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# PAKISTAN

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## MANAGING PAK-INDIA RELATIONS BY SHAHID M AMIN

PAKISTAN-India relations have reached a new low. There seems hardly any possibility that, under Modi, relations are going to improve. Therefore, practical wisdom demands that policy-makers should focus attention on managing the dangerous situation as well as possible, so that matters do not get any worse between two nuclear-armed states. For the last few weeks, there has been daily exchange of fire by the two armed forces along the Line of Control (LoC) in Jammu & Kashmir, as also on the Working Boundary.

Apart from causing death and injury of innocent civilians, mostly on Pakistani side, the number of soldiers and officers killed on both sides is probably the highest ever. It is a tit-for-tat situation. Every breach of LoC by one side brings an equal or greater response by the other side. Diplomats of the two countries are summoned every other day and protests lodged. Pakistan has also sought to draw the attention of other states, including five permanent members of the UN Security Council, to the volatile situation created by India's aggressive posture.

It seems that India is deliberately heating up the LoC to divert attention from unprecedented protests in Indian-occupied Kashmir for nearly four months. World opinion was becoming critical of India's gross violation of human rights due to use of pellet guns and other tactics, amounting to a reign of terror in occupied Kashmir. There could be some other reasons also why India has heated up the LoC. In Azad Kashmir, civilian population lives right up to LoC, while on the Indian side, civilian population has been moved away from LoC. India alleges that terrorists, who cross the LoC from Azad Kashmir, take cover of civilian population near the LoC.

By inflicting civilian casualties, India might be expecting that civilian population on the Azad Kashmir side would be pushed back from LoC, so that terrorists do not find shelter in civilian population. A third reason for heating up LoC could be that India wants to destroy its legality, enabling it to act without any restraint. Pakistan's response against this background should be to manage the situation by not adopting a tit-for-tat response every time and in any case by not allowing the LoC violations to become a military confrontation. Our restraint would help increase international pressure on India to act more responsibly and not inflame the situation any further.

Indian attitude has hardened since the Uri incident in September when 19 Indian soldiers were killed in a terrorist act. India accused Jaish-i-Muhammad (JEM), a Pakistan-based group, for this terrorist act. Goaded by the Modi government, the Indian media went into a war hysteria, calling for revenge against Pakistan. India then claimed that it had carried out a 'surgical operation' across the LoC in Azad Kashmir. This was hotly denied by the Pakistani military, which took the international media to various spots on Pakistani side of LoC to show that there had been no surgical strike. Nevertheless, the claimed surgical strike suggested a confrontational stance by India. It next embarked on a campaign to isolate Pakistan internationally to have it declared as a 'terrorist state'. This has further vitiated the atmosphere in India-Pakistan relations.

Pakistan can manage this sinister campaign through proactive diplomacy. Effective steps taken to curb JEM and Lashkar-e-Taiba will silence our critics abroad.

Modi also warned that India might abrogate the 1960 Indus Waters Treaty (IWT) which had divided the six rivers between India and Pakistan equally. He implied darkly that Pakistan would be denied the river water that is so crucial to its economic survival. In another statement on November 26, Modi said that India would ensure that every drop of the three eastern rivers —Ravi, Sutlej and Beas— would be given to Indian farmers and would no longer flow to Pakistan and going to waste in the sea. He said that this was India's right under the IWT but the water was still flowing into Pakistan. To recall, IWT allocated three eastern rivers to India and the three western rivers —Indus, Jhelum and Chenab — to Pakistan.

In effect, Pakistan gave up its share of riparian rights to the three eastern rivers. To compensate Pakistan for the voluntary abandonment of its share, several countries joined the World Bank in building 'replacement works' in Pakistan under which Tarbela and Mangla dams, five barrages and eight link canals were built in Pakistan. Thus, Pakistani farmers who no longer had access to Sutlej and Ravi were provided water for their farms. However, a minor amount of water of three eastern rivers still reaches Pakistan, particularly during the Monsoons. Modi wants to ensure that India retains this water also for the use of its farmers. Technically, this may not be possible, but we need not get too concerned since such an action would not be inconsistent with the allocation of river waters made under IWT.

However, if India tries to block waters of the three western rivers, that would be a flagrant violation of IWT and could cause serious problems for Pakistan. But IWT was not merely a treaty between India and Pakistan. It also involved other countries like USA and UK, apart from World Bank, which played the key role in securing IWT. India cannot unilaterally abrogate the treaty. On cooler reflection, it seems that India can

hardly block the Indus, which is a small river when it passes through Indian-occupied Kashmir, in the middle of the highest mountains in the world. Indus grows in size only when it is flowing inside Pakistan. Jhelum does originate in Indian-held Kashmir but becomes a big river after it enters Pakistan. Chenab also originates in Indian-occupied Kashmir but any diversion of its water in mountainous area would be difficult or impossible.

Moreover, India would be the loser if it seeks to abrogate IWT. In that situation, under International Law, Pakistan would reassert its riparian rights to the three eastern rivers. Abrogation of IWT by India will mean that we go back to square one, with the big difference that replacement works under IWT have already given Pakistan two great dams, five barrages, and eight link canals, and all the benefits accruing from these works. For example, Tarbela remains the single largest source of power in Pakistan.

— The writer served as Pakistan's Ambassador to Saudi Arabia, the ex-Soviet Union, France, Nigeria and Libya.

Source: <http://pakobserver.net/managing-pak-india-relations/>

## CHANGE OF COMMAND: CIVIL-MILITARY TIES BY ZAFAR NAWAZ JASPAL

THE appointment of the Chief of Army Staff is always very sensitive due to the decisive role of the Army in the polity of Pakistan. The trends in the prevalent internal and external environment of the country also make the appointment of the current Chief of Army Staff (COAS) critical. So, the announcement of the promotion of General Qamar Javed Bajwa on November 26, 2016, as a four star-General and COAS has commenced thought-provoking debate on the civil-military relations in the country. The cautious conclusion is that General Bajwa would prefer the status quo and refrain from political adventurism.

Conversely, the domestic dynamics, especially the serious rift among the political parties and amateurish political culture of the state, are too unpredictable and may oblige COAS to contravene his mandate. The probability of the latter necessitates the critical analysis of the change of guards in Army and civil-military relations in Pakistan. The honourable retirement of General Raheel Sharif and appointment of a new COAS not only quashed the tradition of extension, but also accentuates that individuals are not indispensable. Moreover, Pakistan Army as a professional organization is immensely capable to breed able commanders or generals.

The appointment of new COAS General Qamar Javed Bajwa and General Zubair Hayat Chairman as Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee (CJCSC) also manifested that it is prerogative of the elected Prime Minister to decide who is capable to lead the armed forces. Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif amply exercised his constitutional power of the nomination of the COAS (4th in order of seniority) and CJCSC and President Mamoon Hussain endorsed the former's recommendation. Nevertheless, still a few tricky cum challenging issues have potential to spoil the smooth functioning of the civil-military relations. The developments in the realm of domestic politics, counter-terrorism and upsurge on the eastern and western borders could encourage antidemocratic forces to pursue their agenda. The COAS General Bajwa, certainly, endeavours for the logical conclusion of the ongoing Zarb-i-Azb. In this context, the biggest challenge for him would be refurbishing of the counter-terrorism strategy's tactics. Without revamping the tactics, the counter-terrorism strategy would be victim of stagnation. Perhaps, inertia would complicate the pursuit of the objectives in the prevalent asymmetrical warfare in the country and also frustrate the man on the horseback. Therefore, he needs to act intelligently and swiftly. The recent three terrorist attacks in Balochistan necessitate the broadening of counter-terrorism operations including serious actions in certain parts of Punjab. Whether he would be able to persuade the ruling PML-N for such actions or simply follow the policy of his predecessor, i.e. chasing and killing the terrorist in entire country except Punjab.



The most important undertaking for the new COAS is to avoid military interference in the politics. Ironically, today, parliamentarians are debating the national issues on the private TV channels instead of at the floor of the National Assembly and Senate. One leading political party has boycotted the parliament for indefinite period and seems convinced to win 2018 general elections by maintaining political jingoism and protests on the streets. Political history of Pakistan reveals that such political tactics not only obstruct the smooth functioning of the political system but also make it vulnerable to the extra-constitutional upheavals.

Importantly, today, the Army seems amenable to judicial dictates, sensitive to media trials, and also reiterating that it supports democratic political system, legal and constitutional legitimacy of an elected government and also espouse for the PML-N government to complete its term in office. Simultaneously, the prevalent trends in the Pakistani polity manifest that the Army still plays an affective umpire, final arbiter or broker's role in the civilian domain and is also determined to hold on its public vision as the ultimate custodian of Pakistan's integrity.

The political elite in Pakistan are divided and engaged in free for all struggle for power. The integrity of the elected ruling elite is at the mercy of the apex court decision on the Panamagate cases. The political parties are a mirror image of dynasties. The steady degeneration of the civilian institutions and civilian law enforcement agencies have created space for Army's role in restoring the writ of the state in Karachi, Federal Administrative Tribal Areas, Balochistan. Even in Islamabad, Rangers accompany the police mobiles during the patrolling.

Thus, the Army's position of pre-eminence in the national polity would continue under the stewardship General Bajwa. To conclude, the national interest of the country pleads that the new COAS General Bajwa should not permit the derailing of the Zarb-i-Azb gains and focus on the rehabilitation of the affecters of the operation; assist civilian ruling elite in restoring and maintaining the writ of the state internally within the ambit of the constitutional framework; and above all forcefully thwart the military challenges at the eastern and western borders of Pakistan.

— The writer is Associate Professor, School of Politics and International Relations, Quaid-i-Azam University, Islamabad.

Source: <http://pakobserver.net/change-of-command-civil-military-ties/>

## PARLIAMENTARY DEMOCRACY IN PAKISTAN BY GENERAL SAAD KHATTAK

A system of government in which people directly elect representatives to the parliament is known as Parliamentary democracy. The parliament elects the prime minister from within its members who through the parliament is directly answerable to the people. The parliament is responsible for making laws and taking other important decisions for the country. In presidential democracy the president is directly elected by the people to head the executive branch. The president though independent of the legislature, works in consultation with the legislative branch on issues of national importance. The west took centuries to attain the level of democracy that exist in most of the western world today. Though its relevance and benefits to the greater world in its present form is a question mark, yet the system has visibly contributed meaningfully to the wellbeing of the western society.

Courtesy capitalism and fast expanding globalization, this has in most of the cases happened at the expense of deprived people of poor regions and countries. The evolution of democratic process in western societies has undoubtedly added to the wisdom of common people in exercising their choices while choosing future leadership. It has generally been viewed that people choose its leadership primarily taking into account its domestic issues and concerns rather than their country's international obligations associated with its international stature. The recent election of Donald Trump as US President bears testimony to this fact. The bottom line remains that people's will is decidedly manifested in their domestic priorities first and national interests abroad later. That is what has happened in the recent US presidential elections to the surprise of many.

Subjecting third world countries to such refined processes without having them equipped for the change is an unfair ask to say the least hence the experience mostly failed wherever attempted. Common people in these countries have some specific justified expectations from potential leadership while most of their demands are usually unjustified not qualifying on merit and fair play. Potential candidates who succeeds in painting the rosiest picture to the people succeeds. Host of other factors like lack of education, ethnicity, baradarism and crookedness of candidates all contribute meaningfully to the success in election process. Making false promises to the some justified and some unjustified demands of the majority illiterate populous, the great number of crooks makes it to the corridors of power after spending millions, to be recovered as the first sacred task on attaining access to the treasury. and unattainable promises by the potential leaders over most of which they fail to deliver. The whole

edifice therefore, stands on one cheating the other with utter disregard to deliverance and merit.

Pakistan in its almost 70 years of history has experienced both presidential and parliamentary systems and neither has delivered to the satisfaction of the majority. This is not for any flaw in the system but its faulty and self-centered implementation by the people running it. The periods of our presidential governments were all preceded by martial laws hence vehemently opposed by the political elite of the time as they considered it their inherited privilege and right to rule the country. There is no denying the fact that the local bodies system considered the essence of democracy and also serving as the nursery of future leadership were not only introduced during our presidential regimes but also delivered at the grass root level whenever empowered. Most of the presidents being ex-military men while possessing total powers could not deliver to the expectations as they were haunted by lack of legitimacy and political constituency thus resorting to measures mostly for perpetuating their regimes costing dearly to the system and the country in the long run. On the contrary, whenever the political elite came into power, the local bodies system was shelved for vested interests. In our parliamentary democracy, elected members of national and provincial assemblies never liked to share their powers with political workers at grassroots level. In principle, their prime responsibility being only legislation but in practice they are keener in development projects for obvious reasons. Even if we disregard the aspect of corruption and kickbacks for a moment, yet they want to remain relevant to their voters for securing their future election. Almost everywhere in the world however, developmental works fall in the domain of local governments. If we evaluate the recent past then despite having almost two full tenures of parliamentary democracy the local bodies system remains in limbo due to political expediencies.

Considering Pakistan`s internal dynamics some of the anomalies experienced with the parliamentary system are; One, the country being low on literacy and having no mature local bodies system, it is neither able to offer suitable candidates nor the populous yet groomed desirably to make rightful choices. Two; with legislative and developmental powers concentrated in the same hands, neither is attended to hence both suffers in the process. Three; with party based system sans local bodies, selective areas are chosen for developmental works thereby depriving other areas from the fruits of development. Four; with majority population concentrated in Punjab , only that political party can be in a position to form government at Islamabad which gets maximum seats from the province thus perpetually denying the opportunity of federal leadership to smaller provinces. Five; in our parliamentary system where there is hardly any intra party election, the party leadership revolves around one figure who is mostly focused on passing the baton to family kith and kin thus depriving the party and country to genuine

leadership. Six; in most cases party leadership is held hostage by few financially strong and influential party members applying effective breaks on emerging potential leadership. Seven; the increasing role of money in politics effectively denies honest and experienced people the opportunity to participate thus depriving the country of their talent and contributions.

Though 70 years may not be too long a period yet it should be considered enough to evaluate the pluses and minuses of the systems we experienced. There is hence a requirement of initiating a serious debate at various tiers across the country on the suitability of either presidential or parliamentary democracy for our country. It is however, my considered opinion that given our domestic make up and experience of past 70 years, a presidential system promises better future for our country. In either of the case the system will require a robust local bodies system in place and a serious effort to create more provinces on administrative grounds with equal representation in the senate if we are truly aspiring for a strong Pakistan.

Source: <http://nation.com.pk/columns/10-Dec-2016/parliamentary-democracy-in-pakistan>

## THE US MAY NOT COMPETE WITH CHINA FOR INFLUENCE IN PAKISTAN BY MICHAEL KREPON

ONE of Pakistan's greatest diplomatic achievements during the Cold War was to simultaneously enjoy strong ties with the United States and China. With the end of the Cold War and the retreat of Soviet forces from Afghanistan, this triangular relationship has changed. Pakistan's ties to Beijing have never been stronger, while ties to Washington are once again troubled. Nothing symbolises this shift more than CPEC.

China has offered Pakistan over \$50 billion in investments for critical infrastructure projects as prospects for greater financial and military assistance from Washington dim. Washington has good reasons to be supportive — or at least not negative — about CPEC. If Pakistan can raise its game and make the most of this opportunity, CPEC will not just be one more external lending stream, it can help Pakistan achieve sustainable economic growth, one predicate for national, if not regional stability.

There are, however, challenges to be overcome before extravagant visions of CPEC can be realised. Thriving port cities depend on location and historic patterns of commerce. Habitual Pakistani frictions between provinces and civil-military relations are complicating the takeoff stage. Beijing does not have a track record of philanthropy with respect to foreign investments. CPEC is not a gift; it's a mutual opportunity, accompanied with interest rates. And Pakistan is in no position to drive hard bargains.

The US may not compete with China for influence in Pakistan.

The upswing in China-Pakistan relations extends well beyond CPEC. Beijing is also helping Pakistan by placing road blocks before India's entry into the Nuclear Suppliers Group and preventing the UN from adding Jaish-e-Mohammad chief Masood Azhar to its listing of terrorists. In contrast, the US Defence Authorisation Act passed by the Congress conditions half of the assistance given to Pakistan on demonstrable steps against terror groups.

Not that long ago, in 2009, Washington decided to make a major effort to improve relations with Pakistan and to bolster a newly elected civilian government. Now it is very hard to envision another major initiative by Washington, which is sceptical of Islamabad's promissory notes, or by Pakistan, which is accustomed to being on the receiving end of Washington's initiatives, not the other way around. Absent a source of new propulsion, bilateral ties will continue to lose altitude.

Islamabad, Washington, and even Beijing have something to lose from these dynamics. No matter how generous Chinese infrastructure and military support turn out to be for

Pakistan, having one major power benefactor is half as good as having two. Washington will have less influence to change Pakistani choices for the better, and will now need more of Beijing's help with crisis management. And while Beijing's gains are likely to be real, so, too, will the responsibilities of being Pakistan's top benefactor.

Washington is not inclined to compete with China for influence in Pakistan. Nor is the prospect of more Russian engagement with Pakistan likely to alter US calculations. Washington's current mood is to continue offering assistance to support common interests — while conditioning a growing portion of aid to demonstrable steps that confirm long-promised changes in Pakistan's national security policies. All this can be upended with another major act of terrorism that can be traced back to Pakistan.

A legitimate question is whether Washington is capable of acknowledging changes for the better in Pakistan's national security policies after such a long period of complaint. There has been clear acknowledgement of Pakistan's counterterrorism campaign against the Pakistan Taliban, and the sacrifices this has entailed. But there is deep scepticism that the scope of this campaign will be widened.

Some in the incoming Trump administration might be inclined to pursue the 'nuclear option' — declaring Pakistan a state sponsor of terrorism. This would be a grave mistake, not just for Pakistan and the United States, but also for India. Severing ties will not improve Pakistan's choices, nor help the United States to encourage nuclear-armed neighbors to improve ties or defuse tensions. Washington does more of the latter than the former because, when New Delhi occasionally seeks to turn the page, an attack on India by cadres of groups based in Pakistan typically follows.

One challenge for Washington during the Trump administration will be to keep the door open and to recognise changes in policies that have weakened Pakistan's well-being. A second challenge will be to not fly off the handle in ways that badly affect ties. The challenge for Pakistan is to keep moving forward rather than to fall back on bad habits. And to recognize that standard talking points will fall flat without changes in national security policy. Even in the absence of changes in Pakistani policies, the US continues to have important reasons to remain fully engaged on common interests. That sounds easy enough, but sensible steps cannot be taken for granted in the Trump administration.

The writer is co-founder of the Stimson Centre.

Published in Dawn December 11th, 2016

## PAKISTAN'S POWER SECTOR: GOING UP, DOWN OR NOWHERE? BY MOHAMMAD YOUNUS DAGHA

When did we last read positive reviews in the international reports about Pakistan's power sector? Never. It is now accepted internationally that Pakistan's power sector has come out of its worst financial crisis, from posting a loss to the national budget of Rs200bn to now a negligible Rs8 bn per annum. In terms of its impact on the national exchequer, the power sector's performance has brought savings of Rs400 bn in the past two years. On the operations side, the power sector has come a long way from a routine of 12-15 hours of industrial and domestic load-shedding, often unscheduled just a few years back, to now zero load-shedding for industries and a scheduled predictable load-shedding of three hours in urban and four hours in rural areas, as per the new schedule announced in November 2016.

Due to an uncontrollable circular debt, rising at a pace of Rs10-18 billion a month (in a month) during 2007-14, no investors and their bankers were ready to put in their funds in Pakistan's power sector till 2014. After strenuous efforts, the menace of circular debt has been successfully tackled with better recoveries in distribution companies and better management of generation plants plugging losses from all sides. The reduction in oil prices also helped to an equal extent. The result: an increase in circular debt has been capped since Oct 2014.

Now, there is a beeline of foreign and local investors vying to get a space on our grid. In just one year (2015), more than 12000 MWs of new private sector power projects were facilitated as against only 8756 MWs of private sector power generation in the entire (20 years') history of IPPs in the country from 1994-2013. This demonstrates that the power ministry has been able to successfully put better monitoring systems for oversight of the power sector entities which has helped reduce the sector's losses. However, in order to keep this system afloat, such vigilant monitoring and supervision will need to continue, perhaps with greater vigour if new generation is to be smoothly added to the system. In addition, there is also a need to keep the power tariffs realistic and cost-covering. Any artificial lowering of tariffs, will again jeopardise the stability achieved in the power sector, after decades of turbulence.

This tells the story of reduced load-shedding and better financial performance of the power sector, but how would that translate into zero load-shedding as being claimed. We read some worrisome views of few analysts who maintain that the aims for bringing load-shedding (outages) to zero are not supported by the available transmission and distribution capacity. Some other views even question the expected timelines for completion of the new generation projects. These views cannot be ignored especially



when they get the support in the reports issued by the regulator which though based on outdated data, still get attention of the power sector analysts.

Power sector projects, like all such large scale undertakings, always have possibilities of changes in the timelines. In order to cater for any such eventuality, against an expected generation shortfall between 7000-8000 MWs estimated for 2017-18, the additional capacity planned to be achieved by March 2018 is around 10,996 MWs. The question is whether there are any projects expected to get delayed and substantially reduce power availability in March 2018? The frank answer — while the possibility of such an eventuality occurring owing to any unforeseen technical problems in any project can never be ruled out, it will be too far-fetched presuming such problems occurring everywhere, putting the entire plan of zero-load-shedding into jeopardy, God forbid.

And there are plans for the years after 2018, as well. There is a healthy pipeline of 30,837 MWs of the new generation projects already in execution, expected to complete by the year 2022. This includes the capacity of 10,996 MWs expected by March 2018, but doesn't include many projects such as Diamer Basha Dam and others which are also expected to be initiated soon. In these new projects, a large funding came from the CPEC Energy portfolio which solved the problem of Coal (especially Thar Coal) power financing which Pakistan was seeking to replace costlier generation and to improve the energy security.

There is no doubt that the weak and unreliable transmission and distribution system plagued with constraints and bottlenecks has been a major challenge, for successfully inducting new generation. The simulations run in the Ministry of Water and Power showed that there was no chance of transmitting any new generation on the system as it prevailed in 2013. It could not carry more than 15000-16000 MWs. For a generation of more than 25000 MWs, expected in 2018, there were 38% constraints on the NTDC's 500 KVA and 29% constraints on its 220 KVA transmission network. The work on improving system resilience is going on in all areas of the country, and closely monitored in the Ministry. It has helped reduce these constraints substantially since 2014. This was the reason that all the generated capacity, which went up to 17340 MWs in 2016 summers, was transmitted without major issues. However, the system augmentation work will be completed by the end 2017. It is expected that more than 90% of the system will be constraint free in 2018. Zero outages for the industry since November 2014 (except during the month of Ramazan) has also helped enhancing GDP growth in 2015-16. The reduced domestic load-shedding has also alleviated the sufferings of the common man to some extent. We need to work hard every hour, all the days in the next eighteen months to ensure that the nation can see the end of the



menace of power outages and its remaining adverse effects on the economy and the lives of our people, before the summer of 2018.

The increased generation and removal of system constraints will eliminate outages in most of the country. Futuristic investments will still require to be made into all spheres of power sector, from generation to distribution. The Ministry is committed to keep on working beyond 2018 end load-shedding plan to turn the entire power setup into a modern, efficient and resilient system in line with the aim to enhance energy security of the country.

Published in The Express Tribune, December 14th, 2016.

Source: <http://tribune.com.pk/story/1262369/pakistans-power-sector-going-nowhere/>

## BETWEEN IWT AND NSG | EDITORIAL

IN a recent telephonic talk with Prime Minister Muhammad, Nawaz Sharif, the US President- elect Donald Trump has expressed his positive views about Pakistan which include his promise to visit Pakistan. Trump's expression of objectivism supported by optimism, about Pakistan may have provided a chance to mend the fences between Washington and Islamabad, is also a good omen for both US-Pakistan future relationship. There appears three fundamental problems in terms of US-Pakistan relationship: first, a trust deficit, second, a relationship based on transactionalism , and third an India-fixed US's South Asia policy. The two countries have had a one-dimensional transactional relationship characterized by security concerns, i.e., the war against the Taliban and Al-Qaeda.

And most significantly, the main source of US-Pakistan tension has been the war in Afghanistan, and recent scuffles are caused because of changing American strategy. It is also true that deviousness in this situation has not been a Pakistani feature.

While Washington has been insisting that Islamabad press on with attacks against the Taliban over the past years, the US has had held secret meetings with Taliban representatives in Germany, Doha, and Qatar—thereby keeping Pakistan out of those talks. Resultantly, this increased Pakistani insecurity and provoked the idea that Washington will ignore Islamabad's interests in the Afghan endgame, while giving India a role to play. The lack of a broad partnership between America and Pakistan prevented the building of mutual trust or the alignment of interests. India-US nexus establish during the Junior Bush and Obama's administration created much doubts and lets in the mind of Pakistan civil and military establishments. Due to the apprehensions levelled by the Indian Lobby in the US, the US Congress refused to release funding of the sale of eight F-16s from the Foreign Military Financing (FMF) programme and resultantly Pakistan could not get the new jets. Additionally, cuts were imposed on the reimbursement of the Coalition Support Fund. The Congress 'imposed current stipulation of releasing \$400m aid to Pakistan's govt prompt action against the Haqqani network is reflective of the US administration's prejudicial and closed fist ed approach.

Since Pakistan holds a pivotal position in the Muslim world, Trump's administration's pacifying and futurist approach towards Islamabad would cast positive leverage in the Muslim community and also restore Trump's ill image that he left during his election-campaign. The most important realization that the Trump administration should not skip is that Pakistan has been a US- major ally in its war against terrorism that is being fought mutually for the last fifteen years and undoubtedly Pakistan armed forces have given great sacrifices in this war. And it also goes without saying that Pakistan economy

has suffered a lot while fighting this war on its soil. Even the civilians and the law enforcement agencies have suffered a lot in this regard. Taking into account the spectrum of the human loss that has been suffered by Pakistan and considering the fact that US has been lagging behind in settling the scores in this regard and realizing the point that other powers in the region have started to gain proximity with Pakistan, Washington needs a pro-Pakistan stand. Undoubtedly, United States has been a major contributor in initiating the programmes in the social sector like the US AID in the health and education and energy sector; yet it remains far away to give it a fair try in settling the disputes with Pakistan's neighbours—India and Afghanistan. What US and the upcoming political set up in the US needs to ascertain that, Pakistan has been fighting at the US front since 1979; the influx of Afghan refugees has created a havoc in the social fabric of the country which has turned given the dividend of sectarianism and terrorism. Surely, Pakistan has been playing a glaring and prompt role in terminating terrorist networks. Though the Trump administration is most likely to continue the Obama government's policy towards Pakistan to come clean and hard on existing infrastructure and manpower of jihadi organisations, it may revise/reorient Obama administration's overriding approach towards India. Trump's administration South Asia policy must focus on regional peace.

Given the history of Pak-US relations during the Republican regime, we come to realize that both Washington and Islamabad seem to have shared an experience of promising relationship based on pragmatism. The 58-page party platform released during Trump's election campaign is reflective of an unexpectedly friendly towards Pakistan and recognizes the historic ties the US has had with Islamabad. It also stresses the need to continue this relationship. The Republican Party platform seems to mark a pleasant departure from usual Washington rhetoric of blaming Pakistan for its own internal as well as regional problems and asking it to do more.

It is high time for the US administration that it must leap forward to transcend Pakistan-US broad-based partnership based on a hard/soft power cooperation. Though the road to improved U.S. relations with Pakistan is bumpy, it is not difficult given the exigencies entailed by counter-insurgency and counter-terrorism, and peace talks with Taliban. It will require nuanced diplomacy that involves defending mutual interests, particularly restoring of peace and stability in the South Asian region. Washington must realize that it cannot achieve its broader interests in South Asia, as long as its South Asian policy hangs in balance.

To strike a balance of power in South Asia, it will be imperative for the Trump administration to boost partnership with Pakistan, especially bolstering economic, defence, and civilian nuclear cooperation. Under the new administration, it is being

positively expected albeit not miraculously that Washington would reorient its South Asian strategy- as Senator John McCain, chairman of the U.S. Senate's influential Armed Services committee, anticipates to uplift Pak-US ties.

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Source: <http://pakobserver.net/trumps-optimism-retuning-pak-us-ties/>

## COME TO SENSES NEIGHBOUR BY HAFSA KHALED

It seems that India is hell-bent on deteriorating already dismal relations with Pakistan to the point of no return. It is true that Pakistan and India are traditional hostile enemies, but the dynamics of today's globalised world demands greater cooperation and lesser hostilities in order to work together to counter global threats. The world has changed a lot since the last couple of decades and today the world powers which used to be hostile to each other are creating more close bilateral ties. Unfortunately it seems that our extremist neighbour, India, doesn't seem to acknowledge the fact that this is a nuclear era and any type of war or aggression can lead to a regional, possibly global catastrophe. The consequences of India's adventurism can be quite disastrous as India seems to be ignoring the fact that both countries are nuclear weapon states with a second strike and in search of a first strike capability against each other.

Since Modi came to power, India has amped up its war hysteria and the aggression on the Kashmiris who are under its illegal and unlawful occupation. The border firing and cease-fire violations have increased manifold, just to divert the attention of the world community from its atrocities in Occupied Kashmir. It is also part of Modi's policy to isolate Pakistan internationally, which was quite evident at the Heart of Asia conference, which focused more on undue bashing and criticism of Pakistan. It seems India has totally forgotten the basic diplomatic norms. By mistreating Pakistan's representative at Amritsar, India is sending all the negative signals which can lead to disaster. Thankfully, Pakistan till now is showing great maturity and patience against India's much awaited wish of a limited war.

Just like the SAARC conference which was to be held at Islamabad, the Heart of Asia conference also became a victim of India's irresponsible and hegemonic attitude. In Afghanistan, India found a great ally in totally cornering Pakistan at a forum which was established to encourage security, political and economic cooperation between Afghanistan and the surrounding states. India has countless times turned such regional as well as international forums a source to vent out its obsession against Pakistan showing its desperate aspirations of becoming the regional hegemon. Today's Pakistan is on a road to economic recovery and it should be kept in mind that it is no longer the Pakistan of 1965 and 1971. Any kind of misadventures on the part of India can be equally responded by Pakistan at all levels.

The major points which added to India's frustrated behavior and the immature actions of its extremist leader are the international community's concern over atrocities in Kashmir and CPEC. Since the staged Uri attack, which fell flat on its face, India has desperately been trying to accuse Pakistan of one thing or the other. Secondly, India tried

everything in its power to sabotage the CPEC project which is a threat to India, as Pakistan will emerge as an economic power due to the fruits of this project. States like Russia and Iran have already shown interest to be included into the project because everyone is aware of the vitality and magnitude of the CPEC which will transform the region into an economic and trade hub. India feels threatened because the Chinese presence at Gwadar will be a danger to its own trade route and of course it doesn't want to see Pakistan prosper economically and come at par with other states in the region.

As far as Afghanistan is concerned, President Ghani should not have rejected Pakistan's aid and cooperation as this will further widen the gap between the two countries which can create instability in the region. Afghanistan is widening the gap with Pakistan at the behest of India, and at this point we also need to review our foreign policies towards Afghanistan. The issue of Pakistani Taliban taking safe havens in Afghanistan has further widened the gap. We should review our policy of looking at Afghanistan with an Indian policy prism. Pakistan should work more seriously on improving relations with Afghanistan at least, as there is no hope of de-escalation of hostilities with India any time sooner. Lastly, Kashmir is the core outstanding issue between India and Pakistan and a positive movement on it is essential. It is high time that better sense should prevail in Delhi as the Modi government seems to be on a destructive course of action with Pakistan. It should be kept in mind that building bridges and improving relations is not the sole responsibility of Pakistan; India has also a greater role to play to end the hostilities. For that to happen, all the core issues need to be discussed and resolved. India should quit the destructive war path which can lead to a much dreaded nuclear conflict in the region.

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Source: <http://tribune.com.pk/story/1263527/come-senses-neighbour/>

## PAKISTAN AND INDIA: CURRENT ISSUES AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS BY DR HASAN ASKARI RIZVI

Pakistan and India are facing serious difficulties in their bilateral relations. Though they are not in a state of war, a virtual warlike situation exists on the Line of Control (LoC) in Kashmir. They are engaged in an intense propaganda against each other. Their mutual antagonism has increased since Narendra Modi became India's Prime Minister in May 2014.

An interesting feature of the difficult Pakistan-India relation is that there is a wide discrepancy in the informal and personal interaction between Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif and Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the policies of their governments. The goodwill reflected the personal interaction of the two Prime Ministers has not played any moderating role on the troubled relations between the two governments.

India holds Pakistan responsible for all terrorist incidents in mainland India and Indian-administered Kashmir. The major incidents enumerated by India include the terrorist attack on the Indian Parliament (December 2001), the attack in Mumbai (November 2008), the military camp Pathankot attack (January 2016), the military camp in Uri attack (September 2016), and an attack of Nagrota Army Camp near Jammu City (November 2016). India blames Lashkar-e-Tayyaba/Jamaat-ud-Dawa, Jaish-i-Muhammad for these terrorist incidents and wants that the chiefs of these organizations should be handed over to it. Further, it also wants the completion of the trial of Lashkar-i-Tayyaba activists in connection with the Mumbai attack that has been going on in Rawalpindi since their arrest in December 2008.

India refuses to hold any dialogue with Pakistan until the latter adopts punitive measures against the above named groups and puts these out of action. This pre-condition for holding the talks is coupled with India's persistent campaign for isolating Pakistan at the international and regional levels and getting it declared as a terrorist state by the United States and the UN.

It is not an advisable strategy on the part of India to reduce the dialogue process to a single issue, i.e., satisfy India on the terrorism related issues before any talks can take place. Until the end of the 1980s, the government of Pakistan used to argue that increased trade and expanded societal relations with India could not be cultivated prior to the settlement of the Kashmir problem, i.e., settle the Kashmir problem first. Now, Pakistan talks of Kashmir and other problems. Similarly, India needs to adopt a more flexible approach of "Terrorism and other issues" if it is genuinely interested in resuming the dialogue for improvement of relations with Pakistan.

For India, terrorism means the above named organisations and their leaders. As compared to India's narrow focus, Pakistan takes a more comprehensive view of terrorism in the region. It views these organisations as a part of a bigger problem of extremism and terrorism.

Pakistan complains about India's insensitivity towards the magnitude of terrorism issues and problems in Pakistan and the fact that Pakistan has suffered more human and material losses due to this menace. India is seen in Pakistan as an augments of terrorism in Pakistan by extending what Pakistan's official circles claim material support to various terrorist groups, including Pakistan Tehrik-e-Taliban, and Balochistan based dissident groups through Afghanistan territory with whose government it shares the negative views on Pakistan.

India's persistent anti-Pakistan propaganda aims at building diplomatic pressure on Pakistan for taking effective punitive actions against the groups identified by India. In reality, this propaganda is counter-productive to India's goal of containing these groups. The Indian campaign is used by these organisations to entrench them in Pakistan, especially in the Punjab, by arguing that India is opposed to them because they stand for the liberation of Kashmir. The more India talks against these groups, the stronger become these groups in Pakistan. This reduces the space for the Pakistan government to take any stern action against them.

India needs to abandon its policy of coercion and intimidation in Kashmir. As long as the internal situation in Indian-administered Kashmir stays unsettled by popular protest of young Kashmiris and India continues with human rights violations, anti-India sentiments would remain strong in Pakistan. Similarly, there is a need of restoring peace and stability on the LoC and both need to include the alleged negative role of their intelligence agencies in each other's territories in the agenda for the talks in the future.

India should develop a comprehensive agenda for talks that can have terrorism as the priority for India but it cannot dictate a single item agenda to Pakistan. There has to be a shared agenda for the talks that includes all issues of concerns for both countries. Both Kashmir (priority for Pakistan) and terrorism (priority for India) can be on agenda along with other issues and problems.

Pakistan and India need to resume unconditional talks on all contentious issues and they should tone-down anti propaganda against each other. They need to explore the option of adopting a shared approach towards the on-going strife in Afghanistan.



Positive reciprocity rather than coercive diplomacy can defuse the current tensions between Pakistan and India.

Bilateral talks cannot produce any positive results until the power elite in both countries display a categorical political determination to put an end to negative propaganda, restore peace on the LoC on the basis of the November 2003 ceasefire, and resume result-oriented talks. They should also restore the confidence building measures already agreed to and add new CBMs in order to overcome the new biases that have cropped up in their relations since May 2014, when Modi became India's Prime Minister. This will help to boost their economic relations and trade ties.

India needs to tone down ultra-nationalism and curtail the role of hardline Hindu groups in the BJP. This is going to be as challenging for the Indian government as it would be a formidable task for the Pakistan government to contain the influence of militant Islamic groups, especially the Kashmir focused groups, in Pakistani state and society.

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## 2016 — YEAR OF DARK CLOUDS BY YOUSAF RAFIQ

The outgoing year turned out very different than expected, to say the least. There was hope and optimism going in. The country had, after a long time, finally lifted itself from the shadow of the Peshawar tragedy. The main reason was the continuing success, or so we were told and thought and believed, of Zarb-e-Azb. '16 would be the year to finally finish them off was the going sentiment. And that, of course, would usher in peace, development, and so on and so forth.

Sadly, though, the assumption did not hold true. Taking nothing away from the many, many successes of Zarb-e-Azb, the final nail in the terrorist coffin has still not come. The main initial thrust of the operation — which comprised mostly of bullets and bombs in the tribal area — had more or less been wrapped up by the fall of '15. The operation was to transpose into intel-intensive and combing ops as the net widened to urban centres and main cities.

One of the main features of the National Action Plan — that post-Peshawar blueprint of the war going forward — was integrating and sharing intelligence between the many dozen security and intelligence agencies that litter the landscape. '16 was supposed to be the time when these aspects of the plan came together. More intel-based operations would take out the remainder of the enemy on home soil. Sadly, again, that too did not happen. Not only did NAP remain frozen for the entire length of the year — more or less — but the attacks also did not stop altogether. They are fewer than before, but the enemy's ability to attack at will has not been neutralised. Also, lately the attacks have been high profile, killing upwards of fifty people per hit towards the end of the year, especially in Balochistan.

Of course, terrorism was not the year's only problem. Foreign aggression also raised its head in an unprecedented manner. Modi's ascent in Delhi was always going to be problematic. But apparently he's coupled his diplomatic onslaught by setting the LoC and working boundary alight. There are growing casualties on both sides with even the present lull not quite going as far as the ceasefire agreement of '03. And it's not just India that wants Pakistan out of the game. Afghan enmity has also returned with a vengeance. There was a brief moment, shortly after Ghani took charge in Kabul, when it seemed everybody would agree to reset the bilateral equation. But that's not happening anytime soon either. To make matters worse, the foreign office is no more competent, or better structured, than a year before. The ministry is still rudderless, and the prime minister — who still holds the foreign ministry portfolio — is neck deep in political and personal survival to give the international environment much of his time.

And that, of course, brings us to the biggest political scandal of the year. Panamagate has lingered for most of the year. And it's still not clear which direction it is really going to take. Expectations that Pakistani democracy was maturing, and politicians had become sensible enough to give corruption, however alleged, very serious consideration are also now fading away.

Still, that is not all the tragedy that this year brought us. In addition to the sad, unfortunate yet completely random deaths and killings that plague our country, some stood out. Abdul Sattar Edhi for one; that unique, unparalleled soul. He finally breathed his last after a long illness. Junaid Jamshed for another; his death a different sort of tragedy. Qandeel Baloch was another shocker. Another reminder that for all the strides we take, we have not gone very far after all.

However bleak the situation, one thing did go Pakistan's way this year, and in a very big way. Finally, after long talk and deliberation, CPEC took off. That, perhaps, was the one thing to write home about this particular year. Little surprise, really, that enemies inside the country and out are already trying to sabotage it. If it goes all the way and comes to fruition — which is should in due course — it will certainly change the course of this region, particularly Pakistan, forever. However, even though the enemy's efforts against it have been countered well enough by the security agencies, there are bigger problems that threaten to derail this goldmine if not taken care of in time.

Much grimmer than armies of any enemy of ours are the forces of religious and sectarian hatred that continue to tear Pakistan from the core. They have been spreading their disgusting orgy of death and destruction up and down the country for many years now. Yet there's still no check on them beyond mere politically correct formalities. And they've been more active in Balochistan than the rest of the country — though their footprint has not been insignificant in any part. And Balochistan, for better or worse, is the most important point of CPEC and the region most desperately in need for that turnaround that it is going to bring.

We must not close our eyes to the fact that so far, despite the obvious threat, we have been unable to secure Balochistan. Even Quetta, not one of our biggest cities, with such obvious threats is not nearly protected well enough. There is, therefore, an urgent need to take stock of our strengths and weaknesses. If '17 too is allowed to drift on its own, we will not be in a much better position in another year's time. Hopefully '16 would have made enough of an impact on our leaders to steer a better course for next year.

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## PREVENTIVE DIPLOMACY: SUCCESSES AND FAILURES BY DR GHULAM NABI FAI

“It is also true that there is no peace and sustainable development without respect for human rights.” Antonio Guterres, Secretary General- elect of the United Nations

“Mankind must put an end to war or war will put an end to mankind.” President John F. Kennedy

It has always been a challenge to exchange views on conflict prevention and the summoning into being a of peaceful and prosperous world. The intellectual debate is great, but the stakes are even greater. Men and women have yearned for peace and prosperity for ages. President Abraham Lincoln in his second inaugural address declared, “Fondly do we hope, fervently do we pray, that this mighty scourge of war may speedily pass away.” Winston Churchill brilliantly recognised that it is invariably better to jaw-jaw than to war-war.

The most gifted men and women have toiled since the beginning of civilisation to end conflict and warfare without much ocular success. Fix your eyes upon the globe as it comes before you day after day. Conflict and carnage seem ubiquitous: Syria, Myanmar, Afghanistan, Iraq, North Korea, Chechnya, the Philippines, Thailand, Kashmir, etc. The list seems horrifyingly endless. The United Nations has no excuse for its failure to pluck universal peace in the planet from the profoundly flawed human species.

Prosperity is as much to be coveted as peace. That is because prosperity means more than wealth and luxury. Indeed, it means the opposite. Prosperity means a spiritual and moral flourishing that celebrates the better angels of us. It means self-discipline, austerity, magnanimity, and selflessness. On that score, there is no tangible progress. According to UNICEF estimates, 8.1 million children die annually because of the stinginess of wealthy nations.

The most promising way to prevent conflict is to eliminate its causes. The latter are well known. Violence and mayhem ensue because of mankind’s desire for domination, wealth, territory, fame, revenge, and destruction of people and things that are disliked for religious, racial, ethnic, political, cultural, or other reasons. Accordingly, the United Nations should summon persons of international standing in the world to teach a global audience to be responsive to their facilitation to set the stage for the elimination of the root-causes of the conflict. As Donald Trump, the President-elect said on October 17, 2016 that he would be honoured to mediate between India and Pakistan to address the

"very, very hot tinderbox" of Kashmir. As we know that it has been universally accepted that the bone of contention of the tensions between India and Pakistan is the unresolved dispute over Kashmir.

Candour compels the conclusion, however, that the ingredients of conflict and violence will remain with mankind for the indefinite future, despite the collaborative efforts of the men of international standing to make these phenomena museum pieces in the history of civilisation. Even the most heralded champion of non-violence in modern times, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., died at the hands of a gunman who had not been persuaded of the superiority of pacifism. Thus, suboptimal approaches to eradicating conflict from the face of the planet must be considered. On that score, the United Nations has much to offer.

Preventive diplomacy has proven a sparkling success in some areas but also failure in many. Specialists at the United Nations routinely spot places where conflict is brewing, either between nations or within a nation's borders. For example, the United Nations identified the possibility of renewed warfare between the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Rwanda, and dispatched diplomats accordingly. As a consequence, a full-scale war in Africa was averted. History has taught that warfare and conflict yield death, destruction, and misery.

There are occasions, however, when preventive diplomacy fails. A backstop is necessary in such cases. And the backstop regrettably means abandoning non-violent solutions. When indicted war criminal Slobodan Milosevic initiated ethnic cleansing of Kosovar Albanians, pleas that he reverse course under the banner of human rights and saintliness were given a deaf ear. Milosevic persisted. Hundreds of thousands were herded into Macedonia and Albania. Tens of thousands were killed. Human rights violations stalked the land. Likewise, preventive diplomacy failed in the region of South Asia to resolve the Kashmir conflict because of the obduracy of one of the parties to the dispute – India.

Confidence building measures also hold promise of averting conflict. Many divisions between peoples and nations come about because of suspicion born of ignorance or mistrust. Confidence building gambits seek to overcome such sinister gaps by thickening contacts and information between adversaries. For instance, two nations might collaborate in preparing textbooks that avoid distortions and propaganda, which foster strife and hatred. The Chinese and Japanese teach about World War II in dramatically conflicting ways. Kashmiri and Indian chronicles of the invasion by the Indian army in October 1947 are at sharp variance. Even the map of South Asia is in variance, depending on whether it was produced by the United Nations or by the

government of India. The former shows it as a disputed territory, while as the latter as integral part of India.

An additional confidence building measure pivots on information. Instant messaging and broadband communications should link all defence and foreign ministries together. The greater the information exchange, the less probability of misunderstandings causing violence or conflict. As recently, we have seen that a telephone call between national security advisors of India and Pakistan on October 4, 2016 was instrumental in diffusing the tension between these two nuclear-armed neighbours.

Fact-finding is a further tool to mitigate or avoid conflict. Nations frequently disagree over facts vital to their bilateral relations. For example, Austria disagreed with Serbia over responsibility for the assassination of Archduke Ferdinand at Sarajevo. A fact-finding mission from an international organisation might have authoritatively resolved the dispute and forestalled the monstrosity of World War I.

The United Nations enjoys several rich fact-finding opportunities. India and Pakistan sharply disagree over the reasons for the prolonged terrorism and conflict in Kashmir. A fact-finding mission as proposed by the United Nations High Commissioner on Human Rights on September 13, 2016 could investigate the cause of the conflict and pronounce fault wherever it might lie. India, Pakistan and Kashmiris might all accept the judgment. But even if a party does not, in the long run the fact-finding will create moral suasion against the party that declines to follow its conclusions.

But it seems to me that the most important fact-finding is not about geography but about political grievances. Fact-finding that would determine which political claims are legitimate and which are illegitimate could work wonders in forestalling such national calamities. I am not suggesting that the fact-finding will invariably succeed. The potential savings in human misery, however, are sufficiently compelling to make the fact-finding exercises worth the effort.

The United Nations is well equipped to orchestrate free and fair elections to end conflicts. Namibia, Mozambique, Cambodia, East Timor and Southern Sudan are splendid examples. The United Nations was prepared to conduct a free and fair plebiscite in Kashmir more than 69 years ago, but was stymied by India's intransigence. Mountains of misery could have been averted if the United Nations had been permitted to step into the Kashmir breach. The new Secretary General-elect has the moral authority and legal obligation to create a conducive atmosphere for a free and fair election in Kashmir on both sides of the Cease-fire Line (CFL), conducted, monitored and supervised by the United Nations.

The United Nations is often criticised for its impotence, although United Nations has ameliorated some conflicts. Further, the United Nations cannot be greater than the sum of its parts. The failings of the UN are the failings of member countries to act decently and humanely as mandated by international law or morality.

In sum, the best method of conflict prevention is for member nations to take their obligations under the United Nations charter and human rights covenants seriously.

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## HOW SECURE IS PAKISTAN? BY RAJA TAIMUR HASSAN

Of many, one of principle factors of demise of the once mighty Soviet Union was widespread economic struggles triggered by massive expenditures on military and weapons, which agitated political and civil unrest in almost all the states. Before the Cold War era, national security was based broadly on military dimensions (strengthening of military, number and variety of weapons, etc.), while the non-military dimensions (i.e., economy and political stability, etc.) played a limited role. But after the Cold War, world powers and their allied countries realised the importance of non-military aspects and started rethinking the security paradigm.

It is now widely acknowledged that a country's national security is inextricably linked with economic security and political stability, where national security cannot be dealt in isolation. As economy and politics of a country affect directly the lives of the people, a weak economy and a difficult political situation can lead to civil unrest and hence weaken the national security. Conversely, a bright economic outlook and political stability ensure social stability, which in turn makes the country stronger on the security front.

In this context a question strikes one's mind that, is Pakistan's politics and economy stable and secure enough to tackle the challenges of national security, in the changing security paradigm? And a subsequent question arises that, is there any threat to Pakistan's national security?

Our history of economic progress and political stability tells a deplorable story and hence, the national security. During the last 15 years, we lost more than 50 thousand innocent civilians as a frontline state in the 'war on terror'. The recent State Bank of Pakistan report revealed that the total direct and indirect loss and damage to Pakistan's economy, as a result of the 'war on terror', is around \$118.3 billion from 2002 to 2016. But as compensation, Pakistan received only \$14 billion through the Coalition Support Fund, which is just peanuts for such a huge loss.

Pakistan could have averted that immense loss of economy and innocent lives, if it was strong on both political and economic fronts. However, it is important for us to know that where we are standing now?

As of today, there is much economic stirring in the country, mainly due to the CPEC and low oil prices. The stock market is breaking record every day, in fact, the best performing in the region, due to political stability and improved law and order. Growing foreign reserves, improving growth rate, significant reduction in power cuts and

successful completion of the IMF programme are the other factors painting the brighter picture of the economy. On the political front, apparently, civil-military ties are improving, showing military non-involvement in political affairs after 2008. We have witnessed Pakistan's first peaceful transfer of power in 2013 and heading towards the second peaceful handover of power, due in 2018.

But do the above-mentioned facts point to economic security and political stability? My answer is No.

There are still many things to worry about. Pakistan's majority macroeconomic indicators do not tell a blissful story of the economy, and growing strife among major political parties coupled with protests and sit-ins is pushing the country towards political instability.

On the economic front, Pakistan's export performance is on declining trend; \$24.5 billion in 2012-13 to \$17.9 billion in 2014 in 2014-15 (Economic Survey 2015-16). Trade deficit is widening, standing at 5.9 per cent of GDP. Cost and ease of doing business in Pakistan is also not globally competitive. Worker remittances are on decline; stands at five per cent of GDP in FY 2015-16, as compared to 6.9 per cent in FY 2014-15. Total level of public debt and liabilities has swollen to Rs22,461.9 billion, which is 75.9 per cent of GDP (SBP 2015-16), and likely to worsen in the next few years. Tax-to-GDP ratio is still stands as one of the lowest in the world, stands at 10.5 percent of GDP. Except China, there is declining trend in investment flows, stands less than one percent of GDP.

Unemployment is on the rise, where millions of graduate are on the streets to find jobs.

On the political front, Pakistan is still struggling with political stability, owing to largely the Panama scandal, and allegations of election rigging. We have witnessed 120 plus days sit-ins and protests on election riggings in 2014 and attempt of locking down the federal capital Islamabad on Panama leaks. Cyril leak, which is being linked with national security, was another dismal civil-military episode.

This gradual degradation of macroeconomic indicators and deteriorating political situation means that the present state of the economy and politics is 'not' in a position to face existential and looming security challenges. Such a development on the economic and political fronts might breed civil unrest, social chaos, promote corruption, breakdown of law and order and absolute failure of governance, which pose serious threat to national security.

**So in this situation what needs to be done?**

In the contemporary world, economic and political factors play a more dominant role in defining and moulding national security. Hence, for the economy to thrive Pakistan needs to strengthen its economy through structural reforms in taxation system, providing a business-friendly environment, encouraging investments through ensuring ease of doing business, borrow prudently to prevent the growing debt level to unsustainable level and enhanced investment in human capital i.e., investing in education and health infrastructure.

For political stability, both political and military leadership of Pakistan should realise that only an economically independent and politically stable Pakistan can effectively deal with national security challenges. For that both civil and military leadership should continue to show patience and restraint for improved Islamabad-Rawalpindi ties. To ease the political tensions, political parties should refrain from politics of mudslinging and confrontation, and should strive for a politically stable Pakistan.

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## **'QUALITY, CAPACITY, SAFETY OF PAKISTAN'S NUCLEAR WEAPONS BETTER THAN INDIA'S' BY IKRAM JUNAIDI**

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's nuclear programme was launched for peaceful purposes but national security issues forced the country to build nuclear weapons, former nuclear scientist and the chairman of the Underground Gasification Project at the Thar Coal Field, Dr Samar Mubarakmand, said on Tuesday.

Dr Mubarakmand was speaking at a seminar titled 'Civilian Uses for Nuclear Energy in Pakistan: Opportunities and Prospects', organised by the Islamabad Policy Research Institute (IPRI).

Although the seminar was supposed to focus on nuclear energy, the discussion revolved mostly around nuclear weapons and nuclear material.

Dr Mubarakmand said Pakistan's nuclear programme was always peaceful, and there have been various peaceful applications of nuclear technology such as the establishment of several nuclear medical centres, agricultural research centres and the radioactive tracers used by the Water and Power Development Authority (Wapda) to build the Mangi Dam in Balochistan.

Because Pakistan is not a signatory of the Non-Proliferation Treaty, he said it was impossible for the country to receive simple technology, and this was possible because of Pakistani scientists who despite heavy sanctions made Pakistan a nuclear state.

"The relaxation of bans by members of the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG) with respect to India as a special dispensation in 2008 under US lobbying, and the current efforts to make India a member of the NSG is an example of the biased Western psyche and mindset," he claimed.

Defending Pakistan against allegations of helping Iran and Libya build nuclear weapons, he said both those countries remain non-nuclear states.

"The world can see that Pakistan's civilian nuclear programme is not being used for military purposes. No theft of nuclear material has ever taken place in Pakistan. We need to survive in the subcontinent with dignity and, being a smaller state, Pakistan restored the balance of power by conducting nuclear tests after India," he said.

Strategic Vision Institute Executive Director Prof Zafar Iqbal Cheema said the treatment given to India by the West is evidence that politics prevails over rules.

“India was trying to make nuclear weapons since 1959, but India is considered a country with a good track record and Pakistan is considered a country that cannot be trusted. However, it is a fact that the quality, capacity and safety of Pakistani nuclear weapons are better compared to India’s,” he claimed.

Prof Cheema endorsed a statement by the Senate chairman, where he claimed that Pakistan was denied nuclear energy because it is a Muslim country.

National Defence University assistant professor Dr Rizwana Karim Abbasi, however, did speak about nuclear energy. She said the demand has increased since the 1990s, and nuclear energy could fill the demand for energy.

“Greenhouse gases have to be cut by 70pc by 2050 so the world will definitely move towards nuclear energy, which is cheaper and environment-friendly. China is producing 19,000MW of electricity through nuclear energy. India and 31 other countries are also going for it,” she said.

“Although incidents of atomic reactor accidents in Germany and Japan have led to resistance to nuclear energy in the West, it is still believed that nuclear energy should be used,” she added.

Dr Abbasi said fossil fuels increase environmental pollution so the world needs to depend more on nuclear power, and safety standards have to be improved.

“Pakistan needs to secure its membership in the NSG, and it should make more nuclear power plants to make more energy,” she said.

The former chairman of the Pakistan Atomic Energy Commission, Dr Pervez Butt, said Pakistan has been considering producing 8,835MW electricity through nuclear energy by 2030, which will meet 5 to 8pc of the total requirement.

Published in Dawn, December 28th, 2016

Source: <http://www.dawn.com/news/1304890/quality-capacity-safety-of-pakistans-nuclear-weapons-better-than-indias>

## PAK-US TIES UNDER TRUMP | EDITORIAL

IT remains to be seen what shape Pakistan-US ties will take under the new US Administration, yet the first ever telephonic conversation between Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif and Donald Trump was very positive and pleasant as the US President-elect not only spoke highly of Pakistan and its people but once again offered mediation in resolution of outstanding disputes between Islamabad and New Delhi. Use of lexemes such as 'Pakistan is a fantastic country of fantastic and intelligent people' has been taken very well in different circles of Pakistan where anti-American sentiments often prevail because of the super power's controversial policies especially against the Muslim Ummah.

We hope that pleasant exchange of words between the two leaders will augur well for future relationship, which witnessed many ups and downs in the history. Since its inception, Pakistan has always desired to have very close and strong relationship with the US but these have often been marred with distrust due to clashing security interests. With a personality like Donald Trump at the White House who during his election campaign manifested himself as a very frank and blunt speaker even on some of the very controversial issues, we understand the relationship between Pakistan and the US could be geared towards mutual trust and respect. The very words that Trump used during his telephonic conversation with the PM showed respect the new President accords to other nations and we expect that he will prove it in his actions to allay fears, which were created before his election to the top slot. As regards Pak-US relations, it is very important in regional context especially regarding situation in Afghanistan. Closer collaboration between the two countries is imperative in order to cultivate the seeds of sustainable peace, security in the region and if Trump implements his pre-election programme of complete drawdown from Afghanistan, we believe this will go a long way in ensuring return of peace to the war-torn country. Pakistan also needs to mount a major lobbying effort in Washington as well as engage deeply with the new Administration to build a strong relationship and protect its interests.

Source: <http://pakobserver.net/pak-us-ties-under-trump/>

## PAKISTAN-US RELATIONS 'QUITE COMPLEX': WH

Pakistan 'would certainly be' among other countries if Trump plans foreign trip

Washington—The White House spokesman, Josh Earnest has noted that the relationship between Pakistan and US was 'quite complicated' and got more so after US conducted a raid into Pakistan that killed Al-Qaeda chief Osama bin Laden.

In a media briefing, Josh Earnest said US relations with Pakistan, particularly on national security, are 'quite complicated', adding that over the past eight years such ties could not remain smooth persistently. In the past, every US President sought advice and benefitted enormously from the expertise of the officials at State Department before meeting with world leaders, he said and added that Donald Trump would also do so after taking charge.

Josh Earnest said Pakistan will be among the list of other countries if US President-elect Donald Trump ever started planning his foreign trip. "When President Trump begins planning his overseas travel, he'll have a range of places to consider, and Pakistan would certainly be one of them," White House spokesperson said when asked about Trump's signal to visit Pakistan.

"At one point in his presidency, I do recall President Obama expressing a desire to travel to Pakistan. For a variety of reasons, some of them relating to the complicated relationship between our two countries at certain times over the last eight years, President Obama was not able to realize that ambition," he added.

To a question, the spokesman said he could not give any response on the accuracy and tone of the conversation between US President-elect Donald Trump and Pakistan's Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif.

"I'd refer you to the President-elect's team for more of a description of what the President-elect may have communicated to the Prime Minister of Pakistan," he told the journalist.

He further stated that the relations between our two countries, particularly over the last eight years, have not been smooth, particularly in the aftermath of the raid on Pakistani soil that killed Osama bin Laden. "But this obviously is an important relationship. There have been areas where the United States and Pakistan have been able to effectively coordinate our efforts," he said.

Earlier on Thursday, Pakistan welcomed U.S. President-elect Donald Trump's offer of playing a role in resolution of longstanding issues. Trump, who spoke with Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif on the phone Wednesday, said he is "ready and willing to play any role that you want me to play to address and find solutions to the outstanding problems," the Foreign Ministry said. This was the first telephone conversation between the two leaders after Trump's victory in elections last month.

The US State Department has said US President-elect Donald Trump was not briefed by officials prior to his much-discussed telephone call with Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif during which he praised the PM as a "terrific guy". "So the White House suggested that State may have briefed President-elect Trump before his call to Pakistan to Nawaz Sharif, and we're wondering if that was the case. And if so, what was discussed," a journalist asked Mark C. Toner, Deputy Spokesperson of the U.S. State Department, at a daily press briefing.

"Not to my knowledge, no, we had no discussion with President-elect Trump prior to that call," Toner replied.—Agencies

Source: <http://pakobserver.net/pakistan-us-relations-quite-complex-wh/>



## PAK-AFGHAN TIES| EDITORIAL

AFGHAN President Ashraf Ghani has become a harsh critic of Pakistan — harsh to the point of outdoing Indian hawks and, seemingly, undermining his own country's interests. At the Heart of Asia conference in Amritsar, where the theme was cooperation against security threats, Mr Ghani's rhetoric was aggressive, almost as if Kabul desired a rupture in Pak-Afghan ties. This is not the right attitude and it is hoped that better sense will prevail. Certainly, there is some history here. When Mr Ghani assumed office more than two years ago, he made it a priority to reach out to Pakistan through some bold verbal statements and diplomatic gestures towards Islamabad and Rawalpindi; it indicated that resetting ties with Pakistan were a core part of his agenda. The outreach was received warmly by both the political government and the military leadership here, but Mr Ghani soon became impatient with what was perceived in Afghanistan as Pakistan's slow pace in addressing his country's concerns.

Yet, Pakistan, too, has had genuine concerns vis-à-vis Afghanistan. As Mr Ghani and the National Unity Government he heads became increasingly hawkish on Pakistan, they deliberately steered closer to India — a growing closeness that the security establishment here saw as one of the reasons behind the renewed security troubles in Balochistan. Moreover, with counter-insurgency operations in North Waziristan and other parts of Fata nearing their final stages, the problem of sanctuaries for anti-Pakistan militants in Afghanistan, particularly in the eastern region, has become a thorny issue. The combination of Afghan and Pakistani grievances against one another has led to a relationship that is now in a shockingly poor state. Still, there are compelling reasons for both sides to move the bilateral relationship back towards cooperation, and Mr Ghani surely knows this, even if he prefers to give voice to a one-sided interpretation of events at the moment.

There are at least three areas in which cooperation is merited — and can be achieved, if both sides are willing to accept the principle of reciprocity. First, the problem of cross-border militancy is a regional one, as the joint statement at the Amritsar conference indicated. In the case of Afghanistan and Pakistan, border management and interdicting cross-border militant movement can be a joint priority. Second, the goal of a political reconciliation with the Afghan Taliban is one shared by all sides. Pakistan can continue to use its influence in a way that nudges the Taliban towards reconciliation, while Afghanistan can tamp down its hostile rhetoric towards Pakistan as it explores further ways to move dialogue ahead. Third, trade and commerce between Pakistan and Afghanistan can and should be expanded — Pakistan remains a vital trading partner for Afghanistan and the old business links, formal and informal, are an important platform. Cooperation needs to be the guiding principle of Pak-Afghan relations.

## PAKISTAN-INDIA TENSIONS: TRUMP URGED TO DEVELOP CLEARER SOUTH ASIA POLICY

WASHINGTON: US president-elect Donald Trump should develop clearer policies to ease tensions between Pakistan and India, senior analysts said at a discussion at the US Institute of Peace (USIP) on Wednesday.

Two analysts, taking part in the discussion, stated that relations between India and Pakistan were becoming less predictable as nationalist sentiments in India heighten political pressure there to escalate its response to clashes in the disputed territory of Kashmir.

“The fear of direct military conflict is real,” Shamila Chaudhary, a former Pakistan director at the US National Security Council said. She said that every new administration wants to end the India-Pakistan standoff, a possibility that Trump and his Vice President-elect Mike Pence have indicated in recent months.

Chaudhary was, however, of the opinion that it was not going to work, and added that more modest goals for the upcoming administration could be to consolidate or better coordinate US policy-making on India and Pakistan. She suggested strengthening private diplomacy to build communication between the countries and limiting public statements, which “don’t work well in the region.”

Speaking on the ties between the US and Pakistan, Sameer Lalwani, deputy director of the South Asia Programme at the Stimson Centre, said that although the United States has slashed aid to Pakistan, Washington still needs a working relationship with Pakistani authorities.

“The US needs Pakistani cooperation on intelligence, homeland security and counter-terrorism, the fight against Islamic State extremists, and stabilising Afghanistan,” he said.

Published in The Express Tribune, December 29th, 2016.

Source: <http://tribune.com.pk/story/1278139/pakistan-india-tensions-trump-urged-develop-clearer-south-asia-policy/>

# ECONOMY

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## STATE OF THE ECONOMY | EDITORIAL

Against the grain of the praise international financial institutions have been lavishing on the Pakistani economy, the State Bank of Pakistan's State of the Economy Report 2015-16 released earlier this month painted a much more dismal picture. The SBP has noted that the Pakistani economy faces serious challenges. Agreeing with the government's macroeconomic stability claims and noting that a higher growth rate in the country is imminent, the bank has still raised a number of alarming markers that can destabilise the economy. It pointed to high levels of public debt, low investment and saving levels, declining exports, reliance on temporary measures for taxation and low levels of social spending as the major concerns for the economy. Note that this does not include political instability, which is one of the major factors the government has offered when explaining why it has been unable to meet the targets it sets for itself. The SBP report does, however, mention the cost of terrorism to be an astronomical \$118 billion to the economy. The low level of private sector investment confirms that businesses have a rather low level of real confidence in the economic recovery narrative. Similarly, the declining interest rates have made it less attractive for individuals to put their savings in short to long-term investment schemes or bank accounts. Moreover, it is the trend of increasing imports amidst low global oils prices as well as Pakistan's declining exports that could create a major foreign reserves crisis soon.

The taxation regime remains a major concern as big sectors remain outside the tax loop while others have been brought in through fairly controversial measures. Low oil prices have been a boon to the economy but the level of public debt has increased under the PML-N government by around Rs2.3 trillion to Rs19.7 trillion. The debt-to-GDP ratio is still over 60 percent, despite the government's promises to bring debt levels down to the required ratio. The SBP's report also tries to balance the high praise that the government has received from abroad and asks the government to remain on its feet and address the key challenges it faces. There is a need for decisive action on issues such as tax collection, instead of the current approach in which tax measures are announced, then renounced, before being announced again. There have been complaints that the economy is run in an ad-hoc manner. There is no doubt that Pakistan has high economic potential but any good work by the government will end up being wasted if structural issues such as implementing a proper tax regime and spending on social services are not sorted out quickly.

## CPEC CHALLENGE AND OPPORTUNITY BY TALAT MASOOD

The CPEC is a multidisciplinary project where systems integration plays a key role. The CPEC provides Pakistan a unique opportunity to master and upgrade new technologies and improve managerial practices that could find wider application in the country. The success in achieving this would, however, depend if Pakistan were able to develop dedicated institutions that are in a position to assimilate and transfer this cumulative experience. With a wider network of roads and highways CPEC would considerably improve connectivity and growth of provinces. The CPEC if implemented faithfully would change the face of Baluchistan and in the long term would be its greatest beneficiary. The central focus is on the development of Gwadar. Its deep seaport last year was officially leased to China for 43 years until 2059 and is now fully operational. The new airport is also near completion and great emphasis is being laid on improving the infrastructure which likely to attract foreign and local investment.

Interestingly, CPEC could be a major vehicle for promoting good governance through institutional reforms. But at the same time to achieve maximum benefit from the enterprise quality governance is critical. Regrettably, in Pakistan governance remains weak, so for those involved in the project their learning curve will have to be steep. The question is whether the government is giving sufficient attention to training and employing the right persons for achieving optimum efficiency. It is not that we do not have the potential to develop skills and improve governance but much will depend to what extent the government takes these issues seriously.

There has been criticism by K-P and Sindh leadership on the priority accorded to Punjab in allocation of resources or in the choice of route. First, the decision on these matters was not solely the prerogative of our government. The Chinese have a major say in these decisions and for them early completion of the project and security was a priority. Chief ministers have every right to advance the interests of their provinces but they should understand that other factors have to be given their due weightage. More importantly, CPEC should not be made controversial. The highest priority is being given to energy and infrastructural projects with an investment of \$34 billion. As there are several coal based energy plants Sindh was the most appropriate choice for locating them. Vicinity to the Karachi port and its developed infrastructure was another major attraction. This decision should not worry other provinces, as the electric power generated is connected to the national grid and available to all provinces.

The CPEC faces hostility of India and is eyed with suspicion by US and certain Western countries. India misreads Chinese designs and considers that their expanding presence and influence in and around Gwadar are meant to promote their maritime ambitions and

economic growth. It is wary that CPEC will bring China and Pakistan even closer and strengthen Pakistan's economy. United States and the West are also uneasy with the growing influence of China in the region. Pakistan and China have been trying to assure the world that it is essentially an economic project meant to bring prosperity to the region. The projected cost of CPEC is \$76 billion and \$46 billion would be spent on Pakistan. This is an extraordinary investment that so far has no parallel. It dwarfs the assistance provided by the US since 9/11. The other characteristic of CPEC is that it opens up new vistas for wider cooperation between countries of the region. Thrust of CPEC is to bind regional countries together to bring about an economic transformation through enhanced connectivity. It aims at promoting trade among regional countries. It is Pakistan's unique advantage of geography that has to be fully exploited to get the best results. Pakistan will be able to link with Central Asian states and beyond. Advantage for China is even greater as through the corridor it gets connected to Africa and Middle East through a much shorter route. China's landlocked western region is home to the Uyghur community and has recently experienced a lot of instability due to the rise of East Turkestan Islamic Movement. It is expected that economic benefits flowing out of CPEC should help in addressing the grievance of the people of this region. Success of CPEC would require that there is greater synergy between foreign and domestic policies. The state of law and order will have to be better for successful implementation of the project and to earn confidence of China and regional countries. Whereas, there has been an overall improvement in the security situation but occurrence of minor and major incidents demand greater effort in this direction.

Media will have to play a major role in projecting CPEC for attracting investment and instilling confidence in the international community. The news that the first CPEC specific convoy completed its journey from Xinjiang to Gwadar was well received. There are innumerable tangible and intangible side benefits that need to be publicised. A very large number of foreign Information Technology companies have expressed interest in the CPEC project. There is, nonetheless, need to curb hype and exaggerated expectations as well. This is a project spread over years fruits of which will take time to materialise.

There has to be a continuous appraisal of the challenges facing CPEC in economic, financial and logistic areas. Human resource development has to be given high priority. At present it is the planning commission and the various committees that are responsible for evaluation. The political and cultural implications also need to be monitored for appropriate and timely response. Financial transparency is key for gaining confidence of the foreign investor and our people. The government has to be very open about all major and minor transactions that relate to CPEC. As most of the mega projects are being financed through loans on high interest rates it would be advisable if

the government would be more transparent about their feasibility. Concrete steps should be taken to reduce prospects of corruption.

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Source: <http://tribune.com.pk/story/1250681/cpec-challenge-opportunity/>

## POST-IMF OR PRE-IMF? BY SAKIB SHERANI

HOW is the economy shaping up in the wake of a recently concluded three-year IMF stabilisation programme that has been dubbed an outstanding success by the government? To answer this question, we need to critically examine a number of areas that the government and the IMF sought to address via the over \$6 billion lending arrangement of September 2013. A sub-set of questions will help clarify the underlying situation with regards to the economy. Is the economy now in a position to deliver robust growth? Is private investment picking up? Have the underlying structural issues in public finances been fixed? Are Pakistan's power-sector challenges behind us? And, of most immediate concern, has the threat of another external payments crisis been averted?

Judging by the immediate aftermath of even partially successful past Fund programmes, this should be a sweet spot for the economy. Under previous IMF-financed and debt-funded episodes of macroeconomic stabilisation, economic activity has, more often than not, rebounded sharply as the uncertainty — and the foreign exchange constraint — have eased and the economy stabilised. Private investment and investor sentiment have usually recovered quite strongly too.

This time around, however, the economy has experienced its weakest and most modest recovery post-IMF programme. Real GDP growth has moved up from 3.7 per cent in 2013 — the start of the IMF programme — to an official 4.7pc at its end in 2016. The government-released growth figure for 2015-16 is highly disputed. Even so, three years after the start of the government's stabilisation efforts, the change in GDP growth (the 'growth momentum') is a mere 1pc. This translates into a negative change if independent estimates of GDP growth of 3-3.5pc are used.

This anaemic boost to growth has occurred despite the government building up international reserves by contracting external borrowing of \$35bn over this period, and by a significant uplift to economic growth provided by the substantial improvement in Pakistan's external terms of trade.

The economy is in its weakest post-stabilisation 'recovery' in recent times.

By contrast, in a similar three-year period between 2009 and 2012, under the previous IMF programme, real GDP growth moved up from 0.4pc to 3.8pc, a swing of 3.4pc. This turnaround happened despite the fact that international oil prices were averaging around \$100 a barrel during that period — twice current levels.

The overall weakness of the economy is reflected in a range of 'soft' numbers. Large-scale manufacturing output rose 2.2pc during July-September. Adjusting for a blip in



production of iron and steel, and continued strength in cement output, production growth for all other sectors was only 1pc during this period. Utilisation of bank credit by the private sector is also subdued, despite banks being flush with liquidity, suggesting weak credit demand. Foreign direct investment inflows are down 50pc over the previous year, despite on-going investment in some CPEC projects.

Perhaps most surprisingly, there has been a steep fall in business sentiment. The latest Business Confidence Index released by the Overseas Investors Chamber of Commerce and Industry, conducted in September/October 2016, has slumped by 19 percentage points, to plus 17pc from plus 36pc previously. This indicates a sharp reversal in business confidence.

On the public finances front, despite some modest effort at reform by the government, total tax revenue collection by the Federal Board of Revenue and provinces for the first quarter of 2016-17 has been sluggish, rising by only 2pc against same period last year. The overall budget deficit for the first quarter is also 0.2pc of GDP larger than the previous year, at 1.3pc versus 1.1pc of GDP.

As a result, government borrowing from the banking system for budgetary support is showing a large increase, of over 77pc as of Nov 25. More importantly, the composition of borrowing has reversed completely, with the government borrowing over Rs1 trillion from the central bank between July 1 and Nov 25, 2016, versus a retirement of nearly Rs323bn in the same period the previous year. This is a clear indication of a weakening of fiscal discipline since the completion of the IMF programme at the end of September, and is a result of a combination of sluggish tax revenue collection and higher expenditure by government.

In the power sector, the subdued accumulation of circular debt has been attributed by the IMF entirely to the decline in oil prices, rather than to any significant improvement in the governance of the sector. According to the latest IMF country report, the fall in oil prices caused a decline in circular debt of Rs119bn. Had oil prices been at the same level as previously, circular debt would have continued rising, though at a slower pace.

Finally, Pakistan's perennial weakness — its external account — continues to remain vulnerable. Despite a modest 2pc year-on-year increase in export earnings in October, after many consecutive months of decline, merchandise exports have fallen to an abysmal 7.3pc of GDP — the lowest since the 1980s and the lowest for any developing country in Pakistan's peer group. With an uncertain outlook for remittances, strong import growth due to the requirements of CPEC projects, and repayments of large forex



liabilities on the horizon, the external account remains vulnerable — even without an increase in international oil prices.

The fact that the economy remains in such an anaemic state at the end of a three-year IMF programme, and despite a massive boost from the fall in international oil prices since 2014, indicates persisting underlying structural weaknesses. Hence, by all accounts, Pakistan is currently in its favoured habitat — sans serious reform, enjoying the sun in a brief interlude between two Fund programmes.

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

Published in Dawn, December 9th, 2016

## MOVING TOWARDS A KNOWLEDGE ECONOMY BY AHSAN IQBAL

The world has entered into a 'knowledge age' and skill and innovative ideas are highly critical for optimal economic growth. At the higher level of abstraction, this was always the case. But what makes the knowledge age different from the industrial or agricultural age? It is the fact that the impact of knowledge on economic growth has increased exponentially in today's economy.

Being cognisant of these dynamic changes in global economy, the PML-N government is allocating huge resources towards establishing a knowledge infrastructure in Pakistan. It is worth reminding to our cynics that knowledge infrastructure mandates the existence of physical infrastructure. Therefore, it is not a choice of one over the other. Both are highly necessary.

In 1998 as a Federal Minister, I had the honour to play an instrumental role in devising Vision 2010 for Pakistan. It launched the roadmap 2010 for higher education which recommended reform of University Grant Commission (UGC) into an autonomous regulatory body that later became the basis for the establishment of the Higher Education Commission (HEC) in Pakistan. The project for producing 5,000 PhDs was also launched in 1999 after I found that there were only 350 PhDs in our universities and majority of them were mature for retirement in next few years.

Dr Attaur Rahman, who was a part of my team in 1998 and later became a Minister in Musharaff's regime effectively pursued some of our laid down policies of Vision 2010. As a result, the HEC evolved into a respectable entity over the years and we have 7,500 PhDs today. In 2013, I again had the honour to devise Vision 2025 for Pakistan. In Vision 2025, the investment in human capital, innovation, and knowledge are identified as significant contributors to economic growth and our PML-N government is taking concrete steps in the right direction.

To evaluate PM Sharif government's commitment to transform Pakistan into a knowledge economy, it should be compared with its predecessors. For instance, in last three years of the PML-N government, funds of Rs215 billion are allocated to HEC. Whereas, from 2010-2013, Rs100 billion was allocated towards the HEC. Our government has increased allocation of funds towards HEC by more than 100 per cent. As Nelson Mandela once said: "education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world".

The PML-N government wants to ensure the access to higher education for students from low income households and also especially for female students. It is imperative to

point out that when students don't have a university campus nearby, they have to rely on hostels and this increases the cost of education and as a result, students from low income households get discriminated.

Moreover, female students suffer even more because parents are less willing to send their daughters away from home for the sake of education.

Therefore, one of the major initiatives of our government is to build university campus in every district of Pakistan — FATA, Gwadar and Zhob university campuses are a few examples of it. A new Skills University and a world class University of Central Asia & Pakistan will also start functioning from 2017.

Furthermore, a 'Technology Innovation Fund' has been set up to finance commercialisation of research by faculty and researchers in universities. The National Endowment of Scholarships for Talent has been set up with seed money of Rs two billion to be increased up to Rs10 billion to provide scholarships based on need and merit. Similarly, the Science Talent Farming project has been launched to polish and develop young talent into proficient scientists. The government is funding various initiatives for developing strong digital infrastructure in universities. Laptop scheme for students, smart university programmes, and establishment of incubators in universities are concrete examples of the initiative.

We want Pakistani students to be at cutting edge of the most advanced scientific knowledge. Historically successive governments in Pakistan have limited their relationship with the US to aid the buying of military armaments. PM Sharif's government is committed to develop a partnership with the US on the front of education, especially because the secret weapon of the US is its world class universities. In the last meeting of PM Sharif and President Obama, the US-Pakistan knowledge corridor was announced. Under US-Pakistan Knowledge corridor, our goal is to send 10,000 Pakistan students to get a PhD degree from the top US universities in next 10 years. In addition to this we are also supporting initiatives with other friendly countries to have additional 10,000 PhD scholarships.

The PML-N government has launched the science, technology, engineering, arts and mathematics initiative. For the new technologically driven knowledge economies, we need competence in science, technology, engineering and mathematics subjects. Also, the importance of arts and social sciences as subjects largely remained ignored in Pakistan. But to produce critical and innovative minds, we must encourage different art forms among our students. Moreover, social sciences are necessary for philosophical, political, ideological and cultural development of any society. Recently, I had the honour

to announce the formation of 'Pakistan Academy of Social Sciences', it will promote the development of social sciences and humanities in Pakistan.

Although education has been devolved under 18th Amendment of constitution, we believe that federal government can't completely absolve itself from the responsibility of state of education in the country. Therefore, the forum of Inter Provincial Committee of Education Ministers has been activated. We have funded three key initiatives to be launched in partnership with provinces, firstly establishment of National Curriculum Council to revise the curriculum from rote learning to critical, creativity and innovation based learning. Secondly, reform of Boards of Intermediate and Secondary Education in the country to align examination with the new curriculum and national standards of merit and transparency. Thirdly, reform of teacher training programmes in the country in partnership with provinces including establishment of Asia's best teacher training center in Islamabad as a resource center. Recently, a project to establish 24 smart schools as models of technology based embedded learning in ICT area has been launched to create schools of tomorrow.

There is no doubt that numbers have improved in terms of higher education in Pakistan but are we producing the desired quality of scholarship/knowledge? Every university and scholar in Pakistan must ask the following epistemological question: Am I really producing knowledge? Given our contemporary situation and the challenges we face as a country, the production of 'knowledge' must be aligned with our real world problems and needs.

In order to do that, a new higher education road map 2025 has been formulated on the following principles. First of all, there will not be any compromise on scientific inquiry and methodology. Second, our universities will not restrict themselves to be teaching centres, they should be the centres of research and innovation. Third, curriculum will encourage critical and innovative thinking and new teaching methods should be used. Fourth, to align and synergise knowledge and production platforms in the economy, universities will take a lead in establishing strong linkages between academia and industry. Fifth, universities will encourage entrepreneurial spirit and responsible leadership skills among students. Sixth, technological advancement is reshaping the global world, we are very much behind in this technological race. Therefore, concerted and coherent effort among universities, industry and government are going to be undertaken to develop world class technological hubs in Pakistan.

The journey of establishing a 'knowledge economy' is neither short nor easy. It requires a persistent and collaborative effort. I am sure that through the aforementioned

initiatives, a foundation for transformation has been laid and our journey to success has begun.

Published in The Express Tribune, December 12th, 2016.

Source: <http://tribune.com.pk/story/1260439/moving-towards-knowledge-economy/>

## CPEC AND RUSSIA'S QUEST FOR WARM WATER PORTS BY NAVEED AHMAD

Pakistan's point-man for China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), Ahsan Iqbal, just concluded an exhaustive visit to Moscow. What would have been the point of a sojourn if there was no talk about the corridor and access to the warm waters of the Arabian Sea? A fortnight ago, Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif attended the Global Conference on Sustainable Transport in Ashgabat, Turkmenistan. Islamabad not only offered its land route to landlocked Central Asian states but also extended the olive branch to Russia. Moscow tried a different strategy to reach the warm waters of the Arabian Sea for three decades, but spectacularly failed courtesy the Afghans and Pakistan.

Russian foreign ministry denied any negotiations with Pakistan on joining the China-sponsored corridor to the Arabian Sea via the Gwadar port. The federal minister's visit 10 days later offered a blunt rejoinder. On its part, the Central Asia Regional Economic Cooperation member state showed its willingness to work with Russia, thus the meeting with Maksim Sokolov, the Russian transport minister.

### Turbulent ties

Islamabad and Moscow first interacted on the fringes of the UN General Assembly meeting on May 1, 1948, when Foreign Minister Sir Zafarullah Khan met his counterpart. Zulfikar Ali Bhutto aspired to create a better bargain for Pakistan by wooing Russia, when he first visited the country in 1960 as Minister of Fuel Power and Natural Resources. Later, he remained actively engaged with Moscow as a foreign minister as well. The engagement eventually led to post-1965 war Tashkent Declaration. Kremlin backed Delhi outrightly as it sponsored Bengali secessionist militancy in 1971. Despite this, the controversial populist leader visited Moscow in 1972 as premier. Later, Russia launched a proxy war against Pakistan after it sided with the Afghan resistance against its military intervention as well as the capitalist bloc.

Following his father's footsteps, Premier Benazir Bhutto tried to warm relations with Russia in 1994-1995. However, political infighting at home and Moscow's annoyance over the rise of Taliban factored in adversely. Just months prior to the coup, Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif visited Russia in 1999. But General Musharraf pressed reset on almost everything the Nawaz government was pursuing, and ties with Russia were no exception.

Since Musharraf's Russia visit in 2003, relations have steadily improved without considerable turbulence. While almost every Pakistan president or premier has visited Moscow since, none were reciprocated at the same level.

In 2015, commandoes from both sides held war-games, while their navies conducted a joint exercise in the northern Arabian Sea. These increasing comfort levels are leading the two nations to previously uncharted waters, the most notable being the sale of MiG-29's engines, RD-33, for en masse production and likely export of JF-17 Thunder.

The move was preceded by a deal to buy Russian Mil Mi-35 gunships and electronic warfare equipment. Besides inducting initial deliveries of four rotary-wing aircrafts, Islamabad may order another 16 subject to the platform's performance and budgetary conditions.

### **Partnership for mutual benefit**

Russia's prime interest in Pakistan has been investment in the energy sector, symbolised by financing of the 850km North-South (Lahore-Karachi) pipeline to securing investment in the Iran-Pakistan gas pipeline. And it remains to be seen if Moscow agrees to invest in the Thar coal field.

If the overview of complicated bilateral relations can be any guide, both the countries are steadily developing ties but are still far from becoming strategic and economic partners. Russia's defense cooperation with India is at a far advanced level, which for now remains un-deterred by Delhi's advances to Washington.

Of late, Moscow has not shared India's hardened position against Pakistan, may it be the BRICS summit in Goa or Heart of Asia conference in Amritsar. Islamabad's recent abstention on the UN resolution regarding Syria was also an effort to stay out of the Pandora's box.

The offer to join CPEC is too enticing for Russia to out-rightly reject. Its energy projects, such as the pipeline network, may eventually culminate in Russian oil being shipped to the east and the west from Gwadar port. Even if Kremlin may not benefit from the CPEC in the short term, it won't back India's rhetoric against the logistical corridor.

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## NEW GLOBAL ECONOMIC ORDER IN THE OFFING? BY M ZIAUDDIN

Most of us seem to have forgotten the popular street movements against globalization that had sent visible tremors across the rich world, especially in Europe and the US during the second half of the 1990s. These movements then tapered off soon after 9/11 as the attention of the world at large was fixated on what was called the global war on terror. Now that the war against terror is being seen to be tapering off except in some pockets like Afghanistan, Iraq and Syria where it is at its violent worst the global antagonism against globalization seems to have reared its ugly head once again. And this time the movement seems to have caught many, especially the Western and the US academia and the media by surprise as instead of displaying its antipathy towards globalization on the streets of rich countries it has emerged from inside the ballot boxes.

The Brexit referendum and the November, 2016 polls in the US have virtually struck the death knell for globalization. The year 2008 had heralded the beginning of the end of globalization as the recession that followed the financial mayhem of the year before had caused the economy of the Eurozone to almost buckle-in with that of countries like Greece keeling over, world markets going haywire with many a trade deal getting stalled and a war-like confrontation seemingly in the offing between the West and Russia on the one hand and on the other making of a bitter trade war between the US and China looking almost imminent. It is in this scenario that the UK has received ballot approval to leave the European Union and the majority of the US Electoral College had voted in Donald Trump who has promised to roll back globalization not as perceived by its authors but as vulgarised by its practitioners.

Europe seems still in a kind of shock as it readies itself trying to cope with the double whammy - the UK exit from EU and the victory of Donald Trump in the US. Russia seems decidedly happy. In fact the CIA has recently come up with a (questionable?) report which alleges that Russia had intervened in the US election in favour of Trump. China has so far kept to itself its reaction to the paradigm shift the world economic order is expected to experience following the Brexit and the advent of Trump.

China was a primary target of Trump during the election campaign as he accused Beijing of enriching its populace at the cost of US manufacturing sector and American jobs. However, Trump has also promised to do away with the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) trade agreement proposed by the Obama administration, which would surely be welcomed by China as the TPP has been designed to deny China the vast Southeast Asian markets located in its neighbourhood. And Trump's promise to abandon the age-old US' interventionist foreign policy would certainly relieve the pressure on Beijing's South-China Sea ambitions.



However, following the recent statement of Trump expressing doubts about continuing to abide by the 'one China' policy Beijing has made it very clear that it is "seriously concerned" at this statement indicating its willingness to strongly oppose such a move by Washington.

Under the 'One China' policy, the US has formal ties with China rather than the island of Taiwan, which China sees as a breakaway province. The "One China" understanding has been crucial to US-China relations for decades.

While one expects this unexpected and unwanted twist in US-China relations to impact hackers used the SWIFT network to send fake orders requesting the transfer of nearly \$1 billion from Bangladesh Bank's account at the New York Fed.

Many of the transfer orders were blocked or reversed but, after a series of oversights and miscommunications, the New York Fed ultimately sent \$81 million to four fake accounts in a branch of Rizal Commercial Banking Corp (RCBC) in the Philippines. Most of the funds then disappeared into Manila's loosely regulated casino industry.

Source: <http://www.brecorder.com/articles-a-letters/187:articles/113199:new-global-economic-order-in-the-offing/?date=2016-12-14>

# EDUCATION

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## MAKING EDUCATION SECTOR DISASTER-RESILIENT BY SALEEM SHAIKH

Over the last five years, public infrastructure in Pakistan has suffered significant damages because of climate change-induced disasters, particularly floods and cloudburst-triggered heavy rains. These disasters have undermined the socio-economic gains achieved as a result of budgetary allocations worth billions. Educational sector has particularly suffered.

Thousands of public schools across the country have been damaged--at least, partially--by consecutive floods between 2010 and 2015. According to the UN estimates, these floods caused economic and infrastructural damages to the tune of around US \$25 billion and the recovery of these damages require an additional US \$35 billion dollars.

Of all the infrastructural damages caused by exacerbated fallouts of the climatic disasters, such as floods, glacier lake outburst floods, landslides, and land erosion over the last 60 years, 80 percent have occurred over the last five years.

A review of the impacts of these disasters indicates that the educational infrastructure has severely been hit while most of them being school buildings in rural areas remain unrestored. Students of these damaged school buildings are forced to sit in open spaces under the sky.

Disasters induced by climate change, especially those between 2010 to 2015 indicate that the country's education sector is critically vulnerable to floods, which have shown an increased frequency as the region continues to witness erratic and cloudburst-induced heavy rains.

Damages suffered by the educational sector because of earthquake further worsen the impacts of climate change-induced disasters. Recurrent earthquakes of varying intensity only add more gravity to the problem.

For instance, over 18,000 children died in the 2005 earthquake in Pakistan while an even greater number was injured in widespread collapses of over 58,000 schools. School children are at a significantly greater risk of receiving more harm during disasters like earthquake and floods.

The heightened climate vulnerability of the education sector emphasises a need for a policy response that aims to establish safe school buildings, especially in the event of any disaster, and provides self-based disaster response training to students and teachers to reduce losses of human lives.

There is an adequate realisation amongst policymakers and disaster resilience experts that the fallouts of climate change on the country's socio-economic sectors can be significantly minimised and even overcome through an effective implementation of policy responses. These responses would help make educational sector disaster-resilient. An over-arching plan in this regard, which was rolled out in August this year by National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) in support of the UNICEF, is more than a welcome move. The blueprint, "Pakistan School Based Disaster Risk Management (PSBDRM) Framework," aims to establish a disaster-resilient and climate-proof educational sector and ensure the safety of the schoolchildren and teachers in the event of any disaster. It spells out measures to guide school safety initiatives, mainstream disaster-resilience into school construction activities, formulate school disaster management plans, and promote awareness through practical exercises, mock evacuation drills, an inclusion of disaster risk reduction in the curriculum, and extra-curricular activities, which include speech competitions and painting exhibitions. Given the vulnerability of schoolchildren, teachers and other school staff members, guiding them on how to save their lives, as proposed in the NDMA's PSBDRM, is of an unprecedented value.

The framework has been rolled out after national-level consultative meetings with the government and private sector stakeholders. It was also reviewed by international consultants, according to NDMA Chairman, Maj. Gen. Asghar Nawaz.

The authority has already started implementing the PSBDRM framework to pre-test it at as many as 68 public and private sector schools as a pilot project before expanding it to all schools across the country. These schools have been selected by the education department and the secretariats of the private school systems.

The primary goal of this pilot project is to identify challenges in the implementation of the framework and, if a need arises, modify it to make it more viable and productive in boosting disaster preparedness, improving responses and recovery, with a special focus on children. It has been observed that the lives of schoolchildren, educational activities and school infrastructure are badly impacted in the event of any disaster.

Preparing schoolchildren on how to be safe, provision of an unhampered education, and a climate-resilient school infrastructure has become inevitable as the country continues

to face climate change-caused disasters, particularly floods, landslides, cloudbursts, land heavy rain as well as flood-triggered land erosion.

Various research studies postulate that most risks faced by schoolchildren are usually caused by decisions taken by elders, including their parents, teachers and government officials. Therefore, communication about disaster safety measures, as recommended in the framework, should feature community meetings, broadcast media, religious and community opinion leaders. All these actors can play a vital role in addressing the impacts of disasters. This can be achieved by bridging information, skill and motivational gaps amongst the three key stakeholders.

With children representing over a third of disaster victims, the humanitarian sector cannot confine children's role in disasters to that of passive victims. However, providing them with an opportunity to directly get involved in DRR and resilience-building activities would provide them with an enabling environment to develop skills to respond to any disaster risk on their own. Furthermore, addressing the usage of non-quality building material in school construction in violation of the existing building codes laws and the relocation of schools away from disaster-prone areas are additional challenges.

These obstacles can also be overcome with the actualisation of the framework's recommendations regarding the inclusion of disaster-resilience construction concept into school construction plans across the country. For instance, ERRA re-built new schools on raised mud platforms and used wood planks and tin-made roofs in the construction of new schools in the earthquake and flood-prone areas, which have withstood these disasters in the following.

Therefore, it would be of great value that such disaster mitigation-related examples amongst other recommendations proposed in the school safety framework are taken into account. Consulting relevant education policymakers and disaster-resilient construction experts for making schools disaster-safe and the inclusion of disaster preparedness and resilience lessons in school curricula can also help make the country climate-resilient.

Educating and empowering school children with knowledge and strategies, which would help them cope with disasters, could indirectly influence families and communities. Children are the motivational reservoir who can encourage their family members to act. In fact, they connect families with the community.

The writer is the head of climate change communication section at the Climate Change Ministry. He is also a freelance columnist, media trainer and a guest speaker on disaster reporting at the National University of Science and Technology, Islamabad

Source: <http://dailytimes.com.pk/opinion/03-Dec-16/making-education-sector-disaster-resilient>

## DEVOLUTION OF EDUCATION | EDITORIAL

Devolution of the subject of education under the 18th constitutional amendment has remained an oft-debated topic as many have questioned the wisdom behind this devolution. The recent Lahore High Court order brought this to limelight again as the court ruled that provinces cannot legislate on the appointment of vice chancellors to public sector universities since the Higher Education Commission Ordinance, 2002 is still in place and provincial statutes cannot replace it. Leaving aside the legal nuances that led to this judgment, the judgment would have a positive impact on the state of higher education in Pakistan, the fate of which had been opaque ever since the devolution. This is not an endorsement of the present performance of the Higher Education Commission (HEC) as public universities in Pakistan under the regulation of the HEC have not shown any admirable progress. However, the solution to this not further fragmentation of the higher education system in Pakistan as only a strong centralised body can have the capacity required to bring about a radical reformation of the education sector.

More broadly, the criticism of the devolution of the subject of education has mostly centred around the supposed provincialism that it would lead to in the absence of a unified 'national' curriculum to condition the students into becoming Pakistanis first. While there may be some merit to these arguments, nevertheless the more serious and immediate ramifications of devolution are the provincial capacity constraints to manage the subject of education. In lieu of well structured and adequately equipped provincial departments to create curriculums, publish or assign textbooks, and train teachers, the provinces can hardly be expected to deliver on providing quality education. The matter is made worse when rent seeking behaviour by government officials leads to the assigning of incompetent individuals as authors of textbooks. The way this jeopardises the entire education project is fairly self-evident.

Corruption and academic dishonesty plagues the system of higher education on an equal, if not more, serious level. Incompetence at the primary and secondary level is further complemented by unconscientious means that academics use to advance in their careers. Professors of public sector universities have failed to produce quality original research and the reason behind this is that most of their publications are nothing more than reassembled and rephrased papers that have already been published. When quantity trumps quality in order to go up the academic ladder, intellectual advancement often stagnates. And when the status of the body overseeing all of this is not clear, academics can indulge in this academic dishonesty with impunity. Granted all of this has happened under the eye of the HEC, but an overhaul of the system of higher education can only be achieved through the HEC. One way to achieve

this is to introduce a criteria of gradation for published papers, and those papers that are published in renowned journals given greater weight than those published in unknown ones. Pakistan has lagged severely behind other countries on the issue of higher education, and it is about time that the government think of an effective strategy to correct the present state of academic decline.

Source: <http://dailytimes.com.pk/editorial/07-Dec-16/devolution-of-education>

## EDUCATION AND POLITICS BY ANJUM ALTAF

I WONDER what the concerned students would be thinking of the government's directive to some teachers of the Pak-Turk school system to leave the country. I guess they would consider it political interference. If so, they would be wiser than the experts who look upon education and politics as separate domains.

The real lesson that the affected students need to internalise is that the incident involving their teachers is not unique. Since schools are not teaching students how to think, exploring what has been happening to schools might induce some much-needed reflection.

The reality is that education has always been subjected to political interventions. That may be one reason why history is no longer taught in our schools. The less one knows of the past the less likely it would be to decipher the ways in which education is manipulated to advance political interests.

Some political interventions can be considered incidental to education. The issue of deportation of the Turkish teachers falls in that category. The sole objective of the government was to please one man and it was mere coincidence that the cause of the latter's disapproval was associated with schools. The personnel could just as easily have been part of another industry, say health. Even so, given that the foundation operated a little over two dozen schools in the country, the impact on education as a sector remains marginal.

Whoever controls what students believe and how they think controls the future.

Another political intervention of this type was the outright nationalisation of educational institutions in 1972. An ideological rationale, which had its supporters and detractors, was offered for the intervention. In this case, however, the impact was spread across the sector and most educationists consider it one cause of the subsequent decline in the quality of education in the country.

A second type of intervention pertains to what students are allowed to do in educational institutions. It is deeply ironic that those who lauded the intense politicisation of students at Aligarh University during the Pakistan Movement concluded it was not such a good idea after all once Pakistan was achieved. Not surprisingly, interventions in education remain subservient to political ends. A third, quite different, type of political intervention has to do with influencing the purpose of education itself. One may consider Macaulay's intervention in 1835, changing the medium of instruction in British India from local languages to English, to be a classic case of such an intervention — the stated purpose being to form a “a class of persons Indian in blood and colour, but English in tastes, in



opinions, in morals and in intellect". It is ironical that those who vilify Macaulay have done nothing to reverse the intervention after the British departed. The politics of that contradiction remains to be fully explained.

Ziaul Haq's contribution, infusing education with morality and Pakistan Studies, is another example of such a political intervention. Yet another is the funding from the Middle East to promote an alternative education in support of a political ideology. And how many people know that in the mid-1980s textbooks for schools in Afghanistan promoting jihad were produced in America under the auspices of the US Agency for International Development at the University of Nebraska and routed through Pakistan? Whatever one's position on these interventions there is little doubt that they have quite significantly altered the very nature and purpose of education in the country.

All kinds of political interventions are of interest but the third type merits special attention. A botched nationalisation of education can be reversed, as it has in Pakistan, and sensible measures can retrieve the institutional damage. Student unions can be reintroduced in colleges. But altering the nature and content of education has much longer-lasting consequences — it produces cohorts of decision-makers who by virtue of their orientation rule out the very possibility of certain types of policy reversals.

An obvious example is the production of the class of persons envisaged by Macaulay. It was unsurprising that the departure of the British witnessed no radical discontinuity in the colonial system of education — the class whose privileges rested on the knowledge of English had little incentive to empower speakers of native languages.

Similarly, Ziaul Haq's 'children', now ensconced in key positions have virtually taken curriculum reform off the table. No number of studies demonstrating problems with the existing curricula and pedagogy can get past the mindset generated by that intervention.

These examples should make clear why education is such a fiercely contested political domain. The most vital resource of a country is its students who will graduate to become the next generation of decision-makers — they are virtually its future. Whoever controls what these students believe and how they think (or do not think) controls the future as well barring unforeseen events or unintended consequences. The stakes are very high; not surprisingly, interventions to mould education to political ends are endemic.

One should keep in mind that countries that are globally competitive, or aspire to that status, are forced to promote scientific and technological innovation which, by its very

nature, requires the freedom to think openly. Hence the existence of top-tier educational institutions in the US, for example. But the outpouring of innovations comes mixed with intellectual questioning which is an outcome of the same freedom to think openly. This dissent has to be tolerated and managed with sensitivity.

Rulers in countries like Pakistan with a primary focus on maintaining the status quo and no real intent to be globally competitive see no reason to promote open minds that can only result in the citizenry asking difficult questions. Hence the continued interventions in education to stifle the promotion of critical thinking and muzzle the possibility of any dissent that could threaten the political status quo.

If our students had read Bulleh Shah or Kabir at school they would have been equipped with the tools for self-reflection. The fact that they do not is as telling a clue as one might need to figure out the purpose being served by our present-day system of education.

The writer moderates The South Asian Idea Weblog.

Published in Dawn December 10th, 2016

Source: <http://www.dawn.com/news/1301494/education-and-politics>

## EDUCATION WATCH BY KASHIF ABBASI

### FPSC starts probe into poor CSS results

While the Federal Public Service Commission (FPSC) has started consultations with the Higher Education Commission (HEC) and universities to determine the reason for the poor CSS results this year, some education experts believe the government should keep a check on the quality of education being imparted in schools.

“This year’s CSS results show the deteriorating standard of education in universities and colleges. But without making improvements in schools, we cannot hope to move forward. Our school education lacks a conceptual assessment system and is not up to the mark,” said Dr Shahid Siddiqui, vice chancellor at the Allama Iqbal Open University.

Just 2.09pc of the students who sat the CSS exams this year cleared it after which the government and the FPSC started investigating into the reason for the bad result. Students performed worst in English Essay and Composition subjects.

“The habit of reading and writing in English are developed in school, so without bringing improvements in the school systems, policy makers cannot produce better results,” said Tahir Saleem Shahbaz, a DMG group officer in the Capital Development Authority, who also stressed on the need to improve the standards of public schools, where the majority of children in the country study.

According to the FPSC report, the students who attempted the exams could not present their ideas coherently and their answers were not organised or focused. The report also points to problems like poor comprehension and expression, which they said was lower than that expected of secondary school students.

“We have started a consultative process with universities and colleges and we were asked to look into the issue and submit recommendations within three or four months,” said Ahmed Farooq, a member of the FPSC, who added that if need be, the commission will also get into contact with schools.

“There is a need for bringing improvements to the whole education system, from primary to PhD classes,” he said.

### Conference on national education

We are the sixth largest population in the world and are among the countries which rank the lowest in terms of education, said the State Minister for Federal Education and Professional Training, Balighur Rehman.

Speaking at a conference hosted by the National University of Modern Languages (Numl) and the International Islamic University at Numl on the education system in the country, the minister said the country is facing a lot of challenges in the field of education.

He said there were no improvements in the sector during the last decade due to inconsistent policies and a change in governments.

He then talked about the steps being taken by the incumbent government towards improving the education sector.

Numl Rector retired Maj Gen Ziaud Din Najam said the two day conference will help raise awareness among stakeholders about the development of the education system in the country.

He said the first word revealed at the start of Islam was 'read' but no university in a Muslim country figures in the list of the top universities of the world.

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Source: <https://www.dawn.com/news/1303972/education-watch>

## BLIND SPOTS OF MODERN EDUCATION BY DR ASAD ZAMAN

The adventure of leaving home, and exposure to unlimited educational opportunities as well as a radically different social environment, made us heady with excitement as freshmen at MIT. We often stayed up all night discussing our new experiences. Since we could not come to any conclusion regarding the most important question we face: “what is the meaning of life?” we resolved to seek guidance from one of our professors. Most were teaching technical subjects like math, physics and chemistry, but our history professor occasionally talked about the bigger issues of life. Upon being asked, he gave us an answer which satisfied us at the time: he said that first we must learn the little things that we were being taught, in order to be able to answer the bigger questions that life poses.

It was many years later that it gradually dawned upon me that we had been scammed. Our teachers had no answers to these questions, and so they shifted our attention to the questions that they could answer. We were counselled to look under the light, for the keys which had been lost in the dark. It was not always that way. In *The Making of the Modern University: Intellectual Transformation and the Marginalisation of Morality*, Harvard Professor Julie Reuben writes that in the early 20th century, the college catalogs explicitly stated that their mission was to shape character, and produce leaders. Students were to learn social and civic responsibilities, and to learn how to lead virtuous lives. However, under the influence of an intellectual transformation which gave supreme importance to scientific knowledge, and discounted all other sources and types of knowledge, consensus on the meaning of virtue and character fragmented and was gradually lost. Universities struggled very hard to retain this mission of character building, but eventually gave up and retreated to a purely technical curriculum. Because this abandonment of the bigger questions of life has been extremely consequential in shaping the world around us, it is worth digging deeper into its root causes. Enlightenment philosophers had hoped that reason would lead to a superior morality, replacing what they saw as the hypocrisy of Christian morality. They thought that Truth was comprehensive, embracing spiritual, moral, and cognitive. However, by 1930s this unity was decisively shattered. The triumphant but fatally flawed philosophy of logical positivism drove a wedge between factual cognitive knowledge and moral/spiritual knowledge. It became widely accepted that science was value-free, and distinct from morality. Prior to the emergence of this division, social scientists had defined their mission as understanding and promoting human welfare. Social and political activism had been a natural part of this mission. However, this changed in the early twentieth century with the widespread acceptance of Max Weber’s dictum that social science, like physical science, should be done from a value neutral perspective of a detached observer.

Positivist philosopher A J Ayer said that moral judgments had no “objective” content, and hence were completely meaningless. Similarly, Bertrand Russell said that despite our deep desires to the contrary, this was a cold and meaningless universe, which was created by an accident and would perish in an accident. These modern philosophies displaced traditional answers to the most important questions we face as human beings. According to modern views, we must all answer these questions for ourselves. No one else has the right to tell us what to do. All traditional knowledge is suspect, and instead of following custom or authority, we should arrive at the answers in the light of our limited personal experience and reason. Indeed, this is a core message of Enlightenment teachings which is built into the heart of a modern education.

The treasure of knowledge which is our collective human heritage has been collected by hundreds of thousands of scholars, labouring over centuries. Imagine what would happen if we were required to use our reason to establish and validate every piece of knowledge that we have. It would be impossible to learn more than a very tiny fragment of this knowledge. As a practical matter, we accept as givens vast amounts of material taught to us in the course of a modern education. This is necessary; if told to re-discover mathematics from scratch, even the most brilliant and gifted child would never get beyond the rudiments of the material in elementary school textbooks. But for the most important question we face in our lives, we are told that all traditional knowledge is useless; we must work out the answers for ourselves. There is a huge amount of discussion, conversation, and controversy contained in the writings of ancients. But we were educated to believe that the wisdom of the ancients was merely meaningless verbiage of the pre-scientific era. Thus, we never learned about Lao Tzu’s saying that loving gives you courage, while being loved gives you strength. We learned fancy techniques and tools, but never learned how to live.

Real education can only begin after removing positivist blinders, and realising that we have no choice but to trust the stock of pedigreed knowledge. It takes a lifetime of reasoning to arrive at a few simple results — we can look at the lives of those who made remarkable discoveries and see how, despite the magnificence of their contributions, their work was confined to a narrow and specialised domain. Furthermore, they were only able to see far by standing on the shoulders of giants of the past. In benefitting from the stock of accumulated knowledge, our main task is to discriminate, to extract the gold nuggets from the mountains of dirt, and to avoid being deceived by fool’s gold. Today, as always, and in all fields of knowledge, the best path to expertise is via discipleship, unquestioning acceptance of instruction from experts. A premature application of reasoning and critical thinking leads to rejection of thoughts which contradict our prejudices, and makes learning impossible. Discipleship requires

putting away preconceptions, emptying our cups, and opening ourselves to complex systems of thoughts entirely alien to anything we have ever conceived before. It is only after absorbing an alien body of knowledge that we acquire the ability to understand, reason and critique. A modern education creates multiple barriers to the pursuit of real knowledge that we desperately need to lead meaningful lives, by renaming ancient knowledge as ignorance, and by presenting us with illusions masquerading as knowledge. Like the wife of Aladdin, we have gladly given away the ancient lamp for the bright and shiny modern one, without being aware of our loss. The path to recovery is long and difficult, as unlearning requires being open to possibilities and exploring directions that seem patently wrong to our modern sensibilities. It is not easy to suspend judgment and let go of what we have already learned, in order to acquire new ways of looking at the world. Yet, this is exactly what is required, if we are to learn to live, and not waste this unique and precious gift of life that has been granted to us for a brief moment only.

Published in The Express Tribune, December 26th, 2016.

Source: <http://tribune.com.pk/story/1274827/blind-spots-modern-education/>

# WORLD

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## THE REBALANCE AND ASIA-PACIFIC SECURITY BY ASH CARTER

April, I laid a wreath at the Manila American Cemetery, in the Philippines, where some 17,000 Americans are buried. Looking up at the mosaic maps of battles whose names still echo throughout the U.S. Department of Defense—Guadalcanal, Midway, Leyte Gulf, and more—it is hard not to appreciate the essential role that the U.S. military has long played in the Asia-Pacific. Many of the individuals buried in the cemetery helped win World War II. For the people and nations of the region, they also won the opportunity to realize a brighter future.

Since World War II, America's men and women in uniform have worked day in and day out to help ensure the security of the Asia-Pacific. Forward-deployed U.S. personnel in the region—serving at Camp Humphreys and Osan Air Base in South Korea, at the Yokosuka naval base and Yokota Air Base in Japan, and elsewhere—have helped the United States deter aggression and develop deeper relationships with regional militaries. The thousands upon thousands of sailors and marines aboard the USS John C. Stennis, the USS Blue Ridge, the USS Lassen, and other ships have sailed millions of miles, made countless port calls, and helped secure the world's sea-lanes, including in the South China Sea. And American personnel have assisted with training for decades, including holding increasingly complex exercises with the Philippines over more than 30 years.

### **We plan to do more, not less, in the Asia-Pacific for decades to come.**

Every port call, flight hour, exercise, and operation has added a stitch to the fabric of the Asia-Pacific's stability. And every soldier, sailor, airman, and marine has helped defend important principles—such as the peaceful resolution of disputes, the right of countries to make their own security and economic choices free from coercion, and the freedom of overflight and navigation guaranteed by international law.

Ensuring security and upholding these principles has long been U.S. policy. During Democratic and Republican administrations, in times of surplus and deficit, and in war and peace, the United States has played a part in the region's economic, diplomatic, and security affairs. This engagement has persisted despite frequent predictions that the United States would cede its role as the main underwriter of security in the Asia-Pacific.



The results have been extraordinary: the Asia-Pacific has long been a region where every nation has the opportunity to thrive. Indeed, economic miracle after economic miracle has occurred there. Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, and the countries of Southeast Asia have all risen and prospered, and China and India are now doing the same. Human progress has produced enormous gains, as education has improved and democracy has taken hold. And compared with many other regions in recent decades, the Asia-Pacific has experienced more stability and peace.

In light of the Asia-Pacific's progress and all the economic, political, and military changes it has produced, U.S. President Barack Obama announced in 2011 that he had "made a deliberate and strategic decision—as a Pacific nation, the United States will play a larger and long-term role in shaping this region and its future." The so-called rebalance to the Asia-Pacific sought to reenergize the United States' economic, diplomatic, and military engagement there. After a decade of counterterrorism and wars in the greater Middle East, the United States—and the Department of Defense—would shift its investments, commitments, and operations to the Asia-Pacific. Five years on, as the Defense Department operationalizes the latest phase of the rebalance, it is important to review the progress we have made as the United States works to ensure that the Asia-Pacific remains a region where everyone can rise and prosper.

## **A CHANGING REGION**

The Asia-Pacific is increasingly becoming the world's economic, political, and military center of gravity. The population changes alone are staggering: already, more than half of humanity lives in the region, and by 2050, four Asian countries—India, Indonesia, the Philippines, and Vietnam—are expected to have grown by approximately 500 million people in total. Despite some recent projections of reduced growth, the Asia-Pacific remains a key driver of the global economy and an indispensable market for American goods. The region is already home to some of the world's largest militaries, and defense spending there is on the rise. Preserving security amid all this change is a priority for the United States and many other nations, since these dynamics are producing opportunities not only for greater growth and progress but also for greater competition and confrontation. And so the rebalance was designed to ensure the continued stability and progress of this unique region at a time of change.

To do so, Washington is strengthening economic ties with the region because the economic destinies of the United States and the Asia-Pacific are intertwined. As Asian economies continue to grow, the United States wants to reinforce the open and inclusive approach that has benefited so many in the region. Thus, one of the most

important initiatives of the rebalance is the Trans-Pacific Partnership, or TPP, which aims to bind the United States more closely together with 11 other economies, guarantee a trading system with high standards, and support American exports and higher-paying American jobs. The TPP is an opportunity that the United States—and Congress—should not miss.

### **Carter in the Philippines, April 2016.**

Through the rebalance, the United States has also reenergized its diplomacy in the region. In addition to increased visits to the region by the president and his cabinet, the United States is playing a critical role in the conversations that are helping determine the Asia-Pacific's economic, political, and security future. And in many cases, the United States has hosted these talks.

For example, in February, Obama hosted the first-ever U.S.-based leaders' summit of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (at Sunnylands, in California), and in September, I hosted the ten defense ministers of ASEAN in Hawaii to discuss regional security challenges.

The Pentagon is operationalizing the military part of the rebalance to ensure that the United States remains the primary provider of regional security for decades to come. The first phase of the rebalance sought to enhance the U.S. military's force posture so that the United States continues playing a pivotal role from the sea, in the air, and underwater. It also sought to make our posture in this vast region more geographically distributed, operationally resilient, and politically sustainable. The Defense Department has committed to homeporting 60 percent of its naval and overseas air assets in the region. It has also announced plans to modernize its existing footprint in Japan and South Korea. And while maintaining a robust presence in Okinawa, Japan, it began to realign U.S. marines from a highly centralized posture there to additional locations, including Australia, Guam, and Hawaii (with Guam serving as a strategic hub).

In the rebalance's second phase, which I launched last year, the Pentagon is continuing to place some of our best military personnel in the region and deploying some of our most advanced capabilities there. Those capabilities include F-22 and F-35 stealth fighter jets, P-8A Poseidon maritime patrol aircraft, V-22 Ospreys, B-2 bombers, and our newest surface warfare ships.

The Defense Department is also devoting resources to new capabilities critical to the rebalance. We are increasing the number of surface ships and making each of them more lethal, and we are investing in Virginia-class submarines, advanced undersea

drones, the new B-21 long-range strike bomber, and state-of-the-art tools for cyberspace, electronic warfare, and space.

The Defense Department is also developing innovative strategies and operational concepts and practicing these new ideas in training exercises, both on our own and with partners. For example, this past summer's Rim of the Pacific(RIMPAC) multilateral maritime exercise—which occurs every two years and is the largest of its kind in the world—brought together 26 countries to work to promote open sea-lanes. In a remarkable show of cooperation, the United States and China even sailed together from Guam to Hawaii for the exercise, conducting several practice events along the way, including one to enhance search-and-rescue capabilities.

## **STRENGTHENING DEFENSE RELATIONSHIPS**

As RIMPAC demonstrates, the United States' defense relationships with allies and partners form the foundation of its engagement in the Asia-Pacific. These ties have been nurtured over decades, tested in crisis, and built on shared interests, values, and sacrifice. Under the rebalance, the Defense Department is modernizing these alliances and partnerships to ensure that they will continue to serve as the bedrock of the region's stability and prosperity.

In East Asia, the U.S.-Japanese alliance remains the cornerstone of Asia-Pacific security. And with the new defense guidelines that Washington and Tokyo signed last year, the alliance has never been stronger or more capable of contributing to security around the region and beyond. Updated for the first time since 1997, the guidelines take new trends and technologies into account and enable U.S. and Japanese forces to work together more closely and on a wider range of contingencies—including those below the threshold of conflict and those in space and cyberspace.

The U.S.–South Korean alliance took a major step forward in 2014, when the two countries agreed to a conditions-based, rather than timeline-based, approach to determining when South Korea would obtain operational control of alliance forces in the event of a war. And in July of this year, as part of an effort to defend against North Korean ballistic missiles, our two countries decided to deploy an advanced missile defense battery, called THAAD (Terminal High Altitude Area Defense), in South Korea at the earliest possible date. The U.S.-Australian alliance, for its part, is becoming more and more a global one. The two countries are continuing their close defense cooperation not only across the region, including through a bilateral force posture initiative, but also outside the region, in the fight to accelerate the defeat of the Islamic State, or ISIS.

The Asia-Pacific is increasingly becoming the world's economic, political, and military center of gravity.

As Obama has made clear, the U.S. commitment to the Philippines is ironclad. Under the rebalance, the alliance has made great strides. U.S. and Philippine personnel regularly train together, and thanks to the landmark Enhanced Defense Cooperation Agreement, signed in 2014, the U.S. military will help modernize the Philippine armed forces. Meanwhile, through the U.S.-Thai alliance—one of the United States' oldest in the region—the United States is helping Thailand better defend itself.

Beyond alliances, the United States is also deepening its partnerships with friends across the region. For example, the U.S.-Indian relationship is destined to be one of the most significant partnerships of the twenty-first century. The United States and India are two great nations that share much in common: democratic governments; multiethnic and multicultural societies with a commitment to individual freedom and inclusivity; and growing, innovative, and open economies. In June, the White House recognized India as a “major defense partner,” a designation that will facilitate defense trade and technology sharing with the country on a level that the United States reserves for its closest friends and allies.

As part of what I have called a “strategic handshake”—with the United States reaching west in its rebalance and India reaching east in its Act East policy—the two countries are undertaking military exercises and strengthening the bilateral security relationship to face common challenges. There's also a technological handshake between the two countries' militaries. Four years ago, the United States and India created the Defense Technology and Trade Initiative to take advantage of both countries' industrial and technological capabilities, a program that dovetails with Prime Minister Narendra Modi's “Make in India” campaign, which is aimed at boosting domestic production. As a result, the two countries are starting to jointly develop and produce a wider range of defense projects.

The rebalance has also helped the United States develop deeper partnerships across Southeast Asia. Obama's historic visit to Hanoi in May was just the latest demonstration of how dramatically the U.S.-Vietnamese partnership has been strengthened: the United States has lifted the ban on lethal weapons sales to Vietnam, which will help the country's military get the equipment it needs. The U.S.-Singaporean relationship also continues to grow. In December 2015, the two countries signed the Enhanced Defense Cooperation Agreement. In addition, the U.S. Navy sent P-8A Poseidon maritime patrol aircraft on their inaugural rotation to Singapore, where we will also deploy up to four U.S. littoral combat ships on a rotating basis. Meanwhile, the United States is working

with Indonesia and Malaysia to help them even better meet their own security challenges and to promote regional security.

The rise of China, of course, is also having a profound impact on the Asia-Pacific. The United States welcomes the emergence of a peaceful, stable, and prosperous China that plays a responsible role in and contributes to the region's security network. Many countries seek beneficial and productive relationships with China, but concerns are growing about some of its actions and its willingness to accept regional friction as it pursues its self-interest. Although China has long benefited from the regional principles and systems that others, including the United States, have worked to establish and uphold, with its actions on the seas, in cyberspace, in the global economy, and elsewhere, Beijing sometimes plays by its own rules and undercuts those principles.

China's model is out of step with where the Asia-Pacific wants to go; it reflects the region's distant past, rather than the principled future the United States and many others want, and its approach is proving counterproductive. China's actions are excluding it from the rest of the Asia-Pacific—erecting a Great Wall of self-isolation—at a time when the region is coming together economically, politically, and militarily to promote shared interests and a principled order. As a result, countries across the region are voicing concerns—publicly and privately, at the highest levels, in regional meetings, and in global forums—about China's actions.

The United States remains committed to working with China to ensure a principled future for the region. The two countries have a long-standing military-to-military relationship. The U.S. and Chinese militaries recently completed two confidence-building measures, one on maritime rules of behavior and another on crisis communications, and we regularly participate together in multilateral exercises. Through these actions, our two countries have made great strides in forging more and better communication channels and reducing the risk of miscalculations that could lead to crises.

## **DEVELOPING A PRINCIPLED SECURITY NETWORK**

The rebalance to the Asia-Pacific will also help the United States play a critical role in the region's developing security network. This in itself is another change for such a dynamic region: unlike elsewhere in the world, in the Asia-Pacific, a formal regionwide structure, akin to NATO in Europe, has never taken responsibility for promoting peace and stability. That has made sense given the Asia-Pacific's unique history, geography, and politics. Yet as the region becomes more politically and economically

interconnected, its militaries are also coming together to plan together, train together, and operate together more than ever before.

The growing Asia-Pacific security network weaves every state's relationships together to help their militaries do more, over greater distances, more efficiently. It allows countries to take coordinated action in response to humanitarian crises and natural disasters, address common challenges such as terrorism, and ensure the security of and equal access to the commons, including vital waterways. Recent examples of this networked approach can be seen in collective responses to Typhoon Haiyan in 2013 and the Nepalese earthquake of 2015.

Most important, this is what I call a "principled and inclusive security network." It is inclusive, because any nation and any military—no matter its capabilities, budget, or experience—can contribute. Everyone gets a voice and no one is excluded, and hopefully no one chooses not to participate. As this security network reflects the principles that its members have upheld for decades, it will help them realize the principled future that many in the region have chosen.

By sharing the burden for regional stability, this network represents the next wave in Asia-Pacific security. To help lead it, the United States is bringing its unique capabilities, experience, and influence to bear. For example, the Defense Department is implementing the Southeast Asia Maritime Security Initiative, an initial \$425 million, five-year U.S. commitment to build maritime domain awareness and security in Southeast Asia. More than simply providing money or hardware, this initiative will help Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Thailand, and Vietnam work with one another and with the United States so that everyone can see more, share more, and do more to ensure maritime security in the region's vital waters.

### **China's model is out of step with where the Asia-Pacific wants to go.**

The Asia-Pacific security network is developing in three additional ways. First, some pioneering trilateral mechanisms are bringing together like-minded countries that previously cooperated only bilaterally. The U.S.–Japanese–South Korean partnership helps coordinate responses to North Korea's nuclear and missile provocations, and earlier this year, the trio conducted its first-ever trilateral ballistic missile warning exercise. For the past three years, the United States, India, and Japan have conducted the Malabar naval exercise together, showcasing how yet another trilateral relationship is starting to provide practical security cooperation that spans the region. And starting last November, the United States and Thailand brought Laos into a successful program



on the disposal of explosive ordnance, and now the three are training together to eliminate this danger.

Second, many Asia-Pacific countries are cooperating on their own, without the United States. India has ramped up its military's training with Vietnam's military and coast guard. Australia, India, and Japan held a trilateral dialogue last year, marking a welcome addition to the region's security network. Japan is also working to build the capacity of the Philippine maritime forces. And this year, Indonesia, Malaysia, and the Philippines agreed to conduct joint counterpiracy patrols.

Third, and even more broadly, many countries in the region are creating a multilateral security architecture through the ASEAN Defense Ministers Meeting–Plus. This initiative, which convenes the defense ministers of all ten ASEAN members plus those of eight other countries, fills the growing need for an action-oriented, ASEAN-centric institution that builds trust and facilitates practical security cooperation.

The principled security network is not developing in response to any particular country. Rather, it demonstrates that the region wants cooperation, not coercion, and a continuation of, not an end to, decades of peace and progress. More important, since this network is not closed, nations can more easily work together. For example, although the United States and other nations have some disagreements with China, they are committed to working through these problems, bilaterally and through the network, in ways that do not destabilize the region.

The network will also help ensure stability amid a number of security challenges. North Korea continues its provocative behavior. Violent extremism has been no stranger to the Asia-Pacific over the past several decades, and terrorist organizations, including ISIS, continue to operate in countries throughout the region. The heavily traveled Asia-Pacific sea-lanes make attractive targets for pirates seeking to steal goods or hold ships and crews for ransom. And already prone to earthquakes and volcanoes as part of the Ring of Fire, the Asia-Pacific also regularly suffers from devastating storms, worsened by accelerating climate change.

And then there are the challenges unique to this region, including those resulting from its changing economic, political, and military dynamics. Thanks to coercive actions by some states, most notably China, contentious and long-running regional disputes, particularly at sea, have grown more tense in recent years. Indeed, in the South China Sea, a transit route for approximately 30 percent of the world's maritime trade last year, including about \$1.2 trillion in ship-borne trade bound for the United States, there is a growing risk to the region's prosperous future.

The United States is not a claimant in the current maritime disputes in the Asia-Pacific, and it takes no position on which party has the superior sovereignty claim over the disputed land features. But Washington supports the peaceful resolution of disputes, especially through mechanisms such as international arbitration. It sees the July ruling by the Permanent Court of Arbitration on maritime claims and activities in the South China Sea as an opportunity for the region to recommit to a principled future, to renewed diplomacy, and to lowering and resolving tensions rather than raising them. The U.S. military will also continue to fly, sail, and operate wherever international law allows, will continue to stand with its allies and partners in upholding core principles such as freedom of navigation and overflight, and will continue to ensure that these core principles apply equally in the South China Sea as they do everywhere else. Only if everyone plays by the same rules can the region avoid the mistakes of the past, when countries challenged one another in contests of strength and will, with disastrous consequences for humanity.

## **SUPPLYING THE OXYGEN**

The rebalance made sense for the United States when it was announced in 2011, but what has become clear since then, especially to U.S. officials traveling in the Asia-Pacific, is that it makes as much sense for the region's people, militaries, and nations. On each of my trips to the region as secretary of defense, one thing has remained constant: requests from defense counterparts and national leaders for the United States to do more, not less, in the region. As has long been said of the Asia-Pacific, security is like oxygen: when you have enough of it, you pay no attention to it, but when you don't have enough, you can think of nothing else. For more than 70 years, U.S. service members have helped provide the oxygen—the security that allows hundreds of millions of people around the world to feel safe, raise their children, dream their dreams, and live full lives.

Thanks to the investments and planning of the first two phases of the rebalance, the United States will have the tools it needs to continue playing this role in the Asia-Pacific. And in the next phase, the Defense Department will work to strengthen the region's emerging principled security network through more frequent and more complex training and exercises. The Defense Department will also continue to qualitatively upgrade the United States' force posture in the region and prioritize "big bet" investments in advanced technologies. By working within the region's principled security network and on its own, the United States will continue to demonstrate to its allies, its partners, and the region at large that it plans to do more, not less, in the Asia-Pacific for decades to come.



With the rebalance, the United States is ensuring that its military is well positioned to help transform an era of historic change into one of historic progress. By operationalizing the rebalance, and by supporting the region's growing principled security network, the Defense Department can help ensure that the next 70 years in the region are as secure, stable, and prosperous as the last.

Source: <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/united-states/2016-10-17/rebalance-and-asia-pacific-security>

## US-RUSSIA RELATIONS UNDER TRUMP PRESIDENCY: WILL RESET COME TO PASS? – ANALYSIS BY BHAVNA DAVE

Donald Trump's pre-election admiration for Russian president Vladimir Putin as a "strong leader" has raised hopes of a 'reset' of diplomatic relations since the deterioration of the US-Russia ties in this decade. While it hints at ending the sanctions on Russia, curtailing support to NATO and joining forces with Russia to combat ISIS in Syria, how likely is a breakthrough in US-Russia relations?

Donald Trump's surprise victory as the US president-elect has raised the prospects of a rapprochement between him and his Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin. Trump has also emphasised the need to work together with Russia in Syria to root out ISIS and other Islamist militants, and supports the removal of sanctions to reach an agreement on Ukraine. Russia is deeply implicated in both conflicts, both as a partisan power as well as a party that holds a key to a resolution.

Trump and Retired General Michael Flynn, his National Security Advisor appointee, have blamed the Bush Administration for the failed war in Iraq, and the creation of ISIS. An admission of the US' blunder could temper Russia's indignation with US unilateralism, but it would have to be followed by tangible and comprehensive plans for containing terrorism and initiating reconstruction. There is nothing in Trump's pronouncements to suggest that this is on the cards. Unlike Putin, Trump will encounter considerable domestic constraints and pressures from diverse constituencies. There are fears that, as with much of his campaign rhetoric, the 'reset' button may not be pushed at all.

### Ukraine and Sanctions

Trump's gaffe that Russia will not "go into Ukraine" when it had already annexed Crimea, and withdrawing support to NATO have unnerved Ukraine, Georgia, the Baltic states and Poland. He has also disavowed any 'nation-building' role for the US, declaring Ukraine to be "a mess".

Any discussion on removal of sanctions would at the minimum require Russia to withdraw its support to breakaway regions in Ukraine. This is tricky when Russia denies any involvement amidst pervasive evidence that 'volunteers' pledging allegiance to the Russian state have been fighting the war against the Ukrainian government in breakaway Eastern regions.

Putin and the state-controlled media blame the “Fascists and extremists within the Ukrainian leadership” as well as the ‘West’ for the war. Sanctions have also bolstered a defensive sense of patriotism, anti-Westernism, militancy and solidarity with Putin.

Many hard-line Republicans have been vociferous about arming Ukraine and tightening sanctions. Many also share Obama’s warning against taking a ‘realpolitik’ approach to relations with Russia, cutting deals that override international norms and abandon the pledge to protect Russia’s vulnerable smaller neighbours.

Vice-president-elect Mike Pence has expressed strong views for strengthening missile defences against Russia. Mitt Romney, who could become Secretary of State, has described Russia “as the greatest geopolitical foe of the US” during his election campaigns in 2012. Those with expertise in Russia and Eurasia in Congress, the State Department and the Pentagon are far from a unified lot, with differing opinions, convictions and policy recommendations.

It is hard to mobilise support for lifting the sanctions when speculation on Russia’s alleged meddling in the US elections (evidence is scanty), hacking of the Democratic National Committee’s email and other ‘interference’ are likely to dominate the agenda as Trump takes office. Trump may also become preoccupied with domestic issues – undoing the legacy of the Obama administration by rescinding Obamacare, reversing his environmental policy gains, and launching a crackdown on illegal immigration.

### **Syria and the Battle against Islamic Terror**

The colossal scale of devastation in Syria makes it a matter of greater urgency than Ukraine. Russian bombs have also killed scores of civilians, hit humanitarian convoys and obliterated the distinction between anti-Assad forces and the extremist factions fighting to establish an Islamic State.

There’s been little substance to Trump’s stance on Syria except that he will support Putin if “Russia helps us get rid of ISIS”. Trump’s Secretary of Defence-designate retired marine general James Mattis has criticised Obama’s policy in the Middle East and the nuclear deal with Iran, described ISIS as “a combined al Qaeda and Lebanese Hezbollah on steroids” and cautioned against an alliance with Russia, proposing a differentiated strategy to combat ‘political Islam’. He is perceived as capable of ‘reining in’ Trump from reckless foreign policy moves, and caution in striking deals with Russia.

Gen. Flynn, who gave a paid speech at a public gig in Moscow sitting next to him, has made erratic and contradictory statements, praising Putin and also blaming Russia for failing to combat Islamist terror within, and supporting Iran.

Overall, the Trump administration would have to find the appropriate language, strategy, and vision to combat ISIS and the global spread of terrorist organisations without deploying Islamophobic rhetoric. Any strategic alliance with Russia and the Assad regime on combating ISIS and terrorism, devoid of an active commitment to protecting civilians and whatever is still left in Aleppo, would have pernicious ramifications across the globe, and especially in the Muslim world.

### **Personalities of Trump and Putin: Poles Apart?**

There is the risk that the hope for a 'reset' may fizzle out even before it has taken off. Trump's favourable assessment of Russia rests on the spurious reasoning that Putin has said "many nice things" about him and "showed respect" to him. Mutual affinity, personal warmth, and shared concerns can certainly herald a much-needed breakthrough. But ties between two greater powers are too complex and multidimensional to be ameliorated by personal bonding alone.

There are also profound differences in temperament and style between the two men. Trump's policy pronouncements have lacked coherence, conviction, complexity or detail. In contrast to Trump's rash rhetoric, improvisations and impromptu outbursts, Putin, a martial arts black belt, knows how to measure his words, bide his time and strike at the opportune moment.

Putin will not put up with Trump's bluster unless he succeeds in persuading Congress to lift sanctions. Trump's popularity in Russia, a product of the state propaganda machine, could easily dissipate, and discredit the image of the US in Russia.

Like Trump's pledge to make America 'great', Putin also wants to restore Russia's declining global status. A scaling down on US commitments to allies, human rights, freedom would easily play into the hands of Putin, allow Russia to further exploit divisions within Ukraine, expose the small states protected by NATO, foment further divisions within the European Union.

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## THE END OF GLOBALISM BY ERIC X. LI

When it rains, it pours. As the Great Recession, eurozone crisis, stalled trade deals, increased conflict between Russia and the West, electoral revolts against European political elites, and finally Brexit followed the 2008 financial meltdown, it seemed clear that globalization was running out of steam. Yet few expected that its opponents would claim the top prize—the White House—and so soon.

World powers are now scrambling to react to Donald Trump's paradigm-shifting election as president of the United States. Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, after repeatedly expressing concern about a potential Trump presidency and pointedly meeting with only Hillary Clinton before the election, rushed to New York for face time with the president-elect. European leaders have been more ambivalent, with German Chancellor Angela Merkel even putting conditions on working with Trump. And the Russians have seemed downright gleeful; in a congratulatory note, Russian President Vladimir Putin wrote that Trump's victory could bring "a constructive dialogue between Moscow and Washington on the principles of equality, mutual respect and real consideration."

Yet the feelings of perhaps the most consequential power—China—remain somewhat unclear. During the campaign, China was a primary target of Trump's dissatisfaction with trade. Yet Trump's likely jettisoning of the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) trade agreement would immediately benefit China. And for obvious reasons, his anti-interventionist foreign policy outlook suits the Chinese. For now, there are signs that Beijing is still processing the enormous development and is calibrating its response.

In the new era ushered in by Trump's victory, the Chinese have the most to gain—or to lose.

It better hurry. In the new era ushered in by Trump's victory, the Chinese have the most to gain—or to lose. And as the world's second-largest economy and its largest trading nation, China's response could mean the difference between prosperity and stagnation, and even war and peace, around the world.

## THE RISE AND FALL OF GLOBALISM

Globalization started as an innocent enough concept in the 1970s: the world was becoming increasingly connected through trade, investment, travel, and information. But after the Cold War, it was injected with an ideological component: globalism. And now one can hardly distinguish between the two.

Globalism is rooted in the neo-liberal doctrine of the Washington Consensus, which was initiated by the first post-Cold War U.S. president, Bill Clinton, and carried out by the successive administrations of George W. Bush and Barack Obama. It envisioned a world moving inextricably toward the adoption of a unified set of rules and standards in economics, politics, and international relations. National borders would gradually lose relevance and even disappear. Cultural distinctions would give way to universal values. Electoral democracy and market capitalism would spread the world over. Eventually, all countries would be governed in more or less the same way.

The process would be backed by the United States' hard and soft power. Indeed, it was partially according to this logic that neo-liberalism's offspring, the neo-conservatives and liberal interventionists, took America to war in Afghanistan and Iraq. And therein lies the problem; globalism was a Trojan Horse. It devoured globalization, turning it into a force that seemed unstoppable until it collapsed under the weight of its own hubris.

In the West, the leading disciples of globalism became its greatest beneficiaries. Wealth and power concentrated at the top, among the owners and deployers of capital, who favored free trade, multiculturalism, multilateral institutions, and even regime change and nation building in foreign lands. But their vision harmed the vast majority that constituted the middle class. Just one generation after winning the Cold War, the United States saw its industrial base hollow out, its infrastructure fall into disrepair, its education system deteriorate, and its social contract rip apart.

Beyond the economic damage, changes in social values propagated by globalism threatened social cohesion. The political scientist Robert Putnam captured the process best in his important book, *Bowling Alone*, in which he described in painful detail the collapse of American communities. In the name of globalization, in other words, American elites had been building an empire at the expense of a nation.

The same thing happened in Europe. Technocrats in Brussels, along with their allies in national capitals, pushed an ever-expanding set of standards onto an ever-expanding European Union, relegating to the backburner the interests of the people in its member states. In some European countries, youth unemployment reached and stayed at 50 percent.

Now the globalist elites have been overthrown at the very same ballot box that used to sustain their rule.

China, more than any other developing country, has benefited from globalization. It saw itself transform from a poor agrarian economy into a global industrial powerhouse, all

while lifting more than 600 million people out of poverty. Yet China chose to engage globalization on its own terms, embracing connectivity while decisively rejecting globalism. In turn, China was able to strengthen its one-party political system and open its market according to its own national development priorities.

Perhaps sensing as much, Trump has taken to blaming China for many of the United States' ills. This seems wholly unfair. Chinese leaders simply exercised their responsibility to do what was best for their people. They would have been in the wrong if they hadn't. But it is also wholly understandable and justified for Trump to want to do what is best for the American people—to put, as his slogan goes, “America First.”

Rather than balking, China should see this as a teachable moment. The awakening of a large portion of the American people should not be viewed as a wholesale rejection of China or as a precursor to unavoidable and fundamental conflicts. Rather, it should be seen as a study in how to engage the United States in a new era.

The lesson comes at an important moment. China's opinion leaders tend to get their information about the United States from American elites. So they are just as disconnected from Middle America as those in the country's own newsrooms and think tanks. As such, they are susceptible to seeing Trump's supporters as “deplorables,” as Trump's rival, Hillary Clinton, put it, who are racist, uneducated, and misogynistic. And that would be a grave misjudgment.

China would do better to look in the mirror to understand the ways in which the United States and Europe are changing for good. The Chinese have been among the loudest voices criticizing the one-size-fits-all model of globalism and calling for the world's nations to be allowed to pursue their own development paths. As Chinese President Xi Jinping famously said, “One could only know if a pair of shoes are good by wearing them.” Trump, it seems, is ready to try on some new ones for America. Meanwhile, Trump's non-interventionist approach to the world—he has emphasized that it was “a dangerous idea that we could make Western democracies out of countries that had no experience or interest in becoming a Western democracy,”—must hearten the Chinese.

No doubt, there will be conflicts as Trump pursues American national interests. But the grievances behind his rise deserve China's attention and due respect. If, for example, Trump were to be less friendly to China on trade, as is expected, China would do well to exercise a degree of restraint. If it responds with tit-for-tat escalation, the risk of a geopolitical conflict is real. In such a scenario, both China and the United States would lose.



## ROOM TO MANEUVER

Chinese leaders, having proved wise over so many years, should see unprecedented opportunities to pursue common interests with Trump's America. China's ideas are fundamentally compatible with Trump's vision. Strong sovereign nations are paramount to a functioning international system. The primacy of culture must be recognized, and enforcing uniform rules should never take precedence over national considerations. Multilateral institutions, moreover, should not be used to suppress bilateral engagements when bilateral arrangements are more effective. All these statements could have been uttered by Trump or by Xi.

On a practical level, there is a wide range of policies that could benefit both the United States and China. One of Trump's most important initiatives is to rebuild America's decrepit infrastructure. He has promised one trillion dollars in spending, which might not even be enough. His is a laudable goal that would infuse the U.S. economy with much-needed vitality by creating jobs and by building new roads, airports, and dams and upgrading existing ones. But challenges, namely financial constraints and industrial capacity, abound.

Had the globalist elites been more modest in their goals, they might have been able to push their vision further. But it appears to be too late.

China understands a thing or two about building infrastructure. And as his many campaign speeches indicated, Trump knows it. On the campaign trail, Trump complained loudly that, compared with China, America's infrastructure was "third world." China could bring its considerable capacities to bear in the United States. For one, it could bring the United States into the Asia Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) and supply industrial capacity on favorable terms and relatively quickly. This would significantly benefit China, which needs to deploy its excess capital and capacity. And there is no better place to do so than in its largest trading partner.

In the area of geopolitics, there are likewise significant common interests. Both Trump and China seem to recognize that the gravest threat to world peace comes from nonstate actors. One of the worst injuries globalism has inflicted on the world has been to weaken the state just as the threat of transnational terrorism has grown. By erasing national borders and diminishing the powers of national governments without providing a good replacement, globalism has created a more dangerous world. Over the years, of course, globalists have condemned China for a supposedly regressive insistence on protecting its national sovereignty. But China certainly seems to have fared better in



protecting its people's safety and interests. China and Trump's America can find much common ground in that.

Even on trade, there is potential for convergence. The globalist elite narrative presents a dichotomy between free trade and protectionism. Anyone who eschews global standardization risks being labeled a protectionist. (In fact, China has frequently been accused of protectionism on those grounds.) But the globalists' dichotomy is false. It is possible to promote trade and to protect legitimate national interests at the same time. For example, China's proposal for trade expansion in Asia Pacific, the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP), specifically allows for many differentiations on tariffs and industry standards based on participating countries' varied economic and political conditions.

A worker inspects a mask of then-presidential candidate Donald Trump in Jinhua, China, May 2016.

By contrast, Obama's TPP was solely designed to enforce a set of uniform rules regardless of the particular requirements of nations at very different stages of development. Ironically, many Americans now see the agreement as unsuitable to their country's own needs. As China restructures its economy to rely less on exports and more on domestic demand and service industries, which are higher value-add, and as the United States seeks to rebuild productive capacity, the two countries are in a good position to explore new approaches to expanding their trade.

Last but not least, Trump seems to intuitively grasp the damage done to the United States by what the historian Paul Kennedy called imperial overreach. The desire by American elites to remake the world in their country's own image has cost them—and the world—dearly. The United States has less than five percent of the world's population and about 20 percent of its total GDP, but it accounts for 40 percent of its total military expenditures (that figure reaches half in some years). Trump has said that he would like to curtail such interventionism, and global elites have derided him as isolationist. But there is plenty of room between a United States that insists on telling other countries how to govern themselves and total disengagement. For example, the United States should remain engaged on Middle East issues, but end efforts at regime change or nation building there.

It is very much in China's interest to encourage Trump's shift away from an ideologically driven worldview. And, as the second largest economy in the world, China has a responsibility to help maintain global stability. It could do so by moderating its own

geopolitical postures in the Asia Pacific so as to foster a more peaceful region, as it has already done with the

Philippines. China could also share the burden in the Middle East, where it is fast becoming the region's largest oil importer and has a long-term interest in stability.

## **A NEW WORLD ORDER?**

Trump's victory was not an accident. It was the culmination of structural changes within American society that elites had ignored for too long. These forces will continue to push the United States and the world down a different path than the one they've been on for 25 years now. It is critical that Chinese leaders see this reality and respond accordingly. If China gets it wrong, trade wars, geopolitical confrontations, and even military conflicts could follow. It would be a classic case of the Thucydides Trap, in which a rising power strikes fear in an established power and tensions escalate into war. The United States has legitimate reasons to place itself first in its dealings with the world. China, more than any other nation, should be capable of understanding that. And China, also more than any other nation, could offer Trump's America room to successfully adjust its national priorities.

The death of globalism does not mean the end of globalization as the idea was originally understood. On the contrary, interconnectedness will probably continue to increase, driven by secular trends in technology and economics. Effective global governance, in other words, is needed more than ever. But it can no longer be based on the narrative of globalism.

The world needs a new order grounded not in twentieth-century ideological fault lines and the idea that history would soon reach its end, but in respect for diversity among nations, state sovereignty, and cultural integrity. Instead of trying to run the world according to a singular set of global standards, nations can cooperate freely in ways that are suited to their particular circumstances. Only strong sovereign states can effectively cooperate with each other and, when appropriate, willingly moderate their sovereignties for the benefit of world order.

If we want a peaceful and prosperous twenty-first century, China should work with Trump's America to develop that new future. Although competition between the two powers will be unavoidable, their now-shared outlooks on the world and common interests far outweigh their differences. Indeed, China's leaders would be well advised to hear what Trump had to say in a major foreign policy speech last April: "We desire to live peacefully and in friendship with Russia and China. We have serious differences

with these two nations, and must regard them with open eyes, but we are not bound to be adversaries. We should seek common ground based on shared interests.”

With so much doomsday thinking—so many dire predictions about what’s going to happen to America and the world—a dose of optimism is needed. China harbors no designs to somehow replace the United States as the dominant world power. It naturally seeks to reclaim a leadership position in its neighborhood. And America needs to focus on rebuilding itself. If the two nations have the wisdom and pragmatism to work together on those goals, to live and let live, they can perhaps formulate a new consensus on global governance that will lead to a more stable world.

Globalism has committed suicide. A new world order has been born. Let’s engage it now.

Source: <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/united-states/2016-12-09/end-globalism>

## WILL TRUMP STAY OR GO IN IRAQ? BY JOHN HANNAH

Though the battle for Mosul has slowed to a crawl, the collapse of the Islamic State's territorial caliphate — at least in its Iraqi incarnation — remains only a matter of time. Whether it happens before President-elect Donald Trump takes the oath of office on January 20th, or in the weeks and months shortly thereafter, it's all but certain that the next administration will quickly be confronted with a fateful decision: Should it seek to maintain an ongoing U.S. military presence in post-caliphate Iraq? Or should the demise of Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi's proto-state be the cue for a relatively rapid drawdown of American forces from the country — now numbering some 6,000?

As is the case with so much of the president-elect's foreign policy, the answers to these questions are not yet obvious. Trump's strong condemnation of the decision to invade Iraq in 2003 is now well established. During his presidential campaign, he repeatedly opined that it "may have been the worst decision" in American history. In Trump's telling, the Iraq war destabilized the Middle East, empowered Iran, and wasted trillions of taxpayer dollars and thousands of American lives.

Whenever one pinpoints the exact date that Trump's opposition to the war became fully manifest, there's no doubt that his disdain for the American project in Iraq is of long-standing. Importantly, at the time when President George W. Bush was launching his troop surge in early 2007, Trump was already on record publicly urging that the U.S. military presence be immediately shut down.

As early as 2006, Trump had condemned the Iraq war as "a total mess, a total catastrophe, and it's not going to get any better. It's only going to get worse." His prescription? "What you have to do is get out of Iraq." In an interview with CNN in March 2007, Trump elaborated: "You know how they get out? They get out. That's how they get out. Declare victory and leave." His assessment at the time was clearly that the costs of maintaining a continued U.S. presence far exceeded any possible gains. To Trump's mind, the pathologies of Iraq's internal divisions were largely immune from American treatment. "[T]his country is just going to get further bogged down," Trump said. "They're in a civil war over there. There's nothing that we're going to be able to do with a civil war."

For Trump, U.S. troops at best served as a temporary salve, suppressing deadly ethnic and sectarian tensions that would immediately re-emerge at the first opportunity. U.S. soldiers would be trapped in an endless cycle of violence at enormous cost in national blood and treasure. "[W]e're keeping the lid on a little bit but [the] day we leave anyway

it's all going to blow up.... So, I mean, this is a total catastrophe and you might as well get out now, because you just are wasting time.”

Trump's decade-long penchant to wash his hands of Iraq as soon as possible certainly had loud echoes in this year's election campaign. One of his most consistent themes has been that “Our current strategy of nation-building and regime change is a proven failure.” As president, Trump pledged that “the era of nation-building will be brought to a swift and decisive end.” Referring to Iraq specifically, Trump said that “It hasn't worked. Iraq was going to be a democracy. It's not gonna work, OK? It's not gonna work and none of these things work.” Even as the war against the Islamic State raged in the fall of 2015, Trump lamented that in Iraq “We're nation-building. We can't do it. We have to build our own nation.”

Add it all up, and any observer would be forgiven for drawing the logical conclusion that once the Islamic State is put to flight in Mosul, and its Iraqi caliphate as such has ceased to exist, Trump might indeed be tempted, as he advised in 2007, to just “declare victory and leave.” With the Islamic State threat whittled back to a more conventional terrorist insurgency scattered across disparate pockets of the country, Iraq's biggest challenge will again become, as it has been since 2003, the problem of finding a formula for stable governance — in particular one that secures the buy-in of Iraqi Sunnis. In other words, nation-building — precisely the mission that Trump has made plain he wants America to be no part of.

On the other hand, however: During the course of the campaign, an integral part of Trump's critique of President Barack Obama's foreign policy became his decision to withdraw all U.S. troops from Iraq in 2011. Trump blasted Obama's failure to secure a deal with Iraq's government to maintain a residual American military presence, alleging that the precipitous U.S. retreat had opened a vacuum that directly led to the rise of the Islamic State. In a major national security speech last August, Trump said that in 2009 Obama had inherited an Iraq that “was experiencing a reduction in violence. The group that would become what we now call ISIS was close to being extinguished.” However, Trump charged, with an eye on boosting his re-election prospects in 2012, Obama in essence pissed it all away. “That failure to establish a new status of forces agreement in Iraq and the election-driven timetable for withdrawal surrendered our gains in the country and led directly to the rise of ISIS,” Trump said. “Without question.”

Hmmm. This obviously was a much different Trump than the one in 2006-2007 who couldn't abandon Iraq fast enough. This Trump recognized that even while the war may have been a major mistake, U.S. forces by 2011 had started to make a meaningful contribution to longterm Iraqi stability. U.S. forces were making real progress — “gains,”

in Trump's words — and not just a temporary reduction in violence, but also efforts well on their way to actually defeating the Islamic State's predecessor, al Qaeda in Iraq. This version of Trump seemed to appreciate that while maintaining a residual troop presence in Iraq might be no picnic, the consequences of premature withdrawal could be much, much worse for the United States.

So which Trump will it be on January 20th? The one who appears to have written Iraq off as a lost cause? Who implies that after the battlefield defeat of the Islamic State caliphate that directly threatens the U.S. homeland, any additional U.S. commitment to Iraq would be throwing good money after bad, a waste of time, resources, and potentially lives, that has no possible rationale from the standpoint of securing U.S. interests?

Or could we instead get the Trump who seemed to appreciate that the only thing worse than staying in Iraq in 2011 was leaving Iraq? Who recognized that as difficult and frustrating as it was helping Iraq's fragile state consolidate the hard-fought gains won with U.S. military support, the price paled in comparison to the likely costs of simply abandoning the country too soon, unleashing the forces of anti-American chaos to gather and strengthen unmolested — radical Islamists of both the Sunni and Iranian Shiite persuasion, each hell-bent in their own way on engineering America's ultimate demise? The Trump who understood that foreign policy was frequently not a matter of choosing between good and bad options, but between bad and worse, between risky and riskier. Between two evils, to be sure, but one very likely lesser than the other.

In thinking through what to do in post-Mosul Iraq, Trump will surely look to at least two people with extensive experience fighting America's wars there for counsel: his soon-to-be national security advisor, retired General Michael Flynn, and his appointee as secretary of defense, retired General James Mattis.

Flynn, like Trump, has made clear his view that the decision to invade Iraq was a disastrous mistake. But in his recent book, *The Field of Fight*, he also said that the change in strategy reflected in President Bush's surge of troops "allowed us to win the war in Iraq." That significant victory against the forces of radical Islamic terrorism was tragically squandered, according to Flynn, "because winning is only temporary if you don't sustain success." Flynn's assessment leaves little doubt that the precipitous U.S. retreat from Iraq was fatally flawed. "Everyone that has paid attention to the unraveling of the situation in the Middle East realizes today the tragic error in judgment when President Obama made the fateful decision to pull out forces in Iraq in 2011," he wrote. "This decision led to the rise of Islamic State and the significant and dangerous increase

in Iran's proxy war involvement across the region and its near takeover of Iraq as a surrogate."

Mattis's public views on Obama's withdrawal from Iraq are harder to find, but in all likelihood no less harsh. At the time of the pull out, Mattis was in charge of U.S. Central Command, which was strongly recommending that the U.S. maintain a substantial troop presence. After retiring, Mattis testified in 2015 "that the military, the senior military officers, we all explained that the successes we'd achieved by 2010-2011 were — and this is a quote — 'reversible,' that the democratic processes and the military capability were too nascent to pull everyone out at one time."

Earlier in the war, of course, Mattis had led (and lost) Marines in battle to secure portions of western Iraq that were subsequently overrun by the Islamic State — precisely the kind of outcome Central Command's recommendation was intended to prevent.

Importantly, the U.S. secretary of defense, Ash Carter — probably the most serious national security thinker in the Obama administration — has recently broached the need for the American military, along with its international partners, to remain in Iraq even after the defeat of the Islamic State. In a speech on December 3rd, Carter argued that "there will still be much more to do after that to make sure that, once defeated, ISIL stays defeated." He made clear that "We'll need to continue to counter foreign fighters trying to escape and ISIL's attempts to relocate or reinvent itself. To do so, not only the United States but our coalition must endure and remain engaged militarily." In Iraq in particular, Carter said that "it will be necessary for the coalition to provide sustained assistance and carry on our work to train, equip and support local police, border guards and other forces to hold areas cleared from ISIL."

Regrettably, but hardly surprisingly, Carter's boss, Obama, failed to pick up on the suggestion when he gave his final speech on national security in Tampa just days later on December 6th. While speaking at length about the fight against the Islamic State, including the climatic battle for Mosul, Obama had nothing to say on the issue of keeping U.S. troops in Iraq after the defeat of the Islamic State's defeat. He did, however, yet again defend his 2011 troop withdrawal, insisting, however implausibly, that a residual U.S. presence would have done nothing to preclude the parade of horrors that ensued. At any rate, one was left wondering whether Carter's pronouncements reflected the well-informed but largely random musings of a lone administration outlier or the official position of the United States government as decided by its commander-in-chief.



The war against the Islamic State is now hurtling toward an inflection point. The collapse of Mosul, when it comes, will mark the caliphate's defeat in Iraq — at least in the short-term. Whether or not it remains defeated, whether or not we see the eventual emergence of an Islamic State 2.0, and whether or not Iran succeeds in transforming Iraq into a full-blown satrapy of the Iranian Revolutionary Guards — all these questions will be critically affected, for better or worse, by whether the United States and the military coalition it leads decide this time to stay in Iraq, or yet again to pick up and leave, as Obama did in 2011. The disastrous results of that decision are now apparent for everyone to see. Despite all his legitimate misgivings about the Iraq war, Trump indicated during the campaign that he also grasps the potentially tragic consequences that can flow when America prematurely abandons the battlefield. It will now fall to him to decide how the mistakes of the recent past can best be avoided and America's vital interests in defeating radical Islamic terrorism advanced. The world anxiously waits and asks: What will Trump do?

Source: <http://foreignpolicy.com/2016/12/09/will-trump-stay-or-go-in-iraq/>



## CHINA 'SERIOUSLY CONCERNED' AFTER TRUMP QUESTIONS TAIWAN POLICY BY TOM PHILLIPS

The Chinese government has warned Donald Trump it is “seriously concerned” after the US president-elect indicated he might jettison a four-decade understanding with Beijing unless its leaders were prepared to strike a new “deal” with his administration.

In an interview with Fox News on Sunday, the president-elect said he saw no reason why the US should continue abiding by the “One China” policy – under which Washington does not recognise Taiwan as a sovereign state – unless Beijing was prepared to enter into some kind of bargain.

“I don’t know why we have to be bound by a ‘One China’ policy unless we make a deal with China having to do with other things, including trade,” Trump told the channel.

Washington’s acceptance of the “One China” principle – according to which Taiwan is officially regarded as part of the same single Chinese nation as the mainland – has been a crucial part of the foundation of US-China relations since ties between the two countries were re-established by Richard Nixon and Mao Zedong in 1972.

Trump’s comments drew an angry riposte from Beijing. Geng Shuang, a spokesman for China’s foreign ministry, told reporters that bilateral ties and “the sound and steady growth of China-US relations” would be “out of the question” were Trump to turn away from the “One China” policy.

“We urge the incoming US administration and its leaders to fully recognise the sensitivity of the Taiwan question ... [and] to properly deal with Taiwan-related matters in a prudent manner so as not to disrupt or damage the overall interests of the bilateral relationship,” Geng said, describing the “One China” principle as the “political bedrock” of ties between the two countries.

The question of Taiwan, which Beijing regards as a breakaway province that should one day be reunified with the mainland, was one of China’s “core interests”, the spokesman pointed out.

Trump’s comments came less than a fortnight after he looked to have initiated a potentially damaging diplomatic row with Beijing by holding a telephone conversation with Taiwan’s president, Tsai Ing-wen, and subsequently attacking China on Twitter.

In what was widely seen as an attempt to soothe tensions, Trump subsequently appointed the Iowa governor, Terry Branstad – a man China called “an old friend of the Chinese people” – as ambassador to Beijing. Orville Schell, the head of the Centre on US-China Relations at New York’s Asia Society, said Trump’s latest comments – which the academic described as an “incredible provocation” – were the latest example of the billionaire’s contradictory moves towards China.

“He sometimes punches Beijing and he sometimes seems to reach out and hug them. The phone call to Tsai Ing-wen would be the former. Terry Branstad would be the latter. Now we have another uppercut,” he said of the Fox News interview.

Speaking on Sunday, Trump defended his protocol-shredding decision to talk to President Tsai on 2 December, the first such conversation between a US president or president-elect and a leader of the self-ruled island since ties between America and Taiwan were severed in 1979.

China considers Taiwan a renegade province and does not allow countries to maintain diplomatic relations with both Taipei and Beijing.

“I don’t want China dictating to me and this was a call put in to me,” Trump said. “It was a very nice call. Short. And why should some other nation be able to say I can’t take a call?”

“I think it actually would’ve been very disrespectful, to be honest with you, not taking it,” he added.

The president-elect also returned to some of the themes on which he criticised China during the election campaign.

“We’re being hurt very badly by China with devaluation, with taxing us heavy at the borders when we don’t tax them, with building a massive fortress in the middle of the South China Sea, which they shouldn’t be doing, and frankly with not helping us at all with North Korea,” he told Fox News.

“You have North Korea. You have nuclear weapons and China could solve that problem and they’re not helping us at all.”

Trump speaks on Fox News on Sunday.

Nick Bisley, an international relations expert from La Trobe University in Melbourne, said: “The signal Trump is sending to China is: ‘You are not going to push us around; you are not going to dictate terms; we are going to be the ones who dictate terms to you’. And he’s also signalling, whether deliberately or not, that there are no sacred cows in US foreign policy, whether in Asia or anywhere else.”

Bisley said Trump’s early moves would have China’s leaders, who had anticipated dealing with a predictable “Obama 3.0” under a Clinton administration, scratching their heads.

“I think they will be genuinely befuddled and just thinking: ‘How do we deal with this guy? What’s the playbook?’” he said. “The overall consequence of all of this is that it’s going to make the region a lot more uncertain and the temperature is going to be a lot higher.”

Li Yonghui, the head of the school of international relations at the Beijing Foreign Studies University, said Trump was “testing the water” with China before taking office next month.

“It fits with the logic of a businessman. But on this issue, he has really gone off in the wrong direction. If he doesn’t understand the nature of the Taiwan issue then sooner or later he will. Taiwan is not like other issues ... China will not compromise on the Taiwan issue.

“If the US wants to change the ‘One-China’ policy, then it will shake the foundations of Sino-US relations. [The consequences] are hard to imagine,” the Chinese academic warned.

In an editorial, the Global Times, a fervently nationalistic party-run tabloid, said Trump was “as ignorant as a child” in the field of diplomacy and warned him the “one China” policy was “not for sale”.

The newspaper claimed Trump’s inexperience meant he was easily “influenced or even manipulated by hardliners around him”.

It said China needed “to launch a resolute struggle with him” and should be “prepared to accompany Trump on a rollercoaster ride” for Sino-US relations. “We must buckle up, as should others around the world,” it said.

Schell said it was hard to predict how Beijing might respond to Trump’s latest gambit.

“I don’t know what Beijing is going to make of this because they have always dealt with these very square, proper people like Obama and Hillary Clinton who have always sought to keep the US policy relatively constant. And here you have someone who is doing the absolute opposite,” he said.

“I think they will be very careful about responding because in a certain sense they are meeting a brinksman just like themselves ... [and] I don’t know what a brinksman or a bully does when they meet another brinksman and a bully. [Violence] would be one option, but very often one of them backs down.” Additional reporting by Christy Yao

Source: <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2016/dec/12/donald-trump-questions-us-commitment-to-one-china-policy>

## NEW UN CHIEF | EDITORIAL

Former Portuguese Prime Minister Antonio Guterres was sworn in on Monday as the ninth United Nations Secretary-General, pledging to work for peace, support sustainable development and reform the UN to become more effective.

Ban Ki Moon's 10-year leadership was among the least inspirational in UN history. Syrians, Yemenis and Iraqis have endured years of slaughter, while Palestine and Kashmir struggle under stifled political and religious freedoms. In this environment of unrelenting warfare, the impotency of the UN to generate consensus between powerful states like Russia and the US is clearer than ever before. Does it even matter then, that the UN has a new chief? There are hopes that Guterres' empathy for refugees, socialist roots and charisma will add some vivacity to the tarnished body, but good intentions have rarely turned into sustainable solutions since the Cold War.

Guterres was Portugal's prime minister from 1995 to 2002. An engineer by training and a practising Catholic, Guterres fought for migrants' rights over a decade as UN High Commissioner for Refugees from June 2005 to December 2015. The man has an impeccable resume, but the fact is that even though he may be the right man for the job, the failure of the UN is due to the failure of member states to follow the rules they agreed to when they joined the UN. The five permanent members of the Security Council are especially to blame, for treating the UNSC like a rich man's club and their own personal panic room.

When the dust clears in Aleppo, in Mosul, in Sana'a and in Gaza, history will look back at these countries, and blame them for the death of millions, for staying quiet, for selling guns to rebels and empires, for ignoring humanity and choosing "national security", which means nothing and feeds and clothes no one. So much death at a time when food, money, medicines, transport, shelter and technology is available to keep every single person on the face of the earth safe. The new Secretary General will preside over an organisation bogged down in endless bureaucracy and limitless selfishness of the countries it relies on.

Source: <http://nation.com.pk/editorials/14-Dec-2016/new-un-chief>

## THE INDO-JAPANESE NUCLEAR DEAL BY DR AHMAD RASHID MALIK

Japanese defence has been changing since 2007, and it has undertaken harsh security measures at home and abroad including the reinterpretation of the Clause-9 of its constitution. These defence changes have been negatively impacting upon Japanese policies and ties with the region of North East Asia and South Asia.

Japan has been worsening its ties both with China by installing the Terminal High Altitude Area Defense (THAAD), and by a nuclear deal struck with India that would damage its ties with Pakistan in the South Asian regional security perspectives. India is now heavily armed by both Japan and the United States.

In a major defence shift, Prime Minister Shinzo Abe lifted a 50-year ban on arms exports. In a recent move, Japan has supplied 12 amphibious rescue aircraft from Japanese manufacturer Shin Maywa Industries worth US\$1.5 billion. India would use these aircraft for surveillance purposes in the South China Sea against PLA's of China and in the Indian Ocean against China and Pakistan to disrupt the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) and peaceful use of Gwadar shipment for commercial purposes.

Abe's change of defence policy in favour of India consequently counters the China-Pakistan all-weather friendship that has been recently reshaping their growing ties in the Indian Ocean after the inauguration of the Gwadar port shipment on 13 November.

The India-Japan defence collaboration is just not ended here. Both countries have signed the most controversial and long-pending civil nuclear deal on 11 November. Negotiations for the deal were started in 2010 and a number of round of talks were held. The deal has removed the hurdle in supplying Japanese nuclear power plants and equipment to India to boost its energy. The Indo-Japanese deal would also enable the United States, France, and Australia to supply nuclear materials to an NPT/CTBI handicapped India, giving a heavy blow to the global non-proliferation regime.

Pakistan is directly affected by the Indo-Japanese nuclear deals for a variety of reasons. The Indo-Japanese nuclear deal introduced an element of "nuclear discrimination" by excluding Pakistan and also jointly targeting it.

The nuclear deal also changed Japanese foreign policy toward South Asia. It is no longer a silent partner and a balancer in South Asia. It has ended its neutrality in favour of India. Japan's role has become controversial. For decades, after World War II, Japan

strictly maintained its neutrality and became an indispensable economic partner of all South Asian countries.

Although India questioned Japan's military alignment with the United States during the Cold War, it was largely accepted as a development partner of many South Asian countries, and aid and technology provider to them. The Indo-Japanese civil nuclear deal has drastically altered this political and strategic equilibrium.

Pakistan is an energy-deficit country. Nuclear power energy is just one percent of its energy mix, and it's desperately looking to diversify its energy mix by looking at cheaper and economical sources of energy production. Japan disrespects Pakistani viewpoint.

Japan's civil nuclear cooperation with India is pushed by the Indo-American nuclear deal of 2005 and the waiver it extended to India in the NSG in 2008. Japan's anti-nuclear credentials have also been violated, and Japan has emerged as a source of nuclear materials to India.

The entire civil nuclear program of Pakistan has been assisted by China since the 1980s under IAEA's safeguards and framework. The Indo-Japanese nuclear deal has further pushed Pakistan into China's hold to accelerate its civil nuclear program.

Pakistan's first nuclear power plant KUNUPP would be decommissioned within the next three years. Three nuclear power plants have been running at Chasma. Two more power plants will be built at the same site and two coastal power projects at Karachi and all with the use of Chinese technology. Japan has the ability to help diversify Pakistan's nuclear program, but it is reluctant to do so and has a tilted toward India.

Pakistan has a better nuclear safety program than India and Japan. Both countries encountered nuclear incidents. The Fukushima meltdown is the most horrible example, but countries like the United States, France, Australia, as well as, Japan discriminate Pakistan in diversifying its civil nuclear program.

The Indo-Japanese civil nuclear deal has come against the backdrop of the growing China's expanding role in the Indian Ocean and South China Sea. The deal aims at curtailing Chinese role and influence in these regions.

The peaceful use of nuclear energy by India is also highly doubtful. Statements from New Delhi say that there is no bar on India to conduct tests. Statements from Tokyo negate all such claims and say that India needs written permission from Japan to do so. "There is no effective separation between India's nuclear energy program and its

weapons program, and the Japanese Government's agreement conditions are meaningless, stated by Shaun Burnie, a senior nuclear specialist at Greenpeace Japan.

The women of Fukushima, an anti-nuclear lobbying group, have issued an appeal to the Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi to visit the Fukushima disaster area and see himself the consequences of a nuclear disaster. Japan, under the hawkish Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, is more interested in commercialising the sale of nuclear power plants to India to boost its exports but this could pose dangerous physical consequences and to alter the existing balance of power in South Asia.

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Source: <http://dailytimes.com.pk/opinion/16-Dec-16/the-indo-japanese-nuclear-deal>



## WITH TRUMP, THE US FOREIGN POLICY FRAMEWORK IS AT RISK BY ROBERT ZOELLICK

Now that president-elect Donald Trump has selected his national security team, what course will he set? In a recent interview Henry Kissinger, the US secretary of state in the 1970s, cautions that “America has conceived of foreign policy as a series of discrete challenges to be addressed as they arise on their merits rather than as part of an overall design”. Mr Trump, the deal-by-deal negotiator, may prefer to run a case-by-case foreign policy.

For 70 years, US international problem-solving has taken place within the framework that the US created after the second world war and then adapted. That framework is now at risk. States created in the Middle East in 1916 have broken down into a life-and-death struggle among sects and tribes, manipulated by local would-be hegemon. The new battleground supplies a cause and base from which radical Islamic terrorists reach around the world. The chaos has triggered a destabilising migration to the EU. Furthermore, countries in the region — Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Iran — have struggled unsuccessfully to transition to modern market economies, raising the risk of an even larger upheaval.

The European integration project that has been the foundation of transatlantic strategy since the Marshall Plan is fragmenting. Neither Britain nor the EU has a constructive plan for Brexit. Fearful populist-nationalists in eastern Europe recall destructive movements of the 1920s and 1930s. The eurozone is struggling. Even stalwarts of the European project, such as the Netherlands and Italy, are losing faith.

Seizing opportunities, Russia has extended its power in the Middle East and Europe with a mix of military force, brute threats, cyber attacks and disinformation. President Vladimir Putin wants to protect Russia’s southern flank from Islamic dangers, repel European influence and constrain the US within a system of competing powers.

The strategic question in Asia is whether China will demand regional dominance or an adaptation of the current order to reflect Beijing’s power and interests. Mr Kissinger believes that China’s preferred system is one of tributary states. President Xi Jinping moved promptly at the summit of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation forum to fill the vacuum created by Mr Trump’s abandonment of the US-led Trans-Pacific Partnership.

The world is highly alert to signals from the US. Before long, Mr Trump and his team will be tested by crises, as all presidents have been. Their responses need to reflect a strategic framework of US interest and leadership.

History offers insights. First, the US needs continental security. In the 19th century, the US expanded its territory to assure safety. For the past 80 years, since Franklin Delano Roosevelt's "Good Neighbor Policy", the US has worked to build a stronger North America with Canada and Mexico — as a continental base for global power projection.

Second, the US relies on strong, resilient and confident alliances across the Atlantic and Pacific. These ties enable the US to safeguard interests on the western and eastern shores of the vast Eurasian expanse. Nato and the evolving Pacific alliance network encompass America's closest partners. The US also enjoys special ties to Israel and states in the Gulf, and has been building a partnership with India.

Third, America needs to modernise international economic ties to advance both national interests and global growth. The US needs rules on trade, capital flows, investment, exchange rates, the digital economy and intellectual property that will enable America's private sector dynamism to shape the world's economic system.

Fourth, the US should be alert to changes in the western hemisphere, in concert with Latin American friends. Since the 1820s, the US vision of a New World of republics that can shape the Old has waxed and waned. In coming years, new leadership in Brazil and Argentina offers opportunities. Cuba and Venezuela are also ripe for change.

Fifth, the US needs to invest in superior military punch and technology, while following Theodore Roosevelt's guidance on defence diplomacy: "Speak softly and carry a big stick."

Finally, history recounts how the American Experiment became American Exceptionalism. Across different eras, the US has stood as a "Shining City on the Hill": an architect of open doors for private sector initiative, a voice for liberty and human rights and the leader of the free world.

Amid the uncertainties of this new era, the Trump administration will need to match power with purpose. Mr Kissinger observed: "Trump has not put forward a worldview." Now is the time.

The writer is a former president of the World Bank, US trade representative and deputy secretary of state

Source: <https://www.ft.com/content/e6112b5c-c159-11e6-81c2-f57d90f6741a>

## THE CRISIS IN U.S.-ISRAELI RELATIONS BY PHILIP GORDON

Is the U.S.-Israeli relationship in serious trouble? Do the public disputes of the past few years—over Iran, the Palestinians, and the state of Israel’s democracy—represent nothing more than the latest round of a longstanding family feud, or do they amount to a more fundamental breach? And is there anything the next U.S. president can do to repair the relationship?

Dennis Ross’ survey of U.S.-Israeli ties since the Truman administration reminds readers that crises in the relationship, even serious ones, are hardly new. Ross contends that common interests and values still bind the two countries together, and with sound management by both sides, the partnership can continue to flourish.

Dana Allin and Steven Simon are not so sure. They argue that powerful demographic, political, and cultural trends in both Israel and the United States are changing the relationship in fundamental ways. In their view, the tensions between U.S. President Barack Obama and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu constitute symptoms of more serious, underlying problems—ones that portend real trouble in the future.

Dov Waxman, focusing on shifting attitudes among American Jews, also has his doubts. He argues that the American Jewish community is increasingly divided and that its support for Israel—or at least certain Israeli policies—can no longer be taken for granted.

Together, these excellent studies provide a deep understanding of the historical, strategic, and political roots of one of the closest and most enduring bilateral partnerships in the world. They also make clear, however, that the circumstances that have sustained the relationship in the past are changing. Jerusalem and Washington still share many basic interests, but it would be naive to assume that the partnership can automatically withstand future challenges. Without real effort by both sides, the divisions of the past eight years will likely intensify under the next U.S. administration and beyond—to the detriment of Israel and the United States alike.

### **SAME AS IT EVER WAS**

Doomed to Succeed offers a comprehensive overview of U.S.-Israeli relations since Israel’s founding in 1948. A prominent scholar-practitioner, Ross has played a key role in managing this portfolio for decades, serving in the administrations of Presidents Ronald Reagan, George H. W. Bush, Bill Clinton, and Barack Obama, most recently as Obama’s Middle East adviser from 2009 to 2011. (Full disclosure: I have worked closely

with Ross both inside government and out; I have also worked with Allin and Simon and, in my capacity as a former official, spoke to them for their book.) Part scholarly history, part anecdote-infused memoir, Ross' book powerfully demonstrates the continuities in the relationship, regardless of who holds power in Jerusalem or Washington. Indeed, there is a certain Groundhog Day quality to the countries' shared history, with many of the same assumptions, debates, and mistakes appearing again and again. Ross digs up quotes from Americans and Israelis from the 1960s that, with different names attached, could easily have come from 2016.

In other words, although the spats between the Obama administration and Netanyahu may have felt unprecedented to those living through them, they were not. Yes, the two current leaders clashed bitterly and publicly over the Iran nuclear deal, Israeli settlements in the West Bank, and the peace process more broadly. But compare these disputes to previous ones. In the 1950s, President Dwight Eisenhower forced Israel into a humiliating military retreat from Suez, threatening a total U.S. aid cutoff and sanctions unless Israel backed down. In the 1970s, President Gerald Ford grew so frustrated by Israel's refusal to conclude a disengagement agreement in the Sinai that he announced a "reassessment" of U.S. policy in the region, "including our relations with Israel." In the 1980s, in response to Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin's extension of Israeli law and administration to the Golan Heights, President Ronald Reagan suspended F-16 deliveries and halted a newly concluded defense agreement, leading Begin to complain about being treated like "a vassal state." In 1991, President George H. W. Bush froze \$10 billion in loan guarantees to Israel to pressure Jerusalem over West Bank settlements and peace negotiations. He privately fumed about Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir's refusal to halt settlement construction after what Bush thought was a promise to do so. In 1996, President Bill Clinton, after his first meeting with Netanyahu, angrily asked Ross, "Who does he think the superpower is?" (Other eyewitnesses have reported that Clinton added an unprintable modifier before the word "superpower.")

As the longtime U.S. official Robert Gates has observed, "Every President I worked for, at some point in his presidency, would get so pissed off at the Israelis that he couldn't speak." The myth that prior to Obama there was a tradition of "no daylight" or "no surprises" in the U.S.-Israeli relationship does not remotely survive a reading of *Doomed to Succeed*.

That is not the only myth that Ross sets out to destroy. He also targets the notion that close cooperation with Israel costs the United States support in the Arab world. Time and again, Ross shows, senior U.S. officials have argued for distancing the United States from Israel in order to avoid provoking the Arabs. Yet time and again, he argues, their dire predictions of the consequences with the Arabs if Washington failed to do so

were proved wrong. Arab states have long had bigger things to worry about—namely, their security and survival—and it is these national interests, not U.S. relations with Israel, that determine their dealings with Washington.

Ross makes a similar argument about the alleged centrality of the Palestinian issue to U.S. interests in the Middle East. Whereas many U.S. officials have long argued that progress on the peace process is key to resolving the rest of the region's challenges, Ross shows that they have often overstated the linkage. Ross finds little evidence for what James Mattis, a former commander of U.S. Central Command, in 2013 called the "military security price" that the United States pays for its perceived bias toward Israel. An Israeli-Palestinian peace agreement would of course provide huge benefits to most Israelis and Palestinians, but it would have little impact on the Islamic State (also known as ISIS), Iranian expansionism, or the civil wars in Iraq, Libya, Syria, and Yemen.

Finally, Ross pokes holes in the notion, widespread among Israel's critics, that domestic lobbies drive U.S. policy toward Israel. Yes, he admits, groups such as the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC) wield influence, especially in Congress. But he points out that whenever U.S. interests have called for policies that have diverged from the preferences of the Israeli government—selling arms to Arabs, blocking loan guarantees to the Israeli government, or passing the Iran nuclear deal—U.S. presidents have always managed to get their way. History also demonstrates that the same principle holds for Israel, which does not compromise on what it sees as its core interests for the sake of its relations with the United States. Ross marshals considerable evidence to support these arguments, and his demonstration of a resilience in the U.S.-Israeli relationship that has lasted for nearly 70 years is compelling. By focusing on the continuities in that relationship, however, Ross risks downplaying the growing threats it faces. This is especially true when it comes to the Palestinian issue, the most consistent source of stress on the partnership. After all, U.S. policy on the question has never been driven exclusively by a desire to placate the Arabs or by the notion that a peace deal would magically cure all of the region's woes. Rather, every single U.S. administration since Israel entered the West Bank in 1967 has acted out of a belief that continued occupation and settlement expansion threaten both peace and Israel's own future as a democratic, Jewish state. As the other two books make clear, the conditions that have enabled the partnership to prosper despite such differences may no longer obtain.

## DEMOGRAPHY AND DESTINY

Like Ross' book, Allin and Simon's study blends scholarship and memoir. Simon draws from his time in the Reagan, George H. W. Bush, Clinton, and Obama administrations, and Allin offers the perspective of a pro-Zionist American liberal who has participated in

debates over Israel since his college days in the late 1970s. The two also provide a well-informed history of U.S.- Israeli ties, with a particular emphasis on the development of U.S. attitudes toward Israel over time. But their real focus is on the changes they see taking place, changes that leave them concerned about the relationship's future. That concern stems from several trends that "will be impossible to stop and difficult to manage." On the Israeli side, these include a population that is growing increasingly right wing, religious, security-focused, and antidemocratic—developments that could push Israel away from the United States culturally and strategically. Israel's ultra-Orthodox, or haredi, population is growing faster than any other segment of its society, and it is expected to rise from 11 percent today to nearly 20 percent by 2030. The Israeli settler population is also booming, less due to Israelis moving into new construction in the West Bank (although that is happening) than due to growth within the settlements themselves. Between 1991 and 2012, the number of people living in settlements increased by 240 percent—four times as fast as the overall Israeli population grew. There are now well over half a million Israelis living in the West Bank and East Jerusalem, leading many, including Allin and Simon, to wonder whether a two-state solution remains possible. Like other liberal Americans, they fear that an Israel that continues to expand settlements and hold on to the Palestinian-majority West Bank will necessarily be an illiberal Israel, undermining the cultural affinity that has long bound the American and Israeli democracies together.

Allin and Simon also identify other political changes in Israel that are distancing it from the United States. In Israel's 2015 election, right-wing parties won every district apart from Tel Aviv and Haifa, allowing Netanyahu to form the most conservative coalition in the country's history. (It moved even further to the right after the book was written, with the inclusion in May 2016 of Yisrael Beiteinu, the party of former Foreign Minister Avigdor Lieberman—a man who himself lives in a West Bank settlement and who has compared the Iran nuclear deal to the Munich Agreement.) Allin and Simon present a wealth of data showing how Israeli voters, especially young ones, identify less and less with Israel as a democratic state and more and more with it as a Jewish state. Trends in the United States, Allin and Simon write, are equally troubling. The embrace of Israel among American liberals that explained Allin's early admiration of Israel and Simon's travel there as a civilian war volunteer in 1973 is fading as their cohort ages. In the United States, they write, "four generations of intermarriage have weakened both Jewish identity and the visceral attachment that many Jews have felt since the establishment of the State of Israel." Younger Americans, and especially the liberal Democrats among them, no longer back Israeli policy as solidly as they once did—a phenomenon underscored by the remarkable sight of Senator Bernie Sanders, himself an American Jew, making the defense of Palestinian rights a core pillar of his presidential campaign.



For a time, this gradual “liberal disillusionment” was counterbalanced by the vision of Israel as a strategic asset, especially on the American right. But Allin and Simon argue that even that pillar of the relationship is weakening. Although Israel still serves as a valuable military and intelligence partner in the Middle East, “it is difficult to conjure the scenarios in which Israel would facilitate the projection of American power or the pursuit of American purposes in the region.” If nothing is done to save the relationship, they conclude, Israel and the United States will end up as “a dysfunctional couple in a loveless marriage, moving inexorably in separate ways.

## LOSING FAITH

Waxman has a narrower focus, but his argument strongly reinforces that of Allin and Simon. A political scientist at Northwestern University, he explores the place of Israel in the American Jewish community, and his thesis is simple: the age of unquestioning support for Israel is over.

Waxman traces the evolution of American Jewish thinking about Israel through the same set of historical developments recounted by Ross and Allin and Simon. He sees the period from 1967 to 1977 as “the golden era in American Jewish support for Israel,” a time when the community viewed Israel, in the words of the historian Steven Rosenthal, as an “object of secular veneration” and stood ready to provide it with strong political support. Since then, however, and in particular over the past decade, political and cultural changes in both Israel and the United States have divided American Jews. Once a source of unity in the community, support for Israel has become a driver of discord.

The argument should not be overstated, of course. Aipac remains by far the biggest and most influential political voice for American Jews, and it remains strongly committed to unstinting U.S. support for Israel, including for the policies of the country’s current government. Waxman describes how aipac evolved from a small lobbying group with a handful of staff into an independent national organization with over 100,000 dues-paying members, hundreds of employees, a large pool of wealthy donors, and revenues that grew from \$14.5 million in 2000 to about \$70 million in 2013—hardly a sign of American Jews’ declining commitment to Israel. But he also describes the emergence of other, alternative voices for American Jews, such as Americans for Peace Now and J Street, the latter of which describes itself as “the political home for pro-Israel, pro-peace Americans.” Since its founding in 2008, J Street has grown from a tiny start-up into a real player in Washington, with a staff of 65, an operating budget of \$8 million, and a fundraising apparatus that gives it increasing influence in congressional elections. Aipac has lost its monopoly as the political outlet for American Jews who consider themselves

pro-Israel—and the community is increasingly divided over what “pro-Israel” even means.

Waxman’s bottom line is that Israel will have to change its policies if it wishes to retain the support of American Jews. He concludes his book with a dire warning: Growing numbers of American Jews, even a majority now, are dissatisfied with Israel’s treatment of the Palestinians and deeply worried about Israel’s ability to remain a Jewish and democratic state if it continues to effectively rule over Palestinians in the West Bank and East Jerusalem. . . . They face the frightening prospect of Israel becoming increasingly illiberal, and increasingly isolated in the international community. As this happens, many liberal American Jews, especially younger ones, will turn away from Israel in despair, or even disgust.

## **COUPLES THERAPY**

Can the relationship be saved? Ross offers several useful suggestions for how it can. Acknowledging the changing demographics and politics in the United States, he urges Israelis and their supporters to reach out directly to American minority communities, and also to avoid politicizing the relationship, as Netanyahu did by planning his Iran speech to Congress only with Republicans. He also calls on them to “elevate Israeli democratic values” and put an end to right-wing efforts in the Knesset to stifle human rights groups and discriminate against Arab citizens. “The last thing Israel needs now is to have its basic democratic character called into question,” he rightly argues. Finally, Ross calls on Israel to “make its settlement policy consistent with its two-state policy by declaring that until it can reach agreement with the Palestinians on the border . . . it will no longer build in what it thinks should be part of the Palestinian state.” Such modest (if still politically difficult) measures may well prove too weak to counter the negative trends all these authors recognize, but policymakers should listen when such a prominent and long-standing supporter of Israel as Ross warns that they are needed. Allin and Simon, by contrast, go big. They call for the United States to put forward a peace plan as part of a grand bargain that would include “a defense treaty that would bring Israel under formal American protection and that would extend the U.S. nuclear umbrella explicitly and formally.” The ambition is admirable, but it is hard to see Israel making painful concessions on territory and security in exchange for a defense guarantee that it has not asked for and likely would not trust. Moreover, such a treaty would prove impossible to implement. Although nato-like defense guarantees deter traditional invasions well, it is not clear how one would apply to Israel’s primary security threats: Hezbollah rocket attacks, Hamas killings and kidnappings, and Palestinian knife attacks. Ironically, the implausibility of the proposal serves to justify the pessimistic analysis that precedes it. If



the prospect of diminishing U.S. support or the risk of eternal occupation of the West Bank is not enough to get Israel to change course, then perhaps nothing will.

Waxman prefers analysis to advice, but he also has a message for Israelis: “Israeli policymakers, foremost among them Prime Minister Netanyahu, should recommit Israel to the goal of establishing a Palestinian state as quickly as possible. Otherwise, American Jewish support for Israel, at least among the non-Orthodox, is bound to erode.”

Many Israelis—and no doubt the current Israeli government—will likely reject all these suggestions and others. After all, if the steps were easy or popular, then Israel would have taken them long ago. But it would be dangerously complacent to ignore the demographic, political, and cultural changes discussed in all these books at a time of enormous geopolitical upheaval in the region. If the governments and people of Israel and the United States no longer see eye to eye on the Palestinian issue or how to contain Iran, and if the next generation of decision-makers no longer feels as culturally close or politically aligned as earlier generations did, then the bonds between the two countries will weaken. Perhaps the structural changes taking place in the relationship cannot be prevented, but they can be managed, and the upcoming presidential transition in the United States presents an opportunity for a fresh start. Leaders on both sides will have to decide how much they care about the relationship, and whether they are willing to do anything—however politically painful—to preserve it.

Israelis like to remind their American friends that in the Middle East, history is measured in millennia, centuries, and decades, not merely in years and months. By this standard, the U.S.- Israeli alliance described in these three books represents a mere blip. Taking it for granted, while ignoring some ominous trends, could allow it to wither away.<sup>2</sup>

Source: <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/reviews/review-essay/2016-10-17/crisis-us-israeli-relations>

## THE END OF THE END OF THE COLD WAR BY JULIA IOFFE

Twenty-five years ago this week, the Soviet Union ceased to exist and the Cold War ended. Moscow lost, Washington won. I'm not one for historical anniversary stories, but this one seems to me to be truly significant, though mostly in its breach.

Twenty-five years ago, the Western conception of government — democracy, free markets, human rights — seemed to be proved to be the best, most stable, most moral way to govern. And it was decided that the Western way of government, 25 years ago, would govern the new Russia, too.

As the USSR crumbled, many in the urban intelligentsia longed for a Westernization they believed would turn their country and their lives around. Just get rid of communism, they thought, and they'd start living like their American and European counterparts.

And Westernization came. The first constitution written in Russia after the 1991 collapse of the USSR was drafted in the Western mold with the help of young Harvard University wonks. The era of Soviet one-party rule gave way to a raucous parliamentary system that, at one point, had more than 100 political parties, including one for beer lovers. There was suddenly a freewheeling and adversarial press in the Western mold. Those same Harvard wonks — young men like Jeffrey Sachs — helped push the painful transformation of the Soviet command economy into a market one. Western businessmen swarmed the country to make a killing but also brought with them their new, seemingly superior ways of doing business: boards of directors, corporate governance, stocks and bonds. The dollar became the preferred, trusted currency. Western products flooded the Russian market: Coca Cola, Hollywood, cordless phones.

At the same time, Russia quickly went from being a nuclear superpower to a backwater, culturally and geopolitically. Warsaw Pact countries and former Soviet republics lined up at NATO's door, and Russia came to be seen as the land of drunks and mail-order brides, a place to be mocked rather than feared. Its elites chafed at having gone from being one of the world's great empires to being labeled "Upper Volta with missiles." Or derided by Sergey Brin, co-founder of Google and one of the many émigrés who made their fortunes elsewhere, as "Nigeria with snow." Or, as one Republican Senate staffer once referred to it in conversation, "China's gas station." Even for Russians most critical of the Kremlin, the humiliation could be searing.

To some conservative Russian thinkers, many of whom came to influence Vladimir Putin in his third turn at the presidency, the very idea of Russia as a democracy was itself a kind of defeat. It was an imposition of a foreign system of government ill-suited to

Russia's traditions and historical insistence on greatness, unity, and the subservience of the individual to a strong, centralized state. They, and Putin, resented Westernization, especially in its geopolitical manifestations, like NATO's 1999 bombing of Yugoslavia in spite of Moscow's protestations.

Then, in the 2000s, George W. Bush's program of regime change and democracy promotion supported democratic uprisings in the former Soviet republics of Georgia, Ukraine, and Kyrgyzstan. This terrified Putin, who feared Washington would support something similar in Moscow. He responded by actively marginalizing his opposition, creating a militant pro-government youth movement, and castrating what was left of the independent press at home. Then came the toppling of Saddam Hussein, Hosni Mubarak, Muammar al-Qaddafi, and, quite nearly, Bashar al-Assad — all in the name of Western democracy. And it came against the backdrop of protests under the Kremlin walls of Westernized, urban, white-collar Muscovites demanding a more transparent, accountable form of government. They stood in the winter cold of December 2011 and explicitly asked for a European-style government.

But in December 2016, 25 years after Russia lost the Cold War and the West won it, Putin definitively won its drawn-out end.

But in December 2016, 25 years after Russia lost the Cold War and the West won it, Putin definitively won its drawn-out end. He managed to successfully renegotiate the terms of Russia's long and lurching post-Soviet transition and bring it to an end by reversing the conditions of the Soviet Union's bloodless defeat. The bookend on the other side of 25 years of Western moral supremacy was the revelation that the CIA had concluded that Putin's cybersoldiers had tried to throw the U.S. presidential election to Donald Trump.

It was not only about Trump, though, or even just about sowing chaos. It was an operation whose point was its existence, proof that Russia was now a strong enough power to sway the most important kind of election in the most important country in the world. And when you pull off a gamble like that, and pull it off so spectacularly that you help elect a new U.S. president who has already positioned himself as Putin's junior partner, well, what's left of Western moral supremacy? Which kind of government really is better?

And so, after decades of watching the West impose its political and economic model on Russia, Putin has not only stopped its roll but reversed its tide. For years, he has used Kremlin-funded outlets like RT to wage war in Europe on the very idea of a verifiable, knowable truth. He has bankrolled far-left and far-right political parties to wreak havoc

on Europe's normally staid politics. He was even been accused of "weaponizing" flows of Syrian refugees in order to destabilize the European Union. Now, Great Britain is exiting the EU after Brexit's pied piper Nigel Farage spoke of his abiding admiration for Putin; France is getting ready to pick a pro-Russian president; and German Chancellor Angela Merkel, under attack by Russian cyberarmies, hangs by a thread.

But the real victory here is landing these armies on American shores. In 2016, Putin did just that, thoroughly Russifying the U.S. presidential election. The hacks aside (which, Putin could argue, are no different than what America has done for decades during and after the Cold War in supporting "color revolutions" and regime change), what made it a victory was the imposition of a Russian model of politics onto the West, an effective and very tangible reversal of the status quo that had been in place since 1991. An American presidential election became rife with Russianesque conspiracy theories, fake news, absurdity, and the steady, strategic flow of kompromat (compromising information). It was, in other words, a downright Russian election. In the meantime, Putin has been reaching out to traditional U.S. allies, like Israel, Saudi Arabia, and now Japan, trying to convince them that, in the new world order, there is no longer one superpower. Now there is one superpower that is reluctant to act the part and an old, hobbled one that isn't afraid to be decisive, even at great cost to itself.

Because 25 years ago this week, the Soviet Union lost the Cold War. And 25 years later, Russia renegotiated the terms of surrender.

Source: <http://foreignpolicy.com/2016/12/21/the-end-of-the-end-of-the-cold-war-russia-putin-trump-cyberattacks/>

## A NEW GLOBAL ORDER IS EMERGING BY SHAHID JAVED BURKI

While some of Trump's egregious promises made during the over-charged electoral campaign will go unimplemented, his worldview will no doubt hasten the emergence of a new global arrangement. As we near the end of the second decade of the 21st century a new world has begun to take shape. It will be defined by a number of forces in play, each interacting with one another. At this this moment in world history three of these forces are of critical importance: the presence on the world stage of four actors, each vying to play an important role; the split between nationalism and liberalism, two trends that had come together in the second half of the twentieth century to underpin the socio-economic systems in many parts of the world; and the rise of extremist version of Islam in several parts of the world that refuses to accept the established structure of governance.

Let us begin with the first: interactions among four contenders on the world stage. These are the United States, China, India and Russia. What needs to be noted is that relations among these four players have taken binary forms. The institutions currently available were designed for multilateralism not for bilateralism. The future world order will be shaped by at least five bilateral relations: Sino-American, Sino-Russian, American-Russian, Sino-Indian, and American-Indian. China is one element that is common to these relations. In this context the most important relationship will be the one involving Beijing and Washington.

Warren I. Cohen, long-time observer of interaction between America and China, makes the following observation in his review of a recent book by John Pomfret. "As President-elect witlessly roils the waters across the Pacific, foreign affairs specialists agree that management of relations between the United States and rising China surpasses all other international issues, quite possibly for the remainder of the century. In *The Beautiful Country and the Middle Kingdom*, John Pomfret reminds us that the two countries have disappointed each other since their earliest contacts, but have always muddled through. Perhaps overly optimistic, he imagines they will again." With Trump in the saddle, it is not clear in which direction the United States will ride with respect to its relations with China.

There is one important difference in the way Xi Jinping of China and soon-to-be president Donald Trump will approach relations between their two nations. Xi, following the tradition established by the leadership circles in China, will let history inform the making of foreign policy. He will be aware of the works such as those by John Pomfret. Chinese value consistency. Donald Trump reads little and has practically no knowledge of history.

In the few weeks since winning the presidency, he has flip-flopped on a number of issues including those concerning his country's relations with China. He showed no interest in history by accepting the call from the president of Taiwan, thus establishing a link with the Taiwanese senior leadership American presidents since Richard Nixon had agreed not to have in place as a part of the United States' acceptance of the "One China" policy. President Obama said in a news conference a few days after Trump's conversation with the Taiwanese president that "the idea of 'One China' is at the heart of their conception as a nation. And so, if you are going to upend this understanding, you have to have thought through the consequences, because the Chinese will not treat it the way they'll treat some other issues."

But talking to the Taiwanese president was not the only jolt Trump delivered to China. In reacting to the "drone-capture incident" when the Chinese navy picked up a submersible drone belonging to an American naval vessel, Trump took to tweets expressing different views within a few hours. His initial Twitter post, Trump said: "China steals United States Navy research drone in international waters – rips it out of water and takes it to China in an unprecedented act." He viewed the Chinese action as a grave affront. However, after the Chinese agreed to return the submarine drone he tweeted: "We should tell China that we don't want the drone they stole back."

Trump used the appointments he made to the senior positions in his administration as signals concerning the policy content of his governance. In keeping with his style, some of these signals were mixed. He nominated Terry E. Branstad, Governor of Iowa, as the United States ambassador to China. The governor had friendly relations with China's President Xi Jinping. But he followed up by creating a new White House office overseeing American trade and industrial policy and putting the University of California's economist Peter Navarro in charge. The professor had said in many writings that China was effectively waging a trade war against America.

Under Trump relations between the United States and China have not begun well. The Chinese are watching and will begin to act once Trump has taken office. Which way the relations will go will matter for Pakistan, a subject to which I will return sometime in the future.

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Source: <http://tribune.com.pk/story/1274819/new-global-order-emerging/>

## GEO-POLITICS AND AFGHANISTAN BY IMTIAZ GUL

A new regional dynamism on peace and conflict led by Russia and China has emerged. With the presence of armed groups and the emergence of new terrorists bands such as Daesh there, Afghanistan remains at the of these new developments. The third session of a trilateral “working group” comprising Russia, China and Pakistan held on December 27 in Moscow also underscores what is playing out in the region.

Following the rare meeting, the group announced that Kabul will be invited to participate in future meetings on the threat posed by Islamic State (IS) militants in Afghanistan. The decision appeared to be a response to Afghan Foreign Ministry spokesman Ahmad Shekib Mostaghani who, in a note of disapproval, had asserted that “regardless of the good intentions of the participants, the Moscow talks would not help the situation in Afghanistan.” In a joint statement the three nations also reiterated their interest in facilitating peace talks between Kabul and the Taliban. The most striking in the statement was the collective “particular concern” over “increased activities of extremist groups including the IS (Daesh) affiliates in the embattled country.

A cursory look as to what is driving the new developments and guiding the Moscow-Beijing-Islamabad consultations entails some worrying as well as encouraging realities. Firstly, the stalemate on ground in Afghanistan, with 2016 having been the bloodiest year in over a decade of conflict between Taliban insurgents and Kabul. Secondly, the realisation that only a regionally-led and coordinated solution might work following failure of international, US-led efforts to normalise Afghanistan. This might also result in the cooption of Iran, one of the two strategic neighbours of Afghanistan, into the dialogue, which should serve as a big facilitating factor. Third, the birth of Daesh, which most regional players view with extreme skepticism, resonated also by Ambassador Vitaly Churkin, Permanent Representative of Russia to the UN, in a rather dramatic way only days before the Moscow meeting.

Speaking during the quarterly review of the Afghan situation at the Security Council on December 19 Churkin said elimination of Taliban leader Mullah Mansoor only strengthened the influence of irreconcilable radicles which only compounds the current situation in the country.

The most startling was Churkin’s revelations on the expansion/activities of the IS/Daesh influence in Afghanistan. Some excerpts from his statement are quite alarming. He stated that “There is also information about the presence in Afghanistan of IS camps and safe harbors where people from central Asian states and northern caucuses’ republics are being trained and where 700 terrorist families from Syria have already arrived. The



intensive nature of facilities in Syria and Iraq make fighters look at Afghanistan increasingly frequently because they can find refuge there and can find a new platform for expanding their influence to CA and Russia as well as China. Some of our partners are not averse to contacts with the extremist and terrorist groups existing in Afghanistan. We know many events when ISIL fighters were re-deployed into northern provinces of Afghanistan by helicopters without any identification signs". Raising serious, intriguing questions on the US-NATO "attempts to diminish the threat of IS in Afghanistan." He also quoted the US- NATO forces commander General Jon Nicholson who had "stated that the terrorist organisation IS had set itself of the goal of creating Caliphate in Afghanistan and the fighters Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan it with so-called Khorasan velayat."

Churkin also spoke of combat helicopters being used for the transfer of terrorists from one place to the other within Afghanistan, resonating similar apprehensions by Afghan law-makers in recent months. Fourth, the increasing craving for regional trade connectivity — epitomised by the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor. Fifth, despite the stated intent to help the Afghan peace process delisting Afghan individuals from the UN sanctions lists.

The joint statement said that China and Russia, as permanent members of the UN Security Council, had confirmed their "flexible approach to delisting Afghan individuals from the UN sanctions lists" as a contribution to peace efforts in Afghanistan. The Taliban has identified removal of international travel and financial restrictions on its leaders as one of its conditions for engaging in reconciliation talks.

Keeping in view these aspects, one wonders whether the new regional group will eventually trump the Quadrilateral Contact Group comprising China-Pakistan-USA-Afghanistan that was created on the sidelines of the Heart of Asia conference at Islamabad on December 9, 2016? Or is the beginning of a new geo-political game between two obvious blocs (Indo-Afghan-USA and Moscow-Beijing-Pakistan-Iran) divided by conflicting views on sources of terrorism and shared interests in regional peace and development?

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## AFGHAN PEACE | EDITORIAL

IT was a strange spectacle, but nevertheless one that may yield some positive results. Russia, China and Pakistan meeting to discuss Afghanistan without the presence of Afghan representatives seems a recipe for adding to the contradictions and confounding regional dilemmas that bedevil Pakistan's neighbour to the west. It is, therefore, welcome that the new axis of three has decided to invite Afghan government officials to future talks. If there is one certainty in the region, it is that stability and peace will be elusive if arrangements are made and decisions reached without the participation of Afghanistan and Pakistan. Indeed, it has long been apparent that a big-tent approach, however unwieldy, is the only realistic way to stabilise and forge peace in Afghanistan. A roughly analogous situation may be the Iran-US nuclear talks. While it was always clear who the principals were in those talks, the presence of other big international powers in the group helped both keep the talks alive and act as guarantors of a final deal.

Certainly, given the two major decisions that appear to have been reached in Moscow, the continued exclusion of Kabul makes little sense — though the Afghan government ought to consider how its own behaviour may have contributed to Afghanistan's marginalisation. First, the warning of the growing presence of the militant Islamic State group in Afghanistan can help bring international focus to a problem that so far has not got the attention it needs. The rise of IS in Afghanistan and Pakistan has been complicated by a number of factors, but the potential for the group to grow to prominence and become a real menace remains. Yet, the idea of using the Afghan Taliban to fight IS would be disastrous. While IS is carving out a space for itself from old Afghan Taliban and TTP elements, the future of Afghanistan must not reflect its past where militias fought against militants. Instead, it is the Afghan state that must be strengthened and made more capable to lead the fight against militants whose goal it is to overthrow the Afghan state.

Second, the decision to review a UN blacklist of Afghan Taliban leaders — and in doing so, addressing one of the core demands of the Taliban in all negotiation attempts over the years — could open the door to a new round of intra-Afghan talks. The clout that Russia and China have in this regard at the UN is particularly important, though the US will have to be convinced too. Welcome as all moves that increase the possibility of a resumption of Afghan talks are, all steps should be taken with a view to strengthening the intra-Afghan nature of eventual negotiations. If the Afghan Taliban believe they can wrest core concessions from outside powers and bypass Kabul, future talks may become all the more difficult. At the same time, Kabul should reconsider its own stubborn positions of late.

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