has entered office attempting to do precisely that, and each has seen his effort fail. Clinton's endeavor to ease tensions fell apart over NATO expansion, the Balkan wars, and Russian intervention in Chechnya; George W. Bush's collapsed after the 2008 Russian-Georgian war; and Obama's ran aground in Ukraine. Each administration encountered the same obstacles: Russia's transactional approach to foreign policy, its claim to a sphere of influence, its deep insecurities about a yawning power gap between it and the United States, and its opposition to what it saw as Western encroachment. Finding common ground on these issues will be difficult.

It appears that at the core of Trump's vision for improved relations is a coalition with Russia against the Islamic State—to, in his words, "knock the hell out of ISIS." Yet such cooperation is unlikely to materialize. The Russians have shown no interest in beating back ISIS in Syria, choosing instead to attack the main opposition forces arrayed against the Assad regime. Russia's and Iran's support for Assad may have fundamentally changed the course of the civil war in Syria, but their crude methods and disregard for civilian casualties have probably only emboldened the radical jihadists. Help from the Russian military would be a mixed blessing, at best, for the U.S.-led coalition against ISIS, given the pervasive lack of trust on both sides and the very real risk that sensitive intelligence and targeting information would find its way into the hands of Moscow's allies in Damascus and Tehran.

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Trump has also expressed interest in developing stronger economic ties with Russia as a foundation for improved diplomatic relations, at least according to the Kremlin's summary of Putin's congratulatory call to Trump after the election. Here, too, he is likely to be disappointed. Clinton, Bush, and Obama all placed

high hopes on trade as an engine of better relations with Russia. All were frustrated by the fact that the two countries are, for the most part, not natural trading partners, to say nothing of the effects of Russia's crony capitalism, weak rule of law, and predatory investment climate.

PROCEED WITH CAUTION

Trump inherited a ruptured U.S.-Russian relationship, the culmination of more than 25 years of alternating hopes and disappointments. As both a candidate and president-elect, he repeatedly called for a new approach. "Why not get along with Russia?" he has asked. The answer is that at the heart of the breakdown lie disagreements over issues that each country views as fundamental to its interests. They cannot be easily overcome with the passage of time or a summit meeting or two. Thus, the challenge for the new administration is to manage this relationship skillfully and to keep it from getting worse.

Should Trump instead attempt to cozy up to Moscow, the most likely outcome would be that Putin would pocket Washington's unilateral concessions and pursue new adventures or make demands in other areas. The resulting damage to U.S. influence and credibility in Europe and beyond would prove considerable. Already, the rules-based international order that the United States has upheld since the end of World War II is in danger of unraveling, and there is mounting concern throughout Europe, Asia, and beyond that Trump does not consider it worth preserving. What's more, there's no telling how Trump will respond if and when he has his first showdown with Putin, although his behavior toward those who cross him suggests that things would not end well.

Reduced tensions with Russia would no doubt help further many of the United States' political and security priorities. But policymakers must keep in mind that the abiding goal should be to advance U.S. interests, support U.S. allies across the world, and uphold U.S. principles—not to improve relations with Russia for their own sake. Indeed, it's possible to stand up for American interests and principles while pursuing a less volatile relationship with Russia. The Nixon administration sowed mines in a harbor in North Vietnam, a Soviet ally, while seeking détente with Moscow. The Reagan administration aggressively challenged Soviet-backed regimes and groups in Eastern Europe, Asia, Africa,

and Latin America at the same time as it signed arms control agreements with Moscow.

Likewise, the Trump administration can, for example, counter Russian aggression in Ukraine while looking for ways to cooperate on efforts to keep weapons of mass destruction out of the wrong hands. Such an approach has a far greater chance of success than pure confrontation or pure concession. Russian leaders have long expressed their preference for realpolitik; they will respect a country that stays true to its principles, knows its interests, and understands power.

Source: <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/russian-federation/2017-02-13/trump-and-russia>

China, The New Global Leader? By Dr Kamal Monnoo

The roles have reversed: The United States (US) and the West from being champions of openness, *lasses faire*, free trade and responsible economic behaviour are suddenly looking inwards cum turning protectionist, and China – once regarded to be a closed kingdom – takes over as the new global economic leader by choosing to look outwards.

Today, it promotes increased global trade, cross-invests its surplus in poor and developing economies, bids to connect the world through its one belt-one road vision, and from being a violator of green houses gases it, more than any other industrial nation of the world, champions the cause of environmental protection. Anyone accusing Chinese motives to be driven by greed will have a hard time explaining its rationale, as Chinese investment goes to regions that are high risk, poor or developing and may not necessarily yield high returns; at least in the short-term.

Recipients include: Pakistan \$50 billion, Indonesia \$40 billion; Sri Lanka \$20 billion, Myanmar: \$10 billion, Liberia \$6 billion, Kenya \$15 billion, Iran \$20 billion, the list goes on as the total outlay under the one belt-one road connectivity vision is set to surpass \$1 trillion.

While some may argue that Chinese ultimate plan or goal is to establish its hegemony, but the reality is that its engagement is such that most recipient countries are confident that they will be able to safeguard their national interests when settling for inflows from Chinese investments and loans.

They believe that they can not only harness a great opportunity to develop, but also gain access to new markets, which otherwise would have been impossible to reach.

Also, by connecting so closely to China they feel that they will progress by simply piggybacking the most vibrant economy of the world.

Obviously the US and the West would like to think otherwise, but the pendulum has perhaps already shifted and despite concerns being raised by them on China's real economic health, the latest figures reveal otherwise.

China's economy grew by a healthy 6.

9 percent year on year in the first half of this year (data from the National Bureau of Statistics released in July, 2017), and this has attracted considerable international attention.

Also, the latest reports from the World Bank and the IMF tend to be generally optimistic about China's growth, believing that China's strong growth showing in infrastructure-investment and domestic consumption well support its goal of achieving an economic structure that sustains itself on in-house dynamics rather than having an over-dependence on international markets.

Meanwhile, China's economic management philosophy in recent years has transitioned significantly.

It is revisiting its toxic assets' accumulation by ringing reforms in its national debt management practices; reducing overall financial risk by introducing responsible lending in its banking sector; and endeavouring to reduce excess manufacturing capacity by instead focusing on productivity.

And the results on these steps are also already reflecting in recent figures: Value addition in high-tech industry showed an increase of 13.

1 percent year-on-year.

Online domestic consumption increased 33.

4 percent year-on-year.

The number of daily average new registered enterprises has moved up to 15,600.

All this eye-catching data in China's interim report bears testimony to the fact that its economy is finally seeing new drivers of growth.

However, the question then arises that if China is in essence vying to generate home grown growth then why is it investing so heavily abroad? Since the financial logic behind China's spree of overseas mergers and acquisitions (M&A) is often hard to define, the answer to this question may also not be very cut and dry in financial terms and have more to do with attaining glory that takes China back to the economic leadership days of the Ming Dynasty.

In the last 6 months alone, Chinese companies have announced cross-border deals worth \$107 billion.

Few bring any of the financial benefits typical of conventional M&A.

So-called synergies are usually absent, and the buyers generally tend to leave the incumbent management in place.

Analyze this more deeply and three factors seem to be at play: The first and probably the most likely driver is the desire to acquire foreign technology and management expertise.

For example, the \$43 billion offer by the China National Chemical Corporation, known as ChemChina, for Syngenta, the Swiss pesticide and seed giant, fits into this category.

So does the \$5 billion bid by Midea, the Chinese appliance maker, for Kuka, the German robotics company.

Such deals/offers appear to be motivated by the fact that even a minority stake may bring seats on the board of a target company and afford access to information otherwise behind closed doors.

Such deals that are perceived to be in the national interest also benefit from cheap finance: China's state owned banks lend at interest rate of 2% to finance acquisitions involving new technology or expertise.

Second, some of these Chinese acquisitions represent a search for value, compared with inflated asset prices at home.

Chinese equities still look expensive: Shares on mainland exchanges trade at an average premium of 36 percent to shares in the same companies listed in Hong Kong.

Overseas purchases also provide a hedge against currency devaluation, as well as diversification.

For example, given the cheap financing available to most M&A, this notion perfectly fits the bill for China's Anbang Insurance Group's offer of \$14 billion to Starwood hotels – the bid though was not accepted! Lastly, the third factor: These can be termed as 'trophy' purchases for China.

They may lack financial logic but are a part of a broader political calculus. President Xi Jinping's love of football helps explain the recent rush by Chinese buyers to purchase European football clubs.

And when Mr. Xi recently visited New York, he stayed at the Anbang-owned Waldorf Astoria hotel – a privilege he must have felt to be beyond price!

The writer is an entrepreneur and economic analyst.

kamal.
monnoo@gmail.
com

Source: <http://nation.com.pk/columns/02-Aug-2017/china-the-new-global-leader>

Nuclear Deterrence in South Asia By Maimuna Ashraf

DURING the past decade, India has been pursuing a long-term programme for conventional and strategic force modernization. This is manifested through the introduction of advanced, high technology and force multiplier conventional weapon systems and improvements in payloads, ranges, reliability and accuracy of its delivery systems in the form of a nuclear triad. These programs continue to impact nuclear geometry of South Asia as the imbalance with Pakistan in conventional and strategic forces is consistently growing in India's favour. This asymmetry and India's self-image as a regional and global power is increasingly becoming prominent through its accession to the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR) and the possibility to join other export control cartels.

Trends in India's recent testing and technology acquisition show that the country is largely being facilitated in its pursuit of sophisticated technology by a diverse group of supplier states including Russia, United States, France and other European countries. India was also ranked as the world's biggest importer of conventional arms and its foreign acquisitions and technology transfers are going in parallel with its ambitious expansion of long-range missiles, MIRVs, ICBMs and SLBMs, surveillance-armed drones and development of its increasingly sophisticated space program. These observations are reflected through a number of international reports surfaced lately about India's modernization of nuclear weapons. The latest document "Indian Nuclear Forces 2017" by Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists says that India continues to modernize its nuclear arsenal development of several new nuclear weapon systems and it currently "operates seven nuclear capable systems; two aircraft, four land-based ballistic missiles and one sea-based ballistic missile."

Pragmatically, the induction and integration of such technologies also reflect India's aspirations, future strategies and policies in pursuit of regional hegemony and global power projection. Previously, the retaliatory policy or No-First Use gave India a rationale to develop new capabilities in order to build defences against adversaries such as Pakistan and China, i.e. introduction of Ballistic Missile Defence (BMD). However the latest developments indicate an inclination

of a shift to offensive capabilities. Arguably, India's current focus on extending the range of its conventional precision-strike systems, tri-service (land, air, sea) operation of the nuclear-tipped missiles and deviation from liquid to solid fuelled missile systems for high level of readiness is consistent with pre-emptive tendencies but paradoxical to its stated credible minimum deterrence posture. Whereas, the production of shorter range missiles defy the massive retaliation policy and point towards developing war-fighting capabilities. This ambiguous mixture of offensive and defensive capabilities erodes the concept of deterrence stability in the region as they generate strategic ambiguities has rekindled by a debate on India's flexibility of first use in no-first use policy- among deterrence theorists, strategists-scholars and policy makers.

About the increasing stockpiles of India, another document "Trends in World Nuclear Forces 2017" by SIPRI says "India is gradually expanding the size of its nuclear weapon stockpile as well as its infrastructure for producing nuclear warheads. It plans to build six fast breeder reactors, which will significantly increase its capacity to produce plutonium for weapons. India is also currently expanding its uranium enrichment capabilities with the construction of a new unsafeguarded gas centrifuge facility. India's expanded centrifuge enrichment capacity has been motivated by plans to build new naval propulsion reactors, but the potential excess capacity could also signify its intent to move towards thermonuclear weapons by blending the current plutonium arsenal with uranium secondaries." These aforesaid developments will impact the strategic stability in South Asian that revolves around the credibility of nuclear deterrence and the stable or unstable deterrence influences the security architecture and nuclear employment doctrines.

Other than missile proliferation and access to satellite-launch and anti-satellite capabilities, the increased striking capability led by armed drones to target militants across the border will speed up the arms race and heighten the risk of conflagration as these can be used against Pakistan's short-range strategic forces and other conventional targets during a crisis. The likely competition of matching capabilities in response to amplified threats and interplay of missiles, satellites and drones will complicate the threat-perception calculus of the South Asian region. The possibilities and options offered by a variety of such potent capabilities can allow India to adopt an aggressive strategy towards Pakistan, which may cause Pakistan to increase the alertness level in already murky South

Asia. The technological shifts imply that India is reassessing its strategy which will adversely impact the Pakistan-China-India triangular nuclear dynamics generally and South Asian strategic stability particularly.

— The writer is member Strategic Vision Institute, a think-tank based in Islamabad.

Email:maimuna.svi@gmail.com

Source: <http://pakobserver.net/nuclear-deterrence-south-asia/>

Sino-Indian rifts on Doklam By Reema Shaukat

BORDER issues have always remained a matter of rift between countries particularly in South Asian region. India with its particular hegemonic mindset has developed apertures in its relations with China too. In a past one and half month, China and India have developed tensions on Doklam area. Doklam is a narrow plateau lying in the tri-junction region China, India and Bhutan. It is considered as a disputed territory between China and Bhutan. Doklam is situated roughly 15 kilometres southeast of the Nathu La pass that connects India and Tibet and about 30 kilometres southwest of the Dramana Chhu (river) area as disputed between Bhutan and China.

In June 2017, Doka La became the site of a stand-off between the armed forces of India and China following an attempt by China to extend a road from Yadong further southward on the Doklam plateau. Unlike China and Bhutan, India does not have a claim on Doklam; however, India supports Bhutan's claim on the territory. Recently, Indian troops crossed into the territory in dispute between China and Bhutan in an attempt to prevent the road construction. Because of Indian troops placement there was a standoff between the Indian and Chinese troops, with both of them sending reinforcements at the border area.

Indian Army Chief Bipin Rawat on the deployment of army troops stated that India is ready for "two and a half war front". In response to Indian Army Chief statement, the People's Liberation Army spokesperson Col Wu Qian warned to "stop clamouring for war" and termed India as "extremely irresponsible". In response to this, Indian Defence Minister Arun Jaitley hit back at Beijing and asserted that "the India of 2017 is different from what it used to be 55 years ago. If they are trying to remind us, the situation in 1962 was different and India of 2017 is different". Asking India to withdraw, China said the trespassing of Indian troops in Doklam was a betrayal of a treaty signed in 1890, and India had used Bhutan as an excuse to violate the international border between the two countries.

A day before the G20 summit was supposed to begin in Hamburg, Germany, China dismissed the prospect of a meeting between Chinese president Xi Jinping

and PM Narendra Modi saying the atmosphere is not right for a bilateral meeting. China once again demanded the withdrawal of Indian troops, citing it as a precondition for any talks to take place between the two countries. At an event marking the 90th anniversary of People's Liberation Army, Chinese President Xi Jinping said China has the confidence to defeat all invasions. No one should expect us to swallow the bitter fruit that is harmful to our sovereignty, security or development interests.

In a fresh warning to India, Chinese state media People's Daily has said that India should not underestimate China's resolve to defend its territorial sovereignty. According to media reports, Indian border troops had crossed the China-India boundary in the Sikkim sector into Chinese territory and that it was totally illegal. It said China will take all necessary measures to safeguard its legitimate and lawful rights and interests. Media reports highlight that what India did can be defined as illegal and it is nothing but an Indian sense of creating trouble everywhere. The convention signed between Britain and China relating to Sikkim and Tibet states that Doklam was indisputably Chinese territory.

Having border stand off and eye ball to eye ball situation India's military build-up near Chinese border shows that the situation has become a flashpoint. It has been revealed that the Indian Army has moved over 100 Russian tanks T-72 to Ladakh, a disputed border between Indian state of Kashmir and Tibet under Chinese rule. In addition, Indian Navy has sent three warships to the disputed South China Sea to plan training with Malaysian Navy, showing that there's nothing strange with seeing any military conflicts between the two countries. The reason behind such confrontation between the two countries is not complicated. First, their disputed borders are the major cause of tensions between them. They even had a war against each other 50 years ago, but failed to make any progress on the border dispute. Besides, the gap between the positions of China and India over Tibet is wide. While China sees Tibet as one of its local governments, India sees it as a government in exile.

There are certain developments according to sources which say that Indian troops have started moving away from border and only few are left and Bhutan has admitted rights of China on Doklam. Now if this progress on border situation is true then it depicts false claims of Indian hegemony and intruding nature in matters of others countries. India very well knows the condition of its army and

fighting capabilities and just those false assertions were to show off and vaunt. Particularly while seeing China's progress with other South Asian countries it tried to maintain its supremacy with its dominating attitude but fore sighting the war with China and knowing its forces strength it silently has started to withdraw troops. India surely is not capable of long military stand-off and that's why while picking fight with China it concluded results timely and decided not to buckle up with China.

— The writer works for Pakistan Institute for Conflict and Security Studies, a think-tank based in Islamabad.

Email:reema.asim81@gmail.com

Source: <http://pakobserver.net/sino-indian-rifts-doklam/>

Russia and China's Enduring Alliance By Jacob Stokes

Several commentators, among them Doug Bandow of the Cato Institute and Edward Luttwak of the Center for Strategic and International Studies, have suggested that U.S. President Donald Trump should take any efforts to warm relations with Russia one step further and try to enlist Moscow's help in balancing a rising China. Trump views China and Islamist extremism as the two principal challenges to U.S. security, and he sees Russia as a potential partner in combating both. The thinking goes, then, that Trump should run a version of the diplomatic play that former U.S. President Richard Nixon and National Security Adviser Henry Kissinger followed in the early 1970s when they thawed relations with Beijing to counter the Soviet Union. This time, however, Trump would partner with Russia to balance China.

The proposal entices with visions of ambitious strategic gambits across Eurasia, in Trumpian vernacular the "big league" of geopolitics. Nixon going to China was one of the most consequential diplomatic deals in U.S. history. What better way for the dealmaker in chief—especially one who regularly consults with Kissinger—to burnish his credentials than carrying out a version of it for himself? In theory, the move would adhere to traditional maxims of geopolitics: namely, the imperative to maintain the balance of power on the Eurasian continent. U.S. strategists have relied on this principle to varying degrees since at least World War II. Further, a strategy that engages with Russia to counter China might lend a degree of coherence to the Trump administration's otherwise disjointed foreign policy.

ALLIED ENOUGH

The problem for Trump is that Sino-Russian ties have been improving more or less steadily since the waning years of the Cold War. The thaw between the two communist powers began in the early 1980s and was followed by normalized relations in May 1989. Beijing and Moscow established a "strategic partnership" in 1996 and signed a Treaty of Good-Neighborliness and Friendly Cooperation in 2001. Chinese and Russian leaders now refer to the relationship as a "comprehensive strategic partnership of coordination," a convoluted term for a

not-quite alliance. Last September, Chinese State Councilor Yang Jiechi proclaimed that “the depth and scope of coordination between both countries are unprecedented.” Robust cooperation has accelerated since Xi Jinping became China’s top leader in 2012; he reportedly has a warm personal relationship with Russian President Vladimir Putin.

The two countries cooperate closely across a number of fields. On energy, Russia became the top oil supplier to China in 2016. Crucially for China, it transports supplies overland rather than through contested sea lanes. The nations have partnered on military exercises, including in the Mediterranean and South China Sea, as well as on some joint technology development projects. They have revived their languishing arms trade relationship. In 2015, Beijing agreed to purchase both Su-35 fighter jets and the S-400 Triumf surface-to-air missile system from Moscow. The two countries have also embarked on a number of symbolic people-to-people projects, such as beginning the long-delayed construction of a bridge across the Amur River. And in June 2016, Presidents Xi and Putin agreed to work jointly to increase their control over cyberspace and communications technologies.

A shared political vision for world order provides the foundation for Chinese-Russian cooperation. It is defined primarily by the desire to see an end to U.S. primacy, to be replaced by multipolarity. Once this vision is realized, each nation would command an effective sphere of influence in Asia and eastern Europe, respectively. For now, though, China and Russia have tenuous relations with the United States than at any point since the end of the Cold War. This is primarily because of maritime territorial disputes in the East and South China Seas—including over the Diaoyu/Senkaku, the Paracel, and the Spratly island chains—and the war in Ukraine, making the Sino-Russian partnership more important than ever. A recent op-ed in the Chinese Communist Party mouthpiece People’s Daily called that relationship “the ballast stone in maintaining world peace and stability.”

A shared political vision for world order provides the foundation for Chinese-Russian cooperation.

In the 1970s, it was deep discord in the Sino-Soviet relationship that helped convince China to align with the United States. This discord culminated in border

clashes in 1969. By 1972, relations between the two communist powers had deteriorated from frosty to outright frozen. When Kissinger came calling, Beijing already saw Moscow as a bigger threat than Washington. For Russia today, the opposite is true. Moscow sees Washington as the primary adversary despite hopes that Trump will repair the relationship.

Moscow sees Washington as the primary adversary despite hopes that Trump will repair the relationship.

To be sure, there is some potential for a rupture between China and Russia. Moscow worries about a lopsided economic relationship based on trading Russian resources for Chinese finished goods. China's growing influence in Central Asia and the sparsely populated areas of eastern Russia, Moscow's arms sales to India and Vietnam, and China's theft of Russian weapons designs all threaten to derail the partnership. But the United States' ability to fuel those disputes in order to foster divisions remains limited at best. Moreover, Xi and Putin have found a modus vivendi that downplays and contains those frictions while focusing on the cooperative aspects of their relationship. When Chinese leaders talk about a "new type of great power relations" with the United States, they envision something much like the Sino-Russian relationship as a model.

WEAK RETURNS

In exchange for turning against China, Moscow might seek the lifting of sanctions imposed following the annexation of Crimea, an end to U.S. support for a free and independent Ukraine, and acquiescence to the regime of Syrian President Bashar al-Assad. It may also demand a removal of missile defenses from Europe, the cessation of NATO expansion, or, even better from a Russian perspective, the abolition of NATO altogether. Granting Putin's wishes on these issues would undermine the seven-decade U.S. investment in a Europe whole, free, and at peace—an investment that propelled the United States' ascension to postwar primacy in the first place. What is more, accepting Russia's acquisition of territory by force would undermine U.S. arguments about the prohibition of such actions under international law when Beijing asserts its expansive claims in the East and South China Seas using force.

Even if Trump convinced Putin to end Moscow's partnership with Beijing, Russia would still have little capability to thwart China's bad behavior in places that matter. Russia's Pacific Fleet, although relatively sizable in number, suffers from severe shortfalls in maintenance, and many of its assets are aging. Planned additions to the fleet—including extra missile defense systems and submarines—will bolster deterrence capabilities but have limited applicability to the types of sea patrol tasks necessary to counter China's maritime assertiveness. In theory, Moscow could help arm Asian nations to contribute to the balancing effort, but direct U.S. and other allied assistance could easily substitute for that, building relationships more advantageous to U.S. interests in the process.

Putin would also need to patch up diplomatic relations in Asia if he planned to balance against Beijing. Doing so would require a substantial diplomatic investment and, likely, Russian concessions. Putin's ballyhooed rapprochement with Tokyo seems to have run aground despite clear eagerness on the part of Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe for a deal to address the dispute over the Northern Territories islands, which Russia calls the Southern Kurils, as well as a peace treaty officially concluding World War II. And Russia's continued support of North Korea and staunch opposition to the Terminal High Altitude Area Defense missile defense system has made for rocky relations with Seoul. The Russian position on the South China Sea—studied aloofness while agreeing to joint naval exercises with China—means that strategic relations in Southeast Asia would also require substantial diplomatic spadework (Putin's warm relations with President Rodrigo Duterte in the Philippines notwithstanding).

FINDING LEVERAGE

A better U.S. strategy for competing effectively in the no-holds-barred contest of great power politics—including in “triangular diplomacy” with Moscow and Beijing—would focus on two lines of effort. First, the Trump administration should work with both Russia and China where possible. Those efforts should seek to forge a trilateral understanding on contentious issues affecting strategic stability, such as nuclear and missile defense issues, twenty-first-century definitions of sovereignty, and rules for armed intervention. Trilateral discussions should also build practical cooperation on areas of mutual interest, such as climate and energy, counterterrorism, and nonproliferation. Addressing frictions head-on and building habits of cooperation could mitigate strategic distrust among the three

great powers by lessening the worry that two will cut deals at the expense of the other.

Second, Washington must continue to do the hard work of maintaining and building support among current U.S. allies and partners in both Europe and Asia, along with other increasingly powerful middle-tier states such as Brazil, India, and Vietnam. Such ties give the United States leverage over China and Russia, neither of which has similar worldwide networks of friendly states. The United States must assess the costs and benefits of finding and keeping friends overseas in a manner that looks beyond the narrow transactionalism Trump espoused on the campaign trail. Put simply, when considered in the context of a global competition for power and influence, a vast network of allies and partners starts to look more like an asset than a liability.

Trump seeks “good deals” with Russia. Cozying up to Putin in hopes of receiving Moscow’s help in balancing Beijing would not be one.

Source: <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/china/2017-02-22/russia-and-china-s-enduring-alliance>

US-North Korea Reckless Rhetoric By Asif Haroon Raja

THE US-North Korea antagonism has its roots in the 1952-3 Korean War which had divided the country. While North Korea is backed by Russia and China, South Korea is protected by the US and it has a large military presence in the country. In order to ward off impending danger posed by USA and its allies, North Korea despite being an impoverished country, developed nuclear bombs and missiles, causing deep anxieties to USA and its allies South Korea and Japan. The US imposed sanctions in response to Pyongyang's defiance of previous UN resolutions banning the testing of ballistic missiles and nuclear warheads.

When North Korea launched two intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs) in July 2017, which many analysts believe are capable of hitting the US mainland, the US piled on more sanctions in August 2017, which further inflamed tensions. Russia and China bear a measure of responsibility for the latest outburst. The two strategic partners voted unanimously at the Security Council to support US calls to further load North Korea with economic sanctions. They made a big mistake since the move has only spiraled strains and has encouraged the Americans in their incorrigibly aggressive temperament. Moscow and Beijing, more than anyone else, should know that sanctions more often prove counterproductive. They are a weapon of war-making and a sinister ancillary for diplomacy.

Pyongyang condemned the latest round of sanctions as a despicable violation of its sovereignty. It argued that the US has thousands of nuclear weapons capable of hitting North Korea and has also installed this year a new missile system, the THAAD, in South Korea, which gives it a first strike advantage. Given the array of American offensive military forces, the repeated verbal threats of "all options on the table", the nuclear-capable B-1 bombers flying from Guam over the Korean Peninsula, and now the latest enflaming up of sanctions, North Korea perceives it an existential danger and says that it has the right to protect its integrity and sovereignty by developing military self-defence.

The latest sanctions are extremely harsh and punishing when seen in context with poor economy of North Korea and plight of its populace. The nation's top

exports of coal, minerals and seafood are to be banned, which would dry up its already insignificant export revenue by one-third, going from \$3 billion to \$2 billion a year. Miffed by Pyongyang's recent ICBM tests, the US President Trump, a product of gung-ho political culture of the United States, in his bid to add more teeth to sanctions warned North Korea that the country would "face fire and fury, the like of which the world has never seen before". Trump's threat came on the heels of a report by the Washington Post indicating that Pyongyang had "successfully produced a miniaturized nuclear warhead that can fit inside its missiles."

His outrageously incongruous remarks and threat of annihilation shocked the Americans. It drew adverse comments from some politicians and media in USA. Many opined his choice of words were grotesque. Hawkish John McCain said it were not helpful in the current spiral of tensions. Other members of the US Congress also deplored Trump's rash rhetoric. He was compared with North Korean leader Kim Jung-un, commonly portrayed by American politicians and media as "a nut-job". One lawmaker, New York Representative Eliot Engel, called Trump's rhetoric "unhinged". It intensified the upsurge of calls to strip Trump of his nuclear-strike authority. Activists and lawmakers urged Congress to revive legislation that would strip the executive branch of the power to launch a pre-emptive nuclear strike. "Sen. Ed Markey (D-Mass.) wrote. "No U.S. President, certainly not Trump, should have sole authority to initiate an unprovoked nuclear war,"

Given numerous threats already from the US that it is prepared to use pre-emptive military force against North Korea, the words from Trump implying a catastrophic attack worse than the horror of Hiroshima and Nagasaki are indeed feloniously reckless. Such words coming on the 72nd anniversary of the US dropping two atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki — killing over 200,000 people — are grotesque. The situation became more alarming when the US military commander pugnaciously hurled a war threat. The Kim Jong-un regime responded just hours after Trump's remarks, promising to hasten "the tragic end of the American empire" and announcing it would review plans to "strike areas around the U.S. airbase on the Pacific island of Guam," where the U.S. maintains large military bases, "with medium-to-long-range strategic ballistic missiles and envelope it in fire". Pyongyang uses this kind of emotional rhetoric frequently,

threatening to turn the US and its allies in South Korea and Japan into “a sea of fire”.

Seeing that sabre rattling was spiraling out of control, Russia and China have called for composure and for dialogue to resolve the long-running conflict on the Korean Peninsula, which has seen recurring tensions ever since the end of the Korean War in 1953. It cannot be denied that America is part of the problem. Ever since the end of the Korean War, the persistent presence of American military forces on the Korean Peninsula is a never-ending source of conflict. Russia and China are correctly advocating instantaneous all-party talks for the region, involving the two Koreas. But slapping sanctions on one side is wrong, especially given the ongoing war threats issued by the US. Russia and China have a central role to play in order to make the US come to its senses and step back from a disastrous war. But given the American hubris and sanctimoniousness to wage criminal wars, and given the hawkish state of mind of its Commander-in-Chief, possibility of making the US behave like a normal law-abiding and peace-loving nation is slim.

While North Korea is rightly worried about its survival, and is justified in taking measures to protect itself, the US with a track record of destroying nations, capturing sovereign countries, affecting regime changes and stoking proxy wars, is the world’s biggest rogue state. Its USA and not North Korea which needs to be sanctioned and prosecuted. As long as it reserves the right to unilaterally threaten and attack any nation, and even drop atomic bombs on civilian centers, the world will always be in severe danger. It was wrong on part of Russia and China to impose sanctions on North Korea at the call of USA. It’s just like feeding a monster which destroyed Japan, Vietnam, Cambodia, Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya, Yemen, Somalia, Syria, bisected Sudan and bloodied Pakistan. USA has made the world unsafe. The two countries stand at the cusp of nuclear war. One slipup, one miscalculation, could launch a nuclear war in the region. There is growing fear that the U.S. under crazy Trump is inching closer to nuclear war. CIA Director Mike Pompeo suspects that Pyongyang may undertake another missile test and may strike the US mainland. There are wide calls in USA to de-escalate tensions so that diplomacy could work. A petition with over 57,000 signatures, reads: “Stop the insanity. Don’t provoke a war with North Korea.”

Email: asifharoonraja@gmail.com

Source: <http://pakobserver.net/us-north-korea-reckless-rhetoric/>

Donald Trump Has no Grasp of What it Means to be President

DEFENDERS of President Donald Trump offer two arguments in his favour—that he is a businessman who will curb the excesses of the state; and that he will help America stand tall again by demolishing the politically correct taboos of left-leaning, establishment elites. From the start, these arguments looked like wishful thinking. After Mr Trump’s press conference in New York on August 15th they lie in ruins.

The unscripted remarks were his third attempt to deal with violent clashes in Charlottesville, Virginia, over the weekend (see article). In them the president stepped back from Monday’s—scripted—condemnation of the white supremacists who had marched to protest against the removal of a statue of Robert E. Lee, a Confederate general, and fought with counter-demonstrators, including some from the left. In New York, as his new chief of staff looked on dejected, Mr Trump let rip, stressing once again that there was blame “on both sides”. He left no doubt which of those sides lies closer to his heart.

Mr Trump is not a white supremacist. He repeated his criticism of neo-Nazis and spoke out against the murder of Heather Heyer (see our Obituary). Even so, his unsteady response contains a terrible message for Americans. Far from being the saviour of the Republic, their president is politically inept, morally barren and temperamentally unfit for office.

Self-harm

Start with the ineptness. In last year’s presidential election Mr Trump campaigned against the political class to devastating effect. Yet this week he has bungled the simplest of political tests: finding a way to condemn Nazis. Having equivocated at his first press conference on Saturday, Mr Trump said what was needed on Monday and then undid all his good work on Tuesday—briefly uniting Fox News and Mother Jones in their criticism, surely a first. As business leaders started to resign en masse from his advisory panels (see article), the White House disbanded them. Mr Trump did, however, earn the endorsement of David Duke, a former Imperial Wizard of the Ku Klux Klan.

The extreme right will stage more protests across America. Mr Trump has complicated the task of containing their marches and keeping the peace. The harm will spill over into the rest of his agenda, too. His latest press conference was supposed to be about his plans to improve America's infrastructure, which will require the support of Democrats. He needlessly set back those efforts, as he has so often in the past. "Infrastructure week" in June was drowned out by an investigation into Russian meddling in the election—an investigation Mr Trump helped bring about by firing the director of the FBI in a fit of pique. Likewise, repealing Obamacare collapsed partly because he lacked the knowledge and charisma to win over rebel Republicans. He reacted to that setback by belittling the leader of the Senate Republicans, whose help he needs to pass legislation. So much for getting things done.

Mr Trump's inept politics stem from a moral failure. Some counter-demonstrators were indeed violent, and Mr Trump could have included harsh words against them somewhere in his remarks. But to equate the protest and the counter-protest reveals his shallowness. Video footage shows marchers carrying fascist banners, waving torches, brandishing sticks and shields, chanting "Jews will not replace us". Footage of the counter-demonstration mostly shows average citizens shouting down their opponents. And they were right to do so: white supremacists and neo-Nazis yearn for a society based on race, which America fought a world war to prevent. Mr Trump's seemingly heartfelt defence of those marching to defend Confederate statues spoke to the degree to which white grievance and angry, sour nostalgia is part of his world view.

At the root of it all is Mr Trump's temperament. In difficult times a president has a duty to unite the nation. Mr Trump tried in Monday's press conference, but could not sustain the effort for even 24 hours because he cannot get beyond himself. A president needs to rise above the point-scoring and to act in the national interest. Mr Trump cannot see beyond the latest slight. Instead of grasping that his job is to honour the office he inherited, Mr Trump is bothered only about honouring himself and taking credit for his supposed achievements.

Presidents have come in many forms and still commanded the office. Ronald Reagan had a moral compass and the self-knowledge to delegate political tactics. LBJ was a difficult man but had the skill to accomplish much that was

good. Mr Trump has neither skill nor self-knowledge, and this week showed that he does not have the character to change.

This is a dangerous moment. America is cleft in two. After threatening nuclear war with North Korea, musing about invading Venezuela and equivocating over Charlottesville, Mr Trump still has the support of four-fifths of Republican voters. Such popularity makes it all the harder for the country to unite.

This leads to the question of how Republicans in public life should treat Mr Trump. Those in the administration face a hard choice. Some will feel tempted to resign. But his advisers, particularly the three generals sitting at the top of the Pentagon, the National Security Council and as Mr Trump's chief of staff, are better placed than anyone to curb the worst instincts of their commander-in-chief.

An Oval Office-shaped hole

For Republicans in Congress the choice should be clearer. Many held their noses and backed Mr Trump because they thought he would advance their agenda. That deal has not paid off. Mr Trump is not a Republican, but the solo star of his own drama. By tying their fate to his, they are harming their country and their party. His boorish attempts at plain speaking serve only to poison national life. Any gains from economic reform—and the booming stockmarket and low unemployment owe more to the global economy, tech firms and dollar weakness than to him—will come at an unacceptable price.

Republicans can curb Mr Trump if they choose to. Rather than indulging his outrages in the hope that something good will come of it, they must condemn them. The best of them did so this week. Others should follow.

Source: <https://www.economist.com/news/leaders/21726696-u-turns-self-regard-and-equivocation-are-not-what-it-takes-donald-trump-has-no-grasp-what-it>

The Return of Racism? By Fredrick C. Harris and Robert C. Lieberman

It was always a myth that Barack Obama's 2008 election ushered in a post-racial era in which one's skin color no longer correlated with one's prospects for success. Racist beliefs and overt discrimination might have declined among white Americans, we argued in *Foreign Affairs* in 2015, but racial inequality was

still perpetuated by a host of hidden mechanisms that infected apparently race-neutral institutions. Last week's spectacle of racist violence in Charlottesville and President Donald Trump's jaw-dropping embrace of white supremacy in his subsequent remarks made us wonder whether even that assessment was too optimistic. Had the brutish racism of an earlier era merely gone underground only to resurface now in the guise of tiki torch-bearing neo-Nazis and the American president?

Trump himself has done a lot to foster this impression. His real estate and casino businesses have a long and sordid history of racial discrimination. It was Trump's embrace of the "birther" mythology that fueled his political rise. He launched his 2016 campaign with a racist broadside against Mexican immigrants, and he went on to attack the loyalty of a Mexican-American federal judge and the Pakistani-American family of a soldier killed in the Iraq War. His campaign was built on nativist and xenophobic appeals on issues such as immigration and trade, and in his frequent invocation of the slogan "America first," he echoed the xenophobic rhetoric of opponents of American entry into World War II. One of his first acts as president was to issue a ban on immigration from seven predominantly Muslim countries that was widely understood, including by federal courts, to be improperly discriminatory toward Muslims. Trump's political ascendancy has also coincided with a rise in overt racial antagonism and conflict, and he has clearly emboldened white supremacist hate groups, as the events in Charlottesville and elsewhere attest. But while overt racism has resurfaced in ugly ways, other structural factors are also at play.

There is more to this episode than the straightforward resurgence of old-fashioned racism, and Trump's rise also offers a guide to these deeper currents. His presidential campaign was built on a foundation of white working-class despair. In the twenty-first century, that class feels less privileged than ever before; in fact, its members sense that they are under siege, and that belief fuels racial resentment. For many of these white Americans, Obama's presidency emblemized their nation's state of decline, despair, and social death. His administration, they believed, degraded the policies that had underwritten the rise of the white working class in the twentieth century—social insurance that excluded farm workers and domestic servants, for example, and subsidized mortgages that helped create exclusively white suburbs and accumulate wealth that white families could pass on to subsequent generations. Those voters felt

set upon; a 2015 survey by the Public Religion Research Institute asked Americans whether discrimination against whites was on par with discrimination against blacks. Half of the whites surveyed agreed, as did an even larger proportion of working-class whites: sixty percent. Although diminished, racism is still clearly alive in the United States.

Not only do most in the white working class feel aggrieved, they are also deeply pessimistic about the future. According to the 2015 American Values Survey, 52 percent of those surveyed believed that America's best days were behind it. A higher proportion of working-class whites—56 percent—agreed. Pessimism and despair have become deadly. Mortality rates among middle-aged whites with a high school education or less are on the rise. A 2015 study published in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences found that poor and working-class whites between the ages of 45 and 55 have been dying prematurely from suicide, alcohol- and drug-related causes, and diseases such as diabetes and heart disease that are usually associated with people who are older and with people of color. The study estimates that, had the mortality rate for middle-aged whites with lower education levels remained constant at 1999 levels, there would have been half a million more of them in 2013. As a study by the Brookings Institution concludes, “the American Dream of prosperity, equality, opportunity, and stable democracy is being challenged by increasing income inequality, the hollowing out of the middle class, decreasing wages and increased insecurity for low-skilled workers, and rising mortality rates.”

This is what happens when work disappears in previously economically stable communities: the burden of financial strain and a heightened sense of alienation produce social malaise and, in the extreme, violent conflict. Those forces have existed among the black poor and working classes for decades. Now they are catching up with poor and working-class whites who have historically been protected by policies, practices, and often-invisible institutional and market forces that are no longer robust enough to shield them from a globalizing economy. Nor do the old privileges protect them from the rising tide of people they perceive to be the “others.” While some working-class voters supported Bernie Sanders's insurgent campaign for the Democratic nomination in 2016, many others directed their anxiety and anger against those whom they perceived as threatening their way of life and their status in American society—blacks, Latino immigrants, and Muslims, among others. This kind of unease creates the opportunity for the more

forthright expression of racist sentiments (as, for example, we saw at Trump's campaign rallies) and, ultimately, for more radical action, as at Charlottesville.

The perceived threat of the other is what drove Trump's presidential candidacy, and it has become the primary theme of his presidency. Trumpism evokes, for many voters, a half-remembered America of old. His campaign slogan, "Make America Great Again," harkens back to a golden era of American prosperity and social cohesion. (Of course, for minorities, this supposed golden age was an era when segregation was the order of the day, white supremacy was the law of the land, and nonwhites were denied the benefits of material prosperity and full citizenship.)

Alongside this economic and social drift, several factors are reshaping the role race plays in the conduct of American politics. Voting rights, hard won over a century of struggle after emancipation and the passage of the Fifteenth Amendment (which prohibited race-based voting restrictions), are today at risk of being whittled away through increasingly onerous ID requirements fueled by unsubstantiated and fantastical claims of "voter fraud." The Voting Rights Act is under threat, particularly after the Supreme Court's 2013 decision to strike down one of its key provisions—the requirement that certain jurisdictions with egregious histories of race-based voting restrictions undergo preclearance by the Department of Justice before making any changes to their voting rules. The court's decision has accelerated the recent movement toward voting restrictions that disproportionately target African Americans and other minority groups.

At the same time, voting and partisan alignments have increasingly broken along racial lines. Although racial identity has long been one of the fundamental cleavage of U.S. politics, parties have varied over time in the extent to which they have explicitly mobilized racial groups. For much of the twentieth century, for example, the racial lines between the parties were relatively indistinct, as neither party sought seriously to challenge Jim Crow or other structures of segregation—Democrats because they were divided between southern and northern factions and Republicans because they had little electoral incentive to declare themselves on either side. But since the 1960s, the parties have sharply divided along racial lines over issues, constituencies, and electoral appeals, widening a generation-old crack into a chasm. In particular, Republican national campaigns have been trading on themes of racial resentment for half a century, from the nomination of

Civil Rights Act opponent Barry Goldwater in 1964, to Nixon's "Southern Strategy" in 1968, to Ronald Reagan's 1980 campaign launch in Philadelphia, Mississippi, near the site of the murders of civil rights activists James Chaney, Andrew Goodman, and Michael Schwerner, to George H. W. Bush's notorious "Willie Horton" ad in 1988.

The perceived threat of the other is what drove Trump's presidential candidacy, and it has become the primary theme of his presidency.

Trump's apparent appeals to racial animosity and anti-immigrant anxiety is not simply an expression of some kind of fundamental underlying racism among white Americans. Rather, it appears to be a consequence of a generation of structural trends in racial and ethnic politics. His appeal to white working-class voters seems to have energized not racism per se but a sense of alienation from a more cosmopolitan political establishment and nostalgia for a lost status that, while not always rooted in explicit racist attitudes, was built on generations of preferential policies. Nevertheless, Trump's rhetoric has clearly provoked and emboldened people and organizations who espouse racist and anti-Semitic ideas, and in Charlottesville and elsewhere those groups are taking advantage of a moment of alienation and anxiety to advance their cause.

The activity and visibility of white supremacist hate groups has been growing for some time, as last week's events in Charlottesville tragically showed. But this activity is not isolated from other kinds of racial antagonism across the country. Conflict, often fatal, between white police officers and African Americans has inflamed racial tensions in many communities around the country. And Trump's own rhetoric and behavior during his presidential campaign and since have frequently skirted perilously close to the kind of racism, anti-Semitism, and nativism that were long understood as taboo in respectable political life; last weekend, he may finally have crossed the line, as the gathering opprobrium and his growing isolation suggest.

But we should not ascribe the events surrounding Charlottesville solely to the noxious chants of a raggedy band of odious marchers or to the ravings of a shallow, ignorant, and spiteful man who happens to be president of the United States. Although diminished, racism is still clearly alive in the United States, and we should not for a moment relax our vigilance toward its expression and its

effects. We should also remember, however, that the historical and structural roots of racial inequality run deep and that, although less visible, they lie beneath the surface spreading their rot. Digging them up will require more than confrontation and condemnation. It will require the hard work of systemic reform and institutional repair.

Source: <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/united-states/2017-08-21/return-racism>

Why the U.S. Needs Its Envoys By Arsalan Suleman

Over the past few months, U.S. Secretary of State Rex Tillerson has undertaken a radical shakeup of his department and has expressed a desire to remove a number of special envoys and representatives. Although it is healthy to prune positions that have become redundant or obsolete, reckless downsizing without the proper replacement for key functions could damage national security. The U.S. special envoy to the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) is one such position that if removed would eliminate a proven platform for building constructive partnerships with Muslim-majority countries and communities on core national security issues. In fact, given the spread of global terrorism and the ongoing conflicts and humanitarian crises in OIC member countries over the last few years, the position should be not only maintained but also enhanced.

Since 2008, the special envoy to the OIC, which was created at the tail end of President George W. Bush's administration, has represented the United States at the OIC, a 57-member international organization made up of states with substantial Muslim populations. Its membership spans the globe and includes some of the United States' closest allies, such as the NATO members Albania and Turkey, and half of its major non-NATO allies (Afghanistan, Bahrain, Egypt, Jordan, Kuwait, Morocco, Pakistan, and Tunisia). The OIC actively engages with the United States on a wide variety of issues, such as conflict resolution, countering extremism, humanitarian affairs, human rights, and economic development.

At first, the special envoy to the OIC focused principally on efforts, through public diplomacy, to engage with Muslim communities around the world. This was motivated in large part by the need to demonstrate, in the aftermath of the disastrous U.S.-led invasion of Iraq and the ongoing quagmire in Afghanistan, that the United States was not at war with Islam. But in 2010, President Barack Obama broadened the envoy's mandate to deepen and expand U.S. partnerships with the OIC, in line with what he had advocated in his June 2009 speech in Cairo. He had called for "a new beginning between the United States and Muslims around the world," and so he added several much-needed areas of collaboration, such as conflict resolution; humanitarian affairs; health, science,

and technology; human rights; entrepreneurship; and countering violent extremism.

The expanded role of the special envoy yielded substantial dividends that would otherwise have been unattainable, since there is no other position at the State Department that could carry out a productive and sustainable relationship with the OIC. Having served as the acting special envoy for two years and the deputy special envoy for over four years before that, I observed firsthand the unique access that the position of special envoy provided to senior foreign government officials and religious leaders. At the OIC's invitation, the special envoy attended four OIC heads-of-state summits and witnessed such historic moments as the OIC's suspension of Syria's membership in 2012, former Egyptian President Mohamed Morsi's presiding over the 2013 OIC summit in Cairo, and, on several occasions, the symbolic exchanges between the Iranian and Saudi heads of state. The envoy's role provided a distinct, collaborative platform for addressing sensitive issues that intersect with religion and for engaging with senior religious and community leaders. The envoy opened the door in 2013, for example, for a discussion with Ayatollah Isa Qassim, Bahrain's leading Shiite cleric, about the easing of communal tensions in that country.

The special envoy to the OIC also broke new ground on tough issues such as conflict resolution and counterterrorism. In 2014, the envoy collaborated with the OIC in facilitating the first civil-society-led intrafaith mediation effort in the Central African Republic. Over several years, the United States worked with the OIC to solidify international support for concrete action on countering violent extremism. This included promoting the UN secretary-general's 2016 Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism, the UN's first comprehensive strategy to address the underlying conditions that fuel radicalization. Other joint U.S.-OIC projects for fighting extremism have included partnering with the Global Counterterrorism Forum and the OIC's Islamic Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (ISESCO) to examine the role of religious education in advancing peace and countering violence—the first-ever OIC-wide program. To build on this progress, the United States, the OIC, and ISESCO are now collaborating on an effort to help grass-roots religious and community leaders develop and implement initiatives for countering extremism.

Throughout its engagement with the OIC, the special envoy has prioritized the protection of human rights, routinely championing the equal rights of religious minorities and opposing laws that criminalize blasphemy and apostasy. This advocacy successfully ended the OIC's "defamation of religions" resolution in the UN, which had been used by various states to legitimize blasphemy laws and other restrictions on free expression. It was replaced instead with a consensus resolution on combating religious intolerance, discrimination, and violence, which then helped guide other countries in tackling those issues.

The special envoy has made a concerted effort to promote women's rights and combat gender-based violence, which has helped undercut assertions that there are religious justifications for such practices. In 2016, for example, the United States and the OIC co-convened panels at the UN highlighting the role of religious leaders in combating female genital mutilation or cutting (FGM/C) and the role of women in promoting social change. Several religious leaders who spoke at the UN event on FGM/C launched public-awareness campaigns debunking religious justifications for the practice. In one video released early last year, several survivors of FGM/C spoke out against the custom, as did Imam Mohamed Magid, the former president of the Islamic Society of North America, who said, "Such practice cause[s] a woman not to live her life fully with dignity and it cause[s] her physical harm."

Other areas of cooperation have included addressing humanitarian and health emergencies, such as the famine in Somalia, the Syrian refugee crisis, the Ebola epidemic, and the delivery of aid to war-torn Yemen. Such efforts have expanded significantly over the past eight years. Back in 2009, there was no formal mechanism for U.S.-OIC humanitarian collaboration. That changed in 2012, when a memorandum of understanding for cooperation was established, allowing strategic dialogues, expert exchanges, and joint forums of nongovernmental organizations. And in late 2016, the special envoy helped successfully negotiate an indefinite cooperation agreement between the OIC and the U.S. Agency for International Development, which resulted in further efforts to train humanitarian responders. Other key global health projects have included promoting maternal and child health and accelerating the eradication of polio, particularly to improve the reach and effectiveness of vaccination programs in Afghanistan, Nigeria, and Pakistan.

The role of the U.S. special envoy to the OIC has proved so effective that seven U.S. partners—Australia, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Sweden, and the United Kingdom—have all appointed special envoys to the OIC as well. Eliminating this position would derail significant partnerships and slow down the international momentum to constructively engage with the OIC. In fact, the special envoy's substantial track record justifies elevating the role to an ambassadorship, which would guarantee that the position receive the resources it needs to continue its mandate. Right now, the special envoy lacks dedicated funding and staffing and does not have a fixed placement within the State Department. Creating an ambassadorship need not be difficult. The United States already has a consulate in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, where the OIC is based, and has room to house an ambassador. What's more, the United States has ambassadors for other regional organizations of which it is not a member, such as the European Union, the African Union, and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations. It's time to create one for the OIC.

The power to create such a position lies with Congress, but the special envoy to the OIC is of bipartisan lineage—begun by Bush and expanded by Obama—and should therefore continue as such. President Donald Trump already tacitly demonstrated support for U.S. outreach to OIC members during his trip to Saudi Arabia in May, where he led the Arab Islamic American Summit, which included all of the OIC's members except Iran and Syria. As Tillerson decides on which positions to eliminate, he should not only maintain the role of the special envoy to the OIC but also recommend that Congress upgrade it to an ambassadorship.

Source: <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/2017-08-24/why-us-needs-its-envoys>

India's Crisis of Secularism By Syed Mohammad Ali

It was great seeing on these very pages, a couple of weeks ago, a veteran Indian journalist and activist taking issue with the BJP's denouncement of the outgoing vice-president's statement that Muslims do not feel safe in India.

It is unfortunate to note the unravelling of secularism in India these days. While India may still be called the world's biggest secular democracy, the underlying tensions between state, society, and religion within the country make it hard to accept the authenticity of such a label. Besides the prejudice and violence directed against Muslims, India's minority religious groups more generally find themselves to be in an increasingly precarious situation, given the affiliation of mainstream political parties, particularly the BJP, with fundamentalist religious elements.

Although the Indian National Congress, managed from the 1930s on to build a mass anticolonial movement, it never quite succeeded in bridging all the major divisions in Indian society. Gandhi himself was killed by a Hindu fundamentalist, who thought him to be too soft on the Muslim issue. Yet, the fact remains that Gandhi himself wove Hinduism into the freedom movement to broaden its appeal to the masses. Gandhi's intertwining of religious motivation into the anti-colonial movement, however, exacerbated alienation of Muslims and gave impetus to the two-nation theory.

'Secular exercise': Indian court says faith has no role in election

Another Congress stalwart, Sardar Patel, and his communal tendencies, also remain the subject of much debate. Although secular, the Nehru dynasty, especially the authoritarian reign of Indira Gandhi, and her suppression of the Khalistan movement, further enabled political ambitions to be defined along increasingly divisive lines.

While Gandhi, Nehru or Patel would undoubtedly chide the prevalent communal trajectory in India, the fact remains that communalism was also a problem during their times.

Communalist chauvinism, however, went into hyperdrive 25 years ago, when the Babri Mosque demolition took place. Since then, Hindu nationalism has been growing and the 2002 Gujrat massacre under Modi, and its political aftermath, raise serious questions about the Indian state's commitment to secularism.

The BJP-led coalition government of A B Vajpayee refused to suspend or criticise Modi, and instead permitted him to campaign for fresh elections in his home state and beyond. The BJP under Modi has continued to use the communal card to gain leverage. The recent elections in Uttar Pradesh have resulted in a firebrand Hindutva leader becoming the CM. In a state with nearly 40 million Muslims, the BJP did not even field a single candidate from the minority community in the election.

The election of the new Indian president is also not encouraging in terms of India's aspirations to be a secular democracy. While Indian lawmakers may have voted in a new president from the bottom of the Hindu caste system, he is not very tolerant or sympathetic when it comes to Christians and Muslims. Modi, however, has been keen to woo Dalit support, to secure another win for the BJP in the 2019 general election, since his party has largely alienated Indian Muslims.

Modi urges India to reject violence in name of religion

In the world of realpolitik, these alarming developments are not getting the attention that they need. There was a time that Modi and his role in the Gujrat massacre had made him an international persona non grata. Once banned from the US, Modi subsequently managed to develop very warm relations with the US under President Obama. Given its keenness to use India as a counterbalance to China, the current US administration is also not very concerned that Indian democracy has become hostage to those who wish to impose upon it a narrow-minded, divisive and communal vision.

To reassert, and to further evolve its secular identity, the world at large, including Indians, must not over-estimate their democratic credentials.

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A Dangerous Liability By Rizwan Asghar

As of today, nine countries in the world are recognised as possessing nuclear weapons. These countries collectively have a total of 14,900 nuclear weapons in their military stockpiles, with Russia and the US in possession of almost 93 percent of the world's nuclear warheads.

Billions of dollars are spent every year on the constant maintenance and extensive modernisation of these weapons. According to some estimates, nuclear-armed countries spend more than \$300 million a day on their nuclear warheads. Countries choose to draw on their national resources to develop an independent nuclear deterrent because the possession of these weapons is considered to be a guarantee of absolute security against external threats.

Notwithstanding the fact that nuclear weapons provide only some level of security against threats from state actors, the development of nuclear warheads is a risk that is not worth taking.

The greatest threat to global security today comes from nuclear weapons because they are fast becoming a liability rather than a strategic asset. Technological advancements over the past two decades have made nuclear arsenals of many countries more vulnerable than ever before. Owing to the vast increase in nuclear-targeting capability and the development of remote-sensing, nuclear warheads are no longer secure against external attacks.

In order to offset vulnerability, nuclear-armed states will seek to deploy more capable retaliatory mechanisms. With rapid advances in counterforce technologies comes greater ability to target nuclear forces anywhere across the globe. The continued growth of counterforce capabilities also increases the temptation of attacks on nuclear forces of other countries. Although many countries are aware of multifaceted threats to their nuclear arsenals, they do not have a publicly articulated or well-developed strategy for deterring those threats.

Maintaining a safe and secure nuclear weapons stockpile has also become difficult because of insider threats in the form of accidents, employee negligence or even deliberate collusion. While insider threats might be rare, they still occur even within most competent and professional organisations. A 2014 report by the

Sandia National Laboratory in the US found that more than half of the multi-million-dollar heists involved employees from within the organisations.

What makes it difficult to take preventive measures against the possibility of the insider threat is that some states continue to expand the size of their nuclear weapon stockpiles as well as their infrastructure for fissile material production capabilities. In August 2014, a reactor in Belgium had to be put out of commission because an insider deliberately let the lubricant for its turbine drain away, causing significant damage to the facility.

It can be reasonably argued that some terrorist organisations have also shown interest in the use of weapons of mass destruction. In 2009, Nasir al-Wuhayshi, the leader of Al-Qaeda's team in Yemen, even claimed to have some nuclear weapons in his possession and hinted at the possibility of using them on US soil. However, that later turned out to be a false claim.

Deterrence theorists have argued that even a limited number of deployed nuclear weapons are not only survivable but also reduce the possibility of attack to almost zero. However, states continue to enhance their nuclear arsenals even when there is no need for it.

According to a recently-published report, Russia has 1,910 and the US has 1,800 deployed nuclear weapons. In addition to an endless nuclear arms race, the increased vulnerability of nuclear arsenals would be counterproductive to the already shaky acceptance of the idea of nuclear deterrence.

In Pakistan, there is absolutely no debate regarding the possibility of any such incident. In fact, scholars who try to start the insider threat debate are generally ignored. It is also difficult to sustain a debate on such issues because of lack of access to information. This problem also exists in many other countries owing to a veil of secrecy that surrounds nuclear security measures.

Over the past two decades, a number of nuclear security lapses have been witnessed in India. According to the Nuclear Threat Initiative (NTI), India's nuclear security practices rank very low. There is a great deal of room for improvement. Owing to external political interference, India's nuclear regulatory authority also does not possess the crucial independence to take decisions.

It would be wrong to say nuclear weapons are instruments of deterrence since countries possessing these weapons continue to face security threats in the geopolitical arena. Nuclear-armed states still engage in arms races and worry about relative gains. This repeated behavioural pattern on the part of various states demonstrates that nuclear weapons can provide reasonable security but cannot guarantee absolute security. Nuclear weapons are a dangerous liability, not an asset. And the sooner we all realise this fact, the better it is for us and our future.

Email:rizwanasghar5@unm.edu

Source: <https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/225266-A-dangerous-liability>