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PAKISTAN

Abandoning Pan-Islamic Diplomacy | Kunwar Khuldune Shahid



Afghanistan President Ashraf Ghani tore down Pakistan's hitherto Pan-Islamic ideology of diplomacy in a recent interview with BBC on the first anniversary of his presidential tenure. Ghani said that Pakistan and Afghanistan were "not brothers" and that the bilateral ties between the countries were like the "relationship between two countries". This is realpolitik in its crudest, purest form.

The idea of a pan-Islamic "Muslim brotherhood" has hogged Islamabad's diplomacy manual since Pakistan's inception, regardless of civilian or militaristic reigns. Whether it was Zulfikar Ali Bhutto vying to cash in on the 1973 Arab oil embargo, during the OIC meeting in Lahore the following year, or Zia-ul-Haq's thorough Islamisation of Pakistan, the idea of one Muslim Ummah has been central to Pakistan's foreign policy.

Pakistan's creation itself was the corollary of Pan-Islamic rhetoric, because outlining the differences between Muslims and other religious communities in the Indian subcontinent – especially the majority Hindus – was pivotal for the creation of an independent Muslim state.

While 1971 should've been a wakeup call – because evidently religion couldn't hold a single sovereign state together, let alone be the decisive binding force among multiple states – Pakistan ironically upped the ante on Pan-Islamism following the fall of East Pakistan. The Pan-Islamic upsurge was owing to a combination of paranoia vis-à-vis disintegration of the heretofore West Pakistan, and the rise in the clout of Arab states, who were toying with Western economies' futures through their oil wealth. The ground was thence supremely fertile for Zia's Islamisation endeavours.

While the despotic Islamism might have paled following Zia's demise – on surface at least – the post-Zia democrats – and Pervez Musharraf – all clung on to Pan-Islamism as their diplomatic ideology. This was especially true regarding the post-Soviet collapse Afghanistan, as Pakistan sought strategic depth – something it geographically lacks against India – to counter potential surge through the eastern front.

The “Muslim brotherhood” idea was proliferated on the Afghan front, to counter Indo-Afghan alliance, which would've meant Pakistan being flanked with animosity on both the fronts. This is one of the reasons why the Taliban regime was facilitated in Afghanistan by the Benazir government, and “Taliban architect” Naseerullah Babar, in 1996.

Ghani's recent statements against Pakistan are a riposte against a quarter of a century's worth of misuse of “strategic depth” on Islamabad's part. He has publically lambasted Pakistan over the recent rise in Taliban attacks in Kabul, while asking Islamabad to stop differentiating between ‘good’ and ‘bad’ terrorists – clearly a jibe at Pakistan allegedly hosting the Afghan Taliban and the Haqqani Network.

The failed negotiations between Kabul and Taliban in Murree; the ISPR's mudslinging of cross-border accusations following the Badaber attack and the recent Taliban takeover of Kunduz, have further exacerbated Afghanistan's anti-Pakistan sentiments.

Of course, Ghani's statements just reflect the Afghan side of the equation. But there are crucial lessons for Islamabad, regardless of the percentage of verisimilitude in Kabul's claims.

It's at least a century too late – if not four, if one counts the birth of the Westphalian state and not the fall of the Ottoman Empire – to use Pan-Islamism as an inalienable part of a Muslim state's diplomacy. Also, it's nearly a quarter of a century since the collapse of Soviet Russia, which signified – among a multitude of other lessons – the counter-productivity of putting the cart of ideological adherence, before the horse of national self-interest.

While common religion could be a factor to boost bilateral interests, to tout it as the *raison d'état*, and to act accordingly as well, is to jump all the way back to Dark Ages. When a nation state – a security state at that – adopts outdated imperial diplomacy from the 8th century, its foreign policy is going to boomerang big time. And boomeranged it has as of October 2015 AD.

One could actually argue that 1970s Pakistan had put the aforementioned horse and cart in the right place, by selling Pan-Islamism to rich Arab states in the Middle East and budding separatists back home. One could even argue that the idea to use Arab dough to build the ‘Muslim’ nuclear bomb was pretty ingenious on Bhutto's part, as it simultaneously allayed fears of a potentially fragile post-1971 Pakistan, while Islamabad hobnobbed with the leading Muslim states as fellow leader.

But what case for Pan-Islamic diplomacy does one present in 2015, when jihadism and Pan-Islamism both have gorily backfired on Pakistan?

Where does Pan-Islamism factor into Islamabad's diplomacy when the two bordering Muslim neighbours call out Pakistan for facilitating Islamist terrorism?

In April last year Iran's parliament actually passed a bill to enhance security cooperation with Pakistan, while calling out for Islamabad's accountability in cross-border attacks by al-Qaeda linked militant organizations like Jaishul Adl.

And so, when the "brotherly" neighbours and the states' enemies are all Muslims, what sense does it make for Islamabad to cling on to Islam as the core component of its security and foreign policy?

While 1970s Pakistan looked to Arab magnates for strength, the 2010s Pakistan is looking towards 'atheist' China as its godfather. The same China that implements blatant 'anti-Islam' policies in its largest province Xinjiang, to counter Muslim separatism. Xinjiang is the Chinese Kashmir, to put things into perspective.

When Pakistan can sign the 'lifeline' China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) with a state wholeheartedly antagonistic to Pan-Islamist ideology, why does Islamabad still need to continue selling the outdated diplomatic rhetoric?

India.

Pakistan's historical venture to mould itself as the 'anti-India' has gradually evolved into masochism, especially on the diplomacy front. It is because of Pakistan's masochistic foreign policy, that bilateral trade with India is conducted via UAE, ensuring that Islamabad does not reap the benefits of a marketplace of over 1 billion consumers. It is the same self-defeatist paranoia that forces Islamabad to cling onto eastward looking jihadist proxies like Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT), also known as Jamat-ud-Dawa (JuD), aggravating the internal security situation. Not to mention that it's precisely this obsession with negating India that has damaged Pak-Afghan ties over the decades, culminating in Ghani's epoch-defining outburst this week.

Granted India isn't exactly lying in the wait with arms wide open, but how long before common sense, logic, geography and mathematics prevail and Pakistan realises that it has more to gain from smooth Indo-Pak ties than the other way around?

Pakistan's historic interests have been in shaking the Indo-Pak status quo, in Kashmir and elsewhere – hence, the initiation of bilateral wars from our side of the border. Indian interests lie in maintaining that status quo, which is precisely what they've been doing through sheer size of its territory, economy and diplomatic clout.

As Pakistan abandons Pan-Islamism on the Chinese front, it should look to do the same with India. Geographic proximity with the two biggest markets in the world is a virtual goldmine for Pakistan's economy.

The Two-Nation Theory was always going to devour itself and be replaced with ideological pluralism. Now is as good a time as any to pull down the curtain.

Source: <http://nation.com.pk/columns/01-Oct-2015/abandoning-pan-islamic-diplomacy>

Is Pakistan Quite Simply a Misunderstood State? | Farah Adeed



There is voluminous literature on the ideology, creation and politics of Pakistan. There are also some scholarly articles and books written by some prominent and prolific historians, political scientists and journalists on the subject. Almost all articles and books address the very basic issues in the history of Pakistan, ranging from the controversial moment of Partition to present-day ideological confusion in the country. Interestingly, most of the books are authored by our foreign educated scholars and some of them by the western intellectuals and social and political scientists.

A forensic examination and critical evaluation of some most-read and profound books compel us to conclude that these intellectuals and political analysts see Pakistan through the prism of the west. This perspective convinces them to brand Pakistan as a “failed state” and a “failing society”. These books play a remarkable role in producing a community of educated or semi-educated so-called scholars who blatantly criticize and firmly reject Pakistan and its very ideology. Through these writings Pakistani state and society emerge as violent, extremist and directionless crowd of people who simply have no working mind and are being controlled by others for their own interests.

Is Pakistan really a “rogue state” or is it simply a “misunderstood” and “misrepresented” state? Is Pakistani society merely a cluster of idiots who are controlled by others? Are Pakistanis overly conservatives and do not accept any change and progress? Was the creation of Pakistan actually a “blunder” but politically a “big achievement”? Who rules Pakistan and why? Do the mullahs control everything in the country? Do religious parties represent the will of people? Is the Pakistani military all-powerful and all-wise?

We may not answer all the aforementioned questions in a single article but we can develop a perspective to analyze these “intellectual challenges”.

Every society and state has its own social, political, legal, economic and religious history and certain dynamics that are mainly the product of particular circumstances and unique experiences. A comparative study of human societies reveals that every society responds to, and copes with, the same issue in a unique way. Political development of modern-day sovereign states also reflects the fact that they experienced different socio-political circumstances and dealt with them according to their own wisdom and understanding keeping in mind their own history, religion, belief system and public opinion. It is certain that there are no objective values which a country practices or has practiced, and therefore, the rest of the world should also practice them.

Sadly, we have been wisely and very smartly confused by terms like “global values” and “universal human rights”. In reality, these “global values” are western values and people are fooled into believing them to be universal. These so-called global values are instilled in the minds of young students and budding scholars so that they view the whole world through the prism of those values. This is the indication of smart indoctrination.

In United Kingdom, for instance, Sir Samuel Romilly accepted the challenge and started voicing against the death penalty in 1808 but the Royal Commission on Capital Punishment (1864-66) didn't decide anything to abolish it. Later on, in 1938, there was a parliamentary bill to suspend the death penalty for five years just for the experiment's sake, but the changed socio-political scenario owing to the beginning of Second World War, meant that it couldn't be sustained. In 1949, once again the Royal Commission on Capital Punishment abolished the death penalty but it was overturned. Finally, in 1965, there was a five-year suspension of death penalty on experimental basis. So, as we can see it took almost 160 years to bring a reform or change in criminal justice system of UK.

The United States of America, from Plessy v. Ferguson to Brown v. Board of Education, from Whitney v. United States to Dennis v. United States, from The Bremen v. Zapata Off-Shore Company to Bhopal Case, decided all issues and disputes according to their own socio-political realities and economic interests.

But our western indoctrinated pseudo scholars and some non-Pakistanis political analysts urge Pakistan to follow others' footsteps if it really wants peace, prosperity and progress. This is an indication of smart indoctrination and mature politics played by the western giants. People often forget the fact that Pakistan has its own history, religion and belief system and one can't impose foreign values on an independent nation.

The undeniable reality needs to be understood that all concepts like “modernity” and “vulgarity” are culturally defined and have different definitions in different cultures. Everyone likes and exhibits his or her own culture. So it is almost impossible—at least in the 21st century—to understand the politics of any society or state without first understanding its sociology. In other words, it is necessary to understand: what people think of modernity? How do they define progress and change? What is their religion? How do they think of their religion? What are their social problems? What do they like and dislike?

To conclude: if we really want to know and understand the reality behind the creation of Pakistan, the role of Pakistan's military in politics, the place of mullahs in Pakistani society, successful failures of the hypocrite political elite, the thinking of a common Pakistani, and above all, the dominant and remarkable role of the religion in the process of civilizational transition in sub-continent, we have to observe Pakistan through the

prism of Pakistanis. General (retd) Pervez Musharraf rightly said:“You need to understand Pakistan through the eyes of the Pakistanis.”

Source: <http://nation.com.pk/blogs/03-Oct-2015/is-pakistan-quite-simple-a-misunderstood-state>

No Climate Policy | F.H. Mughal



IN September 2012, the federal climate change ministry developed the National Climate Change Policy. The goal of the policy was to mainstream climate change in various sectors. However, the policy has mostly remained dormant.

In November 2013, the federal climate change division produced a framework document for the implementation of climate change policy. The document proposed actions across a range of sectors, which were mainly directed towards conservation. For example, the document proposed installation of water meters to check the indiscriminate use of drinking water supplies. A Climate Change Commission has been recently formed for the implementation of the climate change policy, and the framework document.

The Fifth Assessment Report of the UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) concludes that the warming of the climate system is definite, and extreme weather events associated with climate change pose particular challenges to human settlements.

Climate change predictions for South Asia include increased temperatures, rainfall and flooding, droughts and increased intensity of extreme weather events. Extreme weather events (heatwaves and floods) have already occurred in Sindh. An extreme heatwave occurred in Karachi, Hyderabad and Sukkur in June this year, killing 1,200 people in Karachi and 200 in other cities of Sindh. Another heatwave occurred in Karachi and other parts of Sindh for four days in September.

Cities in Sindh are changing due to the impact of climate change. Urban infrastructure and quality of life are facing significant threats. Karachi's water supply is dependent on the Indus River, which is far away from the city. Increased temperatures are expected to decrease the per capita availability of water. Hyderabad and Sukkur also depend on the Indus for their water supply. Water shortages have already occurred in these cities.

Higher temperatures will decrease the dissolved oxygen levels in the river. The bacterial respiration rates will rise with increasing temperature, enhancing the biochemical oxygen demand of the river. Taste and odour problems are also associated with high temperatures. High temperatures mobilise heavy metals from the bottom sediments. Use of chlorine in water treatment plants will also increase because chlorine decays relatively quickly in warm water. Simply stated, increased temperatures will degrade the water quality of the Indus.

Heavy rainfall worsens stream water quality by increasing organic load, turbidity, microbial population and inflow of agrochemicals. Arsenic and fluorides are likely to be mobilised in case of heavy rainfall. Salinity intrusion is expected in wells located in coastal areas in extreme weather events, disrupting water quality.

Water treatment plants treating raw water containing high organic load run the risk of the formation of trihalomethanes, when humic substances react with chlorine. Flooding of water treatment plants occurs during increased rainfall. The entire urban water supply system will be impacted due to climate change in Sindh's cities.

There are various scenarios for sea-level rise, ranging from just over half a metre rise predicted by IPCC, to two metres by independent US researchers by 2100. A two-metre sea-level rise in Karachi would submerge many parts of the city. Karachi is also vulnerable to cyclones and storm surges, which can disrupt the city's municipal services.

Frequent rainfall will deteriorate the road surface and steel bridges. High temperatures will affect the aging bitumen of the road surface, causing cracks. Built-up areas in Karachi, Hyderabad and Sukkur, during heatwaves, will magnify the impact of heat due to the 'heat island effect', especially in the absence of green infrastructure in the cities. Green infrastructure is defined as a strategically planned network of natural and semi-natural areas.

Urban sanitation facilities are highly sensitive to flooding and storm surges. As they work on gravitational pull, they are often situated at the lowest point. They can, therefore, be easily inundated by rising water levels.

In case of solid waste management operations in Karachi, Hyderabad and Sukkur, increased precipitation will cause inundation of the landfill road network, instability of landfill slopes, and increased leachate from landfills. The state of awareness about climate change in Sindh is practically zero. For example, at a recent public hearing on the Karachi Mass Transit Plan 2030, and opinions expressed in print media, hardly anyone raised the point of impact of climate change on the six bus rapid transit corridors under the mass transit plan.

Robust adaptation plans are required for cities in Sindh, based on vulnerability assessment. Moreover, a proper institutional set-up within the Sindh government is required which can take well-coordinated actions on adaptation plans.

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Pakistan After SCO Membership | Ayaz Ahmed



PAKISTAN finally acquired its one of the significant foreign policy objectives when it was granted full-time membership into powerful the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) on July 10, 2015 at its 15th Summit. Now after fulfilling certain statutory and legal requirements, the country will formally become a full-time member. This membership provides Pakistan with a range of marvellous opportunities on economic, political and security fronts, but certain obstructive challenges also lie ahead.

At the Meeting of the Heads of States Council of the SCO, Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif optimistically opined that Pakistan's inclusion was a "turning point" in the history of the organization and it would prove to be a "watershed" in the changing geo-political landscape of the Eurasian belt, and mutually beneficial economic relations with SCO's member-states would be Pakistan's foreign policy priority. The vexed questions related to this historic breakthrough in Pakistan external policy are: what sorts of geostrategic and geopolitical opportunities this membership provides to Pakistan? Is Pakistan fully prepared politically, diplomatically and economically to capitalise upon the SCO? What stumbling blocks lie ahead which could create mounting challenges for Pakistan to take full advantage of the organization?

First, since independence Pakistan has maintained its tilt mostly towards the Western Hemisphere while depriving itself from the tremendous economic, military and political advantages of the erstwhile USSR, now Russia. The USA left her in the lurch in troubling times of 1965 and 1971, while the Soviet Union relentlessly continued its all out military and economic assistance to India. Now, Pakistan is again surrounded with vast geostrategic opportunities to revisit and diversify its foreign policy by fostering its economic and defence ties with Russia, China and the Central Asian Republics (CARs). Such a prudent decision would greatly help

Pakistan neutralise itching points on Kashmir issue and on any futuristic conflict with bellicose India. It, too, will help Pakistan enhance its military and economic relations with these countries in the near future.

Second, CARs, China and Russia require inexpensive and nearest port to access the oil-rich Middle East, mineral-rich Africa and economically integrated Europe. Importantly, Pakistan's Gwadar deep sea port is located on the gateway of the Strait of Hormuz, where roughly 40 per cent of world petroleum passes and the Middle East—that possesses 48 per cent of the world oil and 38 per cent of natural gas reserves—which could well make Pakistan a regional trade and energy corridor. Resultantly, Pakistan can conclude joint ventures with SCO's members to improve its dilapidated road and rail infrastructure connecting its mainland to Eurasia, enhance economic relations with them, embark upon industrialisation and earn billion dollars as transit fees.

Third, Central Asian and Russian potential oil and gas resources would mitigate Pakistan's ever-rising energy crisis. According to the British Petroleum's 2013 Statistical Review of World Energy, only Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan have 3.6 billion barrels of proven oil and 663.8 trillion cubic feet of proven natural gas reserves. More significantly, Iran and the P5+1 also inked an accord on the former's clandestine nuclear programme which would result in lifting of international sanctions on Iranian economy, thus opening up its 157 billion barrels oil and 1,187.3 trillion cubic feet gas reserves. The stalled work on Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India (TAPI) and Iran-Pakistan (IP) gas pipelines are expected to begin expeditiously. In this regards, Pakistan would be able to import gas through TAPI and IP. It can also seek out the technical assistance from Russian state-run gas giant, Gazprom, on its energy projects.

Moreover, Kazakhstan possesses the Central Asian largest recoverable coal reserves, 33.6 billion tones. Besides, according to the World Nuclear Association, it holds the second largest reserves of uranium with 679,300 tonnes, 12 per cent of the world's total uranium. Pakistan needs potential resources of uranium to produce inexpensive and clean nuclear energy and use them for strategic purposes.

Fourth, terrorism is a major problem insidiously plaguing Pakistan with losses of nearly \$ 100 billion and around 50,000 lives. Pakistan shares SCO's concerns regarding the three evils of terrorism, extremism and separatism. Under the umbrella of the SCO, it would acquire comprehensive counter-terrorism and counter-militancy assistance from the Tashkent-based Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure (RATS) to stamp out rampaging terrorism, bubbling militancy and disruptive low-intensity insurgency of restive Balochistan. Moreover, coordinative intelligence sharing and joint operation between Pakistan and Uzbekistan will greatly help them clamp down upon the deadly Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan that carries out fatal terrorist attacks on Pakistan time and again. Fifth, Pakistan can adopt a two-pronged approach by joining hands with the SCO to ruin drug cultivation in Afghanistan and bust drug cartels operating in the region. With China, Russia and India, Pakistan may conduct vigorous joint naval anti-narcotics drive in the Arabian Sea against the drug smuggling. Finally, with the support of the SCO members, Pakistan can play a bigger role in Afghan's reconciliation and rehabilitation. Afghanistan possesses over \$ 3 trillion worth mineral resources. Pakistan can persuade China, Russia and CARs to come forward with their technological know-how and fiscal resources to help Afghanistan benefit from its natural resources and play a bigger role in Afghan reconciliation. When suitable, Pakistan may bank upon the SCO to resolve plethora of Indian diplomatic missions in Afghanistan, reportedly supporting terrorism and insurgency inside Pakistan.

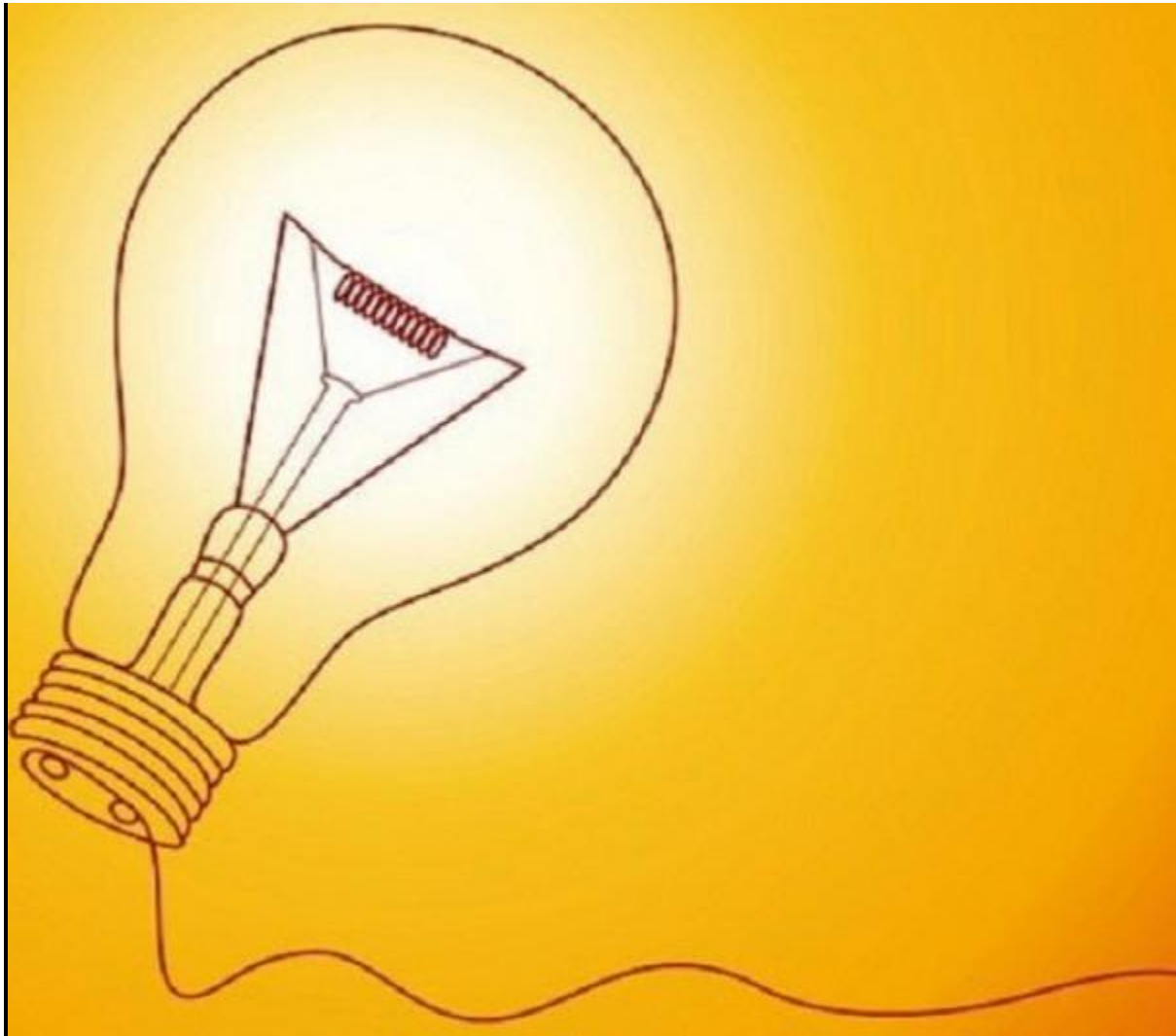
However, Pakistan is faced with a host of internal problems which could make it rather elusive for her to reap rich dividends from the SCO. The issues include, i.e. lethargic political will to seriously move ahead, widespread corruption, bureaucratic red tape, inadequate and dilapidated transport infrastructure, continuing terrorism,

militancy, insurgency creating deteriorating law and order situation, energy shortages, brain drain, disinvestment, outflow of considerable capital, simmering insurgency in Balochistan and federally handpicked Provincial incompetent and toothless set up making Gwadar port and trillions dollars' worth Provincial resources elusive and prone to corruption and misappropriation.

— The writer is a an independent research based in Karachi.

Source: <http://pakobserver.net/detailnews.asp?id=275030>

Energy Crisis of Pakistan | Dr Farid A Malik



How coal can help the country avoid power shortage

As a nation we have run out of fuel. In 1955 when Sui gas fields were discovered in Dera Bugti area of Balochistan, it was believed that our energy future had been secured. With 12 TCF (trillion cubic feet) of natural gas it was the largest deposit of the world at that time. Karachi being the capital of 'Asli Pakistan' was the first to receive the gas, other cities followed. Today the country has one of the best distribution networks of underground pipeline spread over 20,000 kilometers. There are two major companies, Sui Northern Gas Pipelines Ltd (SNGPL) and Sui Southern Gas Company (SSGC), that manage the system and distribute gas.

Ad-hocism that took over the country in October 1958 has continued unabated till today. This gift of nature was grossly mismanaged and misused; today the deposit stands at 2 TCF. New deposits have not been developed and a nation that was once energy surplus faces acute shortages. A few years back I was involved in the development of fiberglass CNG cylinders for cars. Pak-Suzuki at that time was the largest CNG car maker in the world. Steel cylinders worth \$50M were being imported from Italy to be fitted in the cars. All the cylinders that were supplied were prepared in New Zealand. On inquiry it was revealed that New Zealand had converted

their entire transport to CNG and then they ran out of gas. Everything was then converted back to gasoline and diesel. Pakistan committed the same mistake. Gas was used for fertilisers, transport, domestic and industrial use, power generation, heating, cooling as if the supply was unlimited.

Today Pakistan faces serious power and gas shortages. At peak demand power is short by about 5,000MW while gas shortage is about 1,200 mscfd. In the current energy mix, the use of gas is projected at 47 percent by 2030, which is why liquefied natural gas (LNG) is being imported from Qatar. It is a costly three-step process. Natural gas is first compressed into a liquid and then shipped. The liquid is then depressurised to return to the gaseous state. Recent studies carried out at the National Taiwan University compared Synthetic Natural Gas (SNG) produced by coal gasification with imported LNG. The cost of producing SNG was \$11 (USD/GJ) while for LNG it was \$14-17 (USD/GJ).

Despite huge coal deposits (200 billion tons) the government decided to import LNG. The entire project has been controversial, including capacity payments of \$280,000 per day for the terminal at Port Qasim. The country continues to suffer due to the capacity payments allowed to IPPs in the nineties. It seems no lessons have been learnt.

USA has the largest coal deposits of the world with 24 percent, Pakistan being second with 16.1 percent. Despite environmental issues coal continues to be the major source of energy in America whereas in Pakistan it is minimal. Only 5M tons of coal is mined every year in the country while precious foreign exchange is spent on its import. The government has planned to increase the usage of coal to 15 percent by 2030. This figure should be increased to 30 percent to reduce dependence on imported gas. The quantity of coal being mined should be increased to 50M tons by 2020 and 500M tons by 2030 to convert Pakistan into an energy surplus nation.

SNG holds great promise for a coal rich nation. Local coal can be gasified using the latest IGCC approach (Integrated Gasification Combined Cycled). The existing gas distribution network can be used for transmission of locally produced gas. The pilot plant used in Taiwan was based on imported coal. In Pakistan the price can be further reduced by using indigenous deposits.

In Lakhra WAPDA established 50X50X50 coal fired plants based on mouth of mine power generation concept. Unfortunately, the Chinese plants were not designed according to the available coal and as such the boiler gets choked. At a given time only one 50 MW plant can be kept operational remaining two have to be serviced. As 1.33 billion tons of coal is readily available at site, the existing plants should be modified to deliver full capacity and additional plants can also be established making Lakhra the hub of coal power generation in the country.

Not too far from Lakhra is the Thar coal deposit where estimated reserves are of 175 billion tons which is one of the largest single deposits in the world. Mining and hydrology are the major challenges there. Considering the size of this energy resource a development master plan must be developed.

Pakistan is moving in the direction of coal in the 21st century which poses serious environmental challenges that have to be addressed. The country needs affordable energy for its development and growth. Coal based energy roadmap has to be developed together with development of additional gas resources. Shale gas is another option that should be considered. Hydel power potential also remains untapped. In USA, there is a separate department for energy that formulates short, medium and long term plans to ensure sustainable supply of this most important resource. Pakistan can also follow the same approach.

Source: <http://www.pakistantoday.com.pk/2015/10/09/comment/energy-crisis-of-pakistan/>

Democracy and Governance | Muhammad Amir Rana



GOOD governance, human rights and individual freedoms, and rule of law are among the main features of democracy. A democratic state cannot choose one, or some, of these and reject others. Common citizens may see good governance as a priority because this is directly linked to their daily life needs. But the significance of freedom and other attributes of democracy cannot be discounted; they are equally important to fulfil one's physical and emotional needs. Denying emotional, spiritual and aesthetic needs to people does not mean these cease to exist. This is as simple as it is evident.

Complexities arise when certain state institutions or groups of people start to believe that people need only what the power elites think they need. Eventually, the power elites start seeing the people as their subjects who have only physical needs; other needs, in their eyes, fall in the domain of religion. At the same time, these elites try to also regulate religion because they fear 'miscreants' can exploit it and create trouble in the way of good governance.

Although the Muslim world on the whole is facing this dilemma, the Arab world is a chronic example of this model of governance that looks after only the physical needs of the people. The Arab Spring epitomised the fact that people are not merely subjects; nor are their needs merely physical. In some cases, power elites provided more space to their people to resolve the crisis. In others, power elites refused to do so thus plunging their states into turmoil. However, it is becoming increasingly difficult for power elites in these countries to use this model of governance as a tool to suppress freedom and democracy.

Ironically, Muslim countries including Pakistan, which are in a process of democratic transition, still seek inspiration from failed models. One's interaction with power elites in Islamabad would suggest that the concepts of democracy and freedom do not figure in the latter's ideas of state-building. For instance, Middle Eastern

controlled-regime models continue to inspire many retired military top officials and some of them even talk about replicating these models in Pakistan. In their case, it is understandable because they come from a disciplined background, but when former diplomats and bureaucrats also start advocating the same, it surprises many. Pakistani political elites, too, have similar views: many politicians see Turkey and Malaysia as model states in terms of governance, democracy and freedom of expression.

Interestingly, an overwhelming majority of former civil and military officials and politicians also admire Chinese political and governance models even though they know that despite many commonalities, they cannot be fully adopted in Pakistan. Dig deep into their mind and sources of inspiration and you will find one common thing: desire for a controlled regime in Pakistan. Political leaders, however, favour controlled freedom through the power of the vote.

Another important common factor in their thought processes is that they conceive of democracy only in the electoral perspective. They hardly believe in other democratic values. Here they use religion as a crutch to argue that the people already have a socio-political code of life provided by religion. This dichotomy exists in other parts of the Muslim world as well. A debate on the compatibility between Islam and democracy still consumes the intellectual energy of Muslim scholars.

In Pakistan's context, this discourse provides an opening for the partnership between the religious clergy and security and political power elites. In many instances in the past, the first segment became a beneficiary in the power-sharing mechanism and developed a comfortable working relationship with both civilian and military rulers. The religious elite's ability to manipulate street power and provide ideological narratives in support of power elites has furthered their own religious-ideological cause as well.

The sustainability and legitimacy of regimes also depends on two institutions: judiciary and media, which limit the absolute power of the state. Both institutions address the need for justice and freedom and enjoy comparatively more freedom in democratic regimes, but controlling these institutions is a desire that remains alive among states in democratic transition. No doubt the process of democratisation takes time, but the media and judiciary are major instruments in this process. If these institutions are not functioning well, that means a blockage has occurred in the transition process.

Many scholars maintain that the true spirit of pluralistic and secular democracy has never been followed in the country. For instance, renowned scholar Kamran Tahir believes that the Objectives Resolution of 1949 allowed undue space to religious elements in the country's social and political set-up. As a consequence, political instability and authoritarianism became an abiding feature. Other scholars see democracy from the perspective of governance and advocate that democracy is not the final or only form of governance. Among them, a few argue in the socio-political context and assert that it is only the elites who rule in the name of democracy. Others bring in the religious argument to advocate that justice should be the ultimate objective of any form of governance.

The latter point of view is closely aligned to that of religious scholars who also believe only in the electoral process. Non-democratic tendencies among the religious clergy are very common in Pakistan. Religiously inspired militants also borrow this argument from the clergy that democracy is contrary to Islam. All shades of

religious clergy have strong belief in religious identity and value it above democratic norms. The authoritarian power elites see no problem in these views and narratives but are against violent struggle for achieving the objectives. The power elites believe that non-violent clerics should help the state build counter-narratives against violence.

Pakistan is not part of the Gulf or Middle East region. Nor is it located in Central Asia or North Africa. It cannot pull itself out from the South Asian region. Though the state of democracy, good governance and freedom of expression is not satisfactory in the region, its fate is nevertheless linked with democratic institutionalisation.

What else could be the counter-narrative to extremism than democracy, good governance and freedom of expression?

The writer is a security analyst.

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Nuclear Deal With US



Some complications

David Ignatius, famous *Washington Post* journalist, is usually more spot on about the Middle East than other regions (though that too might have changed since the Syrian war), but the war on terror has dragged his expertise to the South Asian region as well. His revelation that a Pak-US civil nuclear deal might be on the cards – on the lines of the Indian deal of '05 – has kicked up quite a debate in Washington and Islamabad, and of course in New Delhi.

Successive US administrations have been 'quite concerned' about Pakistan's arsenal, to say the least, and have wished to limit it. Pakistan, on the other hand, has been on a lookout for just such a deal for a decade – when the Musharraf government warned of consequences following upsetting the regional balance by allowing India a favourable deal. And India, naturally, is already unhappy about latest developments. The US apparently wishes to introduce controls on Pakistan's nuclear weapons production and delivery systems. In return they are willing to extend cooperation in civil nuclear energy, which could benefit Pakistan to no end considering its chronic energy crisis.

No doubt the matter is likely to be taken up quite vigorously at the upcoming Nawaz-Obama meeting, but it's unlikely to be a straight forward affair. As Pakistan made clear immediately after the news was out, its nuclear program is wholly of a defensive nature; hence its deterrent value. And if limiting Pakistan's program is Washington's desire, perhaps it should pay some attention to concerns coming out of Islamabad; that India's provocative posturing forces Pakistan to focus on defence and deterrence now more than ever. The Americans will have a better chance approaching this problem through the Indians. The Modi government, especially, has chosen confrontation instead of reconciliation. And so long as the region remains tense, expecting a principal party to dilute its deterrent is not very realistic. There is no denying that the monies spent on nuclear weapons

in the subcontinent are much better invested in social welfare. But it is also natural for all parties to safeguard their security first.

Way Forward in Pak-Afghan Ties | Malik M Ashraf



PAKISTAN'S friendly overtures toward the newly installed unity government in Afghanistan and the consequent interaction between the leaders of the two countries did help in promoting bonhomie and cooperation between the two countries to fight the common enemy and we did see some concrete actions against TTP operative based in Afghanistan besides an agreement between the intelligence outfits of the two countries to share intelligence and work together to thwart the designs of the enemy. Both countries vowed not to allow their territories to be used for attacks against each other. Pakistan also played a significant role in the first ever face-off between the Taliban and the Afghan government to nudge the process of Afghan-led and Afghan-owned reconciliation in the war-ravaged country.

But regrettably that amity proved short-lived. The two countries relapsed into the blame-game mode due to a number of developments that overshadowed the reconciliation efforts including: rampant attacks in Kabul by Taliban in August for which Ashraf Ghani openly blamed Pakistan, revelation about demise of Taliban leader Mullah Omar, the ensuing leadership battle within the ranks of the Taliban movement, pressure built by the proponents of the war economy and the war lords, unprecedented institutional corruption, burgeoning crimes, geo-political realities nurtured by Indo-Pak animosity, strong anti-Pakistan lobby within Afghanistan and the shrinking writ of the Afghan government.

Afghan President Ashraf Ghani and Chief Executive Abdullah Abdullah have been severely criticizing Pakistan and the former even went to state that relations between Pakistan and Afghanistan were not brotherly but relations between the two states. On one occasion he even spurned Pakistan's further involvement in facilitating dialogue between Afghan government and the Taliban.

In my view the biggest role in orchestrating this dip in relations between Afghanistan and Pakistan has been played by Indian RAW, which has proven links with the Afghan intelligence outfit (NDS). Both have been using TTP for a proxy war against Pakistan and sponsoring terrorist attacks against it from the Afghan territory. This was corroborated by none other than the second in command of TTP Lateefullah Mehsud who was captured by the NATO-Isaf forces in Afghanistan in October 2013 when he was returning after his meeting with key figures in Kabul and the Chief of NDS. He confessed during the interrogation that Kabul-Delhi nexus was harbouring 'safe heavens' across the Durand line and using them for subversive and terrorist activities within Pakistan. The Badaber attack which was planned and executed from the Afghan soil could also be a link in the same chain.

In the prevailing circumstances there is a need for re-establishing contacts between the two countries at the highest level with a view to clearing the haze about mutually expressed apprehensions and finding a way forward in re-building cooperative relations between the two countries, forming a joint front against terrorism and promoting process of reconciliation instead of resorting to brinkmanship.

Both sides need to work together with sincerity of purpose showing sensitivity to the mutual concerns and making a new beginning. Before it is too late, an immediate re-evaluation of the current relationship is essential in order to move forward. It must be understood that as the US troops gear up to withdraw, Afghanistan needs Pakistan more than ever. Ghani is struggling to maintain his unity government intact and the withdrawal of US troops by the end of 2016 may precipitate his woes, as the Afghan Army is still not in a position to maintain security. The capture of Kunduz by Taliban and reported advances in the Badakhshan province are indeed very dangerous portents which have exposed the vulnerabilities of the newpolitical dispensation in Afghanistan.

In the wake of increased attacks by Taliban on government installations and their offensive to capture Afghan cities as well as the presence of IS in the shape of Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan in the country, there is a strong likelihood of Afghanistan drifting towards an unending conflict and struggle for ascendancy among different players after the departure of foreign troops. To prevent this horrible scenario from re-emerging, Ghani government has no alternative but to join hands with Pakistan in forestalling the impending disaster. Similarly Pakistan also is in desperate need of Afghan cooperation in taking the war on terror to its logical conclusion, implementing its economic initiatives including CPEC and recalibrated foreign policy objectives in the region. This is also the considered view of the top US military commander in Afghanistan John F Campbell who briefing the Senate Armed Services committee termed it absolute necessary for peace in Afghanistan.

— The writer is freelance columnist based in Islamabad.

Source: <http://pakobserver.net/detailnews.asp?id=275671>

Fiction and Facts Surrounding Pakistan! | K. Iqbal



Last week threw up a few fictional and factual settings impacting Pakistan in one way or the other. It will be interesting to review some of these.

First the fiction. Indian media has come up with an interesting report. Sounding like an act of comedy, Times of India has reported that a Pakistan Navy submarine had fired at four Indian boats carrying 25 fishermen on port of Jakhau village in Gujarat, injuring one fisherman; and subsequently arrested 24 fishermen on October 15.

The missing dots in the submarine story are: submarines are a deep water system and cannot be used to harass ports, let alone village ports. Torpedo is a heavy duty and an expensive weapon used against ships and submarines and not against the fishing boats. And if at all a torpedo was fired on a small boat, nothing would be left of the boat and its passengers. A typical submarine's detections systems are designed for locating bigger vessels, both surface and subsurface; these detection tools are not geared for detecting small fishing boats. And above all, it is Pakistan Maritime Security Agency that is mandated to guard the boundaries of Pakistan's Exclusive Economic Zone and not Pakistan Navy. Maritime Security Agency in an equivalent of border rangers equipped only with boats and guns. Indian media could have avoided this embarrassment, had it taken the advice of Indian Navy's Public Relations Officer.

Also, while Hindu mobs are busy killing beef eaters in India, ostensibly with the connivance of law enforcing agencies, Chief Minister of Haryana, Manohar Lal Khattar of BJP has come up with a funny solution. He has asked people—read Muslims— “stop eating beef to avoid mob attacks”!

And to offset the embarrassment of hitting a hospital in Kunduz, CIA has had an afterthought to implicate their “on call scapegoat”—Pakistan. Associated Press (AP) has carried a story that American special operations analysts believed that the hospital was being used by a Pakistani intelligence operative to coordinate Taliban activity. “Doctors Without Borders” a humanitarian outfit that was running the hospital has denied this. Spokesperson of Pakistan’s foreign office has termed the story by the AP as baseless and unwarranted. Even if the allegations are true, the billion dollars question is: Was bombing the hospital—in a typical cowboy style—the only available option?

And now coming to facts. In a long anticipated move, President Barack Obama has extended the stay of current level of American forces— 9,800 US troops through most of 2016. Now this contingent shall be available to help or say rescue the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) when Taliban launch their next “Spring Offensive” in April 2016. Obama has set aside his promise to end the war during his presidency; now he will hand over the longest conflict to his successor; he has also abandoned his plans to leave just a small, embassy based force of around 1,000 personnel in Kabul beyond 2016. Now, nearly 5,500 soldiers would still be lingering in Afghanistan when Obama leaves Presidency. Citing an Afghan force which is “still not as strong as they need to be”, Obama said that the level of 9,800 troops would be maintained through most of 2016. “I have decided that instead of going down to a normal embassy presence in Kabul by the end of 2016, we will maintain 5,500 troops at a small number of bases.” These forces will be based in Kabul and at Bagram Air Field, as well as bases in Jalalabad and Kandahar; and will be able to operate quickly when needed. Obama said that while Afghan forces have made progress, the security situation in the country remains fragile: “I suspect that we will continue to evaluate this going forward, as will the next president”.

President Obama has also acknowledged efforts of Pakistan and its ongoing Operation Zarb-e-Azb. “Pressure from Pakistan has resulted in more al Qaeda coming into Afghanistan.” Obama has said that he would meet Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif on October 22 to discuss his plan for peace in the Pak-Afghan region. “I will continue to urge all parties in the region to press the Taliban to return to peace talks and to do their part in pursuit of the peace that Afghans deserve,” Obama said. “By now it should be clear to the Taliban, and all who oppose Afghanistan’s progress, the only real way to achieve the full drawdown of US and foreign troops from Afghanistan is through a lasting political settlement with the Afghan government.”

Earlier this week, Nawaz had said that he “wants to bring the Taliban back to the negotiation table.” Afghanistan has hailed the remarks made by Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif that he would exert efforts in bringing back the Afghan Taliban to the negotiating table. Afghanistan’s CEO Dr Abdullah also wanted Islamabad’s help in ending the “capability” of the Taliban in launching major attacks. Nawaz and Obama will discuss a host of issues including peace in Afghanistan, border tensions between Pakistan and India, and a prospective nuclear deal.

The Taliban insurgents, no longer called as terrorists by Americans, are now spread through more parts of the country than at any point since 2001, according to the recent United Nations estimates. During previous weeks, the Taliban scored their biggest victory of the war, seizing the northern city of Kunduz and holding it for more than two weeks. Incidents of breaking Ghazni Jail, freeing hundreds of militant inmates and later threatening posture toward this urban center speak for themselves. Earlier unrelenting attacks in and around Kabul had amply demonstrated the expanse of Taliban’s combat activities.

As Obama announced to extend stay of US troops in Afghanistan, the Taliban responded: “The Islamic Emirate believes that military solution is not a way out of the Afghan issue. We believe that when Afghans are

convinced, regarding the end of occupation and withdrawal of foreign troops, then all problems could be easily solved through intra-Afghan understanding and dialogue". And, "To end fighting, we are ready to initiate meaningful negotiations with all concerned sides", the Afghan Taliban said in a statement.

Obama's foreign policy has become an issue among candidates running for the White House in the November 2016 election. Jeb Bush, one of Republican candidates, welcomed the move: "While I am glad President Obama has dropped his plan to abandon the region entirely, if he is truly committed to fighting terrorism and securing a stable Afghanistan, he shouldn't short change what our military commanders have said they need to complete the mission". The foreign ministry of Russia, remarked that it doubted the US decision would ease the situation in the country, RIA news agency reported.

State Department has issued a fact sheet on its ties with Pakistan, a week before Nawaz-Obama summit, which highlights co-operation between the two countries in various fields. "Pakistan has generally co-operated with the United States in counter-terrorism efforts and since 2001, has captured more than 600 Al Qaeda members and their allies," says the statement. And that security assistance to Pakistan is focused on "strengthening the counter-terrorism and counter-insurgency capabilities of the Pakistan security forces".

Through perseverance, Pakistan is bravely charting its way forward through vortices thrown up by assortment of fictions and myths. It wishes to continue its contributions for making Afghanistan a peaceful and stable country, it certainly needs a break from an unrelenting fiction based bashing spree.

Source: <http://nation.com.pk/columns/19-Oct-2015/fiction-and-facts-surrounding-pakistan>

Pursuing Our Nuclear Option | Malik M Ashraf



TERRITORIAL integrity and security of a country invariably gets top priority and many wars throughout the history and even the two world wars happened because the involved states felt threatened by other states and were tempted to neutralize and decimate the capability of the other to pose any threat to its security. Another ingredient that has also contributed to wars and conflicts is the irrepressible desire of the strong countries and nations to establish their ascendancy and hegemony over other smaller and weaker countries to extend the tentacles of their influence at the global level. That provides the rationale and justification for all the states to enhance their defence capabilities commensurate with the level of threat, more so when the enemy is a neighbouring country.

When India exploded a small nuclear device in 1974 on the basis of the US sponsored and supported nuclear programme, it heightened security concerns in Pakistan which perforce had to start its own nuclear programme to thwart the ensuing dangers to its security. While India had aggressive and hegemonic designs with regard to its nuclear programme, Pakistan's response was India-specific and defensive in nature. However despite acquiring the capability of producing nuclear weapons it did not explode the nuclear device until India did in 1998. This declaration of acquisition of nuclear capability, as is evident, was again prompted by the Indian indiscretion to announce its nuclear credentials.

It is pertinent to point out that despite the fact that Pakistan was a staunch ally of US during the cold war and during the Afghan war, the latter tried to halt its nuclear programme through different pressure tactics and even sanctions under Pressler Amendment. The nuclear explosions by Pakistan restored parity with India and created a credible deterrent for a full scale war between the two countries, probably for all times to come, because none of the two could run the risk of mutual destruction on an unimaginable scale.

India has continued to enhance its capability of conventional warfare and has been spending staggering amounts of money on acquisition of weapons from different sources that led to a big gap between the capabilities of the two countries in the conventional domain. Inebriated by this development the India has

adopted a belligerent posture towards Pakistan and even coined the concept of Pakistan-specific 'Cold Start' which stipulates hitting specific targets within Pakistan instead of starting full-scale war. These provocative and threatening actions by India could not have gone un-responded by Pakistan. The befitting response was the initiation of a missile programme designed to produce short-range missiles which could carry small nuclear war-heads and hit all targets within India. This option again has been forced on Pakistan by the aggressive Indian designs. Pakistan rightly feels that it would stop India from entertaining aggressive designs against Pakistan and have the temptation to commit any indiscretion. It is yet another deterrent to forestall the possibility of even a limited war between the two countries.

While the US and the Western countries are trying to prop up India as a regional super power, they seem weary of the missile programme of Pakistan. They look at it from the perspective of nuclear terrorism at the global level, rather than it being India-specific, necessitated by legitimate security concerns of Pakistan. The US and the western powers need to understand Pakistan's position with regard to its nuclear programme in its proper context. The only and the practicable solution to this sordid issue lies in addressing the causes that prompted Pakistan to take the nuclear option i.e. the resolution of the core issue of Kashmir that has bedeviled relations between the two countries and precipitated enmity between them. The non-resolution of Kashmir issue not only poses a threat to the regional peace and security but is also a potent threat to the global peace.

If the powers that be are really serious and sincere in peace and security in the region, they instead of coercing Pakistan to abandon its nuclear programme must make efforts for the resolution of the dispute between India and Pakistan in conformity with the spirit of the UN resolutions. Once the Kashmir issue is resolved and relations with India are normalized and India signs the NPT, Pakistan surely would have no hesitation in signing the NPT and removing its objections to initiation of dialogue on FMCT. One-sided pressure tactics and arm-twisting are not going to help the cause. Pakistan is a sovereign and self-respecting country and would never ever take dictation from any one in regards to its security.

— The writer is freelance columnist based in Islamabad.

Source: <http://pakobserver.net/detailnews.asp?id=276995>

ECONOMY

Adrift without a plan | Sakib Sherani



AROUND a month ago, the UK newspaper Financial Times (FT) did a story on Pakistan's economic performance and how the reality seemingly differed from the IMF's "rosy view". I had been quoted as saying the rise in foreign exchange reserves since the start of the Fund programme "was a bit like a Ponzi scheme", meaning that the government was raising high-cost debt to pay off the IMF and previous loans, and would then need to raise even more expensive debt later to retire the obligations it was so happily — and wantonly — raising now. (I should have added: this was an IMF-approved Ponzi scheme).

Within a few days, the ministry of finance had issued a high-sounding rebuttal to the FT, stating that independent economists and commentators did not have access to the data the government did, and therefore had made unfounded assertions in the piece.

Almost exactly a month later, Pakistan was in the international capital markets, looking to raise \$1 billion via a Eurobond issue. With total forex reserves at over \$18bn, why it needed to be in the bond market when global conditions for issuers are challenging, is something that has been left unexplained. A combination of jitters about the timing of the so-called lift-off in US interest rates, and the health of the world economy, specifically of emerging markets (EM), after the severe slowdown in China, has prompted outflows of over \$40bn from EM assets between July and end-September. Many planned bond issues by EM borrowers have been deferred since the spike in uncertainty in the financial markets.

In the event, Pakistan raised \$500 million for 10 years at a coupon of 8.25pc — 617 basis points higher than the yield on the equivalent US Treasury bond. In comparison, a similar 10-year Eurobond was issued by Pakistan in 2006 at a spread of 270 basis points.

If the Ministry of Finance had decided to raise \$1bn, it would have had to offer a coupon of well over 9pc. Rounding off the failure of the issue was the fact that, according to knowledgeable market sources, around 80pc was picked up by the offshore units of Pakistani financial institutions due to lack of demand.

Far more disastrous than the frosty reception to the bond by foreign investors, is what our economic team communicated to the world. At the bond road shows, the highest official of the Ministry of Finance had this to say:

Pakistan was issuing the current bond to repay a maturing similar-sized bond in March 2016.

Pakistan will keep its options open regarding a follow-up IMF programme.

The inappropriate communication from the Ministry of Finance confirmed and reinforced the worst fears of most observers regarding the state of Pakistan's economy: that by requiring new loans to pay off maturing ones, it is indeed sinking into a debt trap, if not already there; and secondly, that even with a 'successful' completion of the current IMF programme, there is considerable uncertainty about meeting the underlying reform objectives.

(As an aside, I find it depressing and demeaning as a Pakistani to see how our bureaucrats and politicians wantonly, routinely and brazenly lie to the citizens of this country without a care, but are forced to be honest against their grain in front of foreign audiences.)

The fiasco of the latest Eurobond issue is instructive of how the PML-N government is managing the economy (or not), what economic targets it is pursuing, and how those targets are completely divorced from the economic objectives we should be pursuing. For example, a key target appears to be to reach \$20bn in total foreign exchange reserves before December-end. If one were to ignore the 'why' and focus on the 'how' it is clear that new borrowing, at mainly commercial rates, is the preferred mode, rather than a focus on boosting Pakistan's flagging exports. Bangladesh, on the other hand, has seen its forex reserves cross \$30bn, with exports of \$27bn providing the main support.

Another target being followed is to increase tax revenue. While some path-breaking measures have been taken, the bulk of the increase in FBR revenue collection has come from an increase in tax rates, the withholding of refunds, and the introduction of multiple new taxes on existing taxpayers. This is hurting the business environment and stopping new investment in the economy. It will also prove detrimental to efforts to increasing tax revenue in the long run — the exact opposite of what Pakistan should be aiming for.

A third objective is ostensibly to 'resolve the power crisis'. How is the PML-N government hoping to achieve this? By pursuing dubious, shady and non-transparent energy deals like LNG, and expensive new power generation projects such as Nandipur and the Solar Park. By failing to implement meaningful reforms in the sector — such as improving governance and reducing theft by collusion of insiders, and instead by focusing on

high-cost 'solutions', the government is actually laying the basis for a more prolonged and severe power crisis well into the medium term.

Similarly, all-important goals of increasing exports, or reducing the debt burden, are either being completely ignored, or being made worse by mismanagement and lack of planning.

An intriguing question is: with Pakistan's economy so clearly adrift, where is the prime minister, and why is he not providing leadership on the economy? At a time when his counterpart in India is wooing the world, casting himself as a 'transformative' leader for his country, and attracting commitments of billions of US dollars, Nawaz Sharif is appearing disoriented, divorced from reality and desultory.

Without the prime minister stepping up, taking firm charge and being counted, the economy will drift further under the current manner of management.

The writer is a former economic adviser to government, and currently heads a macroeconomic consultancy based in Islamabad.

Adrift without a plan |Sakib Sherani

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Misperceptions of IMF | Dr Hafiz A Pasha



The Executive Board of the IMF must be thanked once again for its very sympathetic eighth quarterly review of Pakistan, as part of the Extended Fund Facility. Two more waivers have been given against the violation of key quantitative performance criteria. Cumulatively, twelve waivers have been granted. Never before in previous programs has the Fund shown such understanding and support for Pakistan.

However, the press note released after the Board meeting reveals a number of misperceptions about Pakistan. The first is the statement 'that economic activity is picking up pace and vulnerabilities are gradually receding'.

Unfortunately, there is not much evidence of economic activity showing revival. In 2014-15, the large-scale manufacturing sector grew at 3 percent, as compared to 4 percent in the previous year. The major crops sector achieved a growth rate of less than 1 percent as compared to 8 percent in 2013-14. These two sectors are the principal drivers of growth in the economy. It was only through some exaggeration that a GDP growth rate of over 4 percent was shown for 2014-15.

During the quarter under review, that is, the last quarter of 2014-15, exports also declined by 5 percent and foreign direct investment virtually ceased. Therefore, the statement about economic activity picking up pace is not consistent with the ground reality. In fact, in the first two months of 2015-16, exports have dropped further by 7 percent.

The next question is: are vulnerabilities gradually receding? No doubt, the precipitous fall in the oil prices will reduce the import bill by almost 8 percent, but export prices are also simultaneously declining. Consequently, the agricultural sector is facing a big negative shock and farmers will be at least partially bailed out by a big relief package announced by the Prime Minister. The fiscal cost of this package is almost Rs 146 billion, equivalent to over 0.4 percent of the GDP. There was only partial provision in the 2015-16 Budget for this cost.

On top of this, Pakistan is also experiencing financial contagion effects due to volatility in global stock markets, especially in China. During the last two months, the KSE index has fallen by 10 percent and almost \$100 million have been withdrawn by foreign investors. On the balance, vulnerability has probably increased, rather than decreased.

The press note highlights that further steps are needed to increase revenue mobilization, including by broadening the tax base and strengthening tax administration. But the three budgets presented by the PML (N) Government, with prior agreement of IMF, have mostly involved enhancement in tax rates, frequently of a regressive character. The standard GST rate has been raised, withholding taxes enhanced, minimum import duty imposed on food items and other essential imports, taxes enhanced on petroleum products and natural gas, etc. The burden of the stabilization process under the IMF program has fallen disproportionately on the lower income groups.

There has been little broad-basing, with the number of income taxpayers increasing by only 65,283 in 2014-15. FBR has already experienced a significant shortfall of 7 percent in relation to the target for the first quarter of 2015-16.

The Press note next states that 'strengthening coordination with Provinces will help safeguard fiscal discipline'. The implicit point here is that the provincial governments are more prone to profligate behaviour. They did generate a much smaller surplus of Rs 87 billion in 2014-15 as compared to the target of Rs 289 billion. However, this was due to lower transfers of Rs 179 billion from the Federal Government, primarily due to the large shortfall in FBR revenues in 2014-15.

In fact, the four Provincial Governments cut back their development spending in 2014-15 by Rs 151 billion, as compared to a reduction of Rs 36 billion by the federal government. The provinces actually face a 'hard budget constraint' because of virtually no access to borrowings from the domestic capital market. As opposed to this, the Federal Government had made a commitment in the 2014-14 budget to reduce non-salary costs by 30 percent. Instead, these costs went up by 8 percent during the year, and by 11 percent in 2014-15.

The press note appreciates the fact that 'foreign exchange reserves have continued to increase, benefiting from windfalls from lower import prices'. Reserves did increase substantially by \$ 1917 million in the last quarter under review of 2014-15. But the trade deficit only improved by \$147 million. The major factors contributing to the rise in reserves were privatization receipts, jump in net foreign aid inflows and a large net credit from the IMF. In the first quarter of 2015-16, up to September 25, reserves have actually fallen by \$124 million.

Mention is made in the press note that 'reforms should aim at securing a reliable supply of electricity and gas and reduce fiscal risks posed by these sectors'. In 2014-15, electricity consumption increased only modestly while that of the natural gas declined. The tariff differential subsidy to the power sector was higher by Rs 36 billion over the budget estimate. Similarly, there was a big shortfall in revenues from GIDC of Rs 88 billion. The circular debt in the power sector has approached Rs 300 billion.

Finally, the press note recommends 'an accelerated pace of privatisation and restructuring of public enterprises'. Up to now the government has pursued the easy policy of selling-off shares of profitable entities to help build foreign exchange reserves. Meanwhile, subventions continue to PASMIC, PIA and the Railways. Restructuring is proceeding at a slow pace.

The first quarter of 2015-16, which has just come to an end, has not been characterized by good performance of many indicators like exports, tax revenues, size of fiscal deficit, reserves, etc. When the 9th review of the Fund programme takes place at least two more waivers may be required. We look forward to the same understanding and support from the IMF.

(The writer is the Managing Director of the Institute for Policy Reforms and a former Federal Minister)

Source: <http://www.brecorder.com/articles-a-letters/187:articles/1233068:misperceptions-of-imf/?date=2015-10-05>

Political Economy in Pakistan | Dr Zafar Altaf



Pakistan's political system is flawed and as a result all the resultant actions and implementations are erroneous. Where is reason in the system, where is the thought process. Pakistan will continue this way as its educational system is also flawed. Just imagine the allegations that are made against the opponents. I had always been brought up to accept the opponents. For after all today's opponents may well be tomorrow's power bloc. I had seen that in former East Pakistan where there was a considerable respect amongst the politicians for each other. I had interacted with some of the leaders on a one to one basis. In fact, when my official tenure was over and I was to proceed to Lahore the Shadow CM asked me to have farewell from him. This I declined at which he stated that the people of Shivrampur thana (equivalent to a tehsil here) wanted to give me a farewell as I had built a college and a school there. To this I agreed provided the farewell was represented by a broad section of the inhabitants of the thana area.

But before we get into the pros and cons of political economy, let us examine the nature of public good(s). A public good is one where the matter is freely available to the citizens and its use does not diminish the resource. Wind, energy and sunlight are some examples. Water used to be but not anymore. Modern agriculture has intensified its use and as a result the demand is much more than the supply. Where this political system is working the goods that are delivered are for public convenience and benefit(s) and not for personal benefits. But this is no longer possible as the thought process has been perverted. The current political powers are masters at this. Islamabad is in seismic zone but one politician land mafia-oriented is building twin towers that are about 24-storey high. How did he get this permission? Why was he allowed to violate the building codes of CDA? In Pakistan you show me the face and I will show you the appropriate rule(s). The flip side of this is and I have done it when old rules that are not in line with current thinking have to be done away with. In

fact all obsolete rules can be done away with provided they are based on false premises or the assumptions are inappropriate. The one important angle in this is that the change does not benefit the policymaker. So these two counts matter but then they cannot be applied selectively but uniformly across every sector and for every citizen. The rules of equity have to be dealt with in a legal and equitable manner.

Political economy is a recent development in economics and much has still to be done in developing countries where policy matters are more personal matters. The confusion between state and government is still to be resolved. Governments feel that they are the state and whatever they say is sacrosanct. The constitution is a sacred document(?) in any democratic set-up but the violation of the constitution is more with the government in power than those outside it. I can pinpoint any number of violations that each government has done. Democracy is not about the written word only but about its spirit. A constitutional appointment is not about taking orders from the government in power even if it is responsible for the appointment. How have these constitutional postings helped the people of Pakistan? The advisor to the PM in Aviation and the recent episodes in PIA are a testimony to what I am saying. Outsiders come and plunder the organisation. The only PIA chairman that I know that did not take any benefit from the PIA was Chaudhry Ahmed Saeed while all the others used the airline to the hilt.

What are the institutions that are responsible for the implementation of the constitution? These institutions have become lacklustre as a result of the selection of individuals. I recall when posted as Deputy Commissioner Sahiwal I had put in 14 years of service. To have pliable deputy commissioners, the rule had been seven to eight years of service. I said so to the then Chief Secretary but he was adamant that I should go. I went because that is what civil servants are supposed to do. He was hopping mad when warrants of arrest were issued against a sitting IG police. He rang up. I reminded him of the conversation we had and he went quiet. Irrespective of any favours anyone who has done any wrong has to be castigated. Period.

A political economy works well when the social embodiments are equally well administered. Economy is not about economics only but has many dimensions. You can bet your last dollar and have as many dog and pony shows but the FDIs will not come to this country. The dimensions are not known. When we go to any country we are aware of its legal and social bindings. What are the legal and social bindings under which any foreign company will come here? Search your souls for a correct answer? Balochistan, Karachi, the lower judiciary or what? My own view is that the best chance we had for the lower judiciary to be sorted out was with CJ Iftikhar Chaudhry. We have lost that chance. He was a gritty person who took on massive chances in life. We did not know how to honour him and his doings. As a result we are wallowing in our own dirt.

The muck that we have raked up has engulfed all of us. All oppressive power blocs will get the same treatment that they have meted out to others. The breast beating and the anti-corruption will have to arrest their former bosses for anti-human actions if not for other crimes committed. Any benefits that accrue to anyone will have to be earned and not given on the basis of cronyism. Since all the powerful politicians have earned this money the wrong way they can hardly claim themselves to be farishtas. When will their day of reckoning come? Come it will even if it is delayed. The bill has to be paid in the here and now. It may be hidden from the common man but the arguments for former East Pakistan were different from what we have been given to understand. The Mina tragedy is again a cover up. People that I have interviewed have not talked of any stampede. It is said that it was electrocution that took place. But that will be a different article all together. Be patient, my friends.

Source: <http://www.brecorder.com/articles-a-letters/187:articles/1234626:political-economy-in-pakistan/?date=2015-10-10>

Pakistan now 138th Among 189 Economies



ISLAMABAD: It might come as a surprise to PML-N supporters, but its pro-business perception received a slight jolt on Wednesday, as Pakistan slid two places to be ranked 138th on the 'Ease of Doing Business Index' of the World Bank.

Pakistan improved its distance to frontier (DTF) score, from 51.62 to 51.69, but slid in the list of 189 economies of the world, ranked in terms of the ease it offers to entrepreneurs in doing business.

Three reasons to keep counting on Pakistan

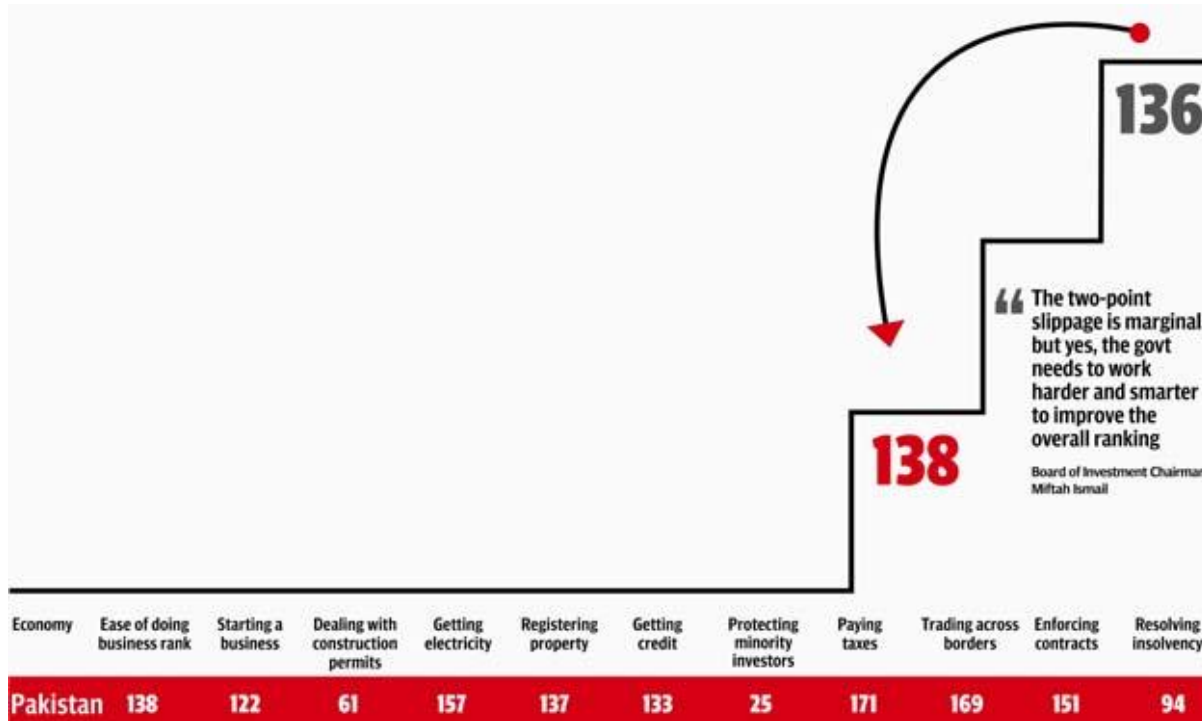
The country was originally ranked 128th last year, but the World Bank changed its methodology and repositioned the 189 economies. Effectively, Pakistan was re-ranked 136th for last year, meaning the country slid two places as it witnessed an overall deterioration in the regulatory and enabling environment for starting and doing business.

The report also gauged the efficacy of the bureaucracy and the nature of business governance, finding Pakistan not doing too well in these areas.

The Doing Business 2016 report is the flagship annual publication of the World Bank Group and is considered as the world's most influential policy publications.

The World Bank's message

Countries like Bhutan claimed South Asia's highest spot in the ease of doing business ranking, at 71st, followed by Nepal (99th) and Sri Lanka (107th). India stood at 130th, followed by Pakistan, Bangladesh (174th) and Afghanistan (177th).



The rankings are benchmarked to June 2015 and are determined on the basis of 10 pillars, each consisting of several indicators.

Minor improvement

Out of the 10 pillars, Pakistan's position improved on only three. It showed a major improvement on dealing with construction permits, improving from 125 to 61, and enforcement of contracts where it improved the standing by 10 points to 151. On the indicator of paying taxes, the country's position improved by one point to 171.

World Bank projects: Pakistan's economic growth at 4.4%

Weak points

The major deterioration was in trading across borders where the country slipped from 108th position to 169th. Pakistan's rank deteriorated in starting a business, getting electricity, registering property, getting credit, protecting minority investors, trading across borders and resolving insolvency.

"The two-point slippage is marginal, but yes, the government needs to work harder and smarter to improve the overall ranking", said Board of Investment Chairman Miftah Ismail, while talking to The Express Tribune.

He said during the last one year, his department focused mainly on two areas -dealing with construction permits and enforcing contracts and there was improvement on both pillars.

Pakistan's economy enjoying period of optimism: report

On the index of starting a business, the total number of procedures required to register a firm remained unchanged at 10. Similarly, the total number of days required to register a firm also remained unchanged at 19.

Getting electricity remained an area of concern and the country's performance deteriorated. It takes 178.3 days to obtain a permanent electricity connection – worse than last years' duration of 173 days. On the benchmark of reliability of supply and transparency of electricity tariff, the country was at the bottom.

The total number of days required to register property remained unchanged at 50. There were six kinds of procedures for getting a property registered.

Pakistan close to clinching \$16b Qatar LNG deal

The country's position on protecting minority investors deteriorated by four notches to 25 but it remained impressive.

Despite an improvement of one notch to 171, paying taxes remained another area of concern. Businesses were required to make 47 kinds of tax payments, which consumed 594 hours or 25 days. They paid 32.5% of their income in taxes. For enforcing contracts, it took two years and seven months besides consuming 23% of the disputed claims.

On the index of trading across the borders, Pakistan slipped 61 notches. It took 62 hours for documentary compliance, 79 hours for border compliance and 13.5 hours for transportation before exporting a consignment. The cost of documentary compliance was \$307, border compliance \$456.4 and transport cost was \$12.2.

The situation was worse in case of imports where it took 152.6 hours for documentary compliance, 140.6 hours for border compliance and 12.2 hours on transportation of the consignment.

Published in The Express Tribune, October 29th, 2015.

Source: <http://tribune.com.pk/story/980732/pakistan-ranks-138-of-189-in-ease-of-doing-business-index-world-bank-report/>

Pakistan & India

India-Pakistan Economic Cooperation | Danish Ahmed Khan



Considering the effects of a large market, regional cooperation will invariably lead to a larger market size for the products of the region as it will allow free movement and lower tariff rates

The terms economic union and economic cooperation have gained momentum. The implemented and impending policies for forming trade alliances have their source in the discipline of international trade and economics. To study wider regional cooperation, it is important for a person to have knowledge of international economics, to know what international trade theories are and how they specifically apply to Pakistan and India trade relations.

First of all, the economic theory of comparative advantage explains that two countries can trade to their mutual benefit even when one is more efficient than the other in producing everything and the producers in the less efficient economy can compete only by paying lower wages. To examine how this model applies to Pakistan and its neighbours first consider that Pakistan is a country that is of fairly medium size compared to its neighbours vis-à-vis India, China and Russia according to its resources and population. As we are producing cement, textiles and ceramics due to our labour expertise and resource availability, it is very hard for us to

compete with India in the software sector and with China in electronics and gadgets. Now it is equally expensive for these countries to compete with Pakistan on the aforementioned sectors. Thus, according to an economist's point of view, there is very little room for fears of Indian hegemony or of China destroying our markets. Trade and economic cooperation with these countries is going to be extremely beneficial only if Pakistan develops the right sectors at right time and then exports its surplus.

Secondly, let us look at the Heckscher-Ohlin Model and its implications for possible Pakistan India joint ventures. According to the Heckscher-Ohlin Model the biased effect of increase in resources on production possibilities is key to understanding how difference in resources give rise to international trade, stimulates it and makes it beneficial to all concerned. Through economic cooperation in the region the supply of land and labour is going to increase disproportionately for both India and Pakistan as compared with the production of silk or petroleum goods. Now, if China on one hand is good at producing silk and the Middle East is good for petroleum products again the point is that it would be beneficial for both India and Pakistan to supply food and cloth to international markets and take petroleum and silk in return.

According to the theory of economies of scale and economic cooperation, the more the firms there are in an industry, the higher the average cost because the average labour input decreases as we increase total output. Thus, this theory advocates joint ventures between the firms of groups of countries that produce the same product and production on large-scale to ward-off high costs.

Similarly, considering the experience curve theory, a country that has extensive experience in an industry may have lower unit cost than another country with little experience. Regional alliances can also help to get the same industries to learn experiences from an old industrialised country. Once trade barriers are lifted these specialised items can become cheaper in the countries that do not produce them. At the level of India and Pakistan such an alliance may come with the relatively new Pakistani film industry and a mature, more experienced Indian film industry.

Considering the effects of a large market, regional cooperation will invariably lead to a larger market size for the products of the region as it will allow free movement and lower tariff rates. An increase in the size of the market allows each firm to produce more and thus have lower average cost. The firms and economies of the region can be extremely beneficial from such alliances; for example the combined population of all countries in the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) region is more than 1.650019 trillion and the demand for a product can rise by the factor of n .

If economic integration occurs among SAARC countries, the economies of scale will dictate that each country produce its specialised range of products in a specific region, i.e. fan industry in Gujrat (Pakistan) and automobile industry in Pune (India). The effectiveness of such specialisation can be observed in the future with the end result of Pakistan supplying India with better quality lower cost fans and India exporting locally made cars. On the same footing Pakistan can produce seats or other automobile parts for the Indian car industry at a lower cost, opening doors for intra-industry trade in specialised goods. This is indeed the scenario of the future when more industrialisation occurs in the region. This will pave the way for external economies of scale to locate specialised suppliers in the same region. The specialised labour market can be found in the vicinity i.e. the I.T. professional from Pakistan could travel to Bangalore and contribute expertise to this developed sector over there. Also, the technical staff present in the area can gain from knowledge spill overs that occur if many firms of the same industry can be localised in a specific region.

Thus, most trade policy measures are undertaken primarily to protect the income of producers. In such a case it is the duty of politicians to go for an optimum tariff rate that should be lower than the rate the producers actually demand. All the regional organisations of which Pakistan is a part are trying to do the same. Secondly, the domestic failure argument in favour of such measures is very strong. At best, economists believe that internal market failures should be corrected by domestic policies aimed at problem sources and that the public in trading economies should be well guided as to the true costs of trade policy instruments.

As we have covered all the important economic theories of international trade, the lesson is that these theories only give a general idea for policy direction. Policy implementation is the most important and difficult part in how the government acts for the betterment of its people. The theories of economics guide us to have more free trade within the region. The policies emanating from these theories should be put to action keeping in view the special case of India and Pakistan and the holistic view of the management and development of economies within the local market. Increase in supply of goods would cut down costs in the local market and export gains can be made but the question remains: are the countries and industrialists within these countries ready for this change to act jointly? If fruit should be reaped from economies of scale, better joint ventures of firms appear to be the norm. Again the question is: are the two countries and other countries in the region ready to unite for joint productions? These questions are indeed important. Theories dictate having open borders and free trade but, at the same time, our policy makers should not overlook and forget the problems and hurdles associated with policy and try to address them for the economic stability of regional nations as a whole. Pakistan and India must continue to increase their economic activity irrespective of border and political disputes. As in other parts of the world like the European Union, economic integration and interests can lead to a resolution of political conflicts.

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This post is written by: Danish Ahmed Khan and Dr Abdur Rehman Cheema

Source: <http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/opinion/03-Oct-2015/india-pakistan-economic-cooperation>

No Hope For Peace and Stability | Dr Hasan Askari Rizvi



The speeches of the chief delegates of [Pakistan](#) and [India](#) at the 70th session of the United Nations General Assembly hardly create any hope for improvement in the bilateral relations of the two countries in the near future. Pakistan and India are now sticking to their traditional positions on the Kashmir dispute and that does not offer any possibility of accommodation. While Pakistan's prime minister presented the four-point proposal in his address to break the current stalemate, India's foreign minister declined to change the Modi government's current policy of reducing the relationship to a single-issue interaction. India's current mantra is that Pakistan must satisfy India on terrorism-related issues before other issues can be discussed. The other feature of the Modi government's Pakistan policy is to keep the country under military and diplomatic pressure, which manifests itself in the form of frequent exchange of fire across the Line of Control (LoC) and a sustained campaign at the international level for designating Pakistan a terrorist state.

All the four points suggested by Nawaz Sharif are not new ideas. Both Pakistan and India have explored these avenues in the past. The first point, relating to respecting ceasefire on the LoC, is based on the understanding reached between the Musharraf government and the BJP government, led by Atal Bihari Vajpayee, in November 2003, to keep the LoC peaceful and stable. This arrangement worked fairly well until the end of 2012. Violence erupted on the LoC from January 2013 onwards. The frequency and intensity of these incidents increased after Narendra Modi assumed power in the last week of May 2014. By the second quarter of 2015, there were firing incidents on the LoC and the Working Boundary every other day.

The second point, regarding the non-use or no threat of the use of force, takes us back to various proposals floated by Pakistani and Indian leaders since the early 1950s for a joint defence arrangement, no-war pact, no first use of nuclear weapons and a nuclear and conventional weapons restraint regime. Neither government pursued these ideas seriously.

The third point pertaining to demilitarisation of Kashmir was discussed by India and Pakistan in the course of the composite dialogue from 2004 till 2007, when both countries explored the option of gradual withdrawal of their military forces from their respective parts of Kashmir. This discussion was inconclusive.

The fourth point, regarding the unconditional withdrawal of Pakistani and Indian troops from the Siachen Glacier, takes us back to the 1989 understanding between the two countries to redeploy troops to the positions they held in April 1984. This would have returned Indian troops to the last demarcated point on the LoC, called NJ 9842. Pakistani troops were also to withdraw from their advance positions. This arrangement soon ran into trouble, mainly because of the opposition by the Indian Army. This issue is currently deadlocked, although the original understanding about the withdrawal is on record.

This four-point proposal was aimed at breaking the stalemate in relations between the two countries. However, it was not surprising that India rejected it because it negated its current hard line on Pakistan, reflecting the biases caused by the BJP's ultra-nationalism and the anti-Pakistan disposition of the Sangh Pariwar. The grand principle of a bilateral dialogue is that the agenda is mutually agreed upon and includes the concerns of both sides. India is violating this principle when it insists on a single-issue agenda, that Pakistan should tackle terrorism to India's satisfaction before any other issue is discussed. Instead of insisting on 'terrorism issues first', India should opt for 'terrorism and other issues' on the lines of Pakistan's strategy of 'Kashmir and other issues'. This would mean that for India, terrorism is a priority, but it will take up all other contentious issues in the same way as Pakistan is willing to talk on other issues, whilst prioritising Kashmir.

India made the first attempt at the international level to get Pakistan designated as a terrorist state in 1992-93. That attempt failed. The subsequent attempts, made from time to time, for this purpose, did not materialise. The US and other Western countries may have complaints about Pakistan's counterterrorism approach. However, they believe in engaging rather than isolating Pakistan. The US may sympathise with India on the issue of the Mumbai attack, but it does not share the Indian agenda of extracting political dividends by maligning Pakistan. The US has encouraged both countries to hold direct talks on contentious issues so as to defuse tension in the region.

Having lost hope for an early initiation of a dialogue with India, Pakistan has adopted a tough diplomatic approach of raising the Kashmir issue on international forums and informing the major states of the world and the UN about what it describes as India's financial support to terrorist groups in Fata, Balochistan and Karachi. Pakistan's army chief addressed two important institutes in London last week, pointing out India's hostility towards his country at a time when it was engaged in countering terrorism within its territory. He also underlined the need of addressing the Kashmir dispute. The diplomatic wrangling between Pakistan and India will further internationalise the Kashmir issue and the current troubles in the bilateral relationship. This will work more against India as it has an agenda for playing an active role at the regional and global levels. It will not be able to isolate its belligerent approach towards Pakistan from the rest of its foreign policy and global economic interaction. The long-term interests of Pakistan and India will be best served by resuming unconditional talks on all contentious issues, including terrorism (India's priority) and Kashmir (Pakistan's priority). Any other course of action is unnatural and detracts both countries from coping with poverty and under-development.

No Hope For Peace and Stability | Dr Hasan Askari Rizvi

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Kashmir Issue | Sultan M Hali



Ground realities

A lot of chest thumping and back-patting is being observed in government circles after Prime Minister Mian Nawaz Sharif's speech at the seventieth UNGA session although his four-point proposal to ease tension between India and Pakistan and move towards a workable solution of the festering Kashmir issue was spurned by India. Sushma Swaraj, Indian External Affairs Minister, responded venomously: "We do not need four points; we need just one—SHUN TERROR!"

It is time that ground realities regarding the Kashmir issue are taken into consideration. First and foremost, Pakistan lacks a sustained and coherent Kashmir policy. Various governments have tried to resolve the issue through different means. Ayub Khan's hands were forced by a coterie of ambitious politicians, bureaucrats and generals to initiate Operations Gibraltar and Grand Slam, which led to India launching a full scale war. Pakistan panicked but a handful of brave soldiers, airmen and sailors saved the day. India lacked strategic planners to see its military thrust bear fruition and the war ended in stalemate but the Kashmir situation remained unchanged. Under Yahya Khan, India planned and executed subversion, insurgency and full scale war in which Pakistan's eastern wing was severed while territories in the west were also lost. Under Zia-ul-Haq's authoritarian rule, India occupied Siachen and has held commanding positions since. As Army Chief, Musharraf tried the Kargil adventure, failed miserably, nearly lost his job but got resurrected as the country's Chief Executive through a soft coup. Musharraf tried to secure an out-of-the-box solution but got outsmarted by the Indians. The plight of the Kashmiris remained unchanged.

Zardari remained oblivious to the Kashmir problem while Nawaz Sharif, elected to lead the country for the third time, tried to mend fences with India through trade and commerce putting the Kashmir issue on the backburner.

He failed to comprehend that Narendra Modi assumed the mantle of Prime Minister with a clear agenda regarding Kashmir—its annexation to India to be completed before the end of his tenure.

Modi's Kashmir agenda is multi-pronged. To sideline the Kashmiri leadership and isolate them from Pakistan; to alter the demography of Indian Occupied Kashmir (IOK) by resettling Hindus so that Muslim majority of the Valley becomes a minority and finally abrogating Article 370 of the Indian Constitution (that grants special autonomous status to the state of Jammu and Kashmir) to amalgamate it as an integral part of India.

Nawaz Sharif should have got the message loud and clear when he was invited to the swearing in ceremony of Modi as the 15th Prime Minister of India and was warned not to meet any Kashmiri leader during his Bharat *yatra*. Mian sahib willingly obliged and gleefully held profitable meetings with Indian iron and steel magnates Birlas and Tatas only.

When India cancelled the Foreign Secretary level meeting scheduled in Islamabad on August 25, 2014, under the plea that Pakistan's High Commissioner in New Delhi had held meetings with the Hurriyat leaders prior to the Foreign Secretaries' Islamabad moot, Pakistan should have seen through Modi's machinations. While Indian forces were blatantly firing barrages of rockets and heavy artillery across the LoC, an undeterred Nawaz Sharif dispatched mangoes to his Indian counterpart and an expensive sari for Modi's mother.

The elections in IOK held in five phases (November 25-December 20, 2014), were expected to bring the BJP into power under its infamous "44+" formula i.e., aspiring to bag at least 44 seats in the Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Assembly. BJP did not achieve its target but managed to form a coalition government with PDP and is now calling the shots in IOK.

The second phase of the heinous Kashmir agenda was to appoint hardliner Hindu extremists like Ajit Doval as National Security Adviser (NSA), Sanjeev Tripathi, Rajnath Singh, et al in key positions. Being a former RSS *Parcharak*, Modi, like Dr Faust sold his soul to Mephistopheles, made a deal for RSS to run his election campaign and drive people out to vote for him. After his anointment as the Prime Minister, the RSS demanded its pound of flesh for backing the BJP campaign under Modi. Modi is endeavouring to change India's constitution from a secular state to a non-secular one promoting Hindutva.

The next phase of Modi's agenda has been put into motion where indiscriminate firing across the LoC and working boundary is being incessantly carried out, killing civilians, destroying property but blaming Pakistan for it. Simultaneously, false flag terror operations are being conducted, laying the blame squarely on Pakistan. The aim is to demonise Pakistan and have the world label Pakistan as a terrorist state while simultaneously abetting and arming terrorists to wreak havoc in Pakistan to destabilise it.

Meeting between the two Prime Ministers at the Russian city of UFA at the sidelines of the SCO Summit, in an atmosphere of bonhomie, Nawaz Sharif complied with the caveat imposed by India not to mention the K-word. Nawaz Sharif went a step ahead as he did not mention the Samjhota Express inferno or the BBC exposé of Indian machinations of spreading terror in Karachi, FATA, KPK and Balochistan, he assented to taking the alleged protagonists of 26/11 Mumbai attack to task and limit all future talks to "terrorism" only.

The meeting between the NSAs got scuttled because belatedly Pakistan decided to meet the Kashmiri leaders prior to the meeting.

Modi's refusal to deny the Kashmiri leadership as being the prime stakeholder in the Kashmir issue is contrary to all norms of humanitarian principles. The Occident, which following the cold blooded massacre of over 2,000 Muslims in the Indian state of Gujarat in 2002 under the stewardship of Narendra Modi, had refused to grant him entry visa to their respective countries but now welcome him with open arms only because India is a huge market and rising economy.

Under the circumstances, instead of having a knee jerk approach, Pakistan must chalk out a comprehensive Kashmir policy and mount diplomatic pressure on India to grant Kashmiris their rights assured by the UN. Indo-Pakistan membership into SCO is subject to both countries settling their issues bilaterally. Perhaps this card can be played effectively to come to terms with India through negotiations.

Source: <http://www.pakistantoday.com.pk/2015/10/08/comment/kashmir-issue-3/>

World Warned of Pak-India Clash



WASHINGTON: Warning of a “real and present threat” to South Asian peace and security, Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif has called on the world to help avert imminent threat of a conflagration between Pakistan and India. “The international community can no longer pretend that it (the threat of armed clash between the two nuclear neighbours) does not exist,” the prime minister said in a speech at a Washington think-tank, underscoring the need to resolve the decades-old Kashmir dispute. “Clearly, there is a real and present threat to peace and security in South Asia,” he spoke to a large audience at the United States Institute of Peace (USIP).

“It (the international community) must play a role to stop the slide towards a dangerous Pakistan-India crisis by preventing India’s belligerent actions rather than Pakistan’s defensive responses,” PM Nawaz said. “A normal and stable relationship between Pakistan-India can be built by adherence to the principles of the UN Charter, especially the principle of sovereign equality of states and non-interference in their internal affairs, and the right of peoples to self-determination,” he said. “There is no alternative for the two countries, but to resume a comprehensive dialogue to resolve all outstanding issues, including the core issue of Jammu and Kashmir.”

Premier Nawaz, who met with President Barack Obama, also said Pakistan was ready to help Afghanistan revive peace talks with Afghan Taliban. The prime minister referred to his meetings with his Indian counterpart Narendra Modi, and said the planned National Security Advisers’ of the two countries was scuttled by India’s attempts to limit the talks to a single issue and to dictate the programme of Pakistani NSA in New Delhi. “The cancellation of the NSA-level talks has been followed by increased ceasefire violations by India across the Line of Control (in Kashmir) and the Working Boundary (near Sialkot), as well as a stream of hostile statements by

the Indian political and military leadership,” he said. Meanwhile, Nawaz said, “Anti-Pakistan actions by Hindu extremists are exacerbating the present tensions in our region.”

Referring to his new peace initiative that he outlined in his last month’s address to the UN General Assembly, the prime minister said India’s response was not positive. “While refusing dialogue, India is engaged in a major arms buildup, regrettably with the active assistance of several powers,” he said, adding that Pakistan would be compelled to take several countermeasures to preserve credible deterrence to some dangerous military doctrines adopted by India. The prime minister did not name the powers he blames for arming India, but Delhi is overhauling and modernising its armed forces with the help of several partners. Last month, for example, it signed a \$3 billion deal with US engineering giant Boeing for Apache attack helicopters and Chinook transports.

On Afghanistan, he said there are two paths to peace – a military victory over the insurgents or a negotiated peace and national reconciliation. “Over the past 14 years, a military solution has been elusive,” he said. “We believe that it is unlikely to be achieved in the future. Thus, achieving peace through negotiations is the best option.” Pakistan, Nawaz Sharif said, had no reason to want any violence in Afghanistan. “The attacks on the Afghan government, and indeed on Pakistan, emanate from the vast areas in Afghanistan now under Taliban control,” he said.

Pakistan’s priority was to defeat the TTP (Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan), which has also found bases on Afghan territory. “Peace within Afghanistan will enable Pakistan to eliminate the TTP threat.” He said he had conveyed to President Ghani that, if he desires, Pakistan was prepared to assist in reviving the talks between Kabul and the Afghan Taliban. “But we cannot bring them to the table and be asked to kill them at the same time,” he said. Pakistan’s military operation, Zarb-e-Azb, launched in June 2014, the largest anywhere in the world, had produced remarkable results. Terrorists’ sanctuaries, command and control and infrastructure have been destroyed, he said, adding thousands have been killed or captured. “The rest are on the run. As the operation goes into its final phase, their few remaining hideouts will be cleared,” he declared.

Simultaneously, he said through well-coordinated, intelligence-based law enforcement operations across Pakistan, the government has launched a focused campaign against terrorist sleeper cells, their supporters, sympathisers and financiers. “This significant improvement in the security situation could not have been possible without the resolve of the people, parliamentary consensus and the dedication and sacrifice of our security forces, all of whom came together to counter and confront this menace,” he said.

“The bravery of 14 year old Aitzaz Hasan of Hangu, who sacrificed his life to save his fellow students, and the extraordinary tenacity of Malala Yousafzai has inspired the entire nation to rise against this scourge. Hundreds of such stories of heroism have been written in blood and tears. “And the blood that has been shed has only strengthened our national resolve to fight until the last terrorist is eliminated.” Reaffirming Pakistan’s commitment to the objectives of non-proliferation and disarmament, the prime minister said a number of national measures have been adopted to strengthen export controls and security.

To fulfill its vast energy needs, he said, Pakistan will install several civil nuclear power plants, under IAEA safeguards. “We look forward to international cooperation in this context. As a responsible nuclear power, and one with the expertise, manpower and infrastructure to produce civil nuclear energy, it would be mutually beneficial for Pakistan to be accepted as a member of the Nuclear Suppliers Group and other export control regimes.”

World Warned of Pak-India Clash

Source: <http://nation.com.pk/national/24-Oct-2015/world-warned-of-pak-india-clash>

Win Pak-India Nuke War? | Pervez Hoodbhoy



That Pakistan may first use nuclear weapons in a future war with India was announced last week by Foreign Secretary Aizaz Chaudhry. Coming just two days before Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif's Oct 22 visit to Washington, this could be considered a reiteration of the army's well-known stance. But, significantly it came from the Foreign Office rather than GHQ or Strategic Plans Division. Coming from both ends of the power spectrum, this confirms that Pakistan has drastically shifted its nuclear posture.

In the late 1980s, Pakistan had viewed nuclear weapons very differently; they were the last-ditch means to deter a possible nuclear attack by India. But Pakistan now says it intends to use low-yield nuclear bombs, also called tactical nuclear weapons, to forestall the possible advance of Indian troops into Pakistan under India's 'Cold Start' operational doctrine.

Floated by Gen Deepak Kapoor in 2010, Cold Start calls for cutting Pakistan into "salami slices" as punishment for hosting yet another Mumbai-style terrorist attack inside India. It assumes that this limited action would not provoke a nuclear exchange. India strenuously denies that such a doctrine is official or that it has been made operational.

This denial cut no ice across the border. In 2011 a successful test of the Nasr "shoot and scoot" short-ranged missile was announced by ISPR, the Pakistan military's official voice. Ensnconced inside a multiple-barrelled mobile launcher the four 60-kilometre-range missiles are said to be tipped with nuclear warheads each roughly one-tenth the size of a Hiroshima-sized weapon. Pakistan says these tactical weapons will not destabilise the current balance or pose significant command and control problems, a claim that many believe as incorrect.

Pakistan is not the first country tempted by nuclear force multipliers. Nor, as claimed by ISPR, is making small warheads a significant technical feat. In fact in the 1950s the Americans had developed even smaller ones with sub-kiloton yields, and placed them on the Davy Crockett recoilless guns deployed at forward positions along the Turkey-USSR border. The nuclear shell, with a blast yield that would be dialled as required, could be fired by just two infantrymen. This was a tempting alternative to artillery but the Americans were eventually unnerved by the prospect of two soldiers setting off a nuclear war on their own initiative. The weapon was withdrawn and decommissioned after a few years.

Wars are fought to be won, not to be lost. So how will Pakistan's new weapons help us win a war? This fundamental question is never even touched. But let us assume their use in a post Mumbai-II scenario. For every (small) mushroom cloud on Pakistani territory, roughly a dozen or more Indian main battle tanks and armoured vehicles would be destroyed. After many mushrooms, the invasion would stop dead in its tracks and a few thousand Indian troops would be killed. Pakistan would decisively win a battle.

But then what? With the nuclear threshold crossed for the first time since 1945, India would face one of two options: to fight on or flee. Which it will choose is impossible to predict because much will depend upon the extant political and military circumstances, as well as the personalities of the military and political leaders then in office.

Official Indian policy calls for massive retaliation. In 2013, reacting officially to Pakistan, Shyam Saran, the head of the National Security Advisory Board (the apex body concerned with security matters) declared that, "India will not be the first to use nuclear weapons, but if it is attacked with such weapons, it would engage in nuclear retaliation which will be massive and designed to inflict unacceptable damage on its adversary. The label on a nuclear weapon used for attacking India, strategic or tactical, is irrelevant from the Indian perspective".

Simply stated: whether struck by a micro-nuke or mini-nuke or city-buster, and whether on its own soil or outside its borders, India says it will consider itself under nuclear attack and react accordingly.

This is plain stupid. It violates the principle of proportionate retaliation and pushes aside the barriers to hell. But could the NSAB be bluffing? It may be that if push comes to shove, India will not actually launch its large nuclear weapons. The sensible instinct of self-preservation might somehow prevail, and the subcontinent live to see another morning.

More likely is that in the heat of the moment, reckless passions will rage and caution will take a backseat. A tit-for-tat exchange could continue until every single weapon, small and large, is used up on either side. It is difficult to imagine how any war termination mechanism could work even if, by some miracle, the nuclear command and control centres remain intact. At the end both India and Pakistan would win, having taught the other a terrible lesson. But neither would remain habitable.

The subcontinent's military and political leaders are not the first to believe that a nuclear war can remain limited, and perhaps even won. President Reagan puzzled over the possibility of Armageddon, uncertain whether or not God was commanding him to destroy earth or to leave it in His hands. Allen Dulles, the first CIA director, had repeatedly railed against the stupidity of those Americans, "who draw an 'artificial' distinction between nuclear and conventional weapons and cannot realise that atomic bombs should be treated like bullets".

Tactical nukes will not make Pakistan more secure. This dangerous programme should be immediately abandoned. Nukes may win a battle for us but at the cost of losing Pakistan. Instead our security lies in ensuring that Pakistan's territory is not used for launching terror attacks upon our neighbours. We must explicitly renounce the use of covert war to liberate Kashmir — a fact hidden from none and recently admitted to by Gen Musharraf.

As for India: your security depends upon adopting a less belligerent attitude towards Pakistan, stopping a menacing military build-up that is spooking all your neighbours, and realising that respect is earned through economic rather than military strength.

These are tall orders for both countries. Any optimism is currently unwarranted.

The writer teaches physics in Islamabad and Lahore.

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Source: <http://www.dawn.com/news/1216449/win-pak-india-nuke-war>

Two-Nation Theory Stand Tall | Ali Sukhanver



It is something very clear and obvious that Pakistan and India have been in a state of war since long. India has always showed its hostility against Pakistan at every platform and this hostility is not going to die at least in the reign of Mr. Modi. The survival of BJP and Mr. Modi is directly linked with aggravation of anti-Pakistan and anti-Muslim feelings among the Indian Hindus. Life is nothing but fear and harassment for the Muslims in India and all credit goes to Mr Modi for this fear and harassment.

The cruelty and brutality with which the RSS, the Shiv Sina and the BJP type of extremist organisations have been treating the Muslims for the last many years is continuously increasing, particularly after Modi's becoming the Prime Minister of India. How pathetic is the fact that in this very modern world of today, the innocent Muslims of India are being butchered there if they are found eating beef or transporting it or even suspected of storing it. The Muslims have to face discrimination-based attitude and treatment at hands of the Hindutva followers at every step and in every field of life.

The days when Modi was the Chief Minister of Gujrat, the Rediff India published a report which said, "In the last five years Modi and his government have systematically put in policies that are discriminatory in nature. Getting a ration card or even a passport is a nightmare in the state of Gujrat as government employees harass them for no reason. For Muslims, even getting a job is not easy. But what pinches Muslims the most is the discrimination in education. Muslim children do not get admissions in 'decent' schools." Same is the situation today. The Hindu extremists are doing all possible to make the life of the Muslims a blazing hell. Gardiner Harris says in an article published in the New York Times, ' Discrimination against Muslims in India is so rampant that many barely muster outrage when telling of the withdrawn apartment offers, rejected job applications and turned-down loans that are part of living in the country for them. As a group, Muslims have fallen badly behind Hindus in recent decades in education, employment and economic status, with persistent discrimination a key

reason. Muslims are more likely to live in villages without schools or medical facilities and less likely to qualify for bank loans.'

It is not only the matter with the Muslims living in India: the Muslims belonging to other countries also have to face the same cruel humiliation at the hands of Hindu extremists. The World Hindu News has recently published a letter of a Hindu extremist J. Arora. The letter says,' Though Indo-Pak sports and cultural exchanges had been snapped after the Pakistan-sponsored terrorist attack on Mumbai in November but it is shocking that Ghulam Ali, a Pakistani singer, had been invited to perform in Mumbai and Pune in October, 2015. And after the said functions in Mumbai and Pune have been cancelled because of strong protests from the nationalists, the said singer is being invited to perform in Delhi and Kolkata.

Such invitations convey very horrible messages. India has lost countless soldiers and civilians in Pakistan sponsored terrorist attacks. And even now, this terrorism is continuing. In this background, it is shameful for any Indian to invite any Pakistani singer for any function.' But on the other hand, we find no such type of anti-India or anti-Hindus movement in Pakistan. The people of Pakistan want peaceful relations based on equality with all their neighbouring countries including India but their desire for peace must not be taken as their weakness.

—The writer is freelance columnist based in Multan.

Two-Nation Theory Stand Tall | Ali Sukhanver

Source: <http://pakobserver.net/detailnews.asp?id=277461>

World

When Obama and Putin Crossed Swords at the UN | Anwer Mooraj



The unexpected presence of [Vladimir Putin](#) at the 70th session of the United Nations added an element of theatre to the proceedings. Not only did the Russian leader see a unique opportunity to air his views about the international crisis to a worldwide audience — a disaster which has been spawned by the jihadist attack on Syria and Iraq — he also dwelt on the lukewarm efforts being made by the United States and its allies to counter the extremist jihadist threat. More than 150 heads of state listened with rapt attention to a man who wanted to tell the world that Russia was still a superpower and should be taken seriously and treated with respect and not indifference. When Putin spoke, the air was saturated with tension.

[Barack Obama](#) was his usual self as he conjugated the rigours of his calling. He is a good extempore speaker with excellent narrative skills and listeners often hang onto his every word as if it had floated down from Mount Olympus. Each sentence of his address is usually delivered with headline-reading brevity. In the UN session, he spoke slowly and deliberately as is his custom, without notes, and paused, perhaps to let the translators from Thailand and Egypt absorb the import of what he had to say. But this time he was involved in a verbal duel with Putin, the Russian leader who has a reputation for standing by his friends and allies. He had come to set the record straight and was ready to engage in a verbal duel.

” Deep down President Obama and David Cameron know that Russia is right

After plumbing the depths of the Syrian crisis, Putin harshly criticised American policy in the Middle East and elsewhere. However, not having been groomed and moulded in the cosy, chintzy, polite vernacular of the Western establishment, his speech appeared to have been written with a chisel rather than a quill. After reviving Russia's historic role in the Middle East, he called for a new broad coalition to fight the Islamic State (IS). And the only way to do this is to strengthen the hand of Syrian President Bashar al Assad and to organise a new Syrian peace conference to be attended by a "contact group" of outside powers, including Russia and the United States, as well as regional powers such as Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Turkey and Iran. The latest we heard in our neck of the woods was that Russian war planes were pounding the rebels fighting the Syrian Army and that Iranian troops had entered Syria.

Frankly, I think Putin is making a lot of sense and I suspect that deep down President Obama and David Cameron know that Russia is right. The IS is a danger, not just to Western democracies, but also to the Middle East, Russia, Saudi Arabia and the Gulf Emirates. This is no local skirmish. This is a war being fought between a coalition of powers that believe that battles should be fought from the air and not on the ground — and a force that is savage and brutal and merciless, but fearless in battle, like the Japanese foot soldier in the Second World War. A force fueled by an ideal. And so the Syrian refugees continue to pour into eastern Europe and the Hungarians and Romanians continue to expel them. As a tailpiece, I would like to quote from my favourite journalist Roger Cohen of *The New York Times*, who in a recent column wrote, "Being part of Stefan Zweig's 'community of expulsion' Jews cannot now turn their backs on the expelled." Of course, this was written in a completely different context but I would like to think that a humanist like him also had the Syrian refugees in mind. The Syrians and the Palestinians are not the real problem for Israel. But the IS jolly well could be. It is only a matter of time.

Published in The Express Tribune, October 4th, 2015.

Is World Heading For World War-III?



As war on terrorism, which has imperilled peace and security of different parts of the globe, is continuing, there are several others alarming developments that could push the world to World War-III. Russian planes have been bombing targets in Syria and in the latest move its jet violated Turkish airspace, prompting Turkish Prime Minister to declare that he would take all necessary measures to protect his country's borders from violation. There were also consultations among the United States and Turkey over infringement.

It is understood that Turkey has the capability to defend itself and it is also a fact that Turkey would not be alone if the tension escalates. In a related development, NATO has decided to open a counter-espionage hub in Poland by year's end aimed at expanding the alliance's intelligence gathering capabilities as it faces 'threats from the east and the south'. Middle East is already in turmoil where apart from Israeli atrocities against Palestinians, both Iraq and Syria are witnessing worst type of crisis of existence, mainly due to foreign intervention and invasions. Yemen is also in the midst of a civil war where trouble-makers, aided by some foreign powers, are fighting against a legitimate Government and the resultant instability in their neighbourhood has forced Saudi Arabia and allies to intervene. On the other hand, as Palestinians are gradually getting global recognition, Israeli intransigence is increasing and the Jewish Prime Minister has threatened to fight to the death with Palestinians. Palestinians have been barred from entering Jerusalem Old City and Tel Aviv has decided to demolish more Palestinian homes and add to its illegal settlements. Similar policy is being pursued by Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who is continuously raising tension with Pakistan and hurling threats of all kinds. With Russia flexing its muscles, the West becoming unnecessarily weary of 'rising China' and several flash-points threatening peace in different regions, there are genuine apprehensions that the world is moving towards another major global crisis. It is, therefore, time for the international community to realize the danger, contain threats and make the UN relevant in fulfilling its responsibilities vis-à-vis world peace and security.

Source: <http://pakobserver.net/detailnews.asp?id=274913>

Triple Threat: America, China and Russia on the Path to Conflict?



“Whatever one chooses to label this confrontation, it is rising to a level where it cannot simply be dismissed, diminished or explained away...”

The United Nations is intended to be the world’s hub for cooperation and conflict resolution based on diplomacy and international law. So it’s a good thing when world leaders gather for the annual debate of the UN General Assembly and engage in direct, substantive discussions on the global and regional challenges that matter most. Unfortunately, the message this year from the three biggest powers—the United States, Russia, and China—was that dialogue and diplomacy have failed to keep up with an emerging new confrontational spirit.

The showdown between Presidents Obama and Putin was widely anticipated before the two leaders made their appearances on the dais in New York, barely more than an hour apart. In fact, the White House and the Kremlin had already agreed to stage a brief summit meeting between the presidents on the sidelines of the General Assembly to address the rapidly deteriorating crisis in Syria. Yet it is now clear that no amount of advance preparation and even substantial direct contact between the two presidents was sufficient to prevent the war of words from signaling what many are already calling the onset of a new Cold War.

Whatever one chooses to label this confrontation, it is rising to a level where it cannot simply be dismissed, diminished, or explained away by those who imagine that the world has somehow graduated from the era of geopolitical rivalries among great powers to a more enlightened, liberal order. Quite the contrary. The current conflict could prove to be as dangerous as the U.S.-Soviet confrontation that shaped the last century, and it will undoubtedly be far more complex. That is above all because of the massively increased power and yet still ambiguous intentions of a third key actor: China.

Taking the podium ahead of his Russian and Chinese counterparts, President Obama spoke of American power and leadership founded on values which he insists are universally shared. The United States, he argued, is the wealthiest and most powerful country on Earth precisely because of its commitment to human freedom and basic human rights. For other nations to enjoy a better life, they must first of all embrace and practice these values, rejecting any narrative that justifies limits on human rights in the name of cultural or civilizational identity.

It was no surprise that President Putin responded with a sharp critique of what he called America's abuse of power. Putin slammed not only Americans' penchant for preaching to others about the superiority of their values, but railed against the destruction wrought by U.S. violations of the very international rules it purports to defend. According to Putin, reckless U.S. interventions in the name of removing and replacing foreign governments have destroyed societies, brought untold suffering, and most recently unleashed the threat of ISIS, which in turn triggered the global refugee crisis.

What is perhaps more troubling than the obvious clash between the U.S. and Russian leaders—underscored by the entanglement of both sides' military forces in Syria—is the apparent indifference and ambiguity of the response from China, the third vital great power in the new global strategic triangle.

Rather than endorse or reject the strong statements from Putin and Obama, President Xi simply repeated platitudes about the importance of basic international rules, and how China's rise will entail harmonious cooperation with other states, large and small. Xi offers such cold comfort to a distressed international community at the same time that he has proposed what is effectively a U.S.-China condominium, which he calls "a new model for big power relations," and has put forward a concept for Chinese-led economic integration from Europe to East Asia, dubbed "One Belt One Road." Thus, while China assures the world that it will play by the rules, and does not seek any sphere of influence or territorial aggrandizement, it is busily expanding its own economic footprint globally and apparently developing geopolitical ambitions to match.

History suggests there are three basic paths forward for the current configuration of great power relations and global challenges. The U.S., China and Russia could find some degree of mutual accommodation in their shared interests in preserving free global trade, travel, and cooperation against global threats such as terrorism, climate change, and pandemic disease. Alternatively, the barriers of distrust could remain so high among all three that each pursues its national interests and purported values in isolation from the others, deepening the current global disorder and likely exacerbating a host of regional and global crises.

Finally, the "New Cold War" Cassandras could turn out to be right. However, the defining geopolitical rivalry of the 21st century will inevitably engage not only Washington and Moscow, but Beijing as well. Judging by the three leaders' disjointed UN discourse, some combination of global disorder and new dividing lines seems most likely, at least until mounting challenges and crises force these juggernauts to seek a more cooperative path.

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America, China and Russia on the Path to Conflict?

Source: <http://www.nationalinterest.org/feature/triple-threat-america-china-russia-the-path-conflict-14020>

Modi appeals for religious unity after beef murder row in India



Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi appealed for religious unity on Thursday after days of growing tensions over a Muslim man's murder by a mob for supposedly eating beef in Hindu-majority India.

The Hindu nationalist premier has been under growing pressure to break his silence over the incident and defuse a row raging over a feared rising intolerance towards Muslims and other religious minorities.

Mohammad Akhlaq, 50, was dragged from his home outside the Indian capital last week and beaten to death after rumours spread that he had eaten beef. His 22-year-old son was severely injured in the attack.

At least eight men have been arrested over the September 28 murder.

Without referring specifically to the attack, Modi said the nation will only prosper "when Hindus and Muslims unite and fight" against poverty instead of against each other.

"The country has to stand united. Harmony, brotherhood and peace will lead us to development," Modi said at an election rally for the upcoming polls in Bihar state in eastern India.

The premier also implored people to ignore political leaders who have jumped on the issue in recent days to win votes along religious lines ahead of the election.

Several of Modi's own ministers have stopped short of condemning the attack outside New Delhi, fuelling concerns among religious minorities of an erosion of rights in the world's biggest democracy, and emboldening Hindu hardliners.

Cows are considered sacred by most Hindus in officially secular India whose millions of Muslims and other minorities eat beef as a source of protein.

President Pranab Mukherjee on Wednesday called for India's tradition of tolerance to be upheld, in what was seen as an attempt to calm raging anger over the issue.

Modi's comments come just hours after legislators from his ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (*BJP*) *punched and shoved an opposition Muslim member* in a state parliament over eating beef.

Modi's party, which came to power in May 2014, wants a nationwide ban on the slaughter of cows, which is prohibited in some but not all states. India is the world's biggest exporter of buffalo meat, an industry mainly run by Muslims.

Modi's BJP colleagues have come under fire for appearing to trivialise Akhlaq's murder.

"If somebody says it was pre-planned, I don't agree. It was an accident and investigations should happen," Modi's culture minister Mahesh Sharma told reporters during a visit to the victim's family last week.

Commentators have also warned of an emboldening of Hindu hardliners since Modi came to power, with vigilante gangs increasingly campaigning against Muslims.

Source: <http://www.dawn.com/news/1211743>

Banning Weapons not to end N-Race: US



WASHINGTON: Banning weapons will not end the nuclear race, says a senior US official while pointing out that both India and Pakistan are adding to their atomic arsenals.

These remarks by US Assistant Secretary of State for Arms Control Frank A. Rose coincided with a Washington Post report that the Obama administration was considering various options to end the nuclear race in South Asia.

According to the report, the United States appears willing to offer the same nuclear deal that it offered to India a few years ago. The deal allowed New Delhi to mainstream its nuclear programme. In return for the deal, Pakistan will have to accept certain restrictions on its programme.

At a recent seminar at Kings College, London, Assistant Secretary Rose clubbed India and Pakistan with North Korea and Iran in a reference to nations that were expanding their nuclear weapons capabilities.

“Some want to oversimplify this task by suggesting all we need to do is ban nuclear weapons. That ignores today’s complicated reality,” said Mr Rose.

“Russia and China are modernising their nuclear forces; India and Pakistan are adding to their arsenals; North Korea’s nuclear and missile programmes remain a concern to all; and Iran, despite the landmark nuclear deal, continues its ballistic missile programmes,” he said.

While acknowledging that banning weapons will not end nuclear proliferation, Mr Rose said: “We must consider how we effectively deter multiple adversaries with varying capabilities.”

Diplomatic observers in Washington argue that the US-India deal, which allowed New Delhi to join the Nuclear Suppliers Group, should also be reviewed in this context.

They say that there is a realisation in Washington that they will have to reconsider their policy towards Pakistan as well because banning its nuclear programme may not succeed in persuading Islamabad to give up its weapons.

David Ignatius, who wrote the article indicating a new thought pattern in Washington for dealing with Pakistan, said that it would be a long process.

“What’s happening now is a very preliminary discussion of what would be a long and difficult negotiation, and I have to say that it’s a long shot,” he told Dawn.

“Dawn readers should not assume this will happen next month or next year ... but this is precisely the kind of issue that the US and Pakistan should be discussing,” he added.

In his piece for the Post, Mr Ignatius indicated that the issue might also be discussed during Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif’s visit to Washington next week.

Assistant Secretary Frank Rose also underlined the difficulties that the US faced in achieving its target for a nuclear-free world.

“Achieving a world without nuclear weapons will be a difficult, painstaking process, undertaken over many years,” he said. “Future arms control success will require creativity, patience and persistence.”

Published in Dawn, October 13th, 2015

US not Leaving Afghanistan Anytime Soon



WASHINGTON: US Defense Secretary Ashton Carter on Wednesday indicated the United States would maintain extra troops in Afghanistan beyond the end of next year.

Under current plans, the United States will draw-down its troop numbers by the end of 2016 from about 10,000 currently to a crew of only about 1,000.

Echoing remarks he made at a Nato meeting in Brussels last week, Carter said it was important for the United States “to formulate options for 2016 and beyond and make adjustments to the planned US presence based on current circumstances.”

The Obama administration has come under criticism for its planned withdrawal of forces, with opponents saying the move opens up Afghanistan to more attacks by the Taliban, who just two weeks ago captured the city of Kunduz.

A swift response by US-trained Afghan security forces led to an eventual Taliban retreat.

“It’s important to say these things because the narrative that we’re leaving Afghanistan is self-defeating,” Carter told an Army conference in Washington.

“We’re not, we can’t, and to do so would not be to take advantage of the success we’ve had to date.” Nato forces have been in Afghanistan since 2001.

Though the United States represents by far the largest contingent, Carter last week said several Nato defense ministers told him they were open to modifications to current plans.

Source: <http://www.dawn.com/news/1213065/us-not-leaving-afghanistan-anytime-soon>

Western Policies Toward Nuclear S Asia | Zumra N Cheema



THERE is no permanent friend or permanent enemy in international politics but permanent interests, a friend of today may be the enemy of tomorrow and enemy of today may be the friend of tomorrow. International system is anarchical and entirely based on realism. Global order is characterised by the principle of "Might is right", in which there is no place for humane and moral values. Power and interests are two main drivers of states' behaviors.

Weaker and smaller states in hierarchical system are constantly getting exploit by great powers. There is no universal judiciary system which can curtail such trend in international arena. Existing framework of rules and laws is getting ridiculed by its own founders. A just, rules-based global order has long been touted by powerful states as essential for international peace and security. Yet there is a long history of major powers using international law against other states but not complying with it themselves, and even reinterpreting or making new multilateral rules further serve their interests.

US and other P5 states claim themselves founders of Arms Control and Disarmament initiatives, while they are not acting in accordance with the terms and conditions of the major main apparatus of non-proliferation efforts i.e. Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) . Pakistan and India are two defacto nuclear weapon states in South Asian region. Owing to pursuing nuclear weapons, both of the states went through huge criticism and economic and military sanctions from the world community.

Western policies towards both of the states have been remained so inconsistent and fluctuating. if someone looks at the western policies toward nuclear India and Pakistan then he will get to know that major powers particularly US the present super power, is being used both the countries, manly Pakistan for its own interests. As Pakistan adapted US alignment policy since the time of its independence in 1947. US remained using

Pakistan against Russia and China but at the time of necessity US withdrew to support Pakistan i.e. in the wars of 1965 and 1971, but contrary to support it imposed heavy arm embargo on Pakistan.

Later on, when India detonated its atomic bomb in 1974 then again Pakistan came under the military and economic sanctions. While during 1979 to 1988 America provide strong support to Pakistan to fight on its behalf against Soviet's forces in Afghanistan. In the meanwhile, US intentionally overlooked the Pakistan's nuclear programme as well. Afterwards, at the end of Afghan war US imposed strict sanctions on Pakistan under Pressler amendment.

Moreover, in 1998, once again sanctions imposed on Pakistan. Later on in 2001, with the terrorist attack in US, again America coerce Pakistan to fight against terrorism.

If someone noticed Indian side, then he will come to evaluate that India did not confronted with as much aggression and criticism as Pakistan did from world community. Although, after nuclear explosions in 1974, and 1998 India also came under international sanctions but those sanctions were not endorsed by the various great powers i.e. Russia, France and Britain etc. Moreover, since 9/11 US is being inclined towards India rather than Pakistan. Currently India is becoming the largest arms importer and its defence budget is constantly increasing but US and other western powers do not have any concern about it. US considers India more favorable to serve its interests in South Asia because India is an emerging power, with second largest population rate and having vibrant democratic system.

Thus under 123 agreement, India had been given by various such nuclear waivers by Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG) which did not provide to any other non-NPT signatory state. Resultantly, India become able to get material and technology from 48 member of NSG for its nuclear power programme. Furthermore, India is signing different accords with Russia, Britain, Australia, Canada and many other states and can increase its fissile material. Although Pakistan has proved itself enough mature and rational state to safe and secure its nuclear programme after A.Q Khan case but still remained unable to get any wavier like India by NSG.

Dichotomy and diplomacy of international community does not ends here, but still Pakistan is at the epicenter of criticism and apprehension from global powers. Many international defence analysts have expressed unnecessary and unjustifiable anxiety on the country's nuclear programme. They are persistently spreading baseless and wrong narratives with respect to Pakistan nuclear capabilities. A recent report published by two American think tanks is symbol to this fact. The authors of the report claimed that Pakistan's nuclear arsenal may become the world's third largest over the next five to 10 years.

Moreover, at the same time western scholars and security experts recommend various suggestions to halt arm race with India. By thanking to those scholars, I will want to raise some questions by the global powers that why those world powers do not have any concern about their own military advancements? Why they do not question the Israeli nuclear capability? why they do not bring the land and naval military modernisations of India under consideration? They are only focusing on Pakistan nuclear programme! Why?

— The writer is Researcher at Strategic Vision Institute, Islamabad

Source: <http://pakobserver.net/detailnews.asp?id=275979>

US Think-Tanks ask Pakistan to sign CTBT Without Waiting for India



Amidst talk of discussion between Pakistan and United States on the nuclear issue during the visit of Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, two US think-tanks have asked Pakistan to take five initiatives, including signing the Test Ban Treaty without waiting for India, to win the confidence of the international community.

“We propose that Pakistan consider five nuclear weapon-related initiatives,” said Stimson Center and Carnegie Endowment for International Relations (CEIP).

“One: shift declaratory policy from ‘full spectrum’ to ‘strategic’ deterrence. Two: commit to a recessed deterrence posture and limit production of short-range delivery vehicles and tactical nuclear weapons,” the two think-tanks said.

“Three: Lift Pakistan’s veto on Fissile Material Cutoff Treaty negotiations and reduce or stop fissile material production,” they said.

“Four: Separate civilian and military nuclear facilities. And finally: Sign the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty without waiting for India,” they said.

The think-tanks presented the findings ahead of Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif’s visit to the US and his talks with US President Barack Obama on October 22.

These recommendations were first proposed in a detailed report by Stimson’s Michael Krepon and CEIP’s Toby Dalton, in which they argued that these steps being taken by Islamabad would advance Pakistan’s national, social, and economic security interests.

Terrorism

Can IS Presence in Pakistan Still be Denied



There's no mistaking it any longer: the self-styled Islamic State is making inroads in the country.

In a militancy-riven landscape like that of Pakistan, where violent extremist groups have had a long run virtually unimpeded by state action until recently, this signifies a dangerous new dimension in the war against terrorism.

However, the stance adopted by the authorities suggests they are either deliberately underplaying the threat, perhaps for public consumption, or else are unmindful of the wider ramifications.

Take a look: Police claim tracing 53 'IS-inspired' militants

According to statements by law-enforcement agencies this week, investigations into the Safoora Goth carnage in Karachi in May have uncovered the existence of a number of terrorist groups "inspired by IS's ideology"; notwithstanding Sindh police's denial that it had issued a list of suspected militants linked with these.

The IGP Sindh informed the Senate Standing Committee on Interior that the group responsible for the Safoora Goth massacre is also associated with IS and that its commander had since fled to Syria.

From the outset, the state has emphatically denied the presence of IS in Pakistan; doing otherwise is especially inconvenient at a time when it is seen as taking proactive steps against terrorism.

Law-enforcement authorities are still at pains to point out there may not be any direct links between militants in Pakistan and IS, the entity fighting in the Middle East.

Even if true, that is an inconsequential detail: it is the group's ideology that matters, and the danger lies in the fact that Pakistan's militant networks are a natural constituency for this pan-Islamist and violently sectarian ideology.

Moreover, IS has also staked a claim to this region — which it refers to by its historical name of Khorasan — as part of its expansionist agenda; and its territorial gains in Syria and Iraq, where it is putting its ultra-radical ideology into practice, offer a template for terrorist groups in Pakistan.

Among these is the Lashkar-i-Jhangvi, one of the main perpetrators of sectarian carnage in the country, whose links with the 'IS-inspired' militants have been disclosed by the police.

Others likely to be seduced by the IS model are disaffected elements from comparatively, or nominally, peaceful organisations aspiring to more 'robust' means of achieving their objectives.

It seems that even urban, educated youth are not immune, evidence of how Pakistani society as a whole has drifted to the right over the years.

Extremism is not static: if allowed to fester — whether by design or by ill-considered policies — it will spawn ever more radical versions of itself.

The trajectory of terrorism both in the international as well as the domestic arena is illustrative of this.

Many local outfits that began with state-sponsored jihadist objectives have displayed increasingly reactionary, even anti-state, tendencies.

Some, it seems, are still being tolerated, as long as they toe the line. If Pakistan is to definitively change course, there must be no room for such elements on its soil.

Published in Dawn, October 15th , 2015

ISIS: Future Threat to World's Amity (Peace) | Tehmina Maqbool Khattak



Extremist groups are usually nebulous organizations. ISIS can mark out its history directly back to the terrorist organization, Al Qaeda, particularly the Iraqi splinter group. Al-Qaeda in Iraq was led by Abu Musab al-Zarqawi. After Al-Zarqawi was killed by an American airstrike, leadership of the group ultimately fell to an experienced Iraqi fighter, Abu Du'a, better known as Abu Bakr Al-Baghdadi, who had once been in U.S. detention in Iraq.

AQI was weakened in Iraq in 2007 as a result of what is known as the Sunni stirring, when a large alliance of Iraqi Sunni tribes, supported by the U.S., fought against the jihadist group. AQI maxim a prospect to recoup its clout and expand its ranks in the Syrian conflict that started in 2011, moving into Syria from Iraq. By 2013 Al-Baghdadi had spread his group's influence back into Iraq and changed the group's name to ISIS which refers to the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria. Different translations of the Arabic name Al-Baghdadi gave his organization have spawned other English lingo versions such as the Islamic State of Iraq and al-Sham (also ISIS) or the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL). It is also known as Daesh, based on an Arabic acronym.

ISIS axiom a series of successes as it has cut its way from Syria into Iraq and towards Baghdad using a mishmash of military proficiency and unimaginable brutality. Societal media accounts connected with ISIS have published disturbing videos purportedly showing ISIS fighters taunting, torturing and executing scores of

unarmed prisoners. In addition, former senior U.S. military officials who served in Iraq and helped train the Iraqi defence forces said that ISIS has been proficient to take advantage of government forces that lack the motivation to put up a good fight against ISIS in some areas.

The Iraqi government and quite a bit of its military officer corps are generally comprised of Shia's Muslims, though a great part of the zones ISIS has held in Iraq are prevalently Sunni, as ISIS, that implies the military powers of Iraq regularly working in regions where the neighbourhood populace may be additionally eager to endure, or even bolster ISIS. ISIS has likewise assembled relations of accommodation with displeased nearby Sunni tribes and ex-Baathists who have felt minimized and disappointed by the administration in Baghdad, which has been blamed for favoring Shia's. ISIS wasn't gave its first significant thrashing until mid-August 2014 when Kurdish and Iraqi powers, bolstered by a forceful U.S. flying besieging crusade, pushed the fear gathering off the Mosul Dam, a key bit of framework.

Western authorities just have unpleasant gauges on ISIS's aggregate battling power, yet in late 2014, the CIA said the gathering was accepted to be dependent upon 30,000 warriors solid including nearby supporters, and developing. Most irritating to Western security authorities, they say, is the gigantic segment of outside contenders who left their homes and on occasion voyaged most of the way around the globe to join terror group.

Nicholas Rasmussen, the Director of the National Counterterrorism Centre, told Congress in February 2015 nearly 20,000 remote warriors from 90 nations had made a trip to Syria to join some gathering – 3,400 of those contenders are said to have originated from Western countries, including more than 150 from the U.S. “who have either gone to the contention zone, or endeavoured to do as such.”

In spite of the fact that Al-Baghdadi had debilitated the U.S. as a rule some time recently, ISIS basically centred its consideration on its local desire preceding the U.S. drove bombarding battle, however as the U.S. also, others draw out to barrage ISIS focuses on, the gathering has oftentimes called at its supporters in Western countries to direct dangerous assaults at home.

One of the shooters in a double dread assault in Paris in January 2015 guaranteed that he was a part of ISIS, however alternate shooters in that assault were connected to an al Qaeda offshoot. Days after the Paris occurrence, compelling voices in the U.S. declared they had captured an Ohio man and ISIS supporter who wanted to bomb the U.S. Legislative centre.

Notwithstanding the “self-radicalized” ISIS supporters, Western intelligence agencies are worried about the individuals who go to Syria and Iraq to battle with ISIS before returning home. The war zones in Iraq and Syria give outside warrior's battle experience, weapons and explosives preparing, and access to terrorist arranges that may be arranging assaults which focus on the West.

ISIS has been particularly merciless in its focusing of minorities in ranges that have gone under its control. Notwithstanding the scores who have been severely killed, incalculable Christians, Yazidis and different minorities have been compelled to escape zones they've called home for quite a long time. In August 2014, a large number of Yazidis must be saved by Kurdish constrains in the wake of being caught with almost no nourishment and water in brutal conditions on the Sinjar mountains where they escaped ISIS. ISIS likewise brutalizes individual Sunni and Shia- Muslims who do not attribute to its great elucidation of the religion, and the gathering has crushed invaluable archaeological locales.

On the event of the 13th anniversary of the September 11th, 2001, terrorist attacks, President Obama declared a new war on terror. However this time his target was not age-old enemy al Qaeda, but a group that goes by one of three acronyms: ISIS (*Islamic State of Iraq and al-Sham*), ISIL (*Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant*), or simply, IS (*Islamic State*). The origin of this jihadi group can be traced back to 2011. Akin to many other countries in the area, Syria was experiencing what is now being collectively called "Arab Spring". A series of revolutions that began in the North African country of Tunisia and spread to the neighbouring countries of Egypt, Algeria, Yemen and many others. Whereas a mainstream of the leaders gave in to the wishes of their people and reconciled, Syrian President Bashar Al-Assad managed to quash the uprising. Since then, the country has been enmeshed in a civil war with several insurgent groups still trying to put an end the President. Among them, is Jabhat-Al Nusra, an endorse offshoot of Islamic militant group, Al-Qaeda.

However the group was radical, they did not acquire much world attention until April 2013, when the "*Islamic State of Iraq*" another offshoot of al Qaeda led by Abu Bakr al Baghdadi, decided to join forces with Jabhat-Al Nusra. When both al Qaeda and the leader of Jabhat-Al-Nusra protested in opposition to the union, Baghdadi swayed 80% of the Syrian rebel group's members to defect with him and figure out a new organization that he called the *Islamic State of Iraq and al-Sham (ISIS)*.

The expression "*al Sham*" refers to a cosmic area that includes southern Turkey, Syria, Egypt, Lebanon, Israel and the Palestinian territories. Baghdadi plans to conquer all and unite them as one *Islamic state* or *Caliphate*. Since the English term for this entire region is "*the Levant*", many experts and politicians have begun to refer to the organization as the *Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant* or *ISIL*.

No matter what they are called, the one thing that is rapidly becoming apparent is that the organization, which has broken all ties with its parent group al Qaeda, means business. Since their creation, ISIS has hastily extended its control over towns and cities in Syria and Iraq. What's even more perplexing is that their growth has been deliberately planned around areas that are close to major supply routes, decisive infrastructure and important border crossings.

As a corollary, they are proficient to smuggle goods as well as oil from the 11 fields that are at this instantaneous in their control, and sell them at exceptionally economical prices to assist fund for terrorist activities. Experts estimate that this together with extortion money obtained from kidnapping foreign nationals for ransom, as well as widespread looting of old artefacts, yields the group about \$3 million USD daily. If the estimates are correct, it elevates ISIS into the world's wealthiest terrorist group, making them even more lethal.

In accumulation to inching towards the formation of the dream '*Islamic State*', ISIS has lately also been grabbing headlines with the public beheadings of two American reporters, James Foley and Steven Sotloff, as well as British abet worker David Haines. Some officials believe the videos, which have been distributed worldwide, are a way to warn off the group's foes, particularly the US military, which has been able to stop their progress towards northern Iraq. Others think it may be for just the opposite reason to draw the world's resentment and force them to assert war against the terrorists.

On the off chance that that was their motivation, it without a doubt appears to have worked following the US alongside 40 associates have promised to do whatever is important to battle the gathering of more or less 31,500 radicals that are bringing about ruin around the world. While the current arrangements are to attempt debilitate the gathering by utilizing automatons and surveillance flights to strike down critical check presents and vehicles accepted on be transporting key faculty, a few specialists dread it may not be sufficient. They imagine that the best way to thrashing this inexorably modern gathering of activists, is by sending ground

troops. On the off chance that they are correct, the partners may be drawn into another long-drawn war, a circumstance that everybody would like to evade, unless it gets to be certain.

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