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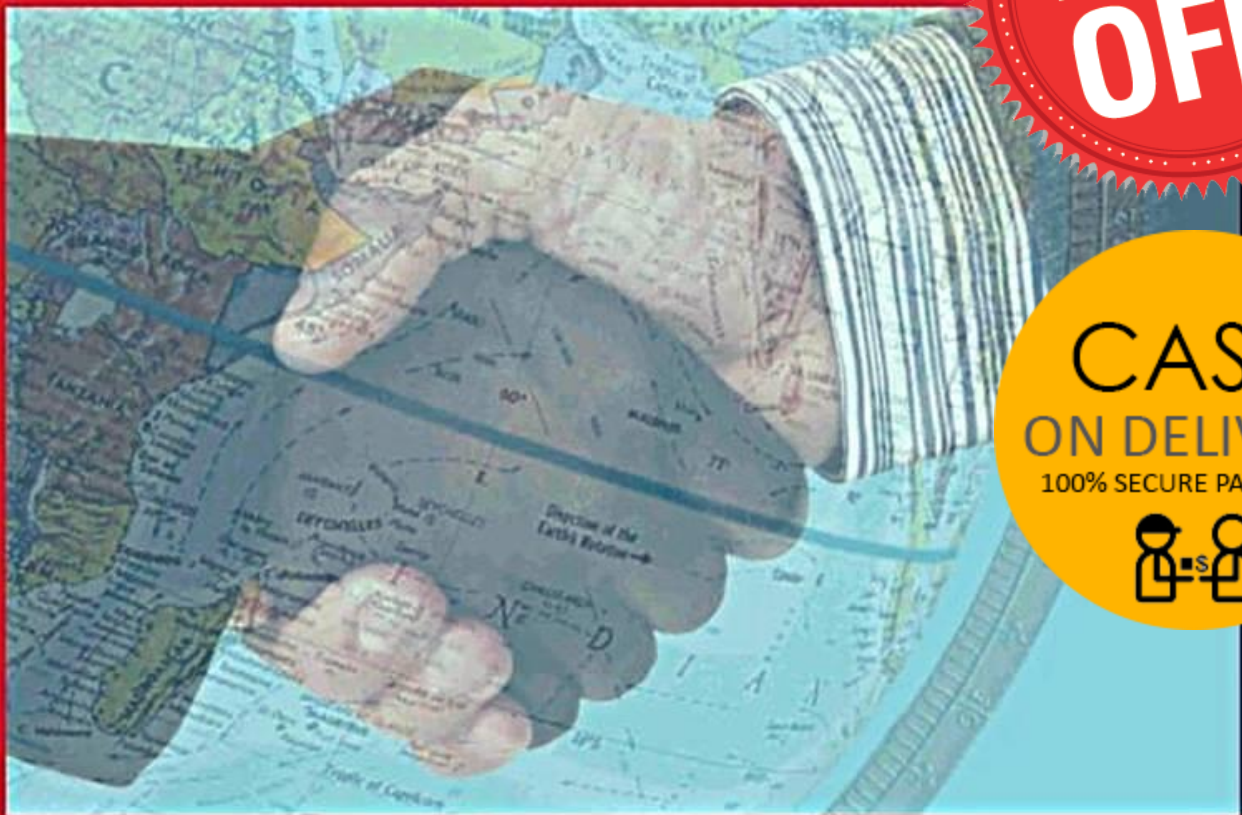
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# PAKISTAN

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## Goodwill After Pak-Afghan Meeting? | Editorial

Army Chief Gen Qamar Bajwa and Afghan President Ashraf Ghani have held an important and necessary meeting in Kabul to try and put the Pak-Afghan bilateral relationship on a more stable footing.

What is particularly encouraging is that both sides appear to have come away from a series of meetings on Sunday with a relatively positive assessment of what transpired, suggesting that a modicum of much-needed goodwill has been generated.

Given the destabilising approach to the region outlined by US President Donald Trump in his South Asia strategy and the Afghan government suffering from a number of ongoing political and security crises, it was necessary that Pakistan and Afghanistan engage each other directly to prevent a further unravelling of ties.

While a true regional solution to Afghanistan's problems is needed, the fact remains that Pakistan and Afghanistan are the two countries with the most at stake. As previously Afghan and Pakistani leaders have also discovered, the two countries have no option but to engage in meaningful dialogue.

However, the necessity of constructive dialogue has not necessarily caused it to materialise in the past. Part of the problem appears to be that neither the Pakistani nor the Afghan side have approached a potential dialogue in a structured manner. Blame games, allegations and recriminations, and short-term demands at odds with long-term confidence-building measures have been plentiful; missing has been the belief that joint problem-solving is likely or possible.

In recent times, Pakistan has tried to change the ad hoc approach to the bilateral relationship by suggesting a list of priority areas for cooperation that can

progressively reduce militant violence on both sides of the border and create the space for an intra-Afghan dialogue that all sides agree is necessary.

Until now, Afghanistan has not been particularly receptive to the newer Pakistani approach, choosing instead to insist that Pakistan is an impediment to peace regionally rather than a genuine partner in dialogue. It is hoped that Gen Bajwa's personal outreach to Afghanistan will help build some much-needed trust on both sides.

While military cooperation along the border and security issues dominate the bilateral relationship, the reference to trade and commerce and people-to-people contact in the ISPR statement was a welcome nod to the sheer range of ties that affect the two countries.

Civil-military cooperation may not be easy to achieve, but it is necessary for the long-term stability of ties with Afghanistan. A partnership inside Pakistan will make it more likely to achieve a partnership with Afghanistan.

Published in Dawn, October 3rd, 2017

Source: <https://www.dawn.com/news/1361354/goodwill-after-pak-afghan-meeting>



## Urban Planning in Pakistan By Zile Huma

The United Nations (UN) has designated first Monday of October every year to be marked as World Habitat Day. The purpose of this day is to create awareness around the world, on the issues like shelter for all, improved urban planning and slum up-gradation, inclusive housing and social services. The theme of this year's world Habitat Day is 'Housing policies — affordable houses'. Increasing urbanisation is giving rise to issues like safe transportation, environmental degradation, non-affordable houses, and health problems.

The agenda 2030 also focuses on making human habitat safe and sound. The sustainable goal 11 talks 'Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable'. On February 19 2016, the National Assembly of Pakistan unanimously passed a resolution adopting the 2030 Agenda as the National Development Agenda. This is why the Sustainable Development Goals are now regarded as Pakistan Development Goals (PDGs). This shows the commitment and seriousness of government about implementation of sustainable goals. The UN-Water Global Analysis and Assessment of Sanitation and Drinking-Water (GLASS 2017 Report) appreciates in following words 'in early 2016, the Parliament of Pakistan adopted a resolution declaring the SDGs to be national development goals, which created momentum at both the national and provincial levels to assess the current situation and develop a baseline'.

But besides all these efforts, population explosion and climate change are two factors affecting the fulfillment of Pakistan's international commitments to creating safe, sound and sustainable habitats for its people.

According to the results of the 6th Population and Housing Census conducted in Pakistan in 2017, Pakistan's populations stands at 207.774 million. According to Pakistan Bureau of Statistics, as many as 32 million households were included in the census throughout the country. Out of the total lot, 20 million households were included from the rural areas of the country, while 12 million were from the urban areas. The increasing urbanisation is building pressure on the government to provide shelters to its people.

Moreover, climate change disasters are causes of destruction of human settlements in Pakistan. The 2010-14 floods in the country caused monetary

losses of over 18 millions dollars, affected 38.12 million people, damaged 3.45 million houses and destroyed 10.63 millions acre of crops. Similarly, Pakistan is an agriculture countries and 60 per cent of the population is associated directly or indirectly to agriculture sectors. But change in weather patterns, unpredictable rains and droughts are causing immigration at mass level and creating shelter problems.

The Housing Policy formulated in 2001 requires to be updated according to the new data available through Census 2017 and Agenda 2030. There should be some legislation on housing societies as well and they must be made to allocate five percent of their total area to Green area

Moreover, unplanned housing societies are only providing shelter, but are neither safe nor sustainable.

There are few recommendations to create better shelters for the people of Pakistan. Every policy and framework needs to be updated according to emerging needs. The Housing Policy formulated in 2001 requires to be updated according to the new data available through Census 2017 and Agenda 2030. There should be some legislation on housing societies as well and they must be made to allocate 5 per cent of their total area to Green area.

There should be monitoring team to check the sanitation structure and resilience of houses against any natural disasters during construction. The construction of housing societies on green area should be banned. There should be proper system of waste management in every housing societies. The Environmental Protection Agencies in every province should monitor the waste management system and heavy should fine be imposed in case of non-compliance. There should be fixation of ceiling of 10 per cent on profit in every housing society.

The writer is based in Islamabad and works on environmental issues. She can be reached at zilehuma\_1@hotmail.com

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Source: <http://dailytimes.com.pk/opinion/03-Oct-17/urban-planning-in-pakistan>

## Foreign Policy Indoctrination: Our Challenges? By Syed Qamar Afzal Rizvi

TODAY, Pakistan's foreign policy is confronted with profound challenges in terms of its set goals, objectives, contours, and policy directions. We have unwisely created the impression in the foreign circles that there is a clot in our policy action towards extremists. Objectively and arguably, formulation, revitalisation and indoctrination of our foreign policy not through a divisive or schismatic approach but via unified and collective institutional approach is the order of present times. In this backdrop, Pakistan's Foreign Office must reorient the contours of our policy based on pragmatic regionalism-cum-internationalism in order to address the impending regional and international challenges. Positively, our National Security Committee (NSC) — consisting of military and civilian members must exercise serious deliberations on confronting foreign policy issues.

In the given strategic culture where Pakistan's foreign policy is security-centric against external threats, our military and intelligence agencies have justified stakes in its indoctrination, and without any frills, we must logically share the role of our military establishment in it. Presently Pakistan foreign policy has four daunting challenges: Our policy towards the US: Trump's announced South Asia policy and US' demand to do more; our policy towards India; our Afghan policy; and our Mideast policy vis-à-vis Saudi Arabia and Iran.

First: As far as the US is concerned, agreeably in the post-2011 phase, the Pak-US relationship has been gradually deteriorated. And yet presently, this relationship is undergone new paradigm shift wherein both sides-Washington and Islamabad are drawing new terms of engagement: American transactionalism is being replaced with "pragmatic realism; whereas Islamabad seems to focus on a policy of cautious gradualism". Despite the latest comment by Nato's secretary general Gen Jens Stoltenberg: "The United States and NATO have jointly urged Pakistan not to see the new US strategy for South Asia as a move to isolate it", Islamabad justifiably thinks that US' South Asia policy sows many seeds of doubt. The US Defence Secretary Gen Mattis' current visit— to India where he focused on enlarging India's role in Afghanistan— imperils the regional peace scenario. Today, Washington must accept the reality that its Cold War policy of nurturing

Jihadism against the then Soviet Union in Afghanistan has caused a boomerang effect in fostering extremism in the region.

While fighting this war on terror, Islamabad has had to compromise its internal security risks at the cost of addressing US' external concerns. Now we have our own security limitations, and cannot do more. Pakistan's sacrifices in the WOT are unprecedented. It had to bear a cost several times greater than the economic support given by the American and her western allies. And yet, we will do our best to deter terrorism. Pragmatic bilateralism must be our policy choice towards America.

Second: As for our policy towards India, Pakistan can only open its diplomatic discourse with New Delhi once Indian government is seriously ready to accept our demand for comprehensive negotiations on the Kashmir issue. This is the voice of both heart and soul of every Pakistani— man in a street to a man in the cabinet. Modi's government must realize that its chauvinist and hawkish policy approach towards Pakistan is a major stumbling block in the way of regional peace.

Third: The most gigantic and tortuous challenge to the foreign policy of Pakistan is the issue of Afghanistan and internal war against terror. In the war against terrorism launched by America against invisible enemy put Pakistan on the epicenter of the war. The Ghani Afghan government must respect Pakistan sovereignty and it must refrain from making a centrifugal policy paradigm in the region with the help of India's Modi. The US, Afghanistan, and Pakistan must mutually resolve the critical challenges in Afghanistan, but the Ghani government has to be cognizant of the internal Afghan problems that include widespread violence, deep poverty, unsettled border tensions, dirty nuclear devices used by the Afghans, drug trafficking, and poor governance. Are not both Afghanistan and Pakistan facing terrorism within their respective territories?

Both Kabul and Islamabad must work out a strategy for bilateral border management. We have to convince the Ghani government that a peace castrated Afghanistan is strategically beneficial for both the US and India but not vice versa. Washington's major interest to prolong the Afghan crisis lies in justifying its military presence in Afghanistan. The Pakistan army chief Gen Qamar Bajwa took right initiative to visit Kabul and sorted out many things.

Fourth: Our Mideast policy: our seamless cold war with Tehran is deeply rooted in Pakistan's engagement with Saudi- led Islamic Military Alliance (IMA), mostly comprising a Sunni world. Here, Islamabad must address the Iranian concerns about the IMA. Becoming a part of an alliance which is largely seeking to "isolate" Iran, makes Pakistani position skeptic for the Iranians. While learning from our mistakes of the past, we can no more be a proxy to the Middle eastern politics. Pragmatically, Riyadh and Islamabad must try to convince Iran via OIC forum to join the IMA.

Needless to say, we must shrug off this thinking of decrepitude that our economic dependency prevents us from making an independent foreign policy. Our national resolve can be the best defence against our cliché of foreign dependency. Therefore, we need to constitute a cohesive policy via rational and systematic institutional approaches thereof establishing a public policy think tank on foreign policy. For years and years, Pakistan has been pursuing a policy in the region—ordained by a superpower who shrewdly used us. Now our survival lies in an independent policy thinking.

— The writer, an independent 'IR' researcher-cum-analyst based in Karachi, is a member of European Consortium for Political Research Standing Group on IR, Critical Peace & Conflict Studies.

Email:rizvipeaceresearcher@gmail.com

Source: <http://pakobserver.net/foreign-policy-indoctrination-challenges/>

## Positive Turn in Pak-US Ties | Editorial

It is satisfying that Pakistan-US relations are once again on the positive trajectory, thanks to meaningful engagement between the two countries at different levels. Following a substantive meeting of Prime Minister Shahid Khaqan Abbasi with US Vice President Mike Pence on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly session in New York where two sides agreed to continue engagement and consultations, Foreign Minister Khawaja Muhammad Asif and his American counterpart Rex Tillerson had an in-depth exchange of view on different aspects of the bilateral relationship and reached a level of understanding to bridge differences and forge ties.

Pakistan-US relations were on tenterhooks ever since announcement of Afghanistan and South Asia strategy by American President Donald Trump, which created strong resentment in Islamabad that the United States was unfairly treating Pakistan despite its enormous sacrifices and contribution in the war against terror and also that India was being showered undue favours especially in the context of Afghanistan and also despite massive human rights violations in Occupied Kashmir by Indian security forces. Khawaja Asif boldly and frankly conveyed Pakistani concerns and apprehensions to the other side and the response was quite encouraging. That the Foreign Minister was able to put across Pakistan's point of view in a convincing manner was vindicated by the fact that the US agreed to assuage its concerns. More importantly, the US Secretary of State argued that Pak-US relationship is not just about Afghanistan but also about the importance of Pakistan. The US desire that the two sides should work very hard at all levels, from the State Department to the Defence Department to intelligence services, as well as economic, commerce opportunities is a clear indication that Washington wants to have a broad-based relationship with Pakistan. This is the only option for the two countries as none of them can advance their national goals and interests especially in this part of the region without a strong partnership. However, we may point out that if the United States sincerely believes in what Rex Tillerson conveyed to Khawaja Asif, it should immediately discard the policy of 'sticks' as reflected in stoppage of committed aid, reimbursement of expenditure on war on terror and drone strikes inside Pakistan. Pakistan would get a better deal if there is cohesion among institutions at home as even Tillerson had to refer to an instable govt in Islamabad and it is therefore imperative that all semblance of institutional clash should come to an end at the earliest.

Source: <http://pakobserver.net/positive-turn-pak-us-ties/>

## NSG Prospects for Pakistan By Abid Hussain

THE Nuclear Group met for the first time in November 1975 in London, and is thus popularly referred to as the “London Club”. Currently there are 48 Participating Governments (PGs) of the NSG. The 27th annual plenary Meeting of the Nuclear Suppliers Group was held in Bern on June 22-23 under the chairmanship of Benno Laggner of Switzerland. The NSG PGs called upon all States to be vigilant and to ensure Effective implementation of all relevant Security Council resolutions and objectives of the Nuclear Suppliers Group. Nuclear Suppliers Group’s plenary meeting joined together all Nuclear Weapon states to share their responsible approach for nuclear exports by adhering to the Nuclear Suppliers Group guidelines. At the Berne general meeting, member States of the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG) reaffirmed its full support for the NPT regime. In the plenary meeting following issues were discussed.

The participants governments also discussed the membership of Indian in NSG by viewing the 2008 statement on Civil Nuclear Cooperation, which needs to be more furnished in upcoming informal meeting in November 2017. Discussed the issue of “Technical, Legal and Political Aspects of the Participation of non-NPT States in the NSG.” an informal meeting in November 2017 will further elaborate the issue of Non-NPT members. The issue of Pakistan and Indian was taken up during the meeting and participating governments agreed to continue deliberations on the matter, no formal decision was taken on granting membership to either Islamabad or New Delhi. The NSG is expected to convene for an informal meeting in Vienna in November this year which will further benchmark the implication for Non-NPT states by joining NSG. A key member of the NSG China is against the India to become a member of NSG as India is not qualified its membership. on the basis of NSG principles India is not signatory to the NPT.

Pakistan’s engagement with NSG predates 2003 and since 2011 concerted efforts are aimed at NSG membership, and outreach meetings with NSG were arranged in 2011 (Vienna), 2013 (Ankara), 2015 (Vienna). The United States calls for membership in India on the grounds that it will ensure energy security for India as well as job creation, but is not willing to accept the same logic for Pakistan, although the country is experiencing the worst kind of energy crisis for a long time. The United States has always supported India in the nuclear technology and seeking membership for the New Delhi Group. Granting concessions. Surpassing



the strategic stability in the region India expanded its capacity to produce fissile material for military use only. Pakistan is currently facing a power crisis and further development of nuclear energy can help bring the country out of this situation.

Like other developing nation, Pakistan is interested in the use of peaceful nuclear technology for energy purposes and has always supported a non-discriminatory criteria – based approach for the entry of non-NPT states into the NSG for peaceful international nuclear trade .Pakistan wants to see the NSG as a credible and rule-based group rather than a cartel driven by commercial and political interests. This reflects that Pakistan cannot get a simultaneous entry into the NSG with India. Other Pakistani experts believe that Pakistan’s civilian nuclear program already separates from its military, and Pakistan has no intention of mixing it. Furthermore, as the world turns away from fossil fuels as a source of energy, Pakistan also needs to switch to environmentally cleaner sources of energy. We hope that Pakistan will continue its efforts to harmonize its approach with other like-minded countries on the question of the membership of the Nuclear Suppliers Group so that there will be no special treatment in India in the future that could endanger the Pakistan’s interests.

Washington’s discriminatory policies towards Islamabad are reflected in the way it continues to oppose Pakistan’s membership in the Nuclear Suppliers Group. It is also exerting pressure on Pakistan to reduce its production of fissile material. On the contrary, it actively supported India’s entry into the Nuclear Suppliers Group and turned a blind eye to its nuclear accumulation in its non-custodial facilities. If it is not for the Chinese opposition, India has been a member of the Nuclear Suppliers Group for a long time. This is recommended that The 48 PGs of The Nuclear Suppliers Group should adopt a non-discriminatory approach to the question of the membership of the Nuclear Suppliers Group of States that are not members of the NPT rather than establishing another country-specific exemption.

— The writer is a Library Officer at Institute of Strategic Studies, a think-tank based in Islamabad.

Source: <http://pakobserver.net/nsg-prospects-pakistan/>

# The Search For A New Foreign Policy By Dr Hasan Askari Rizvi

The recently-concluded foreign minister-level interaction between Pakistan and the United States showed that there are wide gaps in the foreign policy dispositions of the two countries pertaining mainly to Afghanistan, countering terrorism in the region and a framework for bilateral cooperation. The only redeeming feature of this dialogue is that despite their differences, Pakistan and the US agree to continue talking on bilateral and regional affairs because both need each other for different reasons.

The complex relationship with the US creates a challenging foreign policy task for Pakistan. It is a two-fold task of presenting Pakistan's perspectives in a manner that the international community views it as credible, as well as putting its act together in the foreign policy and security domains.

Pakistan's foreign policy bosses need prudence rather than emotionalism and dramatic exposition. While responding to the speech of Indian foreign minister in the UN General Assembly, Pakistan's chief diplomat at the UN showed the picture of an injured Palestinian woman, describing her as a Kashmiri woman that was a victim of the wrath of the Indian military. The speech made by Pakistan's foreign minister at the Asia Society, New York, showed that his mindset was shaped more by the polarised domestic politics rather than the imperatives of global and regional politics. He argued that Nawaz Sharif ran into political problems mainly for his advocacy for improving Pakistan's relations with India. These two events provided India with an opportunity to engage in propaganda against Pakistan's Kashmir policy and counter-terrorism approach.

Pakistan's foreign policy is too narrowly focused on the US and other Western countries. Therefore, whenever serious strains emerge in Pakistan-US relations, there is a sense of crisis in Islamabad. They talk a lot about freeing Pakistan of its dependence on the US and the West. However, only a few decisive and persistent efforts are made to create diplomatic space for cultivating active relations with other important global players and regional states. Pakistan's foreign policy has been more aligned with the West than pursuing an autonomous and independent course of action at the global and regional levels.

Our relations with the US began to show the latest signs of fatigue after a decade or so of friendly relations in President Barack Obama's last year in office. The economic and social development assistance under the Kerry-Lugar-Berman Law that amounts to over \$1 billion a year came to an end. The Obama administration either reduced the amount of the Coalition Support Fund to Pakistan or some assistance was made conditional to performance. Military sales and grants began to be reduced.

The current US President, Donald Trump, was quite categorical in his criticism of Pakistan when he announced a new Afghan policy on August 21, 2017. He accused Pakistan of harbouring the terrorists that killed Americans in Afghanistan and that the US had given "billions and billions" of dollars to Pakistan but the latter provided a haven to terrorists. The public denunciation of Pakistan brought this relationship to a new low point. Since October 2001, it may be pointed out, US assistance to Pakistan amounted to a little over \$33 billion in all categories. Almost one-third of it was the reimbursement of what Pakistan had spent for providing services and support work to the US forces in Afghanistan.

The meeting between Pakistan's Prime Minister and the US vice-president on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly meeting in September 2017 resulted in a decision to hold talks on the overall relationship between the two countries. However, there was no bridging of the differences between the two countries on how to address terrorism-related issues in the region.

Only four countries made a public statement of support for Pakistan after President Trump's public denunciation of Pakistan. These were China, Russia, Iran and Turkey. China surprised many countries because its comments on President Trump's statement were issued even before Pakistan's Foreign Office gave its response.

Pakistan is now pursuing a two-track policy of reactivating the relationship with the US, and seeking new avenues of cooperation with other countries. When it comes to exploring new avenues of diplomacy and economic relations, Pakistan's foreign policy bosses are strong in issuing statements than taking concrete and result-oriented actions. The only exception is China with whom Pakistan's relations continue to expand in all domains of mutual interest. The main initiative is coming from China.

Pakistan must make use of the new diplomatic opportunities that are knocking at its door. Russia has been expressing strong interest in upgrading its relations with Pakistan for the last couple of years. The Pakistani government has also responded positively. However, trade and economic relations have not improved much from what these were four years ago. Some strides have been made in security matters. The special forces of Russia and Pakistan had two military exercises for sharing experience in countering terrorism in the last one year. Russia has supplied MI-35 helicopters and support material to Pakistan about two months ago. This is a good opening for Pakistan but as long trade and economic relations do not improve the Pakistan-Russia relations will move on a slow pace.

Iran is another important opening. However, this continues to be a problematic relationship and mutual distrust adversely affects this relationship. The Iranian offer of supply of gas and electricity to Pakistan is not expected to materialise soon. Pakistan is more interested in obtaining these two types energy from Central Asia and the Gulf region.

Pakistan needs to pay attention to expanding its economic relations and trade with the states of Africa and the Middle East, and it should make full use of the trading concession that the European Union has given to Pakistan. Above all, a high priority should be assigned to eliminating the sources of extremism and terrorism in Pakistan.

Pakistan's civilian and military leadership must appear to be working together with mutual trust in all respects for coping with foreign policy challenges and take courageous initiatives to create a favourable diplomatic space.

Published in The Express Tribune, October 8th, 2017.

Source: <https://tribune.com.pk/story/1525623/search-new-foreign-policy/>

# Improving Pak-Iran Relations: A Game Changer By Sheraz Zaka

There was a time when the relations between Iran and Pakistan were cordial. In 1947 Iran was the first country to recognize Pakistan as an independent country. King Raza Shah Pahlavi was the first foreign leading dignitary to pay a state visit to Pakistan. Both countries were members of SEATO. The cultural links between both the countries were also quite strong. This eventually led to the formation of RCD (Regional Cooperation Development). In 1979 Pakistan was the first country to give recognition to the revolutionary regime of Ayatollah Khomeini after the Shah's regime was brought to an end. But with the passage of time, relations between both countries soured.

However in 2017, both states were brought closer as a result of Donald Trump's shenanigans. Trump thinks that by pressurizing Pakistan with his do-more demands in Afghanistan, he will be able to win the fight against the Afghan Taliban. On 21 August, he delivered a speech in which he employed particularly aggressive rhetoric against Pakistan. He did not consider that even according to conservative estimates, Pakistan has lost tens of thousands of lives fighting against terrorism. At his UNGA speech on Iran, Trump called the nuclear deal with Iran "one of the worst and most one-sided transactions the United States has ever entered into" and signalled that America may soon pull out of the deal. This is despite the fact that the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and European Union (EU) are in favour of concluding an agreement on nuclear energy with Iran.

Over the past few years there has been a debate in Pakistan that due to the increasing US pressure on Pakistan, it would be prudent to develop friendly ties with other countries while also keeping geopolitical realities in consideration. The country has already made a massive diplomatic shift towards Beijing and Moscow. Improving relations with Iran can also be of great strategic importance for us.

Over the past few years, it was seen that Iran and India were developing friendly ties but that ended when India voted against Iran in the IAEA as a result of US pressure. Meanwhile, diplomatic relations between India and Israel are improving. Similarly, once Trump took oath as president, relations between Iran and the US became tenser. Iran's influence in Syria, Lebanon, Yemen and Bahrain has

already been called very dangerous by the current US regime. The progress made by former President Barrack Obama in concluding an agreement with Iran on nuclear power has been greatly nullified and undermined by Trump.

This gives Pakistan and Iran an opportunity to form a strong bond and cooperate on various issues, especially energy. Iran is rich in oil and gas reserves and when the Iran-Pakistan gas pipeline is eventually completed, Pakistan would be enabled to produce electricity at low tariffs. This would also benefit China if the pipeline can also make its way to Xinjiang. Diplomatic hostilities from the US have already bought the two countries closer together than they have been in decades. Balochistan is also a factor here, since both the countries' geopolitical rivals wouldn't want peace in Balochistan. Therefore, cooperation between Pakistan and Iran is also highly important if the situation in Balochistan is to be improved.

This cooperation between both states can be two-fold: one is the implementation of border controls and the other is on keeping checks and balances on the smuggling of narcotics. In this respect both countries' intelligence agencies should engage in information-sharing regularly in order to clamp down on such illegal activities.

It should not be forgotten that during 1990s both the countries had developed differences on the Afghan-policy issue, which affected relations between them after the government of Pakistan recognized the Taliban's government. At present, Iran's government is of the view that the volatile situation in Afghanistan cannot be improved unless or until the Taliban are made a part of the political process as 45 percent of Afghanistan is controlled by the Taliban. It is a reality that without engaging the Taliban politically, the Afghanistan cannot be resolved. Both Pakistan and Iran have to play an instrumental role in this regard.

Over the past few years, it was seen that Iran and India were developing friendly ties but that ended when India voted against Iran in the IAEA as a result of US pressure. In return India got a nuclear agreement from the US. As a result, Iran learnt that India is not a reliable partner and it also knows that the present Indian government is no friend of the Muslim community. This was an eye-opener for both the Iran and Pakistan. Meanwhile, diplomatic relations between India and Israel are improving.

Recent statements from Iran's foreign ministry in favour of Pakistan regarding Kashmir should be welcomed. With the changing geo-strategic scenario it has become vital for both states to bring their relationship closer to what they were in the 1960s as it would be beneficial for people on both sides. This could also be an instrumental factor in uniting Islamic world

The writer is a practicing lawyer and is working as a partner in Zaka and Zaka Law Associates dealing with constitutional and commercial litigation matters. He can be contacted at [sheraz.zaka@gmail.com](mailto:sheraz.zaka@gmail.com)

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Source: <http://dailytimes.com.pk/opinion/08-Oct-17/improving-pak-iran-relations-a-game-changer>'

# The New World Order And Pakistan By Shahzaib Khan

Rarely, in modern history and even less so otherwise, have international relations experienced such fluidity and tumultuousness as is seen today. For the most part, alliances were carried on from one generation to the other, from one war to the other and from one era to the next. Whether it was the pre-war world of international relations, or the post-war era of the Cold War, alliances across the spectrum of international relations were significantly defined, they seemed to have a more evolutionary nature rather than revolutionary.

Not anymore.

Recently, the Saudi monarch paid a visit to Moscow. It was the first-ever visit by a Saudi king to the Russian capital. This is interesting because Russia and Saudi Arabia have always had reasons to get to know each other better. Both of them are significant oil producers and are part of a select group of countries that exert huge influence over the world economy through oil production. The two countries share regional interests, in that their geopolitical situation is influenced by a mutually interesting region. And of course, there are a number of other reasons why two such significant countries would cooperate to manage their shared interests.

This hasn't been the case simply because the two countries have often found themselves on opposing sides of the previously well-defined groups of global alliances. The Saudis have had a longstanding and significant alliance with the US, the significance of it being such that too often the Saudis have been predisposed to an impossibility of cooperating on significant global issues with the Russians, considering their alliance with the Americans. What prompts, then, the Saudi King's visit to Moscow?

The old guard of international relations has retired. International relations as they existed for decades if not centuries have ceased to exist. Today, a more dynamic form of international relations rises, one that isn't pre-disposed to the restrictions that accompany a binary view of international relations. In simpler words, alliances



and enmities, aren't those anymore, they are something much more fluid, much more energetic.

For the longest time, a most staunch demand of the Saudis, considering that they had a significant interest in the Syrian conflict and its impact, was that the Syrian president be removed as a player in any possible post-war future for Syria. This was in stark contrast to the Russian position on the matter, Russia being allied to Iran, a regional rival of Saudi Arabia.

However, when King Salman met President Putin in Moscow, the issue didn't seem to trouble what looks like the beginning of a significant relationship. This is because matters other than that of disagreements were discussed, the two sides realising the need to widen their relationship. And so, a single meeting has discontinued what is an eternity of an estranged relationship. It's not just a drastic change for the Russians or the Saudis, but for the world, with foreign policy analysts across the world scrambling to determine the possible impacts of such a groundbreaking event. It's not just the Saudis or the Russians that are indulging in this new brand of international relations.

International relations today then are inclined to be revolutionary instead of evolutionary. They are characterised by unpredictable tectonic shifts instead of predict slow-paced diplomatic movements. The Turks find themselves in new meaningful relationships with the Iranians and Russians, both not natural allies of the Turks for a long time. At the same time, Turkey and the US, longtime allies and Nato members recently decided to stop the issuance of visas to each other's citizens. Iran fought a decade-long, incredibly bloody war with Iraq just a couple of decades ago. And while the memories of the war haven't even past a generation, the two neighbours seemed to be finding common ground on more and more things, most recently, the fate of the Kurds. These aren't temporary fluctuations in an otherwise stable order, but the revolutionising of the order itself.

This dynamic new brand of international relations finds its purpose in settling matters in relationships that aren't binary. These relationships are much more complex. With the advent of aggressive globalisation, increased layers have been added to what were previously one-dimensional relationships. Diplomats now have to sift between various possible and existing layers of a particular relationship which include economic, political, social, regional and global considerations. As

diplomats adapt to the new order of international relations, they must learn to, as many diplomats across the world are doing today, alienate specific aspects of a relationship from others. This means ensuring mutual cooperation in the economic aspect of a relationship.

What does this mean for Pakistan?

Pakistan has been an active member at the forefront of what was the previously existing order of international relations, one with defined 'enmities' and 'friendships'. Quick to pick sides, Pakistan has often found itself in highly opinionated positions when it came to conflicts between other countries. For this reason, Pakistan's foreign policy has been almost completely one-dimensional. Pakistani diplomats have characterised relationships in an arbitrary manner, where you are lifelong 'enemies' or 'friends' with a particular country. It now finds its friends or enemies behaving uncharacteristically as they adapt to the new ill-defined notions of alliances and conflicts. Allies of Pakistan don't feel that they can't be allied with enemies of Pakistan, and vice versa. While some consider this to be a less 'honourable', selfish form of international relations based on self-interest and no conception of good or bad, one begs the question if international relations are meant to be anything but self-serving and selfish. It's simply the case that international relations have evolved to a point perhaps where they don't feel the need to don the false cloaks of morality or altruism and just present themselves in their inherently, purely, utilitarian nature. International relations hardly ever stood for 'good' in the world, more so perhaps to the contrary.

Pakistan, therefore, faces an urgent need to completely revise its idea of international relations. This means re-characterising relationships not with the broad strokes of 'enemy' or 'friend', but with the articulate and delicate distinctions of completely separable interests over which Pakistan agrees or disagrees with the other country. It means not viewing international relations through the arbitrary lens that was a remnant of a once uni-polar world, and identifying and exploring new avenues of regional and global cooperation. It means forging new alliances and engaging old enemies.

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Source: <https://tribune.com.pk/story/1528877/new-world-order-pakistan/>

# The Crisis of Pakistani Democracy By Rasul Bakhsh Rais

Any democratic rule merely resting on the procedure of elections and winning a comfortable number of seats to form a government may not remain legitimate or provide political stability to a country. The lesson we can learn from the development of democracy in other countries is that there are certain prerequisites, which are social-structural, institutional and cultural which make consolidation and growth of democracy possible. It is the absence of some of these necessary requirements due to which we see a consistent historical pattern of conflictive civil-military relations, confrontation among the political forces to make the system collapse and persistent cycles of instability in the country. The contemporary political scene of Pakistan symbolises a much deeper crisis of democracy more than the individuals, institutional imbalance and the courts exerting their constitutional power.

What are these necessary elements that are absent or weak in Pakistani democracy? For brevity of space, let us consider only three most important requirements. First is a democratic leadership that is intellectually rooted in democratic philosophy and embraces its foundational values, norms and attitudes. In countries like ours, there is hardly any meaningful debate or even basic education about what democratic philosophy or its values are. In this philosophy, the right to govern belongs to people which the elected representatives exercise as a matter of delegated trust and only in support of public interest. The understanding of 'right to rule' is perverted and limited to seeking votes, getting elected and forming governments. These are basic and procedural matters to transfer right-to-rule from people to the representatives.

Getting elected and assuming public offices imposes obligation of empowering people through education, good governance and economic welfare — the most important part of the social contract. Never in history, have the representative governments in Pakistan honoured their part of the contract with the spirit and commitment that democratic philosophy would require one to do. The reason is that ruling classes in feudal societies use democratic procedures to legitimise their traditional social power. They feel insecure about the spread of true democracy,

as it would empower lower and middle classes that might successfully challenge their power.

The ruling groups have formed cliques, terming them political parties that a few individuals dominate and maintain a dynastic control. The social structures of the country being predominantly feudalistic in orientation have sustained a class of leaders from members of the assemblies to the cabinet and highest offices that are part of the dynastic politics. The democratic competition remains confined only to members of that social class. The political contest is theoretically opened but practically closed to other classes. This demonstrates the fact that true democracy from one social class to another has yet to take place. Compared to our country, many other parties, leaders of other countries, like Prime Minister Narendra Modi have emerged in India that have successfully challenged and replaced the conventional ruling groups.

Unlike many other transitional democracies, the political culture of the ruling classes of Pakistan has remained authoritarian, class based and discriminatory. Their style of governance favours the privileged, protects privileges and runs on patronage. They use public funds from running commercials to announcing inauguration of development projects to even some ordinary achievements to employment in public sector along with administrative interventions to garner and maintain a support base. This is pure politics at public expense. This has generated discontent and low ownership of democracy among the general masses. That is the reason why the ruling groups when thrown out of power unconstitutionally find little sympathy or support.

Finally, the present class of 'democratic' leadership that has flourished on corruption and patronage politics is not willing to embrace the rule of law and accountability so easily without which 'democracy' is bound to run into trouble.

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Source: <https://tribune.com.pk/story/1527835/crisis-pakistani-democracy/>

# Indo-US Nexus 'A Threat to Pak Security, CPEC'

## By Maqbool Malik

Islamabad – The deepening Indo-US nexus is posing new challenges to Pakistan's national security and a threat to the multi-billion dollars China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) project which Beijing and Islamabad consider as a game-changer.

India is opening up its market to the US in lieu of high tech weaponry which Pakistan says would adversely affect the strategic balance in the region and the most serious concern to Islamabad is the threat of fourth and fifth generation warfare that is 'non-kinetic' warfare from India aiming at destabilizing Pakistan.

It was out of these challenges that Pakistan armed forces had taken the responsibility of securing the CPEC project.

The CPEC has pushed New Delhi and Washington to come closer and that is why the US is also now speaking the language of India about the multi-billion dollars project.

Analysts see the recent statement of US Secretary of Defence James Mattis about the CPEC project, which essentially aims at the uplifting economic plight of the people of various regions, in connecting with the changing scenario in the region.

The analysts viewing the CPEC project of strategic nature concede that India and the US believe that Pakistan has crossed the red line, therefore, it should be destabilized and isolated. What is that red line which they think Pakistan had crossed by contributing to the China-funded CPEC?

Background discussions with defence and security experts revealed that the US wanted to contain growing influence of China, but Pakistan by giving China access to Arabian Sea through its deep-sea Gwadar port has annoyed not only the US but also India and that is why both are trying to forge a strategic partnership.

Leading defence analyst Lt-Genl (ret'd) Talat Masood agreed that as a consequence of the CPEC, there are new challenges to Pakistan's national

security. He viewed the Indo-US closeness as the main challenge, and hoped that Pakistan was taking appropriate measures to balance the situation.

He was of the view that India's unabated attempts to destabilize Pakistan through dissident elements in Balochistan and Sindh as part of its fourth generation warfare strategy is a serious threat to Pakistan's national security.

Gen Masood said that since Pakistan has been successfully countering India's conventional warfare strategy, India has come up with the fourth generation warfare strategy, going beyond the conventional or kinetic warfare.

Pakistan and China on their parts are also taking appropriate steps to address new challenges to Pakistan's national security in the wake of the CPEC. Some analysts believed that in view of the new scenario, when India has joined hands with the US against Pakistan and China, Pakistan needs to revisit its diplomacy.

Renowned defence analysts Senator Lt-Gen (ret'd) Abdul Qayyum also called for reinvigorated diplomacy by Pakistan to address the new challenges. He supported Pakistan's engagement with the US as a positive development.

He also called for deepening of Pakistan's diplomatic relations with China, Russia, and D-8 member countries to balance out the situation. He also called for highlighting human rights violations in the Indian occupied Kashmir.

Gen Qayyum was clear about India's design in Pakistan and its attempts against the CPEC. "The arrest of a senior officer of the Indian intelligence agency RAW from Balochistan is an undeniable proof of India's unabated attempts in destabilizing Pakistan", Senator Qayyum said.

This news was published in The Nation newspaper

Source: <http://nation.com.pk/national/23-Oct-2017/indo-us-nexus-a-threat-to-pak-security-cpec>

## Population Crisis | Editorial

With the census raw data was finally released, the one glaring fact that shone through was that Pakistan's population growth has not fallen despite this being a stated priority. The country's total population has grown beyond 207 million, with population growth remaining above two percent per year. The crisis is obvious in both the short and long terms for the resource-scarce country. One of the biggest factors for the prediction that Pakistan will be water-stressed by 2030 is continued population growth. Soon enough, the country will be unable to maintain self-reliance on major food items. While one would hope that economic growth and agricultural development will be able to manage any effects of the population boom, we can be certain that planning is not up to the mark due to the agriculture sector in crisis and slow job growth, especially for young people. In this context, the UN Population Fund report for 2017 has some alarming numbers for Pakistan. The one that stands out is that there are two million unintended pregnancies per year in the country. This means that, on average, almost two million more children are born in Pakistan than their families had planned for.

The failure to put food on the table in such families is not unexpected. The problem is the absence of access to reproductive health services, including family planning, for the poorest women. This makes the challenge of eliminating poverty even starker. Inequality in economic wealth also becomes the defining reason for unequal access to reproductive health services. Not only do unintended pregnancies cause an economic burden for the families, they render many working women unable to contribute to the economy. The additional cost to bear is the loss of financial independence for these women. Moreover, many of these women might not have access to doctors or midwives during childbirth, which poses a danger to their lives. The contrast in figures between the developed world and Pakistan is alarming. One in 98 women who give birth in Pakistan dies during the pregnancy. This is not a figure that should be ignored. But we know that women's health remains a low priority for the government given how poorly Lady Health Workers have been treated over the last decade. The programme, with all its limits, has been important in improving women's access to basic care – but it has found itself floundering between the centre and the provinces with no one really wanting to shoulder the financial burden. Population control must be a priority for the government. It is not difficult to manage but there is a clear absence of will. It is time to change that attitude.

Source: <https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/239090-Population-crisis>



## Major Energy Policies of Pakistan (1987-2013) By Dr. Asia Mukhtar

Policies and plans are the outcomes of input process in any political system. Well-conceived public policies are the reflection of accurately assessed and articulated public demands.

In recent times, energy policies have got primacy, and economic sufficiency has become synonymous to the energy sufficiency.

Prevailing oil politics and subsequent strategic and political activity is the evidence of this very fact.

As the growing industrialization has exhausted the energy resources, the competition for the availability of energy resources has become a valid point of global power politics.

The direction of energy policies in the developed and lesser-developed world is quite different.

The developed world is not only occupied with the creation of alternative energy base but also it is exerting for the reservation of conventional energy resources around the world while developing world is still struggling for the acquisition of workable and affordable energy mix.

These nations can be called energy insecure nations.

The position of their energy production reflects their economic growth and their position on Human Development Index.

Gross National Income is the significant measuring unit of HDI.

As far as GNI of Pakistan is concerned, it is going down significantly and not increasing as compared to its population and growing industrial demands.

Apart from many other reasons the ongoing energy crisis can be presented as significant evidence of the very fact.

Energy sector cannot be revamped overnight.

It needs proper assessment, vision, and strong planning.

Unless a well thought out plan is put into execution on a suitable time, no benefit can be yielded.

The decade of the 80s was such suitable time for Energy sector planning.

At that time the construction of one mega water storage dam should have been initiated.

A dam takes a considerable time for its feasibility, planning, and construction. World Bank had conducted a study in 1983 on the Kalabagh Dam project, and the panel was comprised of Mr.

Pierre Londe (France), Dr.

G.

Lombardi (Switzerland), Dr.

James I.

Sherard, Mr.

John Parmakian and Mr.

John Lowe (USA) and Dr.

Klaus W.

John (Germany).

These experts had consensus over the construction of mega storage dam for Pakistan.

If there had been the same kind of agreement of the stakeholders, there would have been whole different energy scenario in Pakistan.

At that particular time, the Government offered a very feasible and favorable energy policy to the private sector.

This was a policy turn from well-assessed hydropower to the thermal power generation by the private sector.

The government offered 'Build, Own and Operate', (famously called BOO), policy to the private sector for the energy generation.

It was a public-private partnership (PPP) in the energy sector.

There are various models of public-private partnerships, in the BOO model projects are made and run with the help of government, but they are not transferred to the government at any stage.

In 1987 the GOP made this generous offer.

The government established Private Sector Energy Fund, and USAID, World Bank, Governments of Italy, France and Nordic Investment Bank were called for funding.

National Development Finance Corporation was established to monitor all financial matters on behalf of the government.

All commercial securities were provided and guaranteed to the lenders.

Private Power Cell was established to facilitate the entire process. HUBCO is the milestone of these policies.

Power policy of 1994 further enhanced these facilities and incentives.

The investors were given Power Purchase Agreement, Fuel Supply Agreement, and a Bulk Power Tariff.

These facilities were so lucrative that private investors took it as a golden investment opportunity.

The policy, in future, proved to be a fatal trap that has affected the entire nation.

The government took responsibility of the arrangement of fuel to these private sector power generation companies.

The government, being the sole purchaser of their product, also guaranteed to purchase electricity at a fair price.

These companies were permitted to consider their affordability while constructing their energy production units.

Consequently, transmission and dispatch process from the production unit to the main power grid causes heavy losses to the government.

Provision of long-distance transmission lines caused severe line losses too.

Moreover, the government has taken on itself to balance the currency rates fluctuations.

In 1995 Pakistani state offer private partnership in hydropower projects as well.

New Bong Hydro Power Project is the only commissioned project in this regard.

Before going further, it would be appropriate to deduce that these quick measures to cope with the rapidly emerging energy requirements turned out to be a massive liability for the government.

Power Policy of 2002 is the reflection of this very realization on the part of the state. All extraordinary incentives like Fuel Supply Agreement, liberty of site selection and upfront tariff, restrictions on fuel selection for the power generation and indexation of US CPI to equity were removed.

Important to note is the fact that all these policies, in the decade of 90s, were devised through a democratic policy process under the provisions of the Constitution.

While post-90s era has again seen the dictatorship oriented policy process where real public participation and consultation process is weak.

Under Prime Minister Mr.

Shaukat Aziz, more privatization was preferred.

It was decided to produce electricity by the source of crude oil imported from Saudi Arabia.

Again, it was not a well-articulated and well-thought policy, which resulted in more dilapidated energy production scenario in the country.

Unbundling of WAPDA was another drastic step taken by the same administration. Since 1958, WAPDA was the fulcrum of all energy production activities in the country.

The decision of unbundling WAPDA was taken without devising equally effective alternatives.

At a time when there was dire need of strong energy base for the industrial development, a well coherent and coordinated institution was disintegrated.

The ill effects of this policy were felt severely when entire process of energy production, transmission and dispatch was disrupted.

It created quite a chaotic situation, which dismantled the further growth of energy sector in the right direction.

Before the Energy Policy of 2010-13, a National Conference was called in Islamabad by PPP administration, where experts were called to discuss the energy issue and some workable solutions.

This energy policy could not bear noticeable developments except government's decision of nationalization of the energy sector, which could also not materialized. Until present, it is worth noticing that government is trying to establish micro power generation projects, which are not effectively coping up the growing social and economic needs.

Since the mid-80s till present, the energy department has remained short of one well thought out, long-term and workable energy policy.

Such energy policy was needed that could reflect the resource index, environment and affordability factor collectively.

Not only the energy resources are not yielded fully, but also there have been massive gaps on managerial front.

On the political front, hydro-politics on both domestic and regional level is not tackled with vision and sagacity.

If the suggestions of experts would have been taken under consideration and right policies would have been implemented on the right time, there would have been a changed energy scenario.

The Author is currently teaching at the University of Punjab.

asiamukhtar@gmail.com

Source: <http://nation.com.pk/columns/24-Oct-2017/major-energy-policies-of-pakistan-1987-2013>

## Kashmir Talks | Editorial

For the past three years, the Narendra Modi government in India has dogmatically refused to negotiate with any party in Kashmir, be it separatist, nationalist or even relatively pro-Indian groups. At the same time, it has ramped up its already brutal occupation of Kashmir to new levels of cruelty. Then, suddenly, on Monday it appointed former Intelligence Bureau head Dineshwar Sharma as an interlocutor with the responsibility to consult all stakeholders in what Home Minister Rajnath Singh called “a sustained interaction and dialogue to understand the legitimate aspirations” of the Kashmiri people. That this came just a day before US Secretary of State Rex Tillerson visited India may have been a coincidence since the US has not put any pressure on India for its human rights abuses and did not even mention Kashmir during his trip.

The US, along with much of the international community, has given India a wide berth and even accepted its ludicrous framing of the occupation as being part of the fight against terrorism. When External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj referred to elements providing safe havens to terrorists in her joint press conference with Tillerson, she was trying to create a parallel between US accusations of Pakistan’s supposed patronage of the Afghan Taliban and the Haqqani Network and India’s belief that the indigenous liberation movement in Kashmir is directed by Pakistan. Still, to give an individual seeming freedom to hold talks without preconditions looked like a significant U-turn from the hardline Modi government. As is always the case with India when it comes to Kashmir, though, there may be less to see here than meets the eye. Senior Hurriyat Conference leader Maulvi Abbas Ansari immediately rejected the proposal since it did not include Pakistan, something the Hurriyat Conference has always maintained is necessary for a lasting solution. Other important Kashmiri leaders such as Syed Ali Geelani, Yasin Malik and Mirwaiz Umar Farooq are yet to weigh in – although they too have also called for Pakistan to be a part of talks before. Less than a genuine attempt to seek peace in Kashmir, this looks like a whitewashing attempt by Modi to disguise its crimes and pretend to be open to compromise.

Even establishment figures like Ghulam Nabi Azad, a Congress Party member who is a former chief minister of Occupied Kashmir, have said they doubt the intentions of the Modi government. That the prime minister refuses even to halt operations by security forces in Kashmir – another two people have been killed

this week – shows just how superficial his supposed commitment to peace is. India is yet to apologise for killing more than a thousand people since the murder of Burhan Wani last year. That it is refusing to consider engaging with Pakistan, despite its constant insistence that the Simla Agreement of 1972 restricts all diplomacy on Kashmir to bilateral negotiations, is further proof that this gambit is little more than a distraction. In that it is similar to what a previous BJP-led government under Atal Behari Vajpayee did when it appointed KC Pant as its Kashmir interlocutor. He was given a similarly wide berth but was thwarted by the centre's refusal to let up on its illegal occupation. For the idea of Modi the peacemaker to be anything other than a cruel joke he will have to do a lot more than just choose an envoy.

Source: <https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/240040-Kashmir-talks>

# Pak, US, India — Friends or Foe? By Aroma Shahid

Standing together against terrorism

US South Asia policy is an alarming indication of Pakistan's foreign relations becoming weaker in the region.

With Pakistan rejecting any blame for exporting terrorism, the US is romancing India as a sound partner in its 'war on terror' in Afghanistan, thus isolating Pakistan on a global front.

Pakistan's defensive strategy against allegations is failing to sustain its relations and the growing bond between US and India is forming the world's opinion of Pakistan as the state that lets terrorists run free on its ground.

The trio — US, India, and Afghanistan are developing a stern narrative against terrorists and it's reasonable for Pakistan to join them since it can't beat them.

Pakistan must take a pragmatic approach to empower its position in the region as a proactive entity against militancy inside its border and across the region.

"As worrying as Trump's South Asian policy is for Pakistan, there is no option for both countries but to continue engaging," said foreign policy expert Moeed Yusuf.

"US and Pakistan must find common ground in Afghanistan and work on policy development together," said Yusuf.

US Secretary of State Rex Tillerson while visiting Pakistan, India, and Afghanistan, promoted the objective to work together against terrorism and demanded cooperation from Pakistan.

Tillerson's visit can be summarised in three accounts — portraying Afghanistan as the sole victim of terrorism, empowering India as an ally, and blaming Pakistan as an enabler of terrorism.



Furthermore, Tillerson's remarks undermined Pakistan's efforts against terrorism and reiterated that the country must be more committed to its role against militancy.

"the US has not said anything new about Pakistan's struggle in the fight against terrorism," said analyst and senior journalist IA Rehman.

"In regards to Tillerson's visit, the growing US-India relations have irked Pakistan but we must realise that confrontation against the US while ignoring our own problems related to terrorism will not lead to solutions."

In response to US secretary of state's remarks, Foreign Minister Khawaja Asif highlighted security risks to Pakistan from India and Afghanistan and said that the US should allow its policymakers to frame its Afghan policy rather than failed army generals.

"The role of the US state department has minimised in generating a new policy as generals are given a higher priority in strategic development, ignoring the failures of the war in Afghanistan," said Qamar Cheema.

"Pakistan must also clear its policy on de-radicalisation and countermeasures against non-state actors so there is less international pressure on us to act with more determination," he added.

However, Pakistan is putting regional ties under risk by acting defensive rather than opting for counter-terrorism measures that serve national interests.

"US and Pakistan have diverging interests in Afghanistan but need to coordinate for regional stability," said Yusuf."

"The main question is how both countries propose to find a solution without the involvement of the other as they cannot work independently on the matter," said Yusuf.

Afghan President Ashraf Ghani recently said his country will not be a part of China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) unless Pakistan provides its trade access to India through its border.

The unreasonable demand by Afghan president shows serious neglect for Pakistan's security interests and brews more hostility in the region.

"It's debatable whether trades routes across the region through Pakistan pose a risk to the country's security," said Moeed Yusuf.

"Pakistan is at the position of benefitting most from regional integration through trade to ensure its economic progress," said Yusuf.

Putting aside its bilateral differences with India, Pakistan needs to establish itself as an active participant against militancy and improve its ties with the US by taking responsibility for domestic insurgency.

Moreover, countermeasures against local extremist elements will also benefit Pakistan in socio-economic development and stabilise socio-political crisis.

"US and India have a strategic partnership and Pakistan must not weigh itself in this equilibrium," said strategic analyst Qamar Cheema.

"The partnership between US and India is not to anger Pakistan or benefit Afghanistan but to enable its capability to engage in Asia Pacific."

The US and its allies have established a strong foothold in the region and Pakistan will benefit more if it acts in the interests of its neighbouring countries to ensure peace and stability inside and outside its borders.

Terrorism has crippled Pakistan but the world pictures it as choosing to remain ignorant while terrorists persistently operate and recruit in the land.

"The world needs to reconsider how Afghanistan benefits on banking on India as an active participant against terrorism and spiting Pakistan," said Yusuf.

“A change in policy is required where Afghanistan revalues Pakistan’s efforts and cooperation in fighting the war against militancy,” Yusuf added.

Without succumbing to pressure from US and India, Pakistan’s cooperation in developing Afghanistan policy will stop others from considering the country as an enabler of terrorism.

“Pakistan needs to reconsider its anger towards the US increasing its praise for India as a strong ally against terrorism,” said Yusuf.

To avoid isolation and benefit from economic developments, Pakistan must reevaluate its counter-terrorism policies and quit prolonging implementation of security policies.

Implementation of the National Action Plan (NAP) and forming further vigilant measures against radicalisation are the most viable options to improve Pakistan’s foreign relations and ensure economic progress.

Source: <https://www.pakistantoday.com.pk/2017/10/29/pak-us-india-friends-or-foe/>

## Reiteration of Cold Start Doctrine By Beenish altaf

THE 'cold start' mentality on part of Indian officials has kept its momentum persistent into its political sphere. The Indian military establishment, on several occasions, has highlighted their offensive military intentions against Pakistan. Recently, on the 85th anniversary of Indian Air Force on October 8, the international community came to hear another hawkish statement from the commander of the Indian Air Force, Air Chief Marshal Birender Singh Dhanoa. He claimed that Indian pilots have the capability to locate and eliminate nuclear and other strategic targets in Pakistan. He was speaking at the annual Air Force Day press conference on IAF response to Pakistan's store of tactical nuclear weapons.

On one hand, Indian Cold Start Doctrine provided the actual pathway to Pakistan to acquire short range missiles for ensuring its security and strategic stability in the region. On the other hand, IAF, Air Chief Marshal Dhanoa's said that IAF has the ability to locate, fix and strike and that is not only for tactical nuclear weapons but also for other targets across the border. Ironically this is not in response to Pakistan's battlefield nukes instead it a part of the confrontational confessions that Indian military sheer after every few days. Looking back, in 2004, 'the Cold Start doctrine was envisaged and soon the word was out that relying on the mobilization of smaller, more compact formation of conventional forces in a series of attack, India will invade and bleed Pakistan with the help of IAF. That is exactly the air marshal was hinting at.'

Nevertheless, the Indian air chief is not the only one to hurl such warnings and publicly acknowledge the existence of Cold Start doctrine (CSD). Gen. Bipin Rawat, Indian army commander-in-chief, blazed a similar conflagration previously by acknowledging that the Cold Start doctrine exists for conventional military operations in an interview on January 4, 2017 in the strategic community of India right after few days of his appointment as army chief. He was the first senior Indian official, military or civilian, to do so as previous all the Indian chiefs avoided using the term Cold Start and preferred calling it as a 'proactive strategy'.

On the global front, India's constant aggressive moves one after the other, gives appalling signals to the international community that the south Asia region is in a

state of permanent horrendous of regional conflicts. At the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Washington, the outgoing US Vice President Joe Biden expressed his concerns in a speech over the rise of nuclear weapons in Europe, east and especially south Asia. This could be related with reference to this official acknowledgment of Indian Cold Start Doctrine also to the mobilization of Indian battle forces to border line. As a result, the response from Pakistani side would also be in the same way to ensure its incessant sovereignty. This is the only way to impede the efforts to malign Islamabad.

The Indian leaders are simply belligerent in their policies and statements without keeping the facts into mind. Though it is impossible to carry any of such attack but even on factual terms, Indians' are bound not to hold such actions by the treaty back in 1988 between both South Asian nuclear rivals. It was a bilateral agreement between India and Pakistan on the non-nuclear aggression agreement, which is a bilateral and nuclear weapons control treaty between the two South Asian states, on the reduction (or limitation) of nuclear arms and pledged not to attack or assist foreign powers to attack on each other's nuclear installations and facilities. The treaty barred its signatories to carry out a surprise attack or to assist foreign power to attack on each other's nuclear installations and facilities. So, there is no question to notify the international community or anyone else know about what the IAF capabilities holds.

— The writer works for Strategic Vision Institute, a think-tank based in Islamabad.  
Email:beenishaltaf7@gmail.com

Source: <https://pakobserver.net/reiteration-cold-start-doctrine/>

# ECONOMY

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## Monetary Policy | Editorial

THE latest monetary policy statement from the State Bank underlines the areas of dynamism in the economy, while simultaneously pointing to the growing weakness on the external sector as a source of concern. It describes the macroeconomic environment as “conducive to growth” and points to favourable estimates of major crops, increasing private sector credit off take and “growing productive imports” as “solid gains for the real sector”. But alongside this expansion in the real sector, the challenges to its sustainability are also rising, the statement adds in the next line. It indicates the high-wire act that the State Bank is now performing to support real sector growth with dwindling foreign exchange reserves, and it is a matter of time before we discover which of these two will define the future trajectory of Pakistan’s economy.

History tells us that real sector growth in the context of falling reserves is a little like the music on the Titanic: it played on even as the ship sank. Nobody doubts that real sector growth is evident in the economy, though the composition of the imports can only partially be described as “healthy” or “productive”. The fact of the matter is, the economy is in the midst of a consumptive and construction boom while the two legs upon which it stands — fiscal and forex — are becoming increasingly wobbly. A government caught up in its legal and political entanglements is finding it increasingly hard to focus on the core problem, the current account deficit, and much of its time and energy is consumed ensuring the nascent power projects reach the start of commercial operations without suffering any further delays. The State Bank’s words of caution, that “an improvement in the country’s external account and its foreign exchange reserve relies upon timely realisation of official financial inflows along with thoughtful adoption of structural reforms to improve trade competitiveness in the medium term”, are probably going to be lost in the wind. Whatever “official financial inflows” are likely to materialise in the ongoing fiscal year will be debt creating, thereby simply putting the problem off by a few months rather than resolving it.

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# Socio-legal Imperatives for CPEC By Jahanzaib Durran

Most of the discussions about the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) to date have revolved around its socio-economic considerations. The government in power has seldom stated, and hardly ever discussed, the socio-legal challenges attached to the projects.

Pakistan is a major developing country in the region, and perhaps one of the ideal places for investment in the world due to its strategic location. Yet it is notoriously difficult to set up and operate businesses in Pakistan. Reason being, the Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) regime of the country appears complex since it lacks unified codification, systematic organisation of legal and regulatory framework and is diffused in the complex structure of economic and policy directives. Hence, if an investor lacks clarity about the legal regime of the host country, it would upset his entire business plan.

Therefore, one of the immediate steps of the government should be: to assemble all the legal and regulatory laws concerning FDI in one source, which should then be explained and illustrated in simple and clear language. Such a compendium should be translated into languages of countries we hope to attract the most investment from. This would provide a comprehensive guide to all the stakeholders, particularly foreign investors regarding the FDI regime.

Secondly, it is the time to revise Pakistan's overall approach towards Bilateral Investment Treaties (BITs). It has been seen in a number of studies that there has never been a consistent procedure behind formulating a BIT in Pakistan; successive governments have introduced their own set of policies, which have resulted in an unstable investment climate with adverse effects on FDI. In a number of international arbitration cases filed against the government of Pakistan, it has been witnessed that far too many protections were given away to investors at the expense of national sovereignty.

An especially egregious giveaway was not requiring these investors to exhaust domestic remedies before opting for international arbitration. Hence, putting a liability on the host state to incur the economic burden of international arbitration.

The reasons behind these discrepancies in executing BITs, if simply put, were lack of meaningful negotiations before signing BITs and little knowledge of the technical terms such as investment, expropriation, most-favoured-nation treatment, fair and equitable treatment, and, importantly, full protection and security, among others.

Therefore, it is important to have a sound understanding of the technicalities involved in negotiating an international investment treaty and a masterly competence over the jurisprudence of international investment law. This could be achieved if substantive law matters relating to investment protection are examined in the light of arbitral decisions. For this, a case-by-case analysis of important arbitral cases should be adopted along with factual circumstances behind those cases in which the particular issue was raised and that provided an arbitral dictum about investment protection clauses, through which the customary law was drawn. This methodology would pave the way towards Pakistan's own model BIT template and let investors know how Pakistan perceive investment protection.

Thirdly, policymakers should bear in mind that with large-scale foreign investment comes wide-ranging litigation as well. It would be hard for the judiciary in the current scenario to successfully tackle investment dispute matters concerning CPEC. The government needs to realise that due to severe overload the litigants' cases are already languishing in the courts. Hence, it's time to start focusing on the alternatives. Currently, 'arbitration' is considered a powerful dispute resolution alternative. Therefore, the importance of arbitration in commercial dispute matters should be highlighted and steps should be taken to revise domestic legislation to accommodate the proceedings of investment disputes at the arbitration centres.

For this purpose, the government should establish an Alternative Dispute Resolution Authority at the Gwadar free zone, for its geo-economical location; it can provide a spectacular venue for arbitration to both, local and international investors. Furthermore, this initiative can be a source of economic activity, with conference centres, hotels and local lawyers all set to benefit. For any country, a recognised arbitral centre is also a great show of 'soft power', helping to underline a broader message about political and legal stability and give comfort to foreign investors.

The authority should be fully autonomous under the Constitution, empowered to enact rules for its commercial matters, and has its separate and distinct arbitration



court system that should be specialised to deal with domestic and foreign investment disputes. It is not advisable to rely on our existing judicial system for the amicable solution of investment matters where the backlog of cases has reached to almost three million.

Further, the centre may draft arbitration rules under the Arbitration Act of 1940, but coming to grips with the international best practices, the parties should be given a choice to any other set of arbitration rules, which they may prefer such as UNICITRAL Model Law.

Fortunately, Pakistan has now transposed the United Nations Convention on the Recognition and Enforcement of Foreign Arbitral Awards, 1958 (New York Convention) into the domestic law — the Foreign Awards Act of 2011, hence the international awards will now be recognised and enforced in the state of Pakistan without any impediment; otherwise, it could have been a serious problem in enforcing arbitral awards in the absence of domestic legislation.

Lastly, the government should ensure financial transparency in foreign invested projects. A number of international initiatives have been taken to fight corruption and promote transparency. These range from the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development's (OECD) convention on bribery, to the recent EU Directives on Accounting and Transparency. The international community has come to realise that the epidemic of corruption and bribery cannot be tackled on the national level alone, but that rather international arrangement must be made to curb it. In this debate, the role of international NGOs and civil society has gained immense importance. The multi-stakeholder initiatives (MSI) are also introduced at the global level, which tend to bring civil society, government officials and the private sector under one roof to address complex development challenges and improve the management of public resources without usurping state's authority. One such MSI is, Global Initiative for Fiscal Transparency (GIFT) that is a network working to improve "fiscal transparency, citizen engagement, and accountability for the use of public funds," and establish legal frameworks that support public access to information.

Recently, the United Kingdom (UK) and Canada have introduced new laws that obligate large foreign enterprises incorporated in their jurisdictions to publicly disclose their financial reports at the end of the fiscal year. Similarly, Pakistan

should also make sure that the companies listed on the Pakistan Stock Exchange should become part of 'Publish What You Pay' campaign to diminish the likelihood of dodgy transactions and ensure the civil society's oversight on the terms of agreement involving billions of dollars.

It is recommended that Pakistan should join such MSIs to improve its standing at the global level. Moreover, strict anti-corruption measures should immediately be adopted before implementing foreign invested projects in the country. If aspects mentioned above are not catered, the benefits from CPEC will remain limited and increase in the foreign investment will rest in an unfulfilled dream.

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## SCO: Aims and Objectives By Baber Ali Bhatti

FOR the peace and harmony of Asia, China and Russia with their four central Asian Partners extended their arms and accepted India and Pakistan as the members of Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO). It was the 17th SCO summit that marked the entry of two major countries. Both countries pledged to adhere to SCO Charter that calls for security cooperation and fight against terrorism and violent extremism, besides envisaging multiple spheres of cooperation. Primary goals of SCO's are: making joint efforts to ensure peace and stability in the region; strengthening neighbourliness among its member states and promoting cooperation in different areas including politics, trade, economy, culture, research, technology, tourism and environmental protection.

SCO was also aimed to check the western interventions in heartland of Asia and curb the rise of militancy of all kinds. Some western analyst tagged the establishment of SCO as a counter-balance set-up for NATO. This perception was vitalized owing to doable position of Russia and China that they would not allow United State to intervene in the bordering areas by any means. SCO is also labelled as China oriented SCO. All in all, SCO is viable and influential forum in the region. With the SCO, India may aspire to join a key international high-table where it can bring forth matters of its concern, such as terrorism and trade.

Economic development has been prioritised by India and SCO can pave the way to achieve the economic objectives in shorter time. Besides, it will also provide better access to the central Asian region which is still untapped when it comes to minerals and coals. On the other hand, Pakistan may try and make it another forum to improve its reputation. Moreover, Pakistan can secure various gains on this table with the better operationalisation of CPEC. There is much more to be achieved at this forum for all member states.

However, there are certain reservations and observations when it comes to draw the future picture of SCO with inclusion of Pakistan and especially India. China is continued to engine the economic ventures with the support of Russia and other member states. In case, economic linkages among member compounds, China will be primary beneficiary of that linkage. Beijing is already following the well calculated strategies for its economic growth especially with Belt and Road plans in which all member states are encompassed with the exception of India.

India recently went through border skirmish with China which further strained the relations. China beefed up the boots near border as pre-emptive measures whereas India made the major deployment for its preparedness. Furthermore, China's spokesperson also signalled that regional countries should not linger for alliances to strain the regional environment with reference to Indo-Japan relationship. Sino-Indian strained ties may lure India to employ hostile stuff against China regardless of the fact that China has utmost influence over SCO.

On the other hand, from the last few years, India is utilising its influence and has activated its lobby in Washington to further undermine the fragile Pak-US ties by painting Pakistan as sheltering the militants. At a time, Indian planners are employing their moves discreetly to enshroud the on-going terror campaign with utmost cooperation of Afghan intelligence. India is likely to retain its manoeuvring against Pakistan by instrumental use of SCO.

India must revisit its policies and should not use this forum to focus on the bilateral disputes. Previously, India twisted the small neighbours' arms shamelessly to torpedo the SAARC summit which was scheduled to be held in Pakistan in last year. India should not repeat such episodes for smaller gains. Instead SCO should be utilised for regional gains and mitigate the animosity. Lately included members have deeply rooted hostilities. China is also seen as hostile state by India. Therefore, it might be challenging for SCO to manage the affairs of such two-pronged hostile triangle. However, both India and Pakistan need to contemplate about their commitment to the objectives and goals of the SCO.

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

Email: [live.baber@gmail.com](mailto:live.baber@gmail.com)

Source: <http://pakobserver.net/sco-aims-objectives/>

## World Bank Warning | Editorial

IN its South Asia Economic Focus report, World Bank has warned Pakistan that its external sector situation could become unsustainable due to lack of policy actions. The report claim, that Islamabad needs \$31 billion this year to meet foreign financial obligations, is contrary to the fact yet there is no doubt that the country is currently facing grave problems which can only be addressed through right kind of intervention in different sectors.

A year back the country was in a very comfortable position when reserves were not only sufficient to cover the gross external financing needs of the country but even the entire stock of portfolio investments but during the current fiscal year the reserves will be under lot of stress due to scheduled debt repayments which will create an external financing need – something which will not be easy to acquire from world lenders such as the IMF or the World Bank due to their tough conditions. Economic experts are also warning the government of serious economic crisis over the next few months if the government does not take important decisions with a view to improving the economy. Recently, Economic Coordination Committee of the Cabinet took a very important step by enhancing regulatory duty on around 297 items in a bid to discouraging the surge in the import bill and slashing it down by \$3 to \$ 5 billion. But we feel this will not be enough and more out of box solutions on emergency basis – the ones that reduce our dependence on foreign aid – will be required to fix the problems that are haunting the country. Decline in gross inflows will make repayments very difficult, which must be taken into account by officials of the Ministry of Finance and the State Bank. Often it has been seen that whenever government comes near to completion of its tenure, the problems start surfacing and ultimately the next government again has to knock at the doors of the lenders to address economic woes. For how long, the people of this country will continue to suffer due to myopic and worthless policies of our corrupt rulers to fix the problems. Time has surely come that a team of competent, loyal and honest economists is formed to pursue and sustain homegrown economic policies after taking on board all political parties, which is the only viable course left not only to improve the living standards of our people but to ensure ‘country’s sovereignty’.

Source: <http://pakobserver.net/world-bank-warning/>

# Poverty and Economic Policies By Khalid Bhatti

In 1992, the UN declared October 17 as the International Day to Eradicate Poverty. Since then, on this day governments around the world pledge to reduce poverty and eradicate extreme poverty. However, all the pledges, promises and slogans to end abject poverty have failed to improve the situation for nearly 1.70 billion people around the world who still live in poverty.

The real question is whether we can eradicate – or rather reduce – poverty without changing economic policies and redistribution of wealth. Capitalist ruling elites around the world have failed to address this acute problem, and poverty is a by-product of the existing social and economic system.

The system we have for producing and distributing wealth is capitalist in nature. It is organised in ways that allow a small elite to control most of the capital – factories, machinery, tools, land – used to produce wealth. This encourages the accumulation of wealth and income by the elite and regularly makes heroes of those who are most successful at it. It also leaves a relatively small portion of income and wealth to be divided among the rest of the population. With a majority of the people competing over what's left to them by the elite, it is inevitable that a substantial number of people are going to wind up on the short end – living in poverty or with the fear of it much of the time.

In part, then, poverty exists because the economic system is organised in ways that encourage the accumulation of wealth at one end and create conditions of scarcity that make poverty inevitable at the other. But the capitalist system generates poverty in other ways as well. In the drive for profit, for example, capitalism places a high value on competition and efficiency. This motivates companies and their managers to control costs by keeping wages as low as possible and replacing people with machines or replacing full-time workers with part-time workers. That makes it a rational choice to move jobs to regions or countries where labour is cheaper and workers are less likely to complain about poor working conditions, or where laws protecting the natural environment from industrial pollution or workers from injuries on the job are weak or unenforced.

Capitalism also encourages owners to shut down factories and invest money elsewhere in enterprises that offer a higher rate of return.

These kinds of decisions are a normal consequence of how capitalism operates as a system. But the decisions also have terrible effects on tens of millions of people and their families and communities. Even a full-time job is no guarantee of a decent living, which is why so many families depend on the earnings of two or more adults just to make ends meet. All of this is made possible by the simple fact that in a capitalist system most people neither own nor control any means of producing a living without working for someone else.

Clearly, patterns of widespread poverty are inevitable in an economic system that sets the terms for how wealth is produced and distributed. If we're interested in doing something about poverty itself – if we want a society largely free of impoverished citizens – then we'll have to do something about both the system people participate in and how they participate in it. But public debate about poverty and policies to deal with it focus almost entirely on the latter with almost nothing to say about the former. What generally passes for 'liberal' and 'conservative' approaches to poverty are, in fact, two variations on the same narrow theme of individualism.

It may mean that capitalism is in some ways incompatible with a just society in which the excessive well-being of some does not require the misery of so many others. It won't be easy to face up to such possibilities, but if we don't we will guarantee poverty its future and all the conflict and suffering that go with it.

Poverty kills people silently. Poor people die because they can't get food, shelter, healthcare. They can't spend money on safety and education. Low incomes force them to live in poverty.

It is not polite to talk about all this. We talk about the poverty rate or the poverty level or the poverty gap, but not about children catching fire and adults wasting away. We talk about economic development and markets and education, not the people who die each year coughing blood as tuberculosis takes over their body. They don't die from tuberculosis. They die because they have no awareness about it. They even die when the government provides them medicines. They die because they live in unhygienic conditions and can't afford decent food to survive.

It is easier to believe that poverty causes people to wear old clothes, live in small houses, or forego owning a television than it is to admit that people on the bottom of the socioeconomic ladder often die early as a result of that poverty.

Poverty doesn't just hurt your body, it also hurts your soul. Poverty kills dreams and murders hope. It squashes every last ounce of ambition; it impacts the old, but targets the young. It steals more than full bellies and healthy bodies; it suffocates the future and squanders potential.

The writer is a freelance journalist.

Source: <https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/238376-Poverty-and-economic-policies-Part-I>



# Let us go Back to Basics, not to IMF By M Ziauddin

Countries lacking in energy, technology and capital—the three essential ingredients needed to achieve a modicum of economic sovereignty and establish a social welfare state—like Pakistan does have either continued to suffer like we do from chronic under-development or have adopted innovative paths to break out of their respective economic stagnations.

The East Asian countries had readily and without question offered to become sweat shops for the US and European manufacturers. Using imported capital and technology from the US and Europe and putting to work locally generated subsidized power and cheap labour these poor East Asian countries became the Asian Tigers by the end of 1970s as they emerged into global export power houses.

India followed a highly restrictive import regime along with adhering to very high savings rates for almost 45 years while its economy expanded haltingly at a snail's pace producing for a market of a billion plus on the back of ever widening budgetary deficits in states. India, in fact had tried rather successfully to spend its way out of stagnation and at the same time because of its focused attention to the education sector, especially to education in physical sciences the country became one of world's top software exporters. Over the last ten years or so, its economy has been growing at an annual average of over 7%.

China on the other hand had remained confined within its bamboo curtain for more than 40 years following a rigid policy of looking after its people from cradle to grave providing them with only the barest minimum essentials by way of food, shelter and clothing while at same time it was manually creating a gigantic production power house generating assets worth trillions and savings worth billions.

One only hopes that Pakistan does not find itself going back to the IMF in the next six months or so, as is being predicted by independent economists. Instead, the country needs to prepare a policy blueprint to make the most of indigenous comparative advantages for enabling the national economy to come out of its

dependence, while at the same time developing into an essential clog of the interdependent world

None of these three regions had reached where they are today with the help of the institutions that created the so called Washington Consensus. The concept and name of the Washington Consensus summarizes commonly shared themes among policy advice by Washington-based institutions, such as the International Monetary Fund, World Bank, and U.S. Treasury Department, which were believed to be necessary for the recovery of countries in Latin America from the economic and financial crises of the 1980s.

The Washington consensus included ten broad sets of relatively specific policy recommendations: 1. Fiscal policy discipline, with avoidance of large fiscal deficits relative to GDP; 2. Redirection of public spending from subsidies (“especially indiscriminate subsidies”) toward broad-based provision of key pro-growth, pro-poor services like primary education, primary health care and infrastructure investment; 3. Tax reform, broadening the tax base and adopting moderate marginal tax rates; 4. Interest rates that are market determined and positive (but moderate) in real terms; 5. Competitive exchange rates; 6. Trade liberalization: liberalization of imports, with particular emphasis on elimination of quantitative restrictions (licensing, etc.); any trade protection to be provided by low and relatively uniform tariffs; 7. Liberalization of inward foreign direct investment; 8. Privatization of state enterprises; 9. Deregulation: abolition of regulations that impede market entry or restrict competition, except for those justified on safety, environmental and consumer protection grounds, and prudential oversight of financial institutions; 10. Legal security for property rights.

Macroeconomic stability is a highly desirable goal but by the time a country succeeds in achieving this goal, it invariably ends up with resource constraints becoming even more chronic, the unemployment rate shooting through the ceiling and inflation spiralling out of control.

In fact like Pakistan most of the countries that have used the 10-point magic formula once have only gone back for more of the same sinking further down the ladder in the process.

One only hopes that Pakistan does not find itself going back to the IMF in the next six months or so as is being predicted by independent economists and instead prepares an economic policy blueprint to make the most of indigenous comparative advantages for enabling the national economy to come out of its dependence on dole while at the same time developing into an essential clog of the interdependent world.

According to Thomas Piketty (*Capital in the Twenty-First Century* – Pp. 491), the development of a fiscal and social state is intimately related to the process of state-building as such, "...the history of economic development is also a matter of political and cultural development, and each country must find its distinctive path and cope with its own internal divisions."

So, it is imperative that Pakistan should try to find its own distinctive path to progress. But no matter how distinctive the path is, unless both the national incomes and tax collections rise to a reasonable level, the economy of developing countries like Pakistan would either continue to remain dole-dependent or trapped into a stagnant mode going south.

Piketty's research states that when the four rich countries of the world (Sweden, France, Britain and the US) collected less than 10 per cent from the national income by way of taxes they could afford to fulfill only their central 'regian' functions (police, courts, army, foreign affairs, general administration, etc.) but not much more. This was the situation in these four countries during the 19th century up to the First World War.

Between 1920 and 1980, the share of national income that the wealthy countries chose to devote to social spending increased considerably as in just half a century, the share of taxes in national income increased by a factor of at least three to four and in Nordic countries by more than five.

The growing tax collection enabled the governments of these rich countries to take on ever broader social functions which now consume between a quarter and a third of national income of which one half goes to health and education, the other to replacement incomes and transfer payments. All told, the total social spending, broadly speaking, amounts to 25-35 per cent of national income.

“In other words, the growth of the fiscal state over the last century basically reflects the constitution of a social state.” And that perhaps is the way for developing countries like Pakistan as well to reach the goal of managing affordable education, affordable health cover, affordable transport, affordable housing and affordable security.

The writer is a senior journalist based in Islamabad. He served as the Executive Editor of Express Tribune until 2014

Source: <https://dailytimes.com.pk/128164/let-us-go-back-basics-not-imf/>

# EDUCATION

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## Education: A Solution for Pakistan By Fiza Farhan

Being a developing country and one with an almost exponentially growing population, Pakistan faces all sorts of socio-economic problems. But the underlying cause of these problems is the issue of illiteracy. Our government spends less than 3% on the education sector. Already an insufficient value for catering to the needs of a considerably large population, it is further misappropriated. According to a compilation of the World Literacy Foundation, more than 796 million people in the world cannot read and write, about 67 million children do not have access to primary school education and another 72 million miss out on secondary school education. Pakistan's situation is even more unfortunate as it is estimated that 26% of the countries that are poorer than Pakistan, send a larger proportion of their children to schools. The main finding of the report further states that putting an economic value on the cost of illiteracy, it is estimated at \$1.2 trillion to the global economy. Hence, this problem is not confined to the developing world.

Why is education so crucial to saving our economy? Literacy is the fundamental building block of education and as vaccine is a prevention measure for a disease, literacy works in the same way for preventing the spread of corruption, hunger, poverty, crime, poor health conditions and unemployment among other socio-economic problems. Education is an essential tool for breaking the rigid and harsh social cycles of poverty.

In Pakistan, the quality of education is as big a problem as lack of access to education starting from the primary level. Even if the net enrollment rate of children attending a primary school is 63%, half of them drop out due to several reasons and those who continue are also getting a substandard experience because of inadequate education facilities, lack of trained teachers, and a standard medium of instruction in all regions, outdated curriculum and absence of a standard assessment tool. Another worrisome issue is that textbooks and the way things

are taught encourage rote learning and promote ideologies of certain powerful groups of the country instead of stimulating creativity and critical thinking.

Additionally, when we talk about gender inequality and discrimination faced by women at all levels, we are always lead to the question: how does one break through the rigid norms? This is again a problem that stems from the lack of access to education and poor quality education. Firstly, female enrolment is only 43.6% of the total enrollment which is significantly less than the male enrolment. Secondly, gender roles for men and women are enforced through education and the curriculum also promotes patriarchal ideologies to a great extent. Both these factors mutually contribute to the social problems that result from gender discrimination in our society. Hence, it is crucial for the progress of Pakistan as a nation that girls are provided with an equal access to education.

Pakistan needs an extensive educational reform which must begin with a policy reform that tackles the chronic under-investment in the education sector. Adding to that, the government and the private sector must work as partners to provide quality education especially primary education to all the school going citizens. It is a long-term process which requires effort from each one of us as individuals too, to work towards a quality education system along with providing the youth with hope, our undivided attention, and unwavering belief in their potential. Education is not only crucial for mitigating the socio-economic issues, it is important for psychological reasons too as it helps to make you feel worthwhile, gives a boost to morale and builds confidence and perseverance.

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# Digital Literacy And Education Reforms By Hammad Asif

With over 2.5 billion internet users and a global penetration rate of internet connectivity at 35%, the world today is highly interconnected, fast paced and technology savvy. Education in today's world comprises technology as the core element of curriculum as it deeply affects our lifestyles. Education also creates the utility of and manages appropriate technological processes and resources to facilitate learning. New platforms and technologies are helping stakeholders get better outcomes — even with fewer financial resources.

This infusion of computers and other digital technologies in programme development and implementation is on a steady rise. Each day new applications and devices are researched, developed and put to use in improving outcome quality. In many interesting ways, technology has been able to resolve complexities and challenges of public service in education. Innovation has ensured effectiveness in programme management, classroom learning experience and professional development in the education system.

Managing education reforms involves many complex tasks and daily challenges. To succeed in delivering essential educational goals in our digital information age, we have to employ the latest technological tools for training, online learning and access to information, resources and services. These tools help us do more by simplifying complex tasks. Prior to 2016, absenteeism was a major issue in public schools in K-P. Implementation of an online action management system with biometric attendance and other advanced processes led to a decline in this. The K-P government recovered Rs2.7 million from absent teachers.

The application of technological developments has an overwhelming impact on our daily activities. This transformation has redefined literacy, and our education system has to align with these changing needs. The K-P government has established 1,340 up-to-date IT labs in government schools across the province. Over 700 additional IT teachers and lab assistants have been recruited. These labs are equipped with the latest technology, interactive and virtual learning tools, and smart connected classroom tools.

K-P has now introduced learning methods using a combination of ICT learning tools. Around 1,100 interactive whiteboards (IWBs) have been installed in government higher secondary schools with solar panels backup. The IWBs offer immense potential to teachers to create as well as curate digital content. These technologies also promise to make the schools environmentally friendly.

Equipping public schools with educational technology has reversed the trend of school migration from public to private. More parents are responding to significant learning gains offered in public schools using digital technology. The pliability of blended learning has facilitated in creating a less stressful learning environment and offers a huge potential for learning gain.

Inclusivity lies at the core of education reforms. Every social group must have equal access to technology for a fair chance at availing opportunities of life in a digital world. Marginalisation of women is an issue of major concern and it reflects in gender statistics. Forty-one per cent of women in Pakistan are not active in the economy, with the lowest labour force participation in the world at 22 per cent.

The progress in changing these oppressive social norms means bridging the gap between women and technology. The K-P government has launched an initiative in 17 districts where 1,200 women from lower-income groups are being trained to use computers and technology in government schools during evening hours. Expert women trainers are hired to enable women enrollment that offers a world full of opportunities.

By making computer education easily available for girls, the K-P government is on its way to bring an educational revolution marked by technological advancement, which will go a long way in eliminating issues of concern in the education system. Such overhauling initiatives are necessary to make sure people are empowered technologically, financially and psychologically.

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Source: <https://tribune.com.pk/story/1521379/digital-literacy-education-reforms/>



# Depoliticising The Higher Education By Munir Ahmed

The most cosmetic 18th Amendment in the Pakistan Constitution 1973 has proved gradual decline in most devolved subjects to the provinces. The 18th Amendment Act 2010 was passed in the National Assembly on April 8, 2011, that introduced a number of changes in the constitution and amended 102 articles and devolved 47 subjects to the exclusive legislative and executive domain of the provinces.

Education was one of the key subjects devolved to the provincial mandate. The concurrent legislative list that included education as a shared legislative jurisdiction at the federal and provincial level was omitted, and so far it had negative impact on education in general and higher education in particular. Having been unable to manage the secondary school education and had already earned bad name for their educational system that had proved to be a failure in many ways, the provinces were given the task of higher education too like many other 'devolved subjects'.

Six years on, the provinces are still in doldrums on fulfilling their international responsibilities on the devolved subjects. It seems that they don't have the resources and will to implement the 18th Amendment in its true spirit.

Same is the case with the higher education being apparently managed by the Higher Education Commission (HEC) at the federal level while the provincial HECs are also popping up with the same mandate in the provinces. So, the situation is quite obvious that even a layman can well imagine the future of higher education in Pakistan in the presence of 'too many cooks' — one federal and presumably four provincial.

The rift has already taken off between the provinces of Punjab and Sindh versus federal on the scope of mandate, authority and resources. Certainly all three aforementioned elements are captivating, especially the lucrative financial resources that could bring more importance to even a lesser child — an undeserving chairman of any HEC if it has to be a non-competitive political decision.

Six years on, the provinces are still in the doldrums on fulfilling their international responsibilities on devolved subjects. It seems that they don't have the resources and the will to implement the 18th Amendment in its true spirit

We have seen immense politicising of every sector of national importance. Same is the case with the higher education. Before the 18th Amendment, all the four provinces were playing the role of watchdogs on the Higher Education Commission (HEC) at the federal level. Many believe the oversight on the provincial HECs would become dimmer. There is a firm opinion of education experts that political influence mounted on the provincial HECs would further decline the standard of higher education that is already not up to the expectation. There is evidently proved opinion that the standards have already declined in the recent years.

An audit report of the 2015-16 is also in circulation that reflects the incompetency of the federal HEC to spend the released funds. It states that Rs 1965 million were approved while Rs 770 million of funds were released for infrastructure development and the federal HEC could spend less than a half of it. Many say the decline of the HEC proficiency and performance is the result of favouritism and lack of oversight.

Two years back, the Islamabad Policy Research Institute conducted a consultation for a research on the post 18th Amendment changes in the federal HEC status. Let's have a look on the findings and recommendations.

18th amendment added 'standards in institutions for higher education and research, scientific and technical institutions' to the Federal Legislative List II. The amendment did not, however, touch two items on Federal Legislative List Part I — 'Federal agencies and institutes created for the purpose of doing research, for professional or technical training, or for the promotion of special studies,' and 'Education with respect to Pakistani students in foreign countries and foreign students in Pakistan.'

The functions of the HEC were not completely devolved to the provinces since some of its functions were handed over to five different ministries at the federal level with only few subjects left to be handled by the HEC.

The federal government placed the HEC under the Ministry of Professional and Technical Training. Prior to the 18th Amendment, HEC worked directly under the Prime Minister, and HEC chairman was equivalent to a federal minister in status.

The confusion needs to be resolved as to what shall be the functions of the provincial HECs and what shall still remain with federal HEC. The higher education is one of the subjects out of 47 that were devolved to provinces and continue to face devaluation in the hands of incompetent and resource-starved provinces marred by the political segregation and lack of drive to benefit the voiceless people.

Whether the 18th Amendment in the constitution was made in the blind love for provincial autonomy or it was a devolution step for a political scoring that erupted unforeseen consequences remains an unanswered question. Whatever the positive or negative consequences, the provinces and the federation are bearing or likely to bear in the days to come would make no difference to the 'historic image' of Mian Raza Rabbani, the proponent of the 18th Amendment. Whether nation would get the actual benefits of the 18th Amendment or remain in chaos for decades, he has been benefited with the chairmanship of the Senate of Pakistan and an unravel image.

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

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Source: <https://dailytimes.com.pk/126188/depoliticising-higher-education/>

## Failed Education System | Editorial

A recent report in The New York Times astutely highlights core aspects of Pakistan's education crisis that have been sidelined as a result of the hype created by private and public entities, domestic and foreign, over the lack of funding in the sector. As images of young Malala Yousafzai at Oxford University spring up on social media and we reflect on how her life transformed from being a naïve girl in a backward province subject to primitive Taliban rule to attending a top institution ready to broaden her horizons, we must not forget the millions of children who are where she once was, trying to make something of themselves in an education system that does not facilitate them.

It is an extremely sorry state of affairs that 23 million children and their parents have given up on this country's education system. A significant portion of the population will have limited literacy and numeracy skills heading into the future. These are the people in whose hands we will entrust the future of this country and the outlook appears bleak.

The attention that has been paid to the education sector in the way of increasing budgets and checks on teacher attendance and ghost schools is hardly praiseworthy. Being a government department, we know the additional funding was usurped by unethical teachers who allegedly make students do personal chores instead of learning. There is no end to this trend in sight and the solution cannot depend on the private education sector, for that has its own problems of ethics and charging exorbitant fees, with teachers who carelessly teach a few lessons, then require students to attend private after-school tutoring sessions for additional fees. Emphasis needs to return on relaunching the public education system. Considering the sheer desperation of the situation, it would be worthwhile to hire expert help to revamp the system and an initial goal should be to stop the glorification of English and teach in native tongues to deliver basic concepts across subjects.

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Source: <https://tribune.com.pk/story/1535823/failed-education-system/>

## A Change in Approach | Editorial

Education is recognised as one of the country's most pressing challenges and yet no government, past or present, has shown the wherewithal to promote education at all levels and for everyone. The government seems to have happily relegated that role to private schools, charitable institutions, and religious seminaries in the vain hope that these institutions will somehow fulfill the education needs of 50 million children. At the last count, 20 million children were still out of school — a sad statistic that mocks both the work and nationwide presence of 220,000 schools. Hefty increases may have been made to education spending since 2010 but these have had minimal impact thus far because of the sheer magnitude of the crisis.

Our schools continue to lack the necessary infrastructure. Another critical but less spoken of issue is the existence of an army of untrained teachers who neither understand the needs of students nor the demands of their profession. The government ought to focus more on teacher training and that too on a priority basis. After all, higher standards and teacher training can do wonders for our students. In the last few years, tertiary education has been the focus of most government efforts. But this approach seems to be flawed because more universities cannot improve the situation on their own. It is far better to strengthen primary education and ensure that they provide quality education.

If the authorities do not work on narrowing the widening gap between rich and poor, Pakistan is unlikely to resolve its education challenges anytime soon. No matter how difficult it may sound, the government should make primary and secondary education free and accessible to all. It needs to ensure quality education to all through the proper channels, including appropriate curricula, teaching strategies and proper teacher training. There should be less focus on rote learning and more emphasis instead on developing the knowledge base of students.

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Source: <https://tribune.com.pk/story/1543093/6-a-change-in-approach/>

## WORLD

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### Syria Endgame? | Editorial

Putin is a man who can.

He said that Moscow would go into Syria to quell the raging conflict that much of the western media still insist on referring to as a civil war. And in superficial terms, at least, that is what he has done. After a mere two years of direct military involvement — the Russian president announced towards the end of last week that conditions have been met to end the conflict in Damascus.

To some, this might sound like big talk. But Putin has the goods to back it up. Namely, a Russia-Iran-Turkey tripartite agreement on Syrian de-escalation zones. Of course, Moscow and Tehran have been actively supporting the regime. While Ankara, the only Muslim NATO member nation, is on Washington's side, wherever that may be.

The question of the US position is an important one. For Obama had kept Syria raging for a good six years, which suited Israel just fine given that many a political pundit believes that the road to Tehran passes through Damascus. Yet it took Donald Trump just nine months in the hot seat to realise — by way of un-strategic ineptitude that is enough to make Britain's Boris Johnson appear rather unpleasantly suave — the Jewish state's worst nightmare.

Yet not only is this an American betrayal, it is a Turkish one, too. One that follows a summer of Israeli discontent. Meaning that Ankara has not played ball in the so-called Gulf crisis, engineered by the Saudis to isolate Qatar over the latter's recognition of Hamas as a legitimate partner for peace. A position that is not dissimilar to that of President Erdogan.

But more than that, it is the emerging alliance between Tehran and Ankara that worries Israel perhaps the most. Especially given that if the two truly join forces — they could pose a serious challenge to Saudi regional supremacy. As far as Tel Aviv is concerned, it suited it far more to think of Turkey throwing its lot in with

Christian Europe. But now that it is back as a regional player — Ankara and Tehran between them wield formidable military might. This is to say nothing of the \$2 billion arms deal that Turkey has inked with Russia.

The only thing that Israel can cling on to for hope is that this polygamous bro-mance will come undone over Iraq and the Kurdistan independence referendum. And now Iran looks set to be more strongly engaged with its Iraqi neighbour, given that both are gearing up to conduct joint military drills.

Yet one thing is certain. Middle Eastern flashpoints ignited by the US, which may or may not have been for Israeli benefit, have shown no signs of being returned to peace, even some 14 years after the fall of Saddam. So, sadly, it seems that Israel can rest assured. Syria's fire is unlikely to be extinguished any time soon.

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Source: <http://dailytimes.com.pk/editorial/01-Oct-17/syria-endgame>

# Is North Korea a Threat to USA? By Yasmeen Aftab Ali

North Korea can never be a threat to USA. It does not share a border with the latter. Not by a long shot is it a possibility that Pyongyang will send its arm forces or launch missiles to conquer USA. Neither does North Korea possess long range bombers. North Korea also does not possess an intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) to deliver nuclear warheads upon USA.

Washington's threatening North Korea is decades old. During the cold war, both South and North Korea held great importance for USA. Had US not interfered, Kim Il-Sung's would have taken over Korea. Washington had posted armored units and infantry on North Korea's borders, a Sword of Damocles' hanging on their head for possible invasion which did take place during the Korean War. Washington had also positioned naval vessels for being used against North Korea. During the Korean War these were duly used as well.

However, North Korea lost most of her allies in post-cold war era. Once Russia broke up, both Russia and China initiated good diplomatic relationship with South Korea, the new block having no intentions of taking on USA had USA wanted to go war with North Korea.

Washington has got used to playing the role of the Global Policeman far too long with Russia out of the picture and China still at an economic low key point. It has bull dozed countries, bringing regime changes where it wanted. Iraq, Somalia, Afghanistan, Haiti, Grenada and Panama being some of its victims. With Saudi Arab, Washington tried to play the same role in Yemen.

South Korea has out distanced herself from North in every sphere of economic activity. In June 2017, South Korean President Moon Jae-in had declared the new nuclear policy for his country; scrapping all plans to set up new nuclear power plants along with cancelling lifetime extensions for aged reactors. South Korea has the sixth largest range of nuclear reactors in the world; a fact that does not seem to have bothered Washington at all. As a matter of fact, Washington has got the world down in two groups. One is composed of those whom Washington may not necessarily like but they would probably not bomb like India, Germany, Pakistan



and others having a bomb too. And not the water ones please. Then there are those who can be shooed aside and bombed when trying to be not an ally with Washington like North Korea. It makes imminent sense for North Korea to have a non-water bomb. It is a good deterrent. There is a history here. A history of North Korea being knocked around by Washington enough for her to decide to do something about it. Going nuclear and coming from a position of strength to not be treated like an underdog is the option North Korea has chosen. It seems unlikely that Trump's threats are going to deter them at this point in time. So what does Trump do? Attack North Korea?

Watching Trump and Kim Jong-un exchange hot words is like watching two boys wrestling with each other in dirt. Trump's over exaggerated comment warning North Korea of "fire and fury" with Pyongyang gleefully stating it was "carefully examining" a plan to attack an American military base in the western Pacific are hot air words.

Washington has already opened too many military fronts around the world, without succeeding in wrapping up a single one, only a mad man will open yet another. But wait, was it not Greg Milam who said, "Mr Trump said he would be an unconventional president. On matters of war and national security, in fact, he said he would be unpredictable. Are we seeing Mr Trump's own version of the Madman Theory?"

It was actually Nixon who developed the Mad Man Theory. The idea was to keep Washington's opponents guessing what the Global Policeman would do next. Let them feel, a point has come where the President of USA may do anything to resolve a situation.

It is extremely unlikely that North Korea, even if it becomes nuclear would use it upon other nations, even South Korea. However not only is a deterrent for bullies to stay off their home turf, it can also be used as a bargaining chip.

North's threat to rain hell and death on Seoul is a repeat telecast after every few years. To be taken as rhetoric. What is serious is North's desire to make them the nuclear weapon. Trump's threats will not work. World powers are not interested in another war. Threatening is not the way out. Talking is. That too, only if you treat

the other as an equal. Unequal partnerships and talks do not work. Not in the long run.

Guardian is bull's eye when it writes, "The North Koreans are worried about what happened to Gaddafi and Saddam Hussein, they're worried about the Americans leveraging change and they know that nuclear weapons are guaranteed to prevent that from happening. That's what this is really all about. North Koreans are not going to back down. They'll continue with the missile testing and make sure that the warhead has been miniaturised. They also need to make sure that the vehicles don't break up when they re-enter the atmosphere. In the meantime, they'll respond to American bluster with their own bluster." (August 9, 2017)

Washington needs to sit down with Pyongyang and talk. North Korea proposal of a Peace Treaty to replace 1953 armistice can be a good starting point. Or, North can go ahead with a nuclear programme and then Washington can talk about a freeze.

In the meanwhile blubbering from White House is not working.

Source: <https://www.pakistantoday.com.pk/2017/10/02/is-north-korea-a-threat-to-usa/>

## **Trump at the UN By Shahid Javed Burki**

The United States is now set on a course different from the one it had taken when it became the leader of the free world. It had then agreed with the victors of the Second World War that an international system would be built to guide member nations. In it, all member countries would give up some of their sovereignty and follow accepted sets of rules. This system worked and provided the world with relative peace and prosperity it had not known for centuries. And then Donald Trump arrived on the global scene as an exceptionally disruptive force. The moment he entered office as the US president, he went about upending the old system. What he intends to do and why he is doing what he has already done is based on his reading of the world situation. His system of beliefs was laid down by him in four speeches he has given, three of them to international audiences.

The first address in which the new structure began to be built was on January 20 in Washington when Trump took the oath of office. In the inaugural speech, the new president made it clear that “America First” would be the basis on which he and his administration would deal with the world. The second speech was given in May in Riyadh when he pledged an all-out war against international terrorism, singling out Iran and Qatar for lending support to dissident forces. The third came in July in Warsaw in which Trump divided the world into two country-clusters, the West and the Rest. He challenged the West to show the will to keep the Rest — and by that he meant mostly the world of radical Islam — at bay.

The United Nations address on September 17 closed the circle by laying out the basis on which the new Trumpian world was to be constructed, replacing the one that was no longer relevant — if it ever was — for what was required to manage the often unruly world. That order was structured over time; the first few bricks were laid down at Bretton Woods in 1944. Then the war in Europe had ended with Germany and Italy defeated by the allied powers led by the United States. The Asian war was still being fought as Japan, in spite of suffering heavy losses, had stubbornly refused to surrender. Surrender came after the devastating nuclear attacks on the cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. More bricks were added later, in particular in the area of international trade. President Trump had made the world aware of his impatience with the old world order during the long and bitterly fought campaign for the US presidency. It did not seem to concern him that he was alone among the leaders of world’s major powers in wanting to build a new system structured on the goals pursued by individual countries, not on the collective global interest.

In the UN speech, Trump used the word “sovereignty” 21 times, saying that strong sovereign nations should keep their citizens safe while enabling them to prosper economically. It was this belief that had led him to use the term “America First” in his inaugural address delivered on the steps of the US Capitol, eight months earlier. At the UN, he said strong sovereign nations could join together to fight common threats and constitute the irreducible blocks of global institutions such as the United Nations. In the election campaign for the US presidency, Trump had repeatedly expressed his doubt whether the United Nations system served any purpose. In the New York speech, he did not make that suggestion but maintained that the United States should not be required to shoulder a good part of the

financial burden of carrying and running the UN system. “As president of the United States, I will always put America first,” he told his audience of heads of state.

The emphasis on sovereignty has a long history in the West. It goes back to Roman times. It was elaborated in agreements like the Peace of Westphalia that gave rise to the principle of noninterference in a country’s internal affairs. It was the foundation on which the victors of the Second World War erected the UN system. But some critics found Trump’s definition narrow and selfish. “It looks like we will respect the sovereignty of countries we like, whether they are dictatorship or democracies, but we will not respect the sovereignty of countries we don’t like,” said Vali R Nasr, an Iranian-American who is now the dean of the Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies. “His definition of sovereignty comes from a very narrow domestic prism,” continued Nasr. It did not preclude criticism of the countries and their leaders who did not fit into the Trumpian view of the world. Two of the three countries — North Korea and Iran — named by President George W Bush as belonging to an “axis of evil” were back on the Trump list.

While Trump covered a great deal of ground in the UN speech what he said about these two countries drew the most attention. He used abuse and ridicule to get North Korea to pay attention to what he was saying. In the case of Iran — as he had done during the election campaign — the focus was on the nuclear accord as well as its alleged role in supporting international terrorism. He once again called the nuclear accord the worst deal Washington had ever concluded. The policies he is likely to pursue with these two nations will reverberate across the globe. The world is watching, wondering where Donald Trump is headed.

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Source: <https://tribune.com.pk/story/1521385/trump-at-the-un/>

# Non-Proliferation Never Ran Smoothly By Ubaid Ahmed

The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) remains the only treaty through which mankind endeavours to curb nuclear proliferation and disarm nuclear arsenals. The enactment of NPT would earn great security reimbursements by affirming that the majority of states, which are non-nuclear, remain so.

Amid World War II, none of the significant belligerents were sure that the progression of nuclear weapons was conceivable, yet all realized that different states were at that point or could soon be attempting to fabricate the bomb. This dread was the focal stimulus for the American, British, German, and Soviet weapons' programs. The United States created nuclear weapons not because it had greater demands for nuclear bomb but because the United States invested more heavily in the program.

Initially, a more fundamental inquiry must be tended to: Why do nations need atomic weapons in any case? All things considered, some need nukes for self-defence, but they're a generally shoddy method for deterring an attack. Some need them as cover for their own forceful plans; waving a couple of nukes can debilitate resistance. Some need them as a badge of prestige. Presumably most nuclear wannabes are propelled by some blend of all the above.

The NPT enforces no penalties for quitting or violating the treaty and it doesn't truly require that the United States, Russia, China, France or Britain disarm or cut back on their nuclear weapons

However, under this security model's rationale, the NPT is viewed as an organization allowing non-nuclear states to get the better of a collective action problem. Each state desires to be the only nuclear power in it's region; the state will avoid further proliferation if its neighbours remain non-nuclear. But it is important to remember that in the world's current state of affairs, militants and insurgents are the most likely belligerents against a state. A nuclear deterrent is utterly ineffective against such groups; they have no cities that can be bombed, nor are they focused on self-preservation.

However with the advancements in globalization, the existing political order is experiencing expanding stress. Both global organizations and non-state actors are dissolving the conventional idea of national sovereignty and challenging states' monopoly of power in energy, politics, military and other lawful domains.

Undoubtedly, worldwide agreements or treaties like the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) are among the variables that have contracted countries' power. The treaty basically has three major holes in it; primarily it allows countries to get to the brink of nuclear weapon proliferation following which they quit the treaty and build the weapons, it enforces no penalties for quitting or violating the treaty and it doesn't truly require the United States, Russia, China, France or Britain to cut back on their nuclear weapons. Furthermore, the treaty also fails to provide a comprehensive plan for the disarmament of nuclear weapon states.

It seems to be likely that elements like globalization, technological dispersion, territorial security contests and intensification in actions of non-state actors will increase the number of nuclear powers worldwide. The cost of building and keeping up these weapons could inhibit proliferation, but it is far more important for nuclear states to show genuine commitment to disarmament and set a precedent for the world.

Moreover we ought to develop a new approach to security which is capable of transcending borders, an inclusive approach that is cantered on the value of every human life. The sooner we can make that transition, the sooner we will achieve our goal of living on a planet which is free of war. The global community has not been successful in creating a possible alternative to the doctrine of nuclear deterrence as the basis for international security. Nuclear weapons will not go away until a reliable collective security framework exists to fill the void.

To conclude we must continue to develop and refine proposals for action. To bring them to the attention of governments and opinion leaders, and to promote public discourse on nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament. Most importantly, the world must remember that under current circumstances, one mishap or mistake can result in the death of millions.

The writer is working as Research Affiliate at Strategic Vision Institute and can be contacted at [ubaid@thesvi.org](mailto:ubaid@thesvi.org)

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# Russia's Resurgence — What Will Be Putin's Next Move? By Muhammad Ali Baig

Will Putin strike again or will he rest and let Trump “Make America Great Again”? Who could have imagined the creation of Abkhazia and South Ossetia? Who knew that Putin will take away Crimea from Ukraine? No one thought that Putin alone will halt the US-led invasion of Syria and circumvented the removal of Assad Regime with authority. And now Putin is warning Trump about any military adventure against Kim Jong Un. Importantly, why have Sweden and Lithuania imposed the military draft — isn't it Putin? These questions, although they reflect different situations with different connotations, have a pattern of behaviour. There are a few people who are bestowed with a natural tendency and will to restore and clean-up the mess; President Putin is a perfect example.

Almost 17 years ago, under the leadership of President Boris Yeltsin, Russia was drowning and even the government was not able to pay the monthly salaries of its employees. It was Putin who resurrected Russia and brought it back again on the stature of a great power. People may criticize him for his policies internally and externally and especially for supporting the brutal Assad Regime, but no one can deny the fact that Putin alone has turned the tide of international politics and put an end to the perceived unipolar world and not in favour of a bi-polar one; but a multi-polar one.

Putin's annexation of Crimea has raised alarms in Scandinavia, but it remains uncertain whether he is going to strike and in what manner

Trump's strike on Syria in April is a clear precedent that Putin has successfully dragged America into the Syrian debacle. Now Trump would not be in a position to concentrate his efforts on internal matters (as it was his election manifesto) in its pursuit of 'Make America Great Again'. Apparently, Putin alone defeated America on almost every front. The testimonies of FBI and NSA confirming the hacking of 2016 American Presidential Elections reveal the skill and prowess of Putin flanked by his determination and Russian strategic culture. It is understandable that Putin alone has forced the US and NATO to go back a little but there is still a huge amount of work that needs to be done. Putin is an unpredictably wise man and like Stalin's Winter War against Finland in 1940, Putin



will wage a war against the Scandinavians and the Baltic Region as he did to Ukraine and Georgia.

Unfortunately, war has always been the decisive factor in international relations and a defining element in the fate of the nations. War — may sound bad or be an ugly aspect of the state to state relationship but its inherent attribute of ‘make or break’ and ‘win or lose’ makes it a permanent subject of politics and history. It is important to scrutinize the actions of Putin from the perspective of international relations while remaining above ethnic, regional and even religious connotations. Putin had missed the opportunity to save the Libyan dictator Gaddafi. Had he acted in the same manner with Gaddafi as he is acting now to save Assad, Putin would have

- i) more influence in the Middle East,
- ii) have another foreign ally,
- iii) the entire Middle East would have been more stable, and

vi) Islamic State would have been deprived of Libyan fighters. Putin’s pre-emptive and preventive attempt to save Gaddafi could have saved numerous precious lives.

It is a fact that President Vladimir Putin has asserted himself in such a forceful manner that he has altered the ostensible unipolar world order into a multi-polar one. Journalists like Steven Lee Myers authored a book by the title ‘The New Tsar’ (2014) and compared Putin’s policies and personality with the historically brutal rulers of Tsarist Russia. Myers may call Putin a ‘Tsar’ but the Russian President’s determination and concentration has turned the tide of international politics. In 2016 Forbes magazine declared him to be the most powerful man in the world.

Almost 17 years ago, under the leadership of President Boris Yeltsin, Russia was drowning and the government was not even able to pay the monthly salaries of its employees. It was Putin who resurrected Russia and brought it back again to the stature of a great power

Putin’s audacious actions in Syria makes one thing clear; he has bigger aims with broad objectives and envisages a bigger share in world politics. Putin’s conquest of Crimea was not merely an acquisition of a piece of land but his action had its roots in its history. Russia can put an end to the ongoing Civil War in Ukraine by calming down the Russian speaking population but Putin is adamant to punish

Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko for his leanings towards NATO and the West.

According to The Atlantic — a renowned political magazine, Sweden and Lithuania have again imposed military conscription to meet the arising defence and security needs. The people of Sweden are now more inclined towards joining NATO due to the perceived Russian threat. Foreign Policy magazine published an article in May 2014, urging neutral Sweden and Finland to join NATO. Putin's annexation of Crimea has brought alarms in Scandinavia but it remains uncertain whether he is going to strike and in what exact manner.

The writer is a freelance columnist based in Islamabad and can be reached at mmab11@gmail.com

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## India's Nuclear Arsenal By Muhammad Umar

India's nuclear-powered submarine was reported damaged in an accident on October 3. This latest incident adds to the already lengthy list of nuclear mishaps the country has faced in the last four or so decades. It begs the exploration of the current status of the Indian nuclear arsenal and the dangers it poses.

Taking advantage of the chaos created by North Korea, India is quietly expanding its nuclear and missile capabilities. In an updated report on the worldwide deployment of nuclear weapons, published by the Bulletin of Atomic Scientists, the authors, Hans Kristensen and Robert Norris note, "India's missile force is evolving rapidly," as it develops "larger missiles with longer ranges and shorter response times."

India's first submarine base is currently under construction and this fact led the authors to raise the question of whether or not India will begin to deploy nuclear weapons on to their nuclear-powered submarines under normal circumstances? An important query because deploying nuclear weapons on to submarines raises serious alarm to other important issues to consider.

The first thing to consider is what it will mean for strategic balance in the region. There is a great deal of volatility in the Indian strategic culture. Clearly, there is an unstable right wing mentality, consider the recent beef related lynching of innocent teenagers or claims that Hindus invented nuclear technology thousands of years ago. Let's not forget the recent armed provocation at the Chinese border. Now imagine, if India begins deployment of nuclear weapons on to their submarines, it will give them confidence of a secure second strike capability; according to their past behaviour they are very likely to provoke a conflict with one of their neighbours, which could escalate to full-scale war, a nightmare scenario on its own.

Second, this development could lead to a regional arms race at sea; further risking the use of these weapons. In 1974, prestige, not genuine security concerns led India to develop nuclear weapons, essentially nuclearizing South Asia; remember that their first nuclear explosion was a result of their violation of terms of a multilateral peaceful uses agreement that they had with Canada and the United States.

The deployment of nuclear weapons on to submarines will most definitely lead to nuclearizing the Indian Ocean, which is total madness, and the international community has a responsibility to demand India stop this pursuit or face consequences, similar to the demands being made of North Korea to curb its nuclear aggression.

The third thing to consider, deploying a nuclear weapon on to a submarine will lower the nuclear threshold; the authority to use a nuclear weapon will rest in the hands of the submarine commander. A very scary thought bearing in mind the extremist tendencies of the Indian polity, society, and its armed forces. What if the command of one of these submarines is given to a Hindu extremist and this person decides to wage a holy Hindu war against non-Hindus?

Additionally, there are many technical safety and security questions that must be addressed. It is unclear what actually happened to the Indian nuclear-powered submarine, which was reported to have been in an accident on October 3. The government has remained quiet about the circumstances and extent of damage, which is unacceptable, considering the possibility of the environmental impact an accident like this could have had on the seas.

India paid no heed to expert warnings of building a nuclear reactor on its eastern coast at Kalpakkam, an area prone to seasonal cyclones, the reactor has also faced many technical glitches.

These are extremely dangerous developments; I argue these rapid Indian advancements and policy shifts are more dangerous than what is happening in North Korea at the moment.

According to “India’s Nuclear Exceptionalism,” a report published by Harvard University, India is capable of producing nearly 2,200 nuclear weapons. Last year, Adrian Levy, a Guardian journalist reported that India was constructing an entire city devoted to building nuclear bombs. Kristensen and Norris in their study bring our attention to India’s “rapidly evolving” missile program and their ambitious plans of arming submarines with nuclear weapons. These developments are completely absurd, and pose great danger to the region, possibly the world.

The international community should no longer allow India to quietly get away with stockpiling nuclear weapons, and should put an end to their attempts at nuclearizing the Indian Ocean. Allowing India to get away with this kind of behaviour will encourage others, like North Korea. The international community has a responsibility to put equal pressure on both North Korea and India to put an end to their nuclear aggression, and suspend their missile programs.

Taking advantage of the chaos created by North Korea, India is quietly expanding its nuclear and missile capabilities.

Source: <http://nation.com.pk/columns/06-Oct-2017/india-s-nuclear-arsenal>

# How Muscular Hindutva is Replacing India's Secular Base By Irfan Husain

WHEN Yogi Adityanath, chief minister of the Indian state of Uttar Pradesh, wanted to celebrate six months of the BJP government, what did he decide to do?

According to a news report, he dropped the Taj Mahal from UP's list of tourist attractions. This is akin to Paris deleting the Eiffel Tower from its tourist brochures, or New York downplaying the Empire State Building.

So why downgrade the importance of this sublime expression of love built by Emperor Shah Jahan in memory of his wife Mumtaz Mahal? Because it "does not represent Indian ethos", according to the Yogi. Excuse me? I thought India was a syncretic place where different cultures, faiths and people were absorbed to produce a rich and vibrant civilisation.

I might have been right once, but not in Narendra Modi's India where the notion of a monolithic Hindu nationalism has taken root. Now, foreign NGOs, Pakistani theatre groups and iconic artists like the late M.F. Hussain have no place in this vast country of over a billion people.

Yogi Adityanath has decided to give visiting dignitaries gifts of copies of the Gita and the Ramayana instead of the traditional miniature replicas of the Taj. No offence, but speaking for myself, I would prefer the Taj replica.

The Yogi was the chief priest of the main Hindu temple at Gorakpur, so one would expect his worldview to be a bit limited. And to be fair, he's not the first official to downplay the Muslim contribution to Indian culture.

Muscular Hindutva is replacing India's secular base.

I was in Mumbai around 12 years ago, and visited the old Prince of Wales museum, or, as it is now called, the Chatraparti Shivaji Maharaj Vastu Sangrahalaya. Inside, I found a vast display of historical objects, but oddly, no sign of any Mughal artefact. Indeed, somebody unfamiliar with the history of the subcontinent could be excused for thinking that there never had been a Muslim presence of any kind in India.

Authoritarian states can erase or rewrite inconvenient chapters of their history. Thus, after Leon Trotsky had been exiled and made a non-person, all photos of the revolutionary communist leadership were issued without his image. A similar fate awaited Mao's comrades who had fallen out of favour.

Insecure states, too, have a problem with uncomfortable historical events that run counter to the official narrative they are trying to promote. Thus, as India moves away from its tolerant, secular foundations laid by Nehru, a new, stirring ideology of a muscular Hindutva is replacing it. For its proponents, it is distinctly problematic to accept the centuries of Muslim rule that preceded the British Raj. Thus the constant attempts to airbrush the role Muslims played in India.

Pakistan, too, suffers from a variation on this theme. In a search for identity, it soon decided that the new state was an extension of the Arab Middle East, rather than a part of the subcontinent. The official version of Urdu was shorn of its sizeable component of Hindi words, and much of our Hindu past was ignored. Our schoolbooks reflect a warped version of history that now begins with the arrival of Islam. Thousands of years of rich, pre-Islamic civilisations that rose and fell by the Indus are neglected.

Successful and secure states take pride in their past, and research it diligently. Any discoveries that extend their history further back in time are celebrated. Yet we in Pakistan are so fixated by faith that we regard any pre-Islamic finds with the same suspicion we would accord a newly discovered time bomb.

I still recall a bizarre experience when I was a newly appointed joint secretary in the culture ministry: I received a call from the Japanese embassy, and an official asked me when we would open the Quranic gallery at the National Museum in Karachi. Not having a clue, I promised to call him back. When I asked the director general of the archaeology department, his reply flabbergasted me.

Apparently, the Japanese had flown out experts to design a special display area on the ground floor to exhibit the museum's collection of old, exquisitely illuminated copies of the Holy Book. But local clerics had objected to their display below a floor that housed ancient Gandhara statues.

This is one small example of how ideology and a distorted version of faith can make us blind to truth and beauty. Sadly, the rise of ignorance and the retreat of reason in Pakistan is now being mirrored across the border. There is little difference between a Hindu being lynched here for alleged blasphemy, and a Muslim in India being killed on the charge of eating beef.

One kind of extremism feeds off the other. When a literal understanding of religious texts replaces the search for their underlying symbolism, we end up with a list of do's and don'ts.

irfan.husain@gmail.com

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# Making Adjustments to Trump's World Order

## By Shahid Javed Burki

I will use some personal history to make the main point of the article this week. I will suggest today that the Trump presidency will leave an indelible mark on his country's relations with the Asian continent. Looked at from the perspective of Washington, the continent has several parts. For the current administration, East Asia is the part that poses a number of seemingly insolvable problems. The American president has an ongoing battle of words with the leader of North Korea. Each has crossed the line of diplomatic decency by using unattractive names for the other. For Trump, Kim Jung-on is a little rocket man; for Kim, Trump is an unbalanced leader of a large nation. In South and Central Asia, Trump's approach to the war in Afghanistan is likely to bring about significant realignment and in the Middle East, the American president has stoked the sectarian divide in the Muslim world.

Donald Trump has succeeded in fracturing the world by undermining the global system that had kept the globe united. He has done this in order to give his country greater space in which to operate. Trump's strong preference is for a multipolar world. I had used the word "multipolar" in a note I prepared for Tom Clawson who had succeeded Robert McNamara as the World Bank president. That was in 1982. The new president was invited to speak at a conference in Tokyo where he was to present his views on the shape of the world. In my note I suggested that the world was no longer bipolar, with two leaders in charge of the divide. On the one side was the United States, leading the free world in a system dominated by rule-based institutions in which member countries took important economic and political decisions. The United Nations Security Council, the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank group belonged to this institutional structure. The World Trade Organisation was added in 1995 to these three to manage global commerce.

On the other side was the Soviet Union that operated on a simple premise: Moscow should do and act in the ways that were good for it. It was this approach that had led the Soviets to invade Afghanistan. In my note for Clawson, I suggested that in addition to Washington and Moscow new centres of power were emerging that would want to follow their one interests in international economic affairs. I identified several of these, including Beijing, Brussels, New Delhi and Tokyo. What would

finally come through would be a multipolar rather than a bipolar world. That fracturing did not occur for another quarter century. It is happening now but not in the ways I had predicted. My world was neat arrangement around half a dozen economic nodes.

The uncertainties created by the way President Donald Trump has managed world affairs, would lead to responses on the part of the countries that had relied on the leadership of the United States leadership. Washington's military presence in many parts of the world, its nuclear umbrella, and defence guarantees provided security for many countries that, without this cover, would have to take care of themselves at great expense. The result would have been chaos. Trump is threatening to withdraw most of these guarantees. The most likely reaction would be hedging by other nations. "Hedging is most common when great powers are unpredictable and the global distribution of power is shifting fast — in other words, during times like today," wrote Stewart M Patrick, in an article for Foreign Affairs. The article was written when the Trump approach to international politics had begun to take shape but was still not fully articulated. Patrick believes that hedging would prove to be most dramatic in geopolitics. Bets will be placed between the United States and the most relevant regional power — China in Asia, Russia in East Europe and Central Asia, and Iran in the Middle East. The most significant change that hedging will bring will be in Asia which now has a regional power, China. Beijing now has much greater economic presence in the continent.

The way Trump has handled his country's presence in Afghanistan illustrates very well how Washington is bringing about a major global reorientation. His much-anticipated August 21st speech laid out the policies the administration would pursue in conducting the ongoing war in Afghanistan. There were a number of departures from old practices in managing the United States presence in this long-troubled country. Abandoning the time-barred approach followed by Barack Obama, Trump's predecessor, the United States committed itself to stay on the ground for as long as that country remained unstable. But its presence will be entirely military with local American commanders operating without constraints imposed by the civilian authority in Washington.

For the Americans to deliver results they needed full cooperation from Pakistan. Islamabad was accused of playing games with Washington that had to stop. If Pakistan continued to support the Taliban and went ahead and provided

sanctuaries on its soil to this group, it will be punished. The punishment will take several forms, including the suspension of various aid programmes. Hints were given that Pakistan may be declared a terrorist state. And, finally help was sought from India to stabilise Afghanistan. New Delhi's economic development programme was lauded and hope was expressed that the large trade surplus India had with the United States would be used to provide economic assistance to Kabul. No self-respecting country would calmly accept the language Trump had used with reference to Pakistan on August 21. Islamabad didn't. It signalled that it will look to Beijing for help if outside help was needed. Realignment had begun in South-Central Asia.

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# Nasty Indo-US Nexus Bares its teeth By Iqbal Khan

ALL of a sudden it has dawned upon the Trump administration that China's One Belt One Road (OBOR) project passes through 'disputed territory', and hence the US must oppose it. For quite some time, China phobia has paralyzed rational thinking in the US policy making circles, the malice is bipartisan. Earlier Obama had also opposed setting up of Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) by China, but he was shocked to find close American allies making a bee line to join the AIIB as its founding members.

In his recent briefing to the US lawmakers on the Pak-Afghan region, US Defence Secretary James Mattis had commented that the US was opposed the One Belt, One Road policy in principle because in a globalized world there were many belts and many roads, and no one nation should put itself into a position of dictating One Belt, One Road: "The One Belt, One Road also goes through disputed territory, and I think that in itself shows the vulnerability of trying to establish that sort of a dictate." Earlier, this claim had been made by India with the view to thwart the multi-billion dollar connectivity project that will link Gwadar to China's Xinjiang.

Existence of this dirty nexus has been well known for quite some time, but Americans were publically maintaining obscurity. Now the US has emerged from the shadow and is standing rock firm behind India. Something better has happened in the form of Mad Dog's confession, it will be easier to handle the unholy alliance. China and Pakistan have already issued the rebuttal. After facing a strategic fiasco in Doklam, India is all set to engage China in proxy war in Balochistan with the objective of disrupting implementation of China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). On behest of India, separatist Baloch elements have widened the focus to jointly demonize China and Pakistan.

A fairly stable political process in Balochistan does not support the views of separatist elements, that is why these disgruntled dissidents are afraid to become part of political process, and they rely on staying abroad and remote controlling the handful supporters to carryout terrorist activities in Balochistan and beyond. A potent Indian intelligence network operates from neighbouring Iran and Afghanistan. Iran was caught unaware with the capture of Indian Naval

Commander Kulbhushan Jadhav, who was stationed at Chabahar port city of Iran. Iran was not aware that India was clandestinely using its soil for carrying out terrorist activities in Balochistan. Iran has assured Pakistan, at the highest level, that it won't allow any third party to use its territory for illegitimate acts.

Earlier last month, India had spent huge amount in arranging display of Free Balochistan posters in Geneva, on the eve of 36th session of Human Rights Council. End result was embarrassing for India as a number of Indian organizations struggling for right of self-determination, autonomy and independence from India were quick to pick the cues and display similar banners for their respective cause.

On September 30, Harbyar Mari's "Free Balochistan Movement" (FBM) organized a protest in Gottingen, Germany on the eve of "Chinese National Day". This has been done on the line of Indian tune of obnoxious narrative about China's neo-colonialism and human rights violations in Balochistan. Protest organizers stated that "China and Pakistan nexus is aimed to turn Baloch demography into a minority". Baloch Student Organization-Azad (BSO) has also held a demonstration outside 10 Downing Street on October 01 to highlight Pakistan's alleged "war crimes in Balochistan".

As tide has been turned on India financed terrorism in Balochistan, and space has been squeezed on Indian proxies in Balochistan, India has hired dissidents to keep the issue stirring in European capitals. The core objective is to disrupt progress on CPEC. Nonetheless India is in a terrible lag, as most of the CPEC related projects are near completion. India faces critical strategic choices in Asia, and must contend with complex geopolitical uncertainties imposed by a powerful and assertive China, but India is not ready to reconcile with peaceful rise of China. India is doing whatever it could to impede peaceful rise of China.

In an article carried by Carnegie India, Rajesh Rajagopalan, a professor of international politics at Jawaharlal Nehru University, has argued that partnership with the United States is the most effective approach to outpace China's growth. In his article captioned: "India's Strategic Choices: China and the Balance of Power in Asia", Rajesh adds: "Though India has considerable military power, China's forces are already stronger and better-funded...China's alignment with Pakistan and deepening relations with other South Asian countries represents a significant

challenge to India's position in the region...". He worries that " Beijing's ability to provide financial assistance and balance against New Delhi may tempt India's smaller neighbours to play one power against the other, undermining India in its own backyard".

Write conveniently turns blind eye on the Indian role of financing favourite parties during previous elections in some of the South Asian countries, more specifically Sri Lanka and Bangladesh. Moreover India's arm twisting of Nepal and Bhutan during Modi era has forced South Asian countries to look towards China as savior against Indian high handedness. India's strategic failure to stand on its feet during Doklam crisis has sent across a strong message that India in no match to China.

Like the US, China phobia is overtaking rational Indian calculus as well. And with Modi in the driving seat, India is more likely to be less inclined towards a reality check. Tool readily available to India for fighting China is to impede execution of CPEC related projects through proxies. Now with big brother at its beck and call, India is likely to become more emboldened in its anti-CPEC spree.

—The writer is a freelance columnist based in Islamabad.

Email: [Iqbal.khan9999@yahoo.com](mailto:Iqbal.khan9999@yahoo.com)

Source: <http://pakobserver.net/nasty-indo-us-nexus-bares-teeth/>

# Yemen Conflict: No End in Sight By M Waqar Anwar

THE Middle East has a long history of conflicts and the region is currently still in turmoil because of the ongoing militancy, and struggle for power. The Yemen Saudi conflict added a new face to the security landscape in the region, and there has been a constant surge in hostilities from March 19, 2015 up till now. The war has caused a lot of collateral damage and transformed into a humanitarian crisis. Therefore, it's pertinent to dig into the root causes of the conflict, which has culminated into a full-fledged air campaign against the poorest country of the region by the wealthiest country.

The origins of the conflict can be traced back to the so-called 'Arab Spring' which culminated in to tumult and catastrophe for many Arab countries. The Houthi insurgency against the Yemeni government had continued since 2004, waxing and waning at different times. The situation exacerbated in 2009, drawing Saudi Arabia in it but became silenced soon. The 'Arab Spring' had its reverberations felt across Yemen in the form of a Yemeni revolution. The Houthi leadership sided with the protestors for the removal of the President Ali Abdullah Saleh. Later, Saleh left the office and the Houthis boycotted the 2012 elections, which resulted in the victory of Mansoor Hadi.

The fighting in 2014 culminated in the capture of Sanaa, the capital of Yemen in September, and in the start of 2015 laid a seizure on the presidential palace. After a month of the seizure President Hadi managed to move out of the capital to Aden. The actual conflict started on 19 March 2015, when the troops loyal to President Hadi and those against him fought at the Aden Airport. The fighting reached Aden, and President Hadi fled to Saudi Arabia.

As of October 2016, the war in Yemen has caused almost 10,000 people dead including 5000 civilians according to the UN and almost 3 million people have been displaced. 19 million which constitute 80% of the total population are in dire need of humanitarian aid. Looking from another angle, despite all the sectarian strands associated with the conflict, it also depicts the internal rift between various factions in Yemen. The element of domestic power struggle can't be ruled out. The 'Arab Spring' protests and the resignation of Ali Abdullah Saleh who had ruled Yemen

for almost 33 years resigned paving the road for Houthi insurgency. In the power struggle between the Houthis and the Islamists, the former resorted to partner with their adversary, Ali Abdullah Saleh. In a long rule spanning over 33 years, Ali Abdullah Saleh had mastered the art of playing with all sides and the Houthis slipped into his side. Although the goal of the Houthis remains unclear, the objective of Saleh is quite clear; he doesn't want Hadi to become president. Therefore, the war in Yemen is a conflict of personalities.

The conflict can be resolved if a personality acceptable to all the fighting groups, mediates. The issue must be resolved without wasting time, as there has been much loss of human life and property. It seems that the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has been trapped into the US double game as it has made a deal with Iran, thus bolstering its role as a regional power and afterwards making a US\$350 arms deal with Saudi Arabia. The Kingdom claims that it is being surrounded by Iran from three sides, and that Iran is supporting the rebel movements. In this situation, the Kingdom should understand the intricacies of the duplicitous role of the US, and tread carefully to save itself from economic crisis. The war in Yemen is draining the Saudi economy, with many mega projects on the stand still. The Kingdom will have to realize the ongoing power politics in the region, and should decide to act in a wise manner.

— The writer is Research Assistant at the South Asian Strategic Stability Institute, a think-tank based in Islamabad

Email: mwaqaranwar87@gmail.com

Source: <http://pakobserver.net/yemen-conflict-no-end-sight/>



## Rising US-Iran Tension | Editorial

ACCORDING to world media, US President Donald Trump may call for the Iranian Revolutionary Guards to be designated a terrorist group as part of a tougher strategy against Iran to be announced in the coming days. Reacting to reports, Iran said on Tuesday that the United States would be siding with the so-called militant Islamic State (IS) group if it designated the Guards as a terrorist organisation.

Analysts say the US move would have a limited impact on the Guards that are already heavily sanctioned but Iran's Foreign Ministry spokesman has threatened of firm, decisive and crushing response if it went ahead. This is not the only issue as President Trump has made his intentions known to unilaterally scrap the nuclear deal, which his country signed with Tehran along with Britain, France, Germany, China and Russia. This is despite the fact that Iran has stuck to its commitments under the accord yet instead of lifting sanctions already imposed on the country the United States is threatening to impose more. Trump must decide by October 15 whether to rectify Iran's compliance with the nuclear deal it signed with world powers in 2015. It is widely expected that Trump will not rectify Iran, saying it is no longer in the US national interest, giving Congress 60 days to decide whether to re-impose sanctions. Brewing tension with Iran comes at a time when the region is already volatile due to negative fallout of the Trump's Afghanistan and South Asia strategy that lays more emphasis on use of force and arms-twisting than peaceful resolution of the conflict through talks and dialogue. This would be dangerous for regional security, peace and might create further problems for trans-national developmental and economic projects that different countries of the region have planned. We hope that China and Russia would play their role in not only saving the nuclear accord with Iran, which Trumps wants to scrap apparently under Jewish influence, but also see to it that the commitments undertaken by world power in respect of lifting of sanctions against Iran are fulfilled. Otherwise, such accords and guarantees would lose credibility in future.

Source: <http://pakobserver.net/rising-us-iran-tension/>

## Time to Ratify the CTBT By Rizwan Asghar

Over the past two decades, the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty Organization (CTBTO) has emerged as one of the top-tier international organizations with an impressive record of achievements. The International Monitoring System and on-site inspection capabilities have made it impossible for any state to conduct nuclear tests without being caught.

The world has been waiting for a complete ban on nuclear testing for almost five decades. As of October 2017, 183 states have signed and 166 have ratified the treaty. However, despite having worldwide support and state-of-the-art detection capabilities, the CTBT languishes in a state of limbo created by an unwillingness on the part of certain countries to ratify the treaty. The lack of concrete progress on the nuclear test accord has led to frustration among many non-nuclear weapon states.

The Trump administration remains annoyingly silent, showing little willingness to consider the treaty on its merits. Historically, the United States has always been a key advocate of agreements to support nuclear testing. President Eisenhower and his successor John F. Kennedy devoted a great deal of effort to negotiate a comprehensive ban but could not succeed because compliance with the CTBT was unverifiable at that point in time. The early signs of opposition to the CTBT emerged in the early 1980s because of security related concerns.

The road to the twin goals of nuclear nonproliferation and disarmament goes through a universal ratification of the CTBT. A test ban treaty would prevent China from further advancing its nuclear capabilities and stop the vertical proliferation of nuclear weapons in the existing nuclear states

The failure of the US to ratify the test ban treaty in 1999 struck a major blow to the existing global nonproliferation disorder. After 2008, the Obama administration expressed a commitment to move forward on the nuclear disarmament agenda. But the CTBT remains unfinished business. The Obama administration's efforts to start negotiations were hamstrung by partisan differences and a strained relationship between the White House and Congress.

Under the Trump administration, the likely prospects of US Senate holding another vote on CTBT's ratification are not too bright because the ratification of the treaty requires a significant investment of political capital from the White House. Influential Republicans in the Senate are also opposed to the idea of taking another look at the nuclear test ban treaty. While opponents of the CTBT frequently mention the possible vulnerability of America's nuclear arsenal, domestic politics will shape any future outcome of the treaty.

Some experts argue that the political circumstances for the ratification of the CTBT might not be ripe today. Notwithstanding the plausibility of this view, pitching nuclear testing ban as an issue of national security in the US can help prevent it from once again becoming a victim of partisan politics.

One of the reasons why the CTBT was rejected by the US Senate in 1999 was the lack of knowledge about its security benefits in the days leading up to the vote. Opponents of the CTBT argue that nuclear testing is required to maintain a high level of confidence in nuclear stockpiles in the United States. However, this argument is no longer valid since, under the science-based Stockpile Stewardship and Management Program, the US does not need to resort to nuclear testing to maintain the safety and reliability of its existing nuclear-weapon stockpiles.

Another point of criticism is that CTBT's monitoring and verification systems are not capable of preventing cheating by identifying secret nuclear tests. Even this argument does not withstand scrutiny. The CTBTO has a very sustainable and verification regime. The International Monitoring System (IMS) with its 321 monitoring stations and 16 radionuclide laboratories is fully operational and capable of detecting nuclear explosions anywhere across the globe.

There is a strong political imperative for the US Senate to reevaluate the merits of CTBT with a fresh perspective. Strong bipartisanship and a well-executed ratification campaign can help CTBT advocates turn the tide in their favour. Any future vote on the CTBT must be preceded by extensive hearings that address the concerns of the treaty's opponents. A multi-pronged strategy is required that is aimed at building bipartisan support in US Senate. Disarmament advocates should particularly approach those Republican senators who have not been exposed to this debate before and educate them about the benefits of the treaty.

If the US takes the lead and ratifies the treaty, it will restore its credibility on nuclear nonproliferation issues. It will serve as a catalyst for similar action by other states. US ratification will set in motion a good domino effect, pushing many other states – including China, India, Pakistan and possibly Iran – to ratify the treaty.

The road to the twin goals of nuclear nonproliferation and disarmament goes through a universal ratification of the CTBT. A test ban treaty would prevent China from further advancing its nuclear capabilities and stop the vertical proliferation of nuclear weapons in the existing nuclear states. Since CTBT imposes a zero-yield ban on the testing of nuclear weapons, it will be difficult for other nations to cheat.

As a republican president, Donald Trump has greater political ability to make sure that the US ratifies the treaty. The greatest arms control cuts in the past 40 years have been done by republican presidents. The ratification of the CTBT will not only promote nuclear disarmament but also help us reach the ultimate goal of elimination of all nuclear weapons from the face of the earth.

As a CTBTO youth member, I feel a strong urge to engage on this issue and produce policy initiative to help win negotiations for the CTBT. Pakistan should also ratify the CTBT and play its role in making the world a better place for the next generation.

The writer is a PhD scholar at University of California, Davis, and a CTBTO youth member. He can be reached at [rasghar@ucdavis.edu](mailto:rasghar@ucdavis.edu)

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# What is Behind Turkish-US Crisis? By Akhtar Jamal

The decades-old strategic and cordial relationship between Turkey and the United States is now has reached a lowest point with Washington suspending non-immigrant visas for Turkish nationals and restricting travel of Americans to Turkey. When Turkey reacted to the US move and imposed its own restrictions on American nationals, the US Embassy in Turkey explained “this suspension of services is not a visa ban on Turkish citizens...It’s a suspension of our consideration of new visa applications.”

Speaking to Diplomatic Correspondents Association in Ankara on October 11, 2017 the outgoing US Ambassador John R. Bass maintained: “It appears they’ve been detained simply for performing their normal duties at the Embassy or Consulates which involved a lot of contact with Turkish government officials.

Following deterioration of ties Turkish Prime Minister Binali Yildirim tried to defuse the tension on October 11, 2017 and said that Ankara was looking forward to a normalization of US-Turkey relations.

“Our wish is that relations between the two allies get back to normal soon. We, as Turkey, will not give up on common sense at a time when regional and global tensions have been rising,” Yildirim said, addressing governors on Oct. 11 in Ankara.

Apparently the relations touched the lowest point after Turkey arrested a US consulate Turkish employee on charges of linked with the Gulen’s FETO movement. The diplomatic spat worsened after another US consulate official was summoned for questioning as a suspect in an unidentified case late on Oct. 9, 2017. Media reports claimed that many other wanted suspects were hiding within the US Embassy and Consulates in Turkey. Prime Minister Binali Yildirim’s reconciliatory remarks came one day after President Recep Tayyip Erdogan accused the US of triggering the crisis. Anatolia news agency quoted the President Erdogan as saying: “The offender in this problem is the US itself.” “If the outgoing US Ambassador to Ankara, John Bass, acted on his own in suspending visa services in Turkey, Washington should recall him from the country, Erdogan said,

adding that Ankara “does not consider Bass to be Washington’s legitimate representative in Turkey.”

The relations further worsened when a spokesperson for the US Department confirmed late on Oct. 10 that the US’s decision to suspend visa services at diplomatic facilities in Turkey was coordinated with the State Department, the White House and the National Security Council, adding that Ambassador Bass had the “full backing” of the US government. The suspension of visa services in Turkey “punishes ordinary citizens” and the problem must be resolved immediately “through dialogue,” Prime Minister Binali Yildirim told the ruling Justice and Development Party (AKP) group meeting. Reports say that two locally employed US consulate staff members in Turkey had been arrested early this year on charges related to last year’s failed coup elements. The second arrest at the Istanbul consulate, Metin Topuz, last week led to the US announcing on Oct. 8, 2017 that it had stopped issuing non-immigrant visas in Turkey – a move reciprocated within hours by Ankara.

Hopes for improvement of ties were once again high when Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu and the US Secretary of State Rex Tillerson held their first telephonic talks on October 11, 2017 since new crisis developed. But an official statement issued by the US State Department again dashed the expectations of Turkish officials and particularly media.

A brief statement issued on October 11, 2017 by the Spokesperson of US State Department said “Secretary Tillerson spoke today with Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu. Secretary Tillerson conveyed to the Foreign Minister his profound concern over the detentions of Turkish national employees of our diplomatic mission to Turkey and of several American citizens.” Without mentioning Turkey’s concerns the US statement further added: “Secretary Tillerson emphasized the importance of transparency in the accusations made by the Turkish government and the need for the Turkish government to present the evidence behind these accusations.”

The US statement also made it clear that “Secretary Tillerson and Foreign Minister Cavusoglu agreed the two sides would remain in close contact to address US concerns about these detentions.”

The American “visa embargo” as the Turks perceive it, further strained Turkish American relations already troubled with issues related to Iraqi and Syrian Kurdish developments along with the presence of an Islamist mullah in the United States, whom Ankara believes to have masterminded the July 15, 2016 coup attempt.

Middle East watchers believe that the arrest of Turkish staff working with US mission or US officials’ alleged links with last year’s failed coup d’etat elements are not the only reason that led to this crisis but US policy in Middle East, support for creation of a Kurdish state (which threatens Turkey’s integrity), US collaborations with Kurdish and other armed groups in Syria, Turkish-Russian rapprochement, Ankara’s quest for S-400 and Turkish-Iranian “understanding” are the real disputes between two NATO allies.

A senior analyst and an advisor of President Erdogan, Mr. Ilnur Cevik asked in Daily Sabah on October 11, 2017 “Is the US our ally or our adversary” and commented “The fact that the US has been extremely sluggish in processing Ankara’s extradition request for FETÖ leader Fetullah Gülen, who lives in Pennsylvania, and that he is treated more as a guest rather than a coup suspect has raised eyebrows in Turkey.”

Mr. Ilnur Cevik added “ The fact that the US has allowed FETÖ members to roam in the US and continue their activities against the Turkish government has created the impression that the US is more than involved in the coup.” Writing in Daily Saba another columnist Ms. Mevre Sebnem (Shebnem) Uruc (Uruch) commented on October 11, 2017 “The evidence for the US Embassy scandal unfortunately proves Turks right in their suspicion that the US had a hand in last year’s coup attempt.”

Ms. Mevre Sebnem noted that “.if someone turns out to be affiliated with a terrorist organization that is seen as an existential threat for Turkey and responsible for the killings of many Turkish citizens, the US sees the case as a matter of freedom and democracy.” In her column Ms. Mevre Shebnem also explained that “ The US has also been backing the Democratic Union Party’s (PYD) People’s Protection Units (YPG), which is the northern Syrian affiliate of the outlawed PKK (Kurdish terrorist wing), by sending tons of arms and ammunition, a part of which has been carried to Turkey and used in attacks in Turkey. Turkish authorities have shown evidence to their counterparts in Washington many times, but the US administration has done nothing but ignore it so far.” PM Yildirim was also quoted by media as saying

“If we are to continue as allies, the US should stop giving arms to Turkey’s enemies, the cousins and nephews of the PKK.”

– The writer is working journalist based in Islamabad.

Email:pakpress@yahoo.com

Source: <http://pakobserver.net/behind-turkish-us-crisis/>



# Decertifying Iran Nuclear Deal By Yasmeeen Aftab Ali

An error of historic proportions by Trump

Decertifying the nuclear deal with Iran, Trump stops short of scrapping it altogether and sending the deal to his parliamentarians asking them to virtually rewrite the conditions under which sanctions may be imposed upon Iran- giving them a period of 60 days.

Bad move.

Trump is also poised to nominate Iran's security force Revolutionary Guard Corp as a terrorist organisation. Reportedly Trump is giving encouragement to America's allies to impose sanctions on Iran's ballistic missile program-both these steps not being a part of the nuclear deal.

Very bad move.

Iran can and will blame U.S of not complying with Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) which basically spells out that sanctions will not be imposed so long Iran complies with the agreement. According to the agreement, the United Nations' organisation the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) holds complete and sole authority to determine whether or not Iran is complying with the agreed terms. The IAEA has on numerous times attested to Iran complying with the agreed terms.

Positions are already being taken by nations of the world on this crucial issue. Israel and Saudi Arabia have predictably supported Trump's America. Israel had tried its utmost to stop the deal going through, going to the length of the Israeli President addressing a joint session of U.S Congress throwing his weight against the U.S lawmakers approving the deal. Saudi Arabia's proxy war supporting its brand of Islam; Wahhabism vis a vis a predominant Shi'ite Iran was bound to lend support to Trump.

Vali Nasr {Dean of Johns Hopkins University's School of Advanced International Studies} writes, "Refusing to confirm Iran's compliance while laying out a broad case against Iran will, in effect, invite Congress to impose new sanctions. But if other signatories to the deal side with Iran in declaring the United States in violation and resist U.S. pressure to curtail their business dealings with Iran, all that "decertification" will achieve will be to open a rift between the United States and its European allies, Russia and China. On the other hand, if the United States wins over its allies, the deal will be dead — and everyone can go back to worrying about war with a nuclear-armed Iran." (The Washington Post October 12, 2017)

China is already supporting the deal as an excellent example of resolving an issue through talks. Russia is on the same page with China and most EU nations and support recertifying of the deal.

The refusal to recertify the deal will push Iran the North Korea way- and Trump already feels threatened by North Korea. Will Trump not feel threatened then by Iran if he is already feeling threatened when Iran has a deal and obligated to fulfill her part of the deal?

By reneging on an international agreement will U.S not be projecting herself as an unreliable partner to enter into a deal with?

Since his campaign speeches, Trump has declared this one as an 'embarrassment'. However, once in seat of the President, the view needs to be broad based.

Trump's ground of questioning the deal is very simplistic. "What is the purpose of a deal that at best only delays Iran's nuclear capability for a short period of time? This, as president of the United States, is unacceptable," Trump said in the Friday address." (Scott Horsley: npr: October 13, 2017) One thing predictable in international relations is that it's unpredictable. Instead of basing a decision of today based on a fear of tomorrow the decision of today should be based on confidence of an even better relationship between both nations and a friendlier Iran of tomorrow.

A very serious angle here is Iran's importance in seeking peace in Afghanistan. The element of a lack of trust caused by this denial by Trump to nullify the deal will

lead to duplicity and suspicion in dealing with the Afghan issue. Iran wields influence over western Afghanistan especially in Herat. It was Iran's closeness with the Northern Alliance that supported US in overthrowing the Taliban way back in 2001.

Central Asia and Southwest Asia including Turkey, Armenia, Pakistan, Turkmenistan and Azerbaijan along with The Persian Gulf and the Caucasus share borders with Iran. Afghanistan has her second largest border with Iran, a geographical fact that must not be overlooked.

The decertifying of Iran nuclear deal will lead to stress and tension in the region with a spillover effect on creating peace in Afghanistan. Iran will not be very forthcoming to support US in the changed scenario.

Not everyone in U.S and White House is in agreement with Trump. "Mattis, who was testifying before Congress, was asked directly by Senator Angus King (I-ME) if he thought it was in the U.S. interest to remain in the deal, to which Mattis replied, "Yes, I do." (Haaretz, Oct 10, 2017)

Michael Morell who served as acting and deputy director of the Central Intelligence Agency under former US President Barack Obama states, "Decertification is inconsistent with the facts. The president's own national security team has said publicly that the Iranians are not in material breach of the agreement. Depending on what Congress does, decertification could be the first step in the US walking away from the deal, which—in the absence of a material breach by the Iranians—would be a strategic mistake of historic proportion. Regardless of what Congress does, decertification will strengthen the hardliners in Iran and it will drive a wedge between us and our European allies—both self-inflicted wounds."

Will Trump rethink this one or lead America to open yet another front?

Source: <https://www.pakistantoday.com.pk/2017/10/16/decertifying-iran-nuclear-deal/>

# Trump's Afghan Policy déjà vu ? By Syed Qamar Afzal Rizvi

GIVEN the context of the former Afghan President Hamid Karzai's critical approach vis-à-vis US policy in Afghanistan, and in the given backdrop of US war strategy, there appears a logical appeal/connotation that Trump's approach of sending more 3,800 military troops to Afghanistan is by no means a rational step towards peacemaking process in the region. Should not Washington's warmongering-policymakers pay heed to a collective wisdom approach: the foundational problem of the ongoing conflict is political and diplomatic and will not be solved militarily? Yet the redemption from the ongoing the Afghan crisis lies in an instrumentally backed non- power incrementalist approach.

In theory, US strategy in Afghanistan has been to train an Afghan army that can fight Al-Qaeda, Taliban, and now the Islamic State, and then largely to withdraw. But a reality check shows that US has been unable to fulfil this objective. Former Afghan president Hamid Karzai recently questioned how, under the watch of US intelligence and military – the militant Islamic State (IS) group emerged in Afghanistan over past few years. “The US came to Afghanistan to bring peace and stability and defeat extremism, [yet] we have more of it today. Why? That is what we should be discussing,” Karzai said. “Clearly bombings, killings, prisons and harassment of people [in Afghanistan] have not worked.”

The 16 years US/NATO-led military intervention in Afghanistan is not yet without consequences on the ground. The transatlantic community which might have rejoiced in advancing an active contribution of a panoply of actors with a wide range of instruments, is still unable to achieve unity of effort. The perceived capability gaps are not being filled, thereof lacking efficiency and efficacy of existing means—resulting in a demand for “more”. “It's not just a little different, it's very different,” says Michael Crane, a retired Major General who commanded Australian forces in the ME including Afghanistan in 2007 and again in 2013. “Afghanistan is a very difficult problem. You have remote mountain areas, border problems, corruption, no real sense of nation. And the Taliban is a very determined enemy.”

The Taliban told US President Donald Trump in an open letter that the military situation in Afghanistan was “far worse than you realize”, and sending in more troops would be self-destructive. “Previous experiences have shown that sending more troops to Afghanistan will not result in anything other than further destruction of American military and economical might,” the Taliban said in the lengthy letter.

Trump’s divergent Afghan policy seeks a non-pragmatic departure from Obama’s quasi-exit strategy in Afghanistan. There is much logic in the argument that President Trump’s approach to repeat the policies of past two administrations—by trying to apply yet more combat power to a fundamentally political and diplomatic problem—will dither the scope of peace. Even if the NATO forces succeed to destroy the terrorist networks, Al-Qaeda, IS and any other terrorist groups that arise in the region, the Afghan government is not headed toward effective governance. Consequently, this exchange lays the groundwork for the US military to, literally, be made Armed Forces of the Afghan state forever.

According to the Brookings policy brief on Afghanistan: Successive US Administrations have struggled to articulate the basis for evolving US policy objectives in Afghanistan, and for sustaining a US military presence there. The administration should seek to distinguish its strategy from those pursued by the previous two Administrations and remind the American public that an ongoing partnership with the Afghan government has served US security interests by providing a hub for critical counter-terrorism-related intelligence collection and special operations.

In view of some critics, US National Security Advisor Gen (Retd) McMaster, the author of ‘In Dereliction of Duty’ and a principal architect of the extension of retreading an Afghan policy designed to simply buy time and avoid defeat can hardly upset the Afghan apple cart in US’ favour simply because he is not rightly reminded of the Vietnam War déjà vu. This deliberate indifference shown by the US-Afghan policy-makers to the lessons of history is a dangerous recourse. Trump’s power-oriented incrementalism in Afghanistan is an antithesis to peace in the region.

Probably incrementalism may temporarily assist holding the line against a resurgent Taliban, but it is absolutely unlikely to change the course of the longest war in US history and may be a recipe for endless war without immediate victory. James Sisco, a retired Navy intelligence officer who served as a US military liaison

and adviser to then-Afghan President Hamid Karzai, was another champion of the short-lived tribal engagement strategy and is also deeply skeptical that adding US troops again will make a difference. “Four or five years from now, you’ll see no change, and we will still be talking about it,” Sisco said.

Today, Afghanistan needs strategic implementation of US’ exit strategy, negating a bigger strategic game, regulated and graduated by such instrumentalist policies that are made through a pluralistic process of partisan mutual adjustment in which a multiplicity of participants focus on proposals thereby incrementally changing the current status quo via trilateral policy dimension in Afghanistan: 1) all, or at least most, social interests must be represented; 2) political resources must be balanced sufficiently among groups that no one dominates; and 3) political stakeholders must be moderate and pragmatic, permitting a convergence to an ever-evolving political gamut. Therefore, the resumption of quadrilateral peace dialogue in Muscat is a positive development.

— The writer, an independent ‘IR’ researcher-cum-analyst based in Karachi, is a member of European Consortium for Political Research Standing Group on IR, Critical Peace & Conflict Studies.

Email: [rizvipeace researcher@gmail.com](mailto:rizvipeace researcher@gmail.com)

Source: <http://pakobserver.net/trumps-afghan-policy-deja-vu/>

## Nuclear Politics in South Asia By Asma Khalid

The strategic framework in South Asia is comprised of a bipolar equation between India and Pakistan, inter-connected with a regional security complex and other major powers. In South Asia, it is believed that peace and stability can only come about with nuclear weapons.

Nuclear arsenal is characterised as a great equaliser and the ultimate tool to counter the adversary's present or future conventional strength. Pakistan's strategists identify conventional military imbalance to that of India's and believe nuclear weapons are a safe alternative to avoid a dangerous conventional arms race. India should realise that by developing nuclear weapons and compelling Pakistan to follow suit, it has neutralised its conventional advantage.

United States' commitment to facilitate India's entry into export control regimes and Security Council has complicated the regional security environment

Moreover, nuclear weapons have played a significant role to revolutionise the relations amongst major powers and South Asian states. The positive trajectory of Indo-US nexus, and Trump's 'do more' rhetoric for Pakistan has made South Asia's strategic environment more complex and unpredictable. South Asian politics are going through profound changes since the announcement of a new US strategy regarding Afghanistan.

The role of South Asia in the strategic calculations of the US cannot be ignored due to its continued interests in West and Central Asia. Pakistan-US relations have been in a critical position since President Donald Trump criticised Pakistan foreign policy in August this year. Trump's harsh rhetoric shows that the Indo-US nexus is getting deeper in contemporary regional politics. Two factors are playing a compelling role to bring the US and India close, firstly the economic rise of China and the development of CPEC.

Secondly, Afghanistan is the main bone of contention in Pakistan-US relations. The US believes that the growing economic role of China and Russia's resurgence in Afghanistan will affect the political influence and strategic interests of the US in the region. These factors are playing a key role in maintaining strong strategic ties between India and the US.

Trump's inclination towards India is due to its' policy of containment of China and strategic interests in Asia is attracting greater attention on New Delhi. For this purpose, the US is vigorously assisting India in modernising and enlarging its nuclear forces. Recent trends reveal that India is pursuing a long-term programme for conventional and nuclear force modernisation to achieve strategic objectives.

These objectives are manifested through the development of advanced technology and forced multiplier conventional weapon systems as well as improvement in ballistic missile and anti-ballistic missile system. India has many operational missiles in its inventory. India's expanding nuclear capabilities with the significant improvement in range, accuracy, payload and reliability, is not only forcing the regional states to enhance their capabilities to ensure their security, but also to have the potential to impact the nuclear geometry of South Asia.

New challenges to security and peace are rising in the region. In a crisis, to maintain peace and stability in region, Pakistan is required to continue qualitative and quantitative improvements in its conventional and missile arsenals to offset the impact of India's proactive operations (CSD) and Ballistic Missile Defence system. Pakistan on its part has responded to these challenges by developing a short-range, low yield, battle field weapon named as "NASR" and surface-to-surface ballistic missile, Ababeel. These developments are capable to demonstrate the complete credibility of its nuclear deterrence posture. Significant contributions of 'Nasar' and 'Ababeel' in the defence arrangements of Pakistan are bargaining chips to negotiate stability and security in South Asia. Another striking issue is that non-proliferation regimes especially MTCR and NSG are subjected to manipulation by the US for its own interest contrary to the purposes for the creation of such regimes. Such as India's accession of Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR) and the US support to India's entry into nuclear cartels (NSG) while giving a false impression that it is neutral in this case, they have had the ability to pose deleterious effects on the India-Pakistan nuclear equation.

In the geo-strategic landscape of South Asia, Pakistan's strategic partnership with China will have a balancing impact on growing strategic ties between India and US. Encapsulated by the US-India civil Nuclear deal. The United States' commitments to facilitate India's entry into export control regimes and Security Council has complicated the regional security environment. At the same time,



Pakistan's efforts to strengthen strategic partnerships with China and close ties with Russia will not be acceptable for president Trump. Pakistan should respond accordingly to these challenges by enhancing its nuclear capabilities as India is purchasing nuclear technology under the umbrella of Indo-US nuclear deal.

To conclude, the growing conventional and strategic force asymmetry between India and Pakistan, strong Indo-US nexus and India's persuasion of regional war hysteria are the factors driving the region towards instability. In the evolving regional security dynamic, Pakistan needs to take necessary measures to maintain a full spectrum deterrence capability to safeguard national security and deter foreign aggression. Major powers, particularly the United States should implement policies to conciliate India-Pakistan rather than instigating instability in the South Asian region.

The writer is currently working as Research Associate at Strategic Vision Institute and can be reached [asmaakhalid\\_90@hotmail.com](mailto:asmaakhalid_90@hotmail.com)

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# Managing A Nuclear North Korea: More Is Not Better – Analysis By Bernard F.W. Loo

Given North Korea's nuclear ambitions, is the best way to manage security and stability in Northeast Asia to encourage both Japan and South Korea to acquire their respective independent nuclear arsenals? Or will this proposal more likely encourage greater instability and bring the region closer to nuclear cataclysm?

By Bernard F.W. Loo\*

If we accept that North Korea's nuclear ambitions will continue, and that the reclusive state will eventually possess a working nuclear weapon that can be delivered by the ballistic and cruise missiles that it is also developing, the question is how a nuclear-armed North Korea can be managed such as to maintain stability in Northeast Asia?

One argument that has been forwarded is that deterring North Korea from using its nuclear capabilities will be to encourage both Japan and South Korea to acquire their own independent nuclear arsenals. This is the phenomenon of horizontal proliferation of nuclear weapons, paralleling the argument forwarded by the pre-eminent scholar Kenneth Waltz in 1981 that "more may be better".

Will the Waltz Scenario Work?

This argument recognises that Japan, in particular, will face an especially difficult transition towards its own nuclear arsenal. China will surely object as strenuously as possible, and attempt to marshal regional opinion in support of its position by raising the spectre of Japan's World War II history. South Korea is the most likely candidate, given its well-known position on Japan's World War II history.

Furthermore, if China succeeds in mobilising South Korea to support Beijing's opposition to a Japanese nuclear arsenal, this can have the added consequence of unravelling the United States-South Korea security relationship.

Nevertheless, as the argument goes, such attempts will likely fail. A nuclear-armed Japan and South Korea can comfortably remain within the ambit of a security partnership with the US. And in the long run, a Northeast Asian version of mutually assured destruction (MAD for short), the doctrine that allegedly kept the Cold War from tipping over into a nuclear war, will ensure that North Korea is deterred, that it will not commit any rash acts with its own nuclear weapons. However, the argument is fatally flawed, for the following reasons.

#### MAD as a Uniquely US Doctrine

Firstly, it is doubtful that the stability of superpower relations during the Cold War was due to the doctrine of MAD. To begin with, MAD was a doctrine promulgated by the US to address the situation of nuclear parity with the Soviet Union. The US then patently structured its nuclear forces into a strategic triad, dividing its nuclear arsenal more or less equitably between air-launched nuclear weapons, land-based and submarine-launched ballistic missiles.

This was to ensure that even if the US was targeted by a massive Soviet nuclear attack, the former would have enough survivable second-strike capability that could bring upon the latter unacceptable levels of damage.

However, the Soviet Union's nuclear force structure, based principally on its land-based ballistic missiles and retaining only a small proportion of nuclear weapons in strategic bombers and submarines, suggested that it did not subscribe to MAD.

Rather, this force structure suggested that the Soviet Union believed in a doctrine whereby in the event of a superpower war, it would launch a massive attack against the US designed to completely destroy the latter.

In other words, MAD might have plausibly persuaded the US that it did not need to initiate nuclear war; the same cannot be definitively said of the Soviet Union.

#### From MAD to a Mexican Standoff in Northeast Asia?

Secondly, for MAD to work, the Soviet Union and the US required sufficient early warning of a land-based nuclear launch, the principal arm of the strategic triad – given their relative accuracy – that would have been used to attack each other's nuclear forces. The early warning systems that both superpowers maintained provided them with a reaction time of approximately 30 minutes.

Presumably, this would have been sufficient time for sufficient numbers of strategic bombers to deploy for a retaliatory strike against the adversary. Further retaliatory capability was maintained in the ballistic missile submarines that were already deployed in the vicinity of their respective launch areas.

In other words, it is precisely the mechanics of MAD that preclude such a doctrine from being fruitfully applied to a scenario of a nuclear-armed Northeast Asia. To begin with, the likely nuclear forces of these countries will be so small as to preclude the existence of a retaliatory capability that can survive a nuclear pre-emptive first strike and still possess sufficient capacity to punish the aggressor for its pre-emptive nuclear attack.

Thirdly, the region is simply too compact, such that warning times of a pre-emptive first strike will be virtually non-existent. In November 1979, a computer glitch led US defence officials to believe that the Soviet Union had launched 250 land-based ballistic missiles. In this instance, the US President had between five and seven minutes to make a decision to launch retaliatory forces.

US land-based ballistic missile crews and B-52 bombers were readied, and it took about six minutes for the computer error to be recognised as the source of the problem. Given the significantly shorter distances separating the states of Northeast Asia, such time to ascertain and verify will be virtually non-existent.

#### Preemptive Strike Increasingly Attractive?

Finally, and stemming from the preceding observations, this will then generate significant pressures on policymakers in Pyongyang, Seoul and Tokyo to “use them or lose them”. Pre-emptive strikes will become an increasingly attractive, even necessary, policy option at the slightest hint of a political crisis that might result in nuclear devastation if one side hesitates.

Of course, the preceding observations include the worst-case scenarios. Nevertheless, even if the worst case does not eventuate, horizontal proliferation will create a Mexican standoff, where none of the states involved can afford to back down. Tension becomes a more or less permanent feature of the relationship.

However, in such a standoff, the actors involved have to have cool heads, they have to want to maintain the standoff without recourse to shooting. They cannot cough, cannot make any sudden movements; otherwise, disaster may happen.

\*Bernard F.W. Loo is Associate Professor at the Institute of Defence and Strategic Studies, Rajaratnam School of International Studies (RSIS), Nanyang Technological University, Singapore.

Source: <http://www.eurasiareview.com/20102017-managing-a-nuclear-north-korea-more-is-not-better-analysis/>

# United Nations — Achievements and Failures

## By Mohammad Jamil

TODAY, United Nations Day is being observed throughout the world; seminars, concerts and meetings are being held in New York, Geneva and The Hague and its offices in other countries. They highlight its achievements in the realm of protecting human rights and economic development of developing countries. The UN participates in activities ranging from assistance in times of natural disasters and those caused by the war, and offers medical assistance to those in need in those areas. It also makes arrangements to provide them clean water, food, and places to rest and recover. The day marks the anniversary of the entry into force in 1945 of the UN Charter, and is celebrated as United Nations Day since 1948. Through its various organs and programs, it helps the developing countries to reduce poverty, hunger and disease, and to promote education through UNICEF, which is indeed commendable.

More than 30 per cent of children in developing countries – about 600 million – live on less than US \$1 a day. While a severe lack of goods and services hurts every human being, it is most threatening to children's rights – their survival, health and nutrition, education, participation, and protection from harm and exploitation. Some regions of the world have more dire situations than others, but even within one country there can be broad disparities – between city and rural children, and between boys and girls. According to data collected by UNICEF, poverty contributes to malnutrition, which in turn leads to deaths of which half are deaths of under-five in developing countries. Some 300 million children go to bed hungry every day; of these only eight per cent are victims of famine or other emergency situations. United Nations Development Programme tries to make real improvements in people's lives, opening up their choices and opportunities.

Of course, the United Nations plays another role in saving the people in the areas of conflict between the nations by deputing peacekeepers. General Assembly had designated May 29 as the International Day of United Nations Peacekeepers to pay tributes to all men and women who served and continue to serve in UN peacekeeping force operations, and to honor the memory of the UN peacekeepers that lost their lives in the cause of peace for their high level of professionalism, dedication and courage. On that day, UN offices, alongside Member States and

non-governmental organizations, hold events to honor fallen peacekeepers. In 2015, the United Nations honoured five Pakistani soldiers for their sacrifices, among over 137 peacekeepers who laid down their lives while serving the cause of peace around the world in 2014. Pakistan is the second largest contributor to the UN peacekeeping mission, and has earned laurels for their dedication to the cause.

Pakistan has contributed 8,163 personnel including 7,581 troops, 487 police officials and 95 military experts that are serving in the UN operations in seven countries. Pakistan's troops and advisors have been involved in peacekeeping operations in the Central African Republic, Ivory Coast, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Haiti, Liberia, Sudan and Western Sahara etc. Within one month of its coming into being, Pakistan had joined the United Nations and is committed to a world in which upholding human dignity is the highest value and maintaining global peace a sacred duty. Pakistan envisages a world, which is free of want, hunger and deprivation – a world where justice and fair-play govern the affairs of human beings, and inequality, oppression and war are abhorred. Pakistan has put this vision into practice by making significant contributions to the principles and objectives of the UN Charter.

But there are some glaring failures also. For one, the UN has failed to resolve the international disputes especially Palestine and Kashmir for the last 69 years. Since 1989, around 90000 thousands Kashmiris have been killed and many more injured and maimed. Recently, Kashmir came into focus in UN after Indian forces killed more than 120 Kashmiris and injured more than 1000 using pellet guns from July 2016 to October 2016. According to Guardian's report, 17,000 adults and children were injured, nearly five thousand arrested, and an entire population spent the summer under the longest curfew in the history of curfews in Kashmir. It has to be mentioned that UN was founded in 1945 after World War-II to replace League of Nations, which had failed to stop wars between countries, and could not provide protection to the weaker nations. Palestinian people have also undergone this ordeal since 1948.

On November 22, 1974, United Nations General Assembly Resolution 3236 recognized the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination, national independence and sovereignty in Palestine. Israel has occupied parts of the West Bank and continues with construction of Jewish settlements, though it had been

decided in Oslo Accords that Palestinian state would comprise Gaza and West Bank areas. Up to October 2014, 137 countries of the world had recognized Palestinian state. Except Eastern European countries Hungary, Poland, Bulgaria, Romania that had recognized Palestinian state in 1988. Some European countries did not recognize Palestinian state just to appease the US and Israel. Spanish lawmakers adopted a motion on November 18, 2014, which read: “The parliament urges the government to recognize Palestine as a state.” Sweden formally recognized Palestinian state on October 30, 2014; and the French National Assembly also voted on a similar resolution on November 28, 2014.

—The writer is a senior journalist based in Lahore.

Email:mjamil1938@hotmail.com

Source: <http://pakobserver.net/united-nations-achievements-failures/>



## Modi Climbdown | Editorial

It was quite a climbdown for Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi to agree to hold negotiations with the All Parties Hurriyat Conference. The move is a welcome gesture so long as it helps lower simmering tensions in Jammu and Kashmir. However, the appointment of the interlocutor — a former director of India's Intelligence Bureau — has generated its share of controversy as well. Given that the problem in the Valley is a political one, most observers feel that the interlocutor (Dineshwar Sharma) is not well versed enough in diplomatic and political negotiations to resolve protracted disputes as New Delhi's special representative. The appointments also shows that Modi is willing to look at Kashmir through the prism of security only. Still Modi's government says it will give Sharma a free hand to decide who to engage with and there would be no political interference whatsoever. But the question on most people's minds is, "can Sharma be expected to understand the legitimate aspirations of the people in Jammu and Kashmir and that too as a government representative?" Modi has shown no such inclination judging from the fact that his government had avoided all kinds of interaction and dialogue so far on the decades-long insurgency in the region.

It is clear that New Delhi is hoping that Sharma can reach out to Kashmiri youth or a whole cross section of them and communicate the stance of the state government and the centre.

New Delhi's haste in naming its interlocutor for dialogue with the Hurriyat indicates that Modi is more interested in showing to the world his keenness to bring down Kashmir tensions than actually doing so. And this only because Delhi is finally convinced that the use of brutal force to suppress Kashmiris' demands for greater autonomy will not work. To resolve the issue in the long term, New Delhi needs to take various stakeholders, including Pakistan, into confidence.

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# New World Order By Remshay Ahmed

The war of consensus

US' engagement in Afghanistan has been more direct with the Taliban yet the ghost of their might lingers on. The force motivating both of these players is significantly different but is a persistent factor instigating both of these factions. Neither one is willing to back down and is willing to show the world not that a solution can be reached (because no plausible solution has ever been proposed) but to show to the world that they can fight an inconclusive war.

What this begs is a revision of what has been done so far and what is to be achieved. Much like in Vietnam, US in Afghanistan is trying to find ways in fighting the Taliban. The policy makers have been successively unaware of the might of the Taliban, the factors that motivate them and to what extent is it willing to fight outside of its realm.

US' support for Al-Qaeda factions against the Houthi rebels in Yemen poses some serious questions about the absence of clarity in US' policies. Where Al-Qaeda is a globally declared terrorist outfit, an enemy of US, is also its greatest facilitators in fight against the Houthi insurgency. This trend has predominantly emerged in Middle East since 2011 where US funds a group against another for regional influence in one particular Middle Eastern country and then subsequently fights it in another country when the armed fighters push for their own freedom. A prominent example of this is the ISIS fighters funded to fight in Libya but when the war moved to Syria were taken as the Syrian rebels or the ISIS fighters. There is very little that distinguishes each of these rebels and with the Middle Eastern crises only exacerbating, there is a need to devise an all-inclusive strategy.

Being a realist I concur with Kissinger's thesis that a state's foreign policy is an extension of its domestic policy interests. This has sufficed US' engagement in Afghanistan since 2001, Iraq since 2003 and the entire Middle East since 2011. However, with casualties on both sides increasing monumentally, Americans' utility towards these operations have significantly decreased, begging the need to re-address what is it that the US wants the world to want from in alliance against the insurgents.

The war in Afghanistan is a largely forgotten war where the emergence of various terrorist groups are being utilized for various states' own interests. It is no longer clear as to who is fighting whom and for what. The much critically acclaimed theory which attributes US' overseas engagement to the control over the oil monopoly in Middle East stood corrected until the emergence of ISIS. The theory falls under the paradigm of hyper-capitalism where the core devises ways in underscoring any development of the periphery and exploits it in ways that justifies as the true spirit of capitalism. However, with the global scope of ISIS and its far reach in the American society itself, this group of insurgent is nothing that the US had predicted.

The group is vicious, vile, violent and is nationalist in trying to create a state for itself-the means with which it is trying to achieve this are wrong; but the ISIS is defeating the US-led coalition at their own game. Much like the modern secular societies, ISIS is also a group that is motivated by its values and wants to exercise its right of self-determination with 'all means necessary'. It has also promised its people a better society where they could exercise their beliefs and practices freely. However, ISIS is also suffering from a loss in consensus that it deemed to provide for its people. Even before its loss in control of its capital Raqqa, reports had started to appear that the people were dissatisfied with the group's failure in providing for what it had previously promised.

From this it can be drawn that much like US, ISIS is also losing in building a consensus on its policies and values which would enable them to commit more ground forces in their war.

The fight against the ISIS will either exhaust both sides towards a stalemate, however, a winner will only emerge when the policies are clearly defined by either group.

Source: <https://www.pakistantoday.com.pk/2017/10/25/new-world-order-2/>

## Xi and 19th CPC Congress By Adeela Naureen

While Pakistanis were busy witnessing political mudslinging and hosting Rex Tillerson in Islamabad; our Iron Brother China was going through a hectic congress of Communist Party of China (CPC) to elect the next set of leaders and laying the future roadmap for next decade in the Great Hall of People at Beijing. With President Xi Jinping becoming the first living leader to be mentioned in the Chinese Communist Party's charter since Chairman Mao, the 19th CPC is an epoch-making event, which should be analysed and followed by friends and foes of China alike. The communiqué of CPC highlighted that the constitution would incorporate Chinese President's theory of governance of modern China and called to deepen socialism with Chinese characteristics in responding to contemporary realities and needs.

Before deliberating upon the proceedings and the broader message emanating from the 19th CPC, it may be interesting to mention about how CPC works in a cycle of five years congress and what changes have been brought by President Xi.

With 90 million members, CPC is probably the largest political party in the world. After becoming a member of CPC through a screening system of probation of one year and initial ideological grooming, the sky could be the limit for men and women forming part of this brotherhood. Party committees exist at local and district levels, and a member is elevated on merit and experience to rise into higher echelons.

The journey of president Xi can be an excellent way to analyse how an ordinary member of CPC can rise to prominence in Chinese political system based on merit and hard work.

Xi Jinping rose from the ranks in Chinese coastal provinces and became the party secretary in a small Zhengding county of South Western Hebei province in 1983. Represented the delegates in one of the CPC congresses in 1998 and became the governor of Fujian province in 1999. Rising subsequently he was picked up by the CPC under Hu Jintao as his probable successor when he joined Politburo Standing Committee and Central Secretariat in 2007. He saw a further rise as vice president from 2008 to 2013 and Vice Chairman of the Central Military Commission from 2010 to 2012.

President Xi at present wears multiple hats; other than the office of the President, he is General Secretary of CPC, and Chairman of the all-powerful Central Military Commission and head of many incubation teams called Leading Small Groups (LSGs). Labeled as the most powerful man in the world by leading journals across the globe, President Xi has brought innovation and new spirit into an assertive leadership of the CPC. He has already paved the way for China to take center stage in the world; no wonder the Chinese call him the Paramount leader as well as Uncle Xi.

The concept of Leading Small Groups (LSGs) has existed in Chinese politics however their usage and efficacy depended on the top leadership; President Xi has made it more formal and placed some of the best brains in China to create these powerful incubation centers of ideas. These LSGs comprise the country's most influential, innovative, and influential leaders and cover almost all aspects, from economics and foreign relations to perception management and strategic initiatives like OBOR and CPEC. Out of the dozen or so LSGs, President Xi has given more attention to the two LSGs dealing with Comprehensive Deepening of Reforms and National Security. This is natural as China consolidates her economic power and exerts her global influence through economic and military diplomacy.

The pyramid of CPC has a broad base and steep slope at the top. The 2000 delegates throw up the Central Committee, comprising 200 plus full members and 170 alternate members as well as 127 representatives of Central Commission for Discipline, this, in turn, morphs into the selected 12 members of Central Military Commission and six members of Secretariat. On top we find the 25 members Politburo peaked by seven members Politburo Standing Committee and the Presidium. The advice of sitting and retired elders is always given due weight in the selection of top leadership.

Xi's, through a system of neng-shang neng-xia (can go up, can go down), has tried to break the shackles of party elevation based on the index of age and seniority. This system has also introduced fresh blood into the party higher ranks; however upper and lower age limit remains one of the major factors determining party positions in Central Committee upwards to the Politburo Standing Committee. In any case, you cannot be parachuted into top echelons of CPC; one has to go

through a rigorous regimen of at least 30 years membership without scandals and scars of corruption.

President Xi, who according to Time magazine joins Mao Zedong and Deng Xiaoping in the pantheon of modern China's most influential leaders, hailed the progress and international stature of China amongst the comity of nations. He said, "Our party shows strong, firm and vibrant leadership. Our socialist system demonstrates great strength and vitality, the Chinese people and Chinese nation embrace brilliant prospects."

Chinese trajectory under Chairman Xi is projected to propel China from a developing nation to a Superpower. Domestically the CPC has endorsed his vision of anti-corruption campaign (also considered as the biggest threat to China's internal polity and cohesion) as well as of economic reform. China would even look at diversifying her mammoth state-owned enterprises while balancing it with people-friendly economic growth and inclusive prosperity.

In the international arena, President Xi has focused on stronger power commensurate with Chinese economic clout, global trade and infrastructure initiatives like OBOR and CPEC connecting large parts of Eurasia and Africa and quest for leadership in innovation and science and technology, where China could become a leading light in research and development at global level.

For Pakistan, a more vibrant and strong China next door is a good omen, contrasted against a bullying and omnipresent west lead by Uncle Sam, who would keep the allies on tenterhooks. Chinese OBOR initiative was highlighted in the 19th CPC as a cornerstone for Chinese global connectivity and shared dreams; with CPEC as the flagship of the concept of OBOR, Pak-China relations are going to grow stronger with every single day. It's time that Pakistan and China announce a hundred years of strategic partnership, a partnership that is based on mutual respect and aspirations of people of both countries. We would wish president Xi the best of luck in his stewardship of CPC and China with a hope that Pak China friendship would reach new heights.

Source: <http://nation.com.pk/26-Oct-2017/xi-and-19th-cpc-congress>

## A New Saudi Arabia? | Editorial

FOLLOWING the rapid ascent of Mohammed bin Salman to the second-most powerful position in Saudi Arabia, a series of unprecedented changes have occurred in the desert kingdom. The young crown prince — seen as the actual power behind the throne — had earlier announced that resort islands off the Red Sea coast would be developed, where the strict religious laws of the kingdom would not apply. He had also recently said that the ban on women drivers would soon be phased out. And the latest in this series of declarations came on Oct 24, when the prince announced the launch of NEOM, a \$500bn mega project on Saudi Arabia's north-western tip. Bin Salman has dubbed this bizarre dream “the first capitalist city in the world. ...” where Saudi law will, again, not be applicable. Along with these futuristic visions, the crown prince has talked of returning his country to ‘moderate Islam’.

From these pronouncements, it appears that bin Salman is embarking on a nation-building project, using a mix of social engineering and authoritarianism to fashion a new, ‘liberal’ Saudi Arabia. However, some things must be considered if the Saudi establishment is serious about changing direction. Firstly, opening nightclubs, beach resorts and allowing concerts, yet at the same time smothering all dissent and criticism, does not translate to a liberal setup. While the prince has announced these ambitious projects, his government has also intensified repression of critics, real and imagined. Over the past few months, clerics, activists and members of civil society have been rounded up by the security apparatus. Even some dissenting members of the royal family have reportedly been detained. For a truly pluralistic sociopolitical setup, people must be allowed to criticise their government, assemble peacefully and discuss ideas openly without fear. Secondly, it is a fact that at its core Saudi Arabia remains a tribal, conservative society. Therefore, any attempts at change must be incremental and, most importantly, should take the population on board. It should be remembered that the 1979 seizure of Makkah's Masjid al-Haram by religious zealots was triggered by their apprehensions that the House of Saud was not ‘pious’ enough. Much of Saudi society — mainly because of the royal family's patronage of hard-line clerics and their influence on the education system — may resist high-speed changes that threaten to undo social and religious structures. Therefore, for the sake of stability, the Saudi rulers need to progress steadily but carefully.

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# Time to Denuclearise the World By Abdul Sattar

The pernicious tentacles of war, death and destruction are likely to grip our planet following the recent lethal missile tests by Russia. According to media reports, the missile, also known as RS-28 Sarmat, travelled 3,600 miles before hitting its target on the Kura test range, an international ballistic missile impact area in the Russian Far East.

This destructive agent of death and annihilation is capable of carrying 12 nuclear warheads and could wipe out a whole country with a single strike. Three ballistic missiles were also fired from nuclear submarines as part of the drills to test Russia's nuclear arsenal.

These tests were carried out by a country where more nearly 20 million people are surviving on wages that are below the poverty threshold and around 1.5 million are facing the scourge of homelessness while 5.1 percent are jobless. It is interesting to note that the collective income of the 13 percent poor in Russia is just \$12.4 billion while the 97 wealthiest Russians jointly own a whopping \$380 billion, nearly 31 times the collective income of the nation's poorest individuals. It is claimed that Moscow now houses more billionaires than New York.

But Russia is not the only country that ignores the pressing needs of its masses and pumps billions of dollars into arms and lethal agents of destruction. In fact the US spent a whopping \$5.5 trillion on its nuclear programme from 1994 to 1996, according to a 1998 book, 'Atomic Audit: The Costs and Consequences of the US Nuclear Weapons Since 1940', edited by Stephen I Schwartz.

The author notes: "This figure does not include \$320 billion in estimated future-year costs for storing and disposing of more than five decades' worth of accumulated toxic and radioactive wastes and \$20 billion for dismantling nuclear weapons systems and disposing of surplus nuclear materials. When those amounts are factored in, the total incurred costs of the US nuclear weapons program exceed \$5.8 trillion."

But, instead of bringing peace and stability, this huge spending created more paranoia among American policy makers. It triggered a mad race for these weapons of mass destruction. Today, the world spends around \$105 on nuclear arms, \$12 million an hour. Ironically, the UN body tasked to eliminate such lethal agents of destruction receives a meagre \$10 million a year.

Now this recent test by Moscow will instil more fear among pacifists. This new missile is enough to wipe out a whole country with a single strike. This is a doomsday scenario for peace-loving people. However, war-mongers will seize upon this opportunity, raising the spectre of death and destruction, which is set to benefit the military industrial complex. The bellicose Trump administration will become more hysterical with this new test and more human energies will be diverted towards this destructive cause. China, India, France and UK will not like to stay behind in this senseless race of arms.

According to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, the world splurged \$1.686 trillion on arms in 2016, a 0.4 percent increase on 2015. The US remained at the top of the military spending league last year with \$611 billion, 36 percent of global total and over three times the amount spent by the second-place China. Russia upped its outlay 5.9 percent to \$69.2 billion, third overall. The think tank estimates that 10 percent of this could cover the costs of global goals aiming to end poverty and hunger in 15 years.

But it seems the global powers are not interested in listening to saner voices. Country after country seems to be falling to war mongers. First it was the US that launched the National Missile Defense system, pumping a whopping \$60 billion into it. This prompted Russia and China to acquire the technology to produce hypersonic missiles which can evade such a missile defence system. Now, the US, Russia and China are blessed with these lethal agent of annihilation. Other countries will soon try to join them.

With the spectre of war looming large over the Korean Peninsula, it is feared that such addition of lethal arms will broaden the scope of any possible future conflict. Countries will try to exaggerate the capability of one another to acquire more and more destructive weapons. The history of such exaggeration is not new. For instance, in 1957 the US only needed 232 warheads to destroy the USSR but an American general, James Gavin, head of army research and development, who

testified before Congress in 1956 and 1957, requested 151,000 nuclear warheads just for the army. Finally, in June 1958, it was recommended that a stockpile level of 51,000 to 73000 should be maintained. The US built a total of 70,000 warheads during the cold war.

Exaggerations are already in vogue in American ruling circles. Even the threat of North Korea's arms, which is not even an iota of what Russia possesses, is magnified. So, it is very likely that this new test will sound alarm bells in the power corridors of Western capitals. It is sure to trigger a new senseless race of nuclear arms that would be catastrophic for world peace, environment and the very existence of mankind.

Russia should not forget that at one stage the USSR possessed around 28,000 nuclear warheads besides acquiring ascendancy in space technology but all that could not stop the disintegration of the second superpower of the world. The USSR collapsed without any attack. History teaches us only one lesson: the bomb of poverty, hunger and starvation is far more dangerous than nuclear arms. Therefore, it is advisable to engage Washington in talks aimed at complete elimination of these weapons of mass destructions. If the number of nuclear warheads can be brought down to mere 15000 from over 70000, then there is every reason to believe that we can eliminate them. All we need is political will.

The writer is a Karachi-based freelance journalist.

Email: egalitarianism444@gmail.com

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