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Pakistan Eighth Most Dangerous Country in the World Report

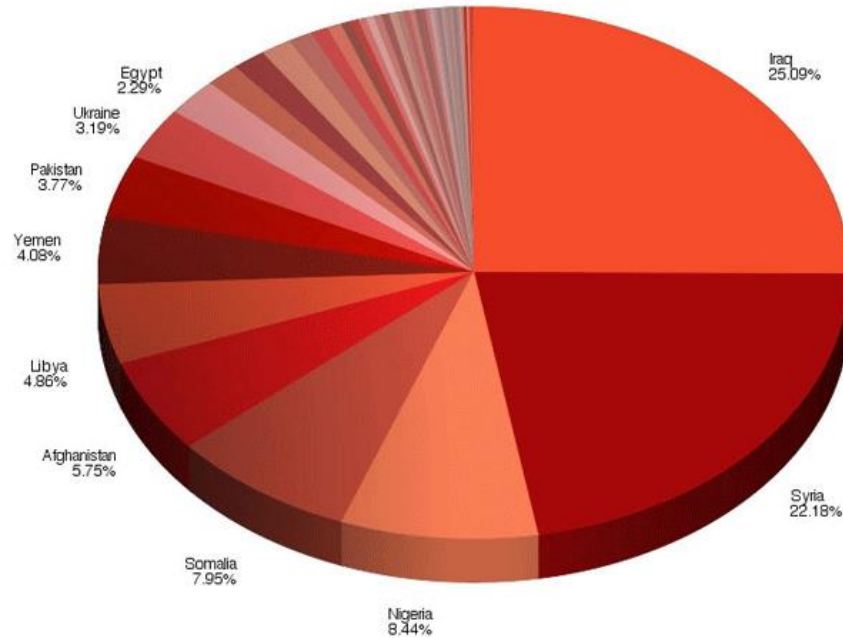


LONDON: Pakistan has emerged as the world’s eighth most dangerous country, according to Intel Center’s list of “Top 10 Most Dangerous Countries”.

The Middle East topped the list as of March 2015, with Iraq and Syria ranking No 1 and 2 respectively, given the current political situation in the war-torn countries.

IntelCenter, a Washington-based company working for intelligence agencies, Country Threat Index (CTI) examines the volume of terrorist and rebel alerts, messaging traffic, videos, photos, incidents and the number of people killed and injured in a country over the past month and runs it through an algorithm to assign the country its CTI.

Out of the top 10 most dangerous countries, Pakistan had a CTI of 122 is joined by Afghanistan with a CTI of 186. The neighbouring country ranked fifth on the list. The higher the CTI, the greater is the risk.



Source: IntelCenter

“A low CTI does not necessarily reflect the absence of risk as the US in the lead-up to 9/11 would have had a low CTI. It does, however, reflect a lower level of activity over the preceding 30 days (of the analysis), which means high-volume activity is unlikely but one-off events are always a possibility,” IntelCenter said in a statement.

CTI should not be the sole measure of risk in a country but should merely be factored into consideration, the statement said.

“The CTI is based solely on terrorist and rebel related activity. It does not evaluate other risk factors such as crime and political instability,” it further said.

The countries completing the top 10 include Nigeria (3rd), Somalia (4th), Libya (6th), Yemen (7th), Ukraine(9th) and Egypt (10th).

The Global CTI serves as an overall indicator of global terrorist and rebel activity and is calculated by adding up each individual country’s CTI, the statement said.

This article was originally published on [The Economic Times](#)

[Dar for Charging Country up on Nukes](#)



- ***Finance minister reviews progress on K2, K3 nuclear power plants, says plants will be cheapest source of energy***

Federal Minister for Finance Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar chaired a meeting at the Finance Ministry Monday to review the progress so far being made on the K2, K3 nuclear energy projects.

Secretary Economic Affairs Division (EAD), Saleem briefed the meeting on the progress of the project. He said that the progress of the project has been actively monitored. He also told that the Economic Affairs Division is also coordinating with the Pakistan Atomic Energy Commission (PAEC) to complete this project on priority basis.

The finance minister said, “This project is important for the future of the country; we cannot bear any delay in its completion.” The project when completed will be the cheapest source of energy for the people of the country and this is actually what we desire for them, further said the minister.

The aforementioned energy projects will be a part of Pak-China Energy Corridor and will be jointly financed by China (EXIM Bank) and Pakistan in a ratio 82 and 18 percent respectively.

The finance minister directed that all departments which are concerned with the completion of this project should actively participate and come up with fruitful suggestions for solving any technical issue with regard to the successful and timely completion of this project.

Source: <http://www.pakistantoday.com.pk/2015/03/31/business/dar-for-charging-country-up-on-nukes/>

India Without Pakistan

In a meeting of the National Executive Committee of India's ruling Bharatiya Janata Party in Bengaluru last Friday, a resolution was passed to elaborate and sanctify a new foreign policy doctrine for India titled 'panchamrita'.

Coming in the wake of India's non-aligned approach during the cold war and 'Look East' policy after it, the new policy seeks to harness the economic and intellectual growth made by India over the past decade and crowns the hectic efforts made by Prime Minister Modi and Foreign Minister Sushma Swaraj during the last ten months in engaging with 94 countries from around the world, chief among them

being Barack Obama becoming the first US President to attend India's Republic Day as chief guest.

The new policy essentially says that India is no longer afraid of crossing high seas and is all set to use the history, size, and intelligence of its people for global influence.

From Pakistan's point of view, particularly notable is the acknowledgement that India's 'innumerable problems with almost all our neighbours is evidence that we had not engaged with the neighbourhood properly in the past,' and the claim that India has 'rendered irrelevant geo-politics of hyphenation while boosting bilateral relationships without being influenced by any third country.'

In other words, India no longer finds Pakistan a handicap to her external ambitions as had usually been the case since 1947.

This vainglorious BJP resolution on the new Indian foreign policy comes at a time when Pakistan is desperately looking for a new foreign policy too. Ever since 1947, Pakistan's foreign policy has essentially focused on survival in the face of an existential threat from India. While survival still continues to be the chief concern, the recent paradigm shifts in regional and global politics demand that Pakistan must adopt a home-grown foreign policy that offers more.

In its struggle for survival, Pakistan has made several Faustian bargains with foreign vultures and is still not in any position to refuse them their pound of flesh. However, the time has come to stand on our own two feet.

We must develop an outside-in foreign policy that takes ownership of Pakistan's unique diversity and potential and permits foreign engagements exclusively and directly for the security, dignity and prosperity of the territories and citizens of Pakistan.

Source: <http://nation.com.pk/editorials/06-Apr-2015/india-without-pakistan>

[India Should Say no to the RSS Version of History](#)



Our subcontinent, now divided into parts, shares a common history; there are diverse ways of looking at the same history by groups belonging to different political ideologies.

With the change of government in Delhi, the leading institutions are having a major policy shift; organisations like the Indian Council of Historical Research, National Council for Education, Research and Training amongst others, as they have got heads whose qualification is not excellence in their disciplines but their proximity to ideology of the ruling dispensation.

These are the institutions which deal with history, education and most of the disciplines related to social sciences. The change of policy seems to be guided by the BJP's parent organisation, RSS, whose political ideology is Hindu nationalism, in contrast to the values of the Indian Constitution, namely, Indian Nationalism.

To give an indication of the same, RSS Chief (Sarsanghchak) stated (March 3, 2015) that Indian history should be 'saffronised'. To back him up, BJP leader and ex-minister

of MHRD Murli Manohar Joshi said that the call to saffronise Indian history is necessary and the concerned minister should feel proud in saffronising history books.

This term was coined by progressive rational historians and intellectuals to criticise the move of the same Dr Joshi when he was minister of Human Resource Development – the ministry which also deals with education – in the Vajpayee-led NDA Government (1998) and had brought serious changes in the curriculum, education and social science-history books.

The books which were introduced during his tenure had statements like these:

It is because we are the children of Manu that we are known as manushya or manav (human).

Scientists consider plants as inanimate, while the Hindus consider them as animate and having life.

On refusing to accept Islam, Banda Bairagi had the heart of his son thrust down his throat.

Sati is presented as a Rajput tradition that we should be proud of.

Similar distortions in the Medieval period were, ‘Qutub Minar was built by emperor Samudragupta and its real name was Vishnu Stambha’. In addition, the battles for power between Shivaji and Afzal Khan, the battle between Akbar and Maharana Pratap, and that between Guru Govind Singh and Aurangzeb were all given religious colour.

These changes came under scholarly criticism from the professional, progressive, secular historians. They coined the term ‘saffronisation of education’ for this presentation of history.

In the face of the criticism, the same Murali Manohar Joshi said that the changes in history books were not ‘saffronisation’ but merely corrections of distortions in history. Now, turning around due to newer political equations, he is owning the same term as a matter of pride.

It was the British who introduced communal historiography in India; this historiography is a way of looking at the historical phenomenon through the lens of religion. The same history in a modified way was picked up by the Hindu and Muslim communalists.

In sum, Hindu communalists and Hindu nationalists presented that India was a Hindu nation from time immemorial and Muslims and Christians are foreigners here. The Muslim communal history began from the invasion of Sindh by Muhammad bin Qasim in the 8th century and claimed that Muslims were the rulers of this land, so the British should hand over power to them once they left. A version of this prevails in Pakistan's history textbooks today.

In contrast, those identifying with secular, democratic Indian national movement presented a view of history where the religion of the King was not the main determining factor of his policies.

This view was also presented by the leader of the freedom movement, Mahatma Gandhi. In his book *Hind Swaraj* he writes:

“The Hindus flourished under Moslem sovereigns and Moslems under the Hindu. Each party recognised that mutual fighting was suicidal, and that neither party would abandon its religion by force of arms. Both parties, therefore, decided to live in peace. With the English advent quarrels recommenced... Should we not remember that many Hindus and Mohammedans own the same ancestors and the same blood runs through their veins? Do people become enemies because they change their religion? Is the God of the Mohammedan different from the God of the Hindu? Religions are different roads converging to the same point. What does it matter that we take different roads so long as we reach the same goal? Wherein is the cause of quarreling?”

After getting independence, while the British-introduced pattern continued for some time, a more serious and rational, research-based approach started entering the history books of India. Along with the formation of NCERT, books with the rational viewpoint did replace the one's with communal interpretation in schools which had the NCERT curriculum.

With the coming to power of the BJP-led National Democratic Alliance from 1998, Dr Joshi introduced communalisation and saffronisation into education. With the NDA's defeat in 2004, the Congress-led UPA came to power and it gradually – to some extent – restored the spirit of scientific temper and rational thought in education, while scrapping the communal version of histories.

So here, in India, a Taj Mahal becomes Tejo Mahalay (purported to be originally a Shiv Temple); the freedom struggle is presented as a religious war against Muslims; Muslim kings are blamed for destruction of temples and spreading Islam by sword.

The divisive mindset is promoted for political goals.

Apart from the official school textbooks, a chain of schools run by the RSS – Sarswati Shishu Mandirs, Ekal Vidyalayas and Vidya Bharati – are using this version of history, and it is this same version from the RSS stable schools which they are now proposing for state-run institutions.

This will be a very divisive move for our plural, diversified country.

Source: Published In Dawn April 7

[World Water Woes | By Syed Mohammad Ali](#)



Over the past several decades, ever-growing demands for water resources have increased the risks of severe water stress across many parts of the world, including Pakistan, which the Asian Development Bank recently categorised as being one of the most water stressed countries in the world.

Pakistan is not the only country confronting worrying water woes. According to a new UN report, [the World Water Development Report 2015](#), the world will only have 60 per cent of the water it needs by 2030 without significant global policy change.

Population growth, and the corresponding increases in direct and indirect water consumption needs, has placed freshwater resources under increasing pressure. India, China, Nepal, Bangladesh and Pakistan, alone account for nearly half the world's total groundwater use. These countries are rapidly depleting their groundwater.

Already a combination of global climate change, increasing demand, waste and water mismanagement, has led to an alarmingly rapid depletion of water supply. Pakistan itself has seen a five-fold drop in water availability per person since independence.

Moreover, the loss incurred due to water-related disasters such as floods, droughts and storms have also increased in frequency and severity over the past decade. In Pakistan, three years of repeated floods (in 2010, 2011 and 2012) have inflicted massive damage. It has resulted not only in loss of lives and livelihoods of those directly hit by the flooding, but also severely hampered potential economic opportunities for many others and caused destruction of vital infrastructure including roads, health and education facilities.

Besides being a necessity for life, water is vital to many other human development processes. For example, water is a prerequisite for ensuring improvements in social and economic well-being, for improving food and energy security, and providing better human and even environmental health. Such competing demands impose difficult allocation decisions on use of water, given that it is simultaneously needed to fulfill manufacturing, thermal electricity generation, agricultural and domestic consumption needs. However, out-dated models of natural resource governance continue to allow over-exploitation and wastage of precious resources like water. The resulting disruption of ecosystems due to growing urbanisation, inappropriate agricultural practices, deforestation and pollution are making clean water scarcer.

The increasing competition for diminishing water resources increases the risk of water-related conflicts within and across countries, and is worsening water unavailability for already marginalised and poor communities. It is however possible to take steps to address the multidimensional challenges related to water. Nations can take numerous actions in this regard, such as well-targeted water pricing, more effective water conservation, and investment in appropriate means to recycle waste water. The agricultural sector itself can do much to increase water use efficiency by reducing the enormous water losses incurred by it, and by focusing on the need to increase crop productivity with respect to water use.

The UN system has realised the need to develop a more detailed and context-specific framework for addressing water issues, beyond the need to improve water supply and sanitation. In its post-2015 development agenda, the UN Sustainable Development Goal for water also focuses on the need for preserving water resources, safeguarding the quality of water and improving wastewater management, bolstering governance related to water usage, and contending more effectively with water-related disasters.

Progress needs to be made simultaneously on all these above fronts, involving serious commitments from international development agencies, national governments and community based organisations working together to conserve water, and make its use more efficient and equitable. Otherwise water scarcity and its adverse impact on a range of other development indicators will become impossible to ignore.

Published in The Express Tribune, April 10th, 2015.

Pakistan-ASEAN Ties



Formation of an organization where none other had existed, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) has been the most significant multilateral group for the past forty-eight years. Since the end of the Cold War, ASEAN has grown increasingly influential whereas much of the West and most emerging markets continue to suffer because of the current global recession. Despite all odds the leading ASEAN economies have recovered and are thriving. Further, the formation of ASEAN has increased cohesion therefore helped prevent interstate conflicts in Southeast Asia, despite several brewing territorial disputes in the region. Yet it has been seen that the ASEAN has the potential to exert a bigger influence in the region and especially Asia.

In August 1967, when ASEAN was founded, Southeast Asia was at the center of world events. The Second Indochina War was raging, following the withdrawal of France in 1954 and the end of the First Indochina War that year. In Malaysia, a powerful communist insurgency had only recently been defeated, while in Indonesia an army coup, launched in part to head off the rise of left-leaning political parties, had unleashed massive communal bloodshed. The Cultural Revolution and China's support for several communist movements in Southeast Asia, as well as the region's fears of the

United States abandoning its commitment to Southeast Asia, led the non-communist countries in the region to form ASEAN.

The original five members—Thailand, Malaysia, Singapore, Indonesia, and the Philippines—varied from military dictatorships to city-states to nascent democracies. ASEAN was founded with a limited charter, even compared to many other regional organizations. The goal was to preserve long-term peace in Southeast Asia and, by unifying, to balance the roles that outside powers, including the United States, China, and Japan, played in Southeast Asia.

Over the past two decades, ASEAN has been the leader of East Asian trade, economic, and security integration. ASEAN has been the only organization consistently focused on regional integration. It has been more successful in promoting trade integration and creating regional forums for discussing security issues than it has been in promoting more concrete security integration or economic integration such as more open borders, joint development of resources, and common currencies. This is due to ASEAN's structural weaknesses, which make it hard for the organization to lead on security and economic integration. In other respects, these failures are simply due to the fact that East Asia contains countries with wider-ranging levels of development, political cultures, and political systems than in Western Europe, and thus integration is more challenging. Its relation with other countries in the region thus becomes crucial in many ways.

Over the last 2 decades or so, Pakistan has sought to forge close links, promote trade and increase cooperation in the diverse fields with the countries of Southeast Asia and their regional organization ASEAN. Pakistan's drive to promote relations with the ASEAN region, and particularly seek entry into the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) was motivated by political, economic and strategic considerations. It was given a strong impetus by Pakistan's endemic rivalry with India which stole a march on Pakistan by becoming a full dialogue partner of ASEAN as well as by gaining membership of the ARF.

Pakistan recognizes, and in turn is recognized by, all the 10 countries of the ASEAN. However, it does not have resident consulates in all Asean capitals nor do all the ASEAN states maintain diplomatic outpost in Islamabad. Pakistan's relations with the ASEAN countries are normal, friendly and unmarred by any conflict or disputes. They cooperate with one another on full range of international issues.

Pakistan had long-standing trade relations with several ASEAN countries- notably with Indonesia, Singapore, Malaysia, Thailand, Burma and the Philippines. During the last four or five years Pakistan's trade with Southeast Asian countries has increased, but the volume to trade stands at US\$ 1.5 billion, whereas India's trade has been estimated at \$12.5 billion and rapidly rising. The balance of trade is heavily in favour of

the Asean partners. Most of the Pakistani exports to Asean are agricultural primary product and low-tech industrial goods. Pakistan was accepted as a sectoral dialogue partner in 1993 and eight sectors were identified for Asean-Pakistan cooperation. They were: trade, industry, investment, science and technology, drugs and narcotic control, human resource development, environment and trade.

Pakistan's relation with ASEAN is being enhanced with a commitment towards mutual benefit in many sectors. In this globalized era of interconnectedness, there seems to be greater gains in cooperation with regional players that share a lot. ASEAN and Pakistan have expressed the need to intensify their efforts to make their Sectoral Dialogue mutually beneficial and substantive. Also, to encourage and facilitate direct contacts between their respective government agencies to develop practical and feasible joint cooperation activities by matching the priorities of ASEAN.

It is believed by the Pakistani leadership that Pakistan can revive its economy by enhancing trade with big economies of Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) including Malaysia, Indonesia and Thailand. Pakistan has a huge scope to promote exports to ASEAN region and for that we should take some policy measures to encourage the private sector to capture a better share in this attractive region. Analysts believe that ASEAN is a very important region for Pakistan as it is a huge market of 550 million people therefore Pakistan gives priority focus to promoting trade with ASEAN countries. Pakistan has the potential to increase trade with ASEAN region by \$ 4-5 billion in a few years and private sector should be facilitated to realize this huge potential. It is also observed that Pak-China Economic Corridor as a very significant project offers tremendous trade opportunities to ASEAN nations and by developing close relations with Pakistan, ASEAN countries could get direct access to Central Asia through Gwadar Port.

It is asserted that Pakistan is the gateway to Middle East and ASEAN countries should take more initiatives to strengthen relations with Pakistan to take full benefit of its geographical location to reach other markets. Expansion of trade and investment between Pakistan and Asean countries is eminently feasible and will be mutually rewarding. There is considerable degree of complementarity between the two sides. Tourism is another large untapped area of development.

Pakistan has a lot more to offer than many Southeast Asian countries, including Malaysia and Singapore which have yet been able to develop a thriving and profitable tourist trade. The governments and leadership from all ASEAN countries and the Pakistani side need to reach a state where relations should reward not only a few but all stakeholders involved.

Amna Malik

Western hypocrisy: Pakistan's nuclear weapon is a threat but India's is not? |
By [Yasir Hussain](#)



On April 6, 2015, *The New York Times* published an editorial titled *Nuclear Fears in South Asia*. The editorial portrayed Pakistan's nuclear weapon capability as an ultra-sensitive concern for the global community; however, India's mighty nuclear quest was **exempted** from this category, using its vibrant democratic system of governance as a justification.

I am still lost over how **nuclear safety** has anything to do with a system of governance, but oh well.

Ever since Pakistan tested its **nuclear weapon in 1998**, it has become an epicentre of criticism and this debate has seldom gone off the radar in contemporary global affairs. Many international security experts have expressed unnecessary and unjustifiable anxiety on the country's nuclear program and this recent editorial is a testimony of that.

Criticism which lacks objectivity as well as academic honesty is useless.

Isn't it ironic that while Pakistan is dubbed as the [fastest nation to develop its nuclear weapons](#), most western media organisations keep mum over who controls the worldwide stock of [fissile material](#) (highly enriched uranium and plutonium) needed to create nuclear weaponry? According to many reports, the P5 states as well as India have an upper hand when it comes to fissile material stockpiles. So how can Pakistan be the fastest developer of nuclear energy, when it has so little control over nuclear raw material? This just doesn't add up.

And even if Pakistan *is* the fastest developer, why does that concern other countries? As long as the nuclear energy is safe – which it is – I really don't see why this fuss is being created around it.

This dichotomy doesn't end here. Interestingly, the editorial critiques Pakistan's recent approval to purchase eight submarines from [China](#) in its pursuit for naval modernisation, but says nothing about the advanced equipment that India has for its navy. India is expanding its maritime activities beyond its littoral region. Unlike Pakistan, India has been envisaging sea based nuclear-deterrent for quite some time now and the Indian government recently approved more than [\\$16 billion](#) to build advanced naval warships as well as nuclear-powered submarines.

In order to ramp up its domestic defence industry, India's plans also to focus on the development of [indigenous nuclear-powered submarines](#) and other maritime vessels. Such hegemonic aspirations are turning the Indian Ocean into India's ocean, yet there is no reprimand from the powers that be.

If India has a right to defend itself, why not Pakistan?

Unfortunately, there is a well-settled narrative in the West that India's nuclear program as well as other warfare modernisation is necessary to counter China's rising power. Over the past decades, the US has sought to use India to contain China. In return, India has received US's largesse – particularly the [123-agreement](#), defence equipment, [support for Nuclear Suppliers Group \(NSG\) membership](#) and bilateral trade. The new US policy called '[Rebalancing of Military Strategy with focus on Asia-Pacific](#)' is confirmation to Chinese counter policy. The pertinent point here is that, the volume of trade between China and India has reached to [\\$100 billion](#), hence making high-intensity conflict less likely to happen.

Therefore, just because India serves a purpose for the US, its nuclear program is not a threat to the South Asian region, while Pakistan's is? And also, why is the US still so adamant on supporting India when India has fairly amicable relations with China now?

These questions need to be answered first, before the West decides to point its fingers at Pakistan.

With the passage of time, conventional warfare balance is becoming unaffordable for Pakistan. India is engaged in a major arms build-up which Pakistan just cannot match.

India is the world's largest arms importer today. The Indian defence budget is set to hit a record high of [\\$40bn](#) whereas Pakistan's budget is just [\\$6.002bn](#). With such a meagre defence budget, Pakistan's conventional capabilities simply do not prove sufficient to deter or halt an Indian conventional military attack. Pakistan can never become a part of any kind of arms race with India due to the economic restraints it faces. Thus it sees nuclear weaponry as a balancer in such a fragile security environment, and rightly so.

People argue that India will not attack Pakistan in conventional warfare. My question is, if this is true, then why is India hoarding so [much weaponry](#)? What is it preparing for? In a region where it is surrounded by friendly countries – keeping its new relation with China in mind – what threat does India have that it needs such a huge amount of weaponry at its disposal?

Pakistan is a nuclear reality now. It has successfully operationalized a comprehensive command and control mechanism to secure its nuclear arsenal. The international community has rejected hyperboles like 'collapse' or 'disintegration' for Pakistan. Our nuclear security measures have been globally recognised. The last decade witnessed that Pakistan maintained as well as sustained "[credible minimum deterrence](#)" under the shadows of nuclear isolationism. International security managers need to realise Pakistan's threat perception. India, having one of the largest armies, the heaviest war technology along with rapidly developing nuclear arsenal, poses security challenges for Pakistan.

The long standing disputes can be resolved through diplomacy and soft-power. War is not only the ultimate solution in the settlement of disputes. The success story of [Iranian nuclear framework](#) agreement with the West is a ray of hope in the zone of conflicts. When the deal was announced, hundreds of Iranians took to the capital's streets, waving flags, amid fresh hopes the country's international isolation would end soon. This made me hopeful for Pakistan as well. The historic agreement has not only gained international praise but is also seen as a beacon of hope to bringing peace and stability in other regions too.

It is the need of hour to bring all [South Asian stakeholders](#) on the same page and that seems possible only through diplomatic initiatives. Unfortunately, the international community has failed to understand Pakistan's security compulsions. It is the responsibility of the global powers to make India agree to a strategic restraint regime.

There is need of bilateral dialogue on the South Asian nuclear arms limitation perspective. Such steps will boost confidence and mutual trust between South Asian rivals and it will also facilitate confidence-building measures in near future.

Source:<http://blogs.tribune.com.pk/story/27113/western-hypocrisy-pakistans-nuclear-weapon-is-a-threat-but-indias-is-not/>

[Resolving Pakistan's Energy Crisis](#) | By Hassan Khan



Pakistan has been facing acute shortage of energy for quite a number of years now, and there have been some attempts to resolve the crisis. The installed capacity to generate electricity is around 22,000 MW and peak demand remains at 17000MW, with the primary source being non-renewable resources such as fossil fuels. However, due to lack of maintenance and inadequate investment, some of the installed sources of electricity are unable to run at full capacity, leading to reduction in supply.

The previous government, led by former President Asif Zardari, did take some steps to reduce the supply-demand gap through implementing consumer friendly energy policies. However, the focus towards investment remained in the balance for resolving the crisis as the government's corrupt practices in the energy sector, in connivance with private companies, damaged its overall credibility. A mega corruption scandal involving high-level officials eventually got taken up by the National Accountability Bureau (NAB), which reported massive losses to the government. These corrupt practices increased the gap in supply and demand of the total output supplied via Distribution Companies (DISCOs) and National Transmission and Despatch Company (NTDC).

The previous government, led by former President Asif Zardari, did take some steps to reduce the supply-demand gap through implementing consumer friendly energy policies

Subsequently, when the government of Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif took over in June 2013, the energy shortfall was already at dangerous levels with overall supply deficit reaching 6000MW to 7000MW during the summers. Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif and his team took drastic steps to reduce load shedding by implementing shortfall reduction policies for commercial and residential areas. Furthermore, six coal-based power projects in Punjab and Sindh were proposed and initiated during late 2013 and early 2014 that were meant to increase the power generating capacity by up to 14000MW. However, the experts considered them environmentally hazardous due to coal being utilised as the primary resource.

China is already the highest consumer of coal based power plants in the world but the impact has been negative on the overall environment due to higher levels of air pollution in the industrialised cities and their surrounding suburbs. This has likely been the reason for Pakistan to review the potential long-term harms of coal based energy projects leading to their replacement with Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) based plants for power generation by February 2015, which is considered the cleanest form of non-renewable energy. A lucrative \$21bn deal for LNG projects with the government of Qatar was also finalised by March 2015 in the presence of the Qatari Emir. This has been a positive step taken by the PML-N led government for it can decrease the costs by 40 percent and emit 45 percent less carbon dioxide as compared to coal. This means that a cleaner and more efficient energy source shall be available for the consumers in case the deal goes as planned. Karachi already has an LNG terminal at Port Qasim and another one in Gwadar can greatly help reduce energy shortfall via Balochistan, especially for the proposed energy corridor from Gwadar to Kashgar, that can create thousands of jobs.

The focus of PM Nawaz Sharif's government is going in the right direction for increasing power generation and it is highly commendable

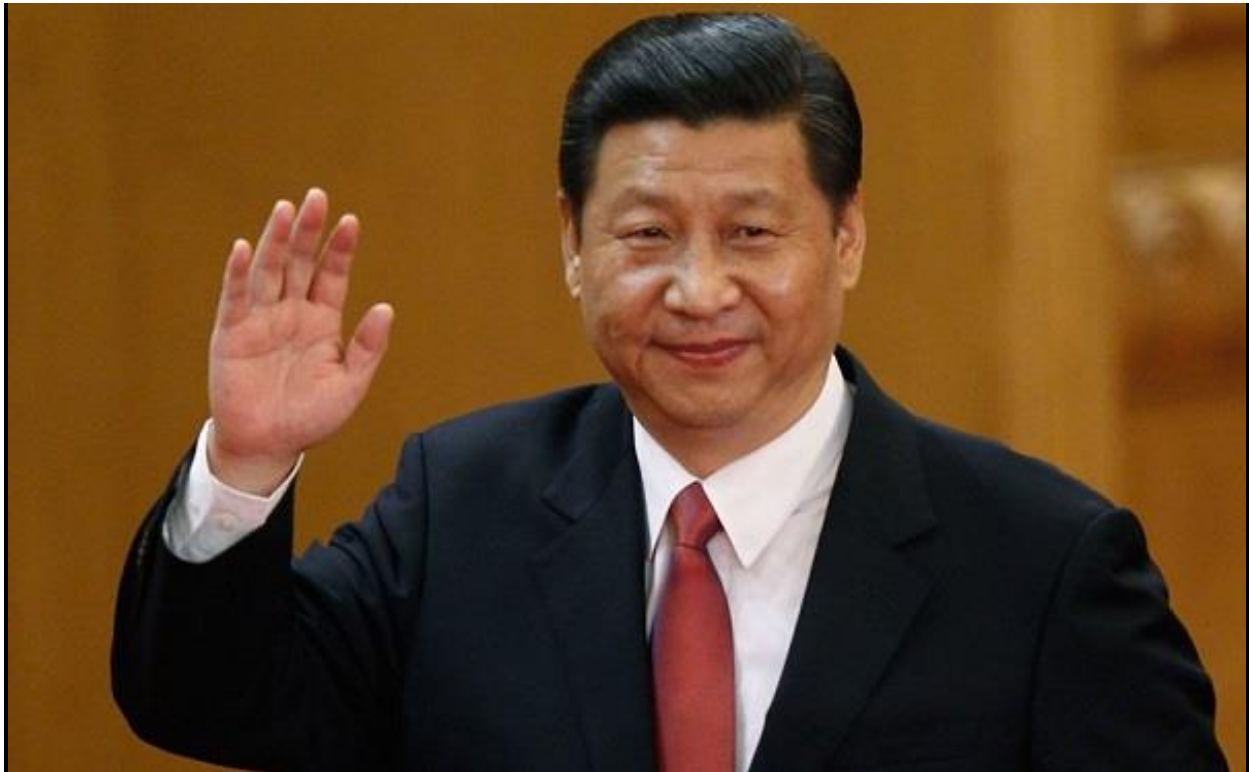
Furthermore, the coal gasification project in Thar under the leadership of renowned scientist Dr Samar Mubarakmand is also of high significance as its purpose is to reduce the emission of harmful gases and provide high quality source for electricity generation that can run side by side with LNG projects. However, renewable resources such as hydroelectricity, solar and wind power should also be invested upon due to the fact that Pakistan's climate is ideal for their utilisation. Old dams such as Mangla and Tarbela are nearing their lifetime due to heavy amount of salinisation from time to time. Hence, their capacity must be prolonged, as newer dams such as Daimajeri shall require time and investment to develop.

The focus of PM Nawaz Sharif's government is going in the right direction for increasing power generation and it is highly commendable. If the government can provide both energy and security needs for Pakistan on a mandated time with the help of scientists

and armed forces then the economy can greatly thrive through both FDI and local investments. Moody's recent upgrade of Pakistan's credit ratings from stable to positive shows that the economy has improved a lot and it is hoped that the government keeps up with its promises of providing relief to the people.

Source: <http://www.pakistantoday.com.pk/2015/04/11/comment/resolving-pakistans-energy-crisis/>

[India Worried as China, Russia Expand Ties With Pakistan](#)



The deepening economic and defence ties China and Russia are pursuing with Pakistan is worrying New Delhi and it is preparing to convey its concerns to Moscow and Beijing through diplomatic channels, according to Deccan Herald newspaper.

Chinese President Xi Jinping's visit to Islamabad is expected to add momentum to the ambitious project of building an economic corridor linking north-western China with southern Pakistan. Xi's visit to Islamabad is also likely see Beijing announcing its plan to supply eight submarines to Pakistan Navy.

Russia too of late moved to step up its defence ties with Pakistan and the two countries this week agreed to hold their first ever joint military exercise. Moscow is also purportedly planning to invest \$2 billion to lay a Liquefied Natural Gas pipeline from Karachi to Lahore.

Sources told Deccan Herald that New Delhi would lodge a strong protest with Beijing if the projects to be announced during Chinese President's visit to Islamabad included any part of Azad Kashmir.

This could even cast a shadow over Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to China next month, added sources.

New Delhi is likely to reiterate that the entire state of Jammu and Kashmir is an integral part of India and any project undertaken by Pakistan — either on its own or in cooperation with China or any other country — in the territory under its “control ” would have “no legal basis and is completely unacceptable”.

Source: <http://www.pakistantoday.com.pk/2015/04/20/national/india-worried-as-china-russia-expand-ties-with-pakistan/>

[The Problem With Governance | By Syed Mohibullah Shah](#)



People are not born good or bad; law-abiding or wild and violent. The way they are governed makes them one or the other. And without reforming the overarching political governance of the state, the actions taken over the years in the name of various sectoral ‘reforms’ – education, health, agricultural, labour, industrial, trade and others – have not achieved desired results nor are these likely to make much difference in the future. The reason is simple: these ‘reforms’ work at cross-purposes with the agenda of political governance – and no reform has succeeded in the world, unless enforced from the top.

So how did the governance of the seventh largest state of the world come to be reduced to ‘the lowest common denominator’ in the hands of transient elements that have penetrated into almost every aspect of governance?

Under assault from non-state actors, the state and its institutions have been underperforming for lack of capacity and competence. More troubling, however, has been the strategy of disabling them from functioning as instruments of the state and allowing them to act when, where and to the extent desired by those controlling the levers of government.

This has deformed the state and its institutions and given a bad name to the country. Most state institutions have regressed into a medieval mode of self-serving and exploitative entities.

The deterioration in two basic state functions captures the essence of the argument: collecting taxes to run the affairs of the state and enforcing the law of the land to deliver order and stability in society.

The declining capacity of state institutions to govern effectively and impartially also opened up space for new sets of skills and enterprises. The size of the black economy now equals the white economy (up from 20 percent in the mid-1970s). Only one percent of the population pays income tax and our tax-to-GDP ratio is among the lowest in the world. A 1990s' survey of the country's busiest markets – Bohri Bazaar in Karachi, Anarkali in Lahore and Jinnah Super in Islamabad – disclosed that the average income shown by shop owners in these markets was less than Rs10,000 per month.

A 'closed-circuit model' of development has taken hold of the national economy where – like the judge, jury and executioner being the same – those awarding, receiving and executing public contracts are often the same or are their proxies. No wonder then that \$200 billion of Pakistani funds have flown to Swiss banks alone.

On the other hand, governance of the lowest-common-denominator helped the informal economy expand into hitherto suppressed areas – and play a larger than life role in the black economy of the country. Land grabbing, extortion, kidnapping, gun-running and gang wars enlarged their domain to fill the vacuum; while ethnic, sectarian and political turf wars and protection rackets muscled their way to grow beyond the reach of the law. Even the euphemistically named 'development funds' from the state's exchequer – meant for upgrading decrepit infrastructure – morphed into an art in rent seeking.

It was not that the state did not know what was going on. A hapless state was seeing it all but was often incapable, unwilling, or disabled from doing anything. The internal systems of checks and balances within the executive branch were either co-opted or disabled. The oversight function of legislature was compromised when an oxymoron was invented – a democracy without opposition – where 'everybody wanted to be onboard everything' with the government; leaving the state and its silent suffering citizens to fend for themselves. Even the honourable judges of superior judiciary have been complaining of stonewalling of judicial orders by the executive branch.

What this tells us is that the deterioration in the basic functions of the state has been deep and widespread – and grown powerful enough to resist change in status quo. The tables have been turned upon the state. For short-term interests of the few, long-term

interests of the state were compromised. And Pakistan continues to pay a heavy price in blood and treasure. One serious collateral damage to the security interests of countries whose leaders have parked their questionable assets in foreign countries lies in their being hostage to the host country's intelligence agencies and providing a handy tool to influence the policies of their countries.

Instead of the governments serving the interests of the state – as is the universally accepted norm of democratic governance – the state became subservient to the interests of the leaders in control of the government. The root cause of malgovernance in Pakistan lies in this reversal of the roles of the state and the government.

This malgovernance is reflected not merely through media reports on extortions, killings and terrorism but also through the lives of millions of silent sufferers who have been condemned to live in poverty, hunger, illiteracy and disease from one generation to the other; whose educated sons and daughters cannot find opportunities for upward mobility and who hear endless stories of plunder of public resources in the name of 'development' – and wonder whose development they all talking about.

When governance deteriorates to becoming a part of the problem rather than its solution, an overhaul of governance becomes overdue. Everyone recognises this except the oligarchy, which is confident that by 'reconciliation of interests' of major power brokers, and getting 'everybody on board everything' it has cleverly blocked all avenues of change. The governance of 'the lowest common denominator' is a by-product of the strategy of 'reconciliation of interests'. By the time every power broker managed to protect their turf, there was nothing left for the state to govern.

But every thesis has an antithesis. The roll-back of the thesis of 'everybody onboard everything' finally started when General Raheel Sharif launched Operation Zarb-e-Azb to take the battle to terrorist hideouts and rescue the writ of the state from withering away any further. As the tentacles of terrorism had spread out to the cities and the countryside in various shapes and forms, their pursuit made the army take larger responsibilities for their eradication – since governance was unwilling or unable to do its job.

In this background, the formation of apex committees to strengthen a professional and depoliticised law and order administration is a welcome step. It has already started showing results in Sindh where it is winning the hearts and minds of the silent sufferers of the city.

Two things are likely to influence the future course of events. Because governance is indivisible, it would be difficult to depoliticise and professionalise one compartment, while business as usual continues to contaminate other compartments. Also, apex

committees would need an under-structure to successfully implement their law and order agenda. How would this come about?

And secondly, will the 'everybody onboard everything' thesis reform itself and show wisdom to facilitate apex committees and not throw a spanner in the works?

Moving forward is the only option left for us to rescue the state, which has already paid heavily in blood and treasure for too long.

The writer specialised in FDI from MIT and designed the Board of Investment and First Women Bank.

Source: <http://www.thenews.com.pk/Todays-News-9-313914-The-problem-with-governance>

Indeed Pakistan Can Be An Asian Tiger



IN his thought-provoking address to the joint session of Parliament on Tuesday, Chinese President XiJinping touched upon a number of topics and issues of concern to both Pakistan and China with special reference to further consolidation of unique relationship between the two countries. His proposition that Pakistan and China must face threats together has gone down well with people of Pakistan in the backdrop of geo-strategic environment.

However, most inspiring were his remarks that Pakistan has the necessary potential to become an Asian Tiger, a term repeatedly used by successive governments during the last two decades. It is understood that these are not off-the-cough or casual remarks as Chinese are known for saying what they feel and observe. His observation must be based on knowledge and information about relevant factors and, therefore, augurs well for the country. In fact, the plans and programmes of the present Government and solid technical and financial support being offered by Chinese, raise hope for early realization of this cherished goal. Pakistan made a good start in early 60s to become an Asian Tiger when country's largestwaterreservoirs were built, sound industrial and agricultural policies pursued and the Capital shifted toIslamabad. That was considered to be a golden period of economic development and had the tempo maintained, Pakistan would surely have attained the status of an economic tiger of Asia. However, chaos, political upheavals, interruptions and discontinuity of policies

proved to be serious setbacks to realization of these dreams. Long drawn Afghan war and conflict, which continues to-date, also adversely affected Pakistan's capabilities to progress and develop. During first few years of former President Musharraf and then Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz, hopes were again rekindled that Pakistan was on its path to become an Asian Tiger but derailment was again in store for the country. Now, it is quite evident that Pakistan is standing on firm footings as there is consensus on continuity of democratic process and gradually consensus is also emerging on economic direction of the country. Pakistan has necessary resources in men and material to become an Asian Tiger provided there is consistency in policies and security environment is improved.

Source: <http://pakobserver.net/detailnews.asp?id=262561>

[XI's Visit: Pakistan and the United States. | By Hassan Shahjehan](#)

Pivots and counter-pivots

Chinese President Xi Jinping's visit to Pakistan few days back was received with much fanfare and excitement. Not only the government, but also the opposition parties, civil society and the public showed much enthusiasm for the visit of their 'iron brother' and 'all-weather friend'. The two-day trip concluded on a positive note, with Pakistan and China signing the economic and strategic projects worth more than \$46 billion. On the broader line, the projects are part of China's 'One-Belt, One-Road' strategy aiming at connecting the East Asia with the Central Asia and Europe. According to the Chinese vision, Pakistan would act as a corridor linking China to the rest of the World — 'Pakistan-China Economic Corridor'.

Beyond the economic side, Pakistan and China, as reported by the media, also closed a deal on the sale of eight sub-marines to the Pakistan navy. In return, Pakistan has decided to hand over the Gwadar port on a 40-year lease to China. The port would be essential for the over-all Chinese vision of New Maritime Silk Road, connecting China with the Indian-Ocean. It would host the Chinese facilities to service the ships and submarines of China's navy operating in the Indian Ocean.

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The kind of agreement reached between Pakistan and China is witness to the fact that the present world order is no more based on Ideology. The ideological order has become more of an 'economic order', with economy taking over the ideology in determining state relations. In the last century, the World was divided into 'Capitalist World' dominated by the US and the 'Communist World' dominated by the Soviet Union. After the break-up of the Soviet Union in 1989, the US enjoyed the status of a sole super power, thereby attracting the developing world towards itself. The international rules and norms were dominated by the US, and any defiance to the 'imposed rules' by the developing world was followed by sanctions. For example, The Pressler Amendment and democratic sanctions on Pakistan in the 90s, and its negative repercussions on its economy explain much about the kind of world order of that time. The 21st century once again brought a shift from Uni-polarity to the multi-polarity. And the present world order is not only dominated by the US in alliance with the European world. Now, China is an emerging power, sometimes substituting the US and at other times, complementing it. Pakistan is benefiting from China's rise in terms of economy and defence.

Being the first country to recognise the People's Republic of China in 1950, Pakistan is reaping the fruits of taking a tough decision in the times of the Cold War. From that day onwards, both Pakistan and China supported each other's stances and claims in the International world. China always used its veto-power in the UNSC for any resolution going against Pakistan, and diplomatically, stood behind Pakistan in its relations with India. Likewise, Pakistan also supported China in its tensions with India. In the recent joint-session of parliament, Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif once again reaffirmed its support to 'One-China Policy' and described China's security as Pakistan's security. The above-mentioned short history of Pak-China ties explain much about why the relations between both countries are full of emotional statements like, 'Bigger than Himalayas, Deeper than oceans, Sweeter than Honey'.

In the case of Pakistan, US economic assistance of \$7.5 billion for five years is nothing compared to the Chinese investment of \$48 billion. Naturally, Pakistan would shift its focus more towards China, perhaps at the cost of the US

One may wonder why such sentiments are not for the United States, with whom Pakistan has been in alliance for many decades. Since 1950s, Pakistan has been the recipient of the US military and economic aid. Without the US support, it might have not been possible for Pakistan to develop its conventional military power vis-à-vis India. Then why is 'anti-Americanism' so high in Pakistan? It seems that there is some flaw in the US State Department.

As mentioned above, state-relations are now determined by economics not ideology. This is the reason that the US Pivot to Asia is aimed at economic connectivity and trade partnerships with Asian states. To counter China's influence in Asia, the US envisioned the 'Trans-Pacific Partnership' — TPP agreement. However, it seems that China has diluted the fanfare of the Pivot by giving its own Asian pivot in terms of the One Belt One Road initiative and the New Maritime Silk Road. The US, on the other hand, is once again involved in the Middle Eastern crisis, particularly post-Arab Spring issues, the rise of ISIS and the Iranian nuclear deal. To counter the US, China is investing heavily in Sri Lanka, Myanmar, India, Pakistan and Afghanistan. Also, the recent formation of AIIB would further boost China's 'soft power' in the world; once the bank starts financing infrastructure and development projects in the developing countries.

So where does the US stand? In the case of Pakistan, US economic assistance of \$7.5 billion for five years is nothing compared to the Chinese investment of \$48 billion. Naturally, Pakistan would shift its focus more towards China, perhaps at the cost of the US. Although the US signed arms deal with Pakistan worth \$1billion, yet Pakistan has been building its defence ties with China, as evident from the sale of Chinese submarines. If the US really wants to counter China's Asian pivot (1B1R project, New Maritime Silk Road), it has to focus on its old allies and finance their economic needs. In this case, the US needs to re-analyse its policy regarding Pakistan. In the world order dominated by economic dependencies, developing countries like Pakistan would naturally go where they find funding and investment

Source: <http://www.pakistantoday.com.pk/2015/04/25/featured/xis-visit-pakistan-and-the-united-states/>

[Say Goodbye to American Supremacy](#)



“Prices come down,” chanted rioters in Indonesia in May 1998. When the International Monetary Fund (IMF) **stepped in** to rescue Indonesia from near-bankruptcy, they demanded the following: privatization of state-owned enterprises, sharp cuts to government spending, and a tighter monetary policy. Unemployment worsened at the same time prices for essential goods such as fuel and food skyrocketed. Similar scenes could be found in Latin America, Africa and Eastern Europe as IMF remedies to the 1997 Asian financial **crisis** only deepened economic woes.

Over at the World Bank, the other pillar of Western-led global economic policy, conditions for development projects have historically included the implementation of strong legal institutions and respect for elections. The bank’s indicators for good governance are implicit development goals centering around promoting democracy, the rule of law, and Western-style government institutions.

For developing countries concerned more with economic growth—more than adhering to a free-market, neoliberal orthodoxy—a long-awaited alternative global economic and development architecture has arrived in the form of China-led initiatives such as the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank, the BRICS Bank, and the New Silk Road. Instead of seeing threats to its preeminence, the United States should seize the opportunity to reassert its leadership by adapting to this new order.

Having languished in declinism since China's emergence on the world stage in 2008, America needs to act now. Recently, the United Kingdom, France, Germany and Italy announced that they would [join](#) the AIIB, an effort to tackle Asia's \$1 trillion infrastructure needs. The United States [sees](#) the bank as China's bid for control of Asia and had pressured allies, including Australia and South Korea, not to join.

At this point, joining is a symbolic gesture. The AIIB is beginning with only \$50 billion in funding, and no governing framework is in place. Thirty-five countries have signed up, not for short-term investment prospects but as a bet that a China-led bank may do better than its Washington-based counterparts for Asia.

The basis of that bet is China's own staggering growth. More importantly for countries receiving aid, Beijing has consistently pledged not to interfere in the domestic affairs of other countries, a direct rebuke to Western foreign policy. After taking some responsibility for globalization's failures, the IMF and World Bank now allow developing countries a longer timeframe to implement reforms. However, it is never in doubt that the ultimate goal is a market economy with social values and institutions found in Western industrialized nations.

Add general frustration at their lack of decision-making power in the IMF and World Bank, and it's easy to understand why developing countries are eager for another source of aid.

The United States was slow to respond to the AIIB expansion, embarrassed at its failure to contain China. Nathan Sheets, Treasury Under Secretary for International Affairs, finally [stated](#) last week that the United States would seek to collaborate on development projects with the AIIB. The IMF and World Bank expressed similar sentiments. In an effort to save face, they claimed their participation would ensure, "high-quality, time-tested standards are maintained," [according](#) to Sheets. In other words, they will push for the AIIB to adopt their standards for governance, the environment, transparency, and the like.

If the promise sounds empty, it is. America is not going to write the rules of a Chinese development bank. The United States needs to do two things to maintain its leadership. First, it needs to realize that the countries of the emerging world order no longer believe development efforts must spread Western political and economic values. Second, it has to accordingly expand its understanding of global leadership. America is still critical in a world where its ideals are not a necessary precondition to economic growth.

The United States should now focus on fulfilling the original promise of the Bretton-Woods conference that established the IMF and World Bank. We should use these

international financial institutions purely as tools for economic policy coordination. This is not to say that the original Bretton-Woods policy prescriptions, such as fixed exchange rates and an international reserve currency, should be followed. But what these policies got right was that we ought to focus on balancing the economic health of countries through facilitating international cooperation on monetary policy. Any sort of conditionality, particularly of a political nature, is unnecessary at best for global development and financial stability.

More fundamentally, the role of the IMF and World Bank must shift from dictating policy to building consensus. America needs to push through sweeping reforms, currently stalled in Congress, to increase funding at these organizations and give developing countries a greater voice.

America's prime responsibility and contribution is no longer as the world's chief idealist, but its most influential pragmatist. The United States must embrace its unique position to facilitate cooperation in a multipolar economic order.

Source: <http://nationalinterest.org/feature/say-goodbye-american-supremacy-12535>

[China-Pakistan Economic Corridor | By Dr Ejaz Hussain](#)

China needs to invest overseas to help digest its domestic excessive production capacity while Pakistan is in dire need of foreign direct investment

According to media reports, Chinese president Xi Jinping's Pakistan visit is expected this month. This well-awaited visit was twice postponed, costing our relations to the country dearly. China and Pakistan have enjoyed unparalleled political and strategic relations since the early 1960s. Most Chinese call Pakistan an "iron brother" and Pakistan terms China a "pillar of its foreign policy". However, despite a strong understanding on the political and diplomatic levels, economic relations have remained far below their actual potential. This is in spite of the fact that the two countries have geographical proximity and road connectivity, the two sides have granted each other most favoured nation status and have signed the Free Trade Agreement (FTA).

Pakistan was the first country in South Asia to enter into an FTA with China. Even though this two-way trade has improved from over a billion dollars at the start of the new century to an estimated \$ 14 billion in 2014, it remains dismal compared to China's trade with other countries, especially India, which has surpassed \$ 60 billion per annum.

In a globalised world where economic considerations overlap strategic considerations in inter and intra-state relations, Beijing and Islamabad need to give serious thought on how to expand their economic and trade ties.

A look at the relationship points to a number of factors behind the low trade and the trade deficit. For instance, Pakistan's colonial legacy, western orientation of its businessmen, language barrier, lack of meaningful economic reforms, political instability, limited export basket, law and order situation (which has worsened post-9/11) and China's controlled economy (till the late 1970s) have all contributed to low trade exchange. If one compares Pakistan's exports to China's during the 1950s with the current export items, one finds hardly any major change in trends. Most of Pakistan's exports to its northern neighbor have revolved around agricultural and leather products, sports items and raw material. On the other hand, Chinese exports to Pakistan are high-tech finished products. In addition, Pakistan's simple commodity trade structure, limited service trade market, low level of investment and interference of non-economic factors also contributed towards the low economic relations. Last but not least, the increasingly deepening economic relations, interwoven with the process of domestic political reforms and economic development of the two countries, has led to symbiotic issues related to security. In this respect, both states have to stabilise their border areas, preventing foreign subversive forces from manipulating domestic ethnic conflicts.

Moreover, both countries are facing the challenges of economic structure adjustment and developmental transformation. Hence, they need to get rid of the negative impact of the international macro-economy, especially the energy security risks. The mentioned problems cannot be addressed without the reconsolidation of economic resources and coordination in macro-economic areas between the two countries. At present, a regional framework that can reflect new trends in bilateral economic cooperation and can properly solve the bellowing symbiotic issues is lacking.

The newly conceived China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) fills this gap. The corridor can act as a regional institution to boost bilateral relations. Against the commonly misunderstood impression that the CPEC is a land or rail connectivity passage between the two countries, the CPEC is indeed a comprehensive concept that encompasses economic and strategic integration between the two countries in the long run. Furthermore, the CPEC is the name of regional economic integration beyond the geographical route; it represent the domestic institutional arrangements and macro-economic coordination between the two countries in the transnational flow of economic factors such as capital, technology, information and labour.

Considering the weak infrastructure in Pakistan and western China, the first task of the CPEC should be the construction of transport links to establish connectivity and make

economic factors move along smoothly. But this does not mean the CPEC is only a simple geographic line or that the spin-off projects will only be implemented along that route. In fact, the corridor promotes cooperation in all areas by drawing upon experiences gained on key points. Here it is important to mention that Pakistan's economy is highly complementary to that of China and exists in a win-win cooperation of investment, technology, human resource and energy. For instance, China needs markets for its products and searches for raw material. Pakistan needs access to technology and equipment to boost its industrialisation process while it has abundant untapped raw material. Second, China needs to invest overseas to help digest its domestic excessive production capacity while Pakistan is in dire need of foreign direct investment (FDI). If China invests in Pakistan, it will reverse the foreign debt trap in Pakistan. Third, China has been facing long-term foreign trade surplus, with a large number of foreign exchange reserves for the purchase of not-always-deserving US bonds. It looks for a more effective channel to use foreign exchange funds. In contrast, Pakistan has been facing an imbalance in its international payments. Fourth, China has become an aging society. Pakistan on the other hand is one of those countries with the highest youth population. By giving Pakistani youth basic training and skills, it can be positively consumed in China's industrial sector and the chain of production. Fifth, because of the significant geopolitical position, Pakistan can help China in the construction of transnational energy channels to diversify energy imports. This will also complement Pakistan's own energy imports mechanism.

Thus, economic cooperation between Pakistan and China is not only complementary in areas such as capital, technology, labour and energy but also pushes for the integration of their economies. This complementing, it is argued, can form a virtuous cycle between the two countries leading to sustainable economic development. This is the essence of the CPEC, which is not mere connectivity but comprehensive economic and strategic integration. Based on this economic integration, the two countries could develop closer economic ties and build transport links as the core of infrastructure construction, industrial division as the core of economic structure coordination, currency unity as the core of the financial system and, finally, policy coordination as the core of the decision-making mechanism.

Undeniably, the construction of the CPEC also faces some challenges, which should be addressed wisely especially on the Pakistani side. The key point may be to fully assess the risks of construction, carefully make risk-avoiding programmes and put them into effect at an early stage. In summation, China and Pakistan have a lot to learn and share. This was precisely discussed and understood at the recently held Pak-China business forum too. Nevertheless, any economic exchange should transform into retributive justice so that the poor remains the priority.

Global Economy & Pakistan | By Dr Kamal Monnoo

As the late John Kenneth Galbraith remarked: “The only function of economic forecasting is to make astrology look respectable.” Of course, the statement is more in light humor and in no way implies that projections are not useful. It is always useful to identify economic trends, assess a few known and unknown global developments, and it is precisely by keeping to this notion that the council of world economists has released their recent advice on the likely global economic scenario over the course of coming months. According to it, the world economy is extremely likely to grow. It has, after all, grown every year since the Second World War, with the sole exception of 2009, the main year of the global financial crisis, when it shrank 2% at market exchange rate and

remained roughly constant at purchasing power parity (PPP). The International Monetary Fund (IMF) in its latest assessment believes that the world economy will grow at nearly 4%, at PPP. This is a good starting point. It is also a remarkable one: at 4% annual growth, the world economy doubles every 18 years. So where will this growth come from?

Well, we can almost be sure that emerging economies will grow faster than high-income ones, and Asian emerging economies – those of East Asia and South Asia – will grow fastest of all. This too by the way has now been a consistent long-term pattern (in excess of 35 years). Asian emerging economies have grown faster than emerging ones as a whole in every year at least since 1980, even (though only just) in 1998, the worst year of the Asian financial crisis. The present challenge however will be that Asian growth is decelerating, largely because of China's slowdown. But it is still expected to run at an annual rate of above 6%. Emerging economies as a whole are forecast to grow at close to 5% annually. The most important positive factor has been the decline in oil prices. An interesting blog from the IMF argues that global output could be between 0.3% and 0.7% higher in 2015 as a result. Lower oil prices help by reducing headline inflation and raising real incomes of consumers. If prices remain low, this benefit could last for a while. For now though – unless we shift to a deflationary cycle – persistently low inflation is being quite helpful. This allows the monetary authorities to remain accommodative. Lastly, as per the report, the major positive supply shock that is likely to come across will be in the shape of a significant recovery in productivity growth in crisis-hit high-income economies (Italy, Spain, France & others in Euro-zone), including the UK and US. Still, that would be a small surprise, but the real big surprise is seen to be coming from India, which is being tipped to be the world's fastest growing major economy over the next two or even three decades. So, with the neighborhood taking off in such a big way, the question for us to consider is that what choices does it leave Pakistan to ensure that it does not lose out and its real potential is not eclipsed by its larger neighbor India?

To understand this, let's first assess that what are the recent economic initiatives that India has undertaken that have suddenly transformed it into being billed as the economy of the future? Foremost, there has been a re-shift of focus from services to manufacturing. In its budget announced recently, the Indian leadership has taken upon itself to formulate economic policies that endeavor to increase the "share of labor in the Indian Economy". To achieve this, they have undertaken a clever mix of financial, corporate and industrial reforms in the country to help boost investment and also the performance of the private sector. Capitalising on the traditional strength of its PSE (Public Sector Enterprises) – State Enterprises still form 25% of the Indian Corporate sector – it has devised an innovative plan to spur growth and investment by making its

state enterprises to not only partner but also lead the private sector into making investments. For example, initiatives like announcing US \$137 bn investment in Indian Railways, which in turn will also open up related projects for the private sector and the plan to turn around its national carrier, Air India Limited, to only name a few. Furthermore, the Modi government has vowed to cut bureaucratic red tape, open up sectors previously closed to foreign investment and ring much awaited property rights' legislative changes that formed the biggest impediment to attracting foreign direct investment. In the finance minister's own words, the aims are very straightforward: One, improve India's competitiveness. Two, ease up doing business in India. Three, ensure that the share of Indian Labor increases in the Indian Economy. And four, no 'witch-hunting' by make taxation in India: a) Affordable (bringing down tax slab to 25%), b) Easy (no coercive or counterproductive contact with the taxpayer) and c) Based on reciprocity by the state.

In contrast, the performance of our economic managers comes across as being unimaginative, to say the least. In reality, all the touted indicators of an economy on the mend are more cosmetic in nature than being deep-rooted – a thin scratch to the surface and the shine fades away. As one dives deep into the key elements of the Pakistan economy, one realises that on the contrary it is in fact faltering and much of it has to do with misplaced governmental priorities. Fancy infrastructure projects are given priority over important areas like health, education, skill development (especially for the lower 50% of the population segment). The focus on the three most important things in an economy is missing: 1) Employment Generation, 2) Competitiveness & 3) Equitable Growth. While most countries around the globe seem to be revisiting policies to revive national manufacturing, our industry is slipping instead; exports are declining; both domestic and foreign investment is at an all time low, and the decline in exports also points towards an eroding national competitiveness. A point further highlighted by the fact that most foreign companies & financial institutions have either already exited our markets or are in the process of doing so. Even more disappointingly, two years have gone by and the 'Big Ticket Reforms' are still missing, and there are no signs of undertaking them any time soon either. These reforms relate to: labor reforms, corporate governance reforms (in SECP, CCP, etc), Reporting Mechanisms, law & order, police, and industrial reforms that will see to it that just like in India the ease of doing business in Pakistan also improves, bureaucratic red tape gets reduced, and taxation becomes fair cum effective.

In spite of the rhetoric on spurring GDP growth by enhanced trade, our trade management strategy not only lacks vision but also suffers from a lack of understanding on evolving global trends. For example, a strong Pakistani Rupee in a scenario of declining exports is nothing but foolhardy. Likewise, in the power sector, the real user, industry, complains that its tariff is still not regionally competitive since the government

has not shared with it the fair impact of the reduced oil prices. On an even more alarmingly note the undocumented sector in Pakistan today appears to be thriving at the expense of the documented sector and by recent unofficial accounts is recording a growth in double digits. The two key sectors of the Pakistan economy, Agriculture and Banking, are misfiring and last but not least, this PML(N) government yet again appears to be repeating the mistake of its yesteryears: ignoring the importance of the small and medium sized enterprises just because it suddenly finds itself flushed with external largesse owing to some extraordinary geopolitical developments. History seems to be repeating itself!

Source: <http://nation.com.pk/columns/15-Apr-2015/global-economy-pakistan>

[Education and Mother Tongue | By Syed Mohammad Ali](#)



While there are varied implementation hurdles in trying to make the shift, our education policymakers seem adamant to adopt English as the medium of instruction across government schools in the country. The emphasis on switching to [English-medium public education](#) is based on the rationale of creating a uniform education system, which can alleviate the existing disparities between students educated from private schools that teach in English versus those who remain at a disadvantage due to receiving a public education provided in Urdu. However, there is growing evidence pointing out that adoption of English will not have a favourable effect on improving universal literacy or even the quality of education being provided by government schools.

Pakistan is not the only country struggling with [the medium of instruction controversy](#). Many countries continue teaching their students in former colonial languages, or in a dominant national or international language, which young children do not speak at home. In the case of Pakistan as well, Urdu had been imposed as the preferred language of instruction in government schools around the country, with ad hoc use of regional languages, used inconsistently across the four provinces.

The Global Education Campaign has put out a policy brief, "[Mother-tongue education: Policy lessons for quality and inclusion](#)", which estimated that 221 million children

across the developing world are enrolled in schools where they are unable to understand the language being used to teach them. An ill-suited language of instruction thus places such children in the undesirable position of struggling to understand the very language being used to educate them about different subjects. Using an inadequate language of instruction discourages many children from enrolling in schools, increases drop-out rates and undermines student learning.

It is not only students who face difficulties when an inappropriate language of instruction is imposed from above. For instance, a 2013 study on teaching and learning in English in Punjab schools undertaken by the Society for the Advancement of Higher Education and the Campaign for Quality Education found that 70 per cent of the teachers had difficulties teaching grade one mathematics and science in English.

Despite increasingly overwhelming evidence of the value and benefits of early education in a mother tongue, few developing countries, including our own, are paying sufficient heed to making required policy adjustments. Encouraging use of local (provincial or regional) languages in education does require additional efforts, such as developing more varied teacher training programmes, teaching materials and examination systems. However, such an investment would prove well worth it, given the resulting savings in the form of reducing school repetition and drop-outs, for example. Investing in increased use of local languages within the education system would also help improve the low quality of education, and help ensure the right to education for all.

There is also convincing evidence around the world that a second language is learned best when a first language has been learned well. Children who receive schooling in their mother tongue in early grades have better learning outcomes and much better literacy levels. Such findings have led educationists to advocate use of children's mother tongue as the initial key language of instruction, with a second language introduced later in carefully managed stages. Several educationists in our country also agree. While the status of Urdu as the medium of instruction is still contestable, there is increasing recognition of the fact that English should only be taught as a subject, rather than being made the medium of instruction, till grade five at least.

Published in The Express Tribune, April 3rd, 2015.

[Education Disaster](#) | By [Zubeida Mustafa](#)

The story goes back to the year 2000 when 1,100 participants from 164 countries assembled in Dakar(Senegal) for the World Education Forum.

The Dakar moot set for itself the goal of 'Education for All' and underpinned it with six specific targets to be achieved by 2015. Unesco stepped forward to monitor progress on these goals annually.

Thus an independent team was constituted and the Global Monitoring Report was born. GMR 2015 was launched last week and summed up the achievements of countries in the education sector.

The score card is not too inspiring. The key finding is that only half of all countries have reached the goal of universal primary education. The report says 80 million more children are in school today than 15 years ago. But the worrisome reality is that millions of children and adolescents are still out of school as states have failed to keep pace with the growing world population.

For us Pakistan is of primary concern. Being the sixth most populous country in the world and a major contributor to the global pool of illiteracy Pakistan is now widely seen

as a basket case. Aaron Benavot, director of the EFA Global Monitoring Report, says, “Three years since Malala Yousafzai was shot for speaking out about her struggle, and that of other young girls, to get a decent education a new Unesco report has revealed that little has changed in Pakistan. It remains the only country outside of sub-Saharan Africa to be in the bottom 10 countries in the world for overall achievement towards Education for All.”

This is a pity because the six targets seemed so achievable when they were adopted. Besides, the barriers of parental resistance have now been pulled down to a great extent. Hence the poor results point to the poor performance of those entrusted with the responsibility of educating our children. .

In 2012, out of a target of 100pc, the goals of ‘early childhood care and education’ and ‘educational access for all children’ scored 82pc (enrolment) and 72pc respectively, while the figure for ‘equitable access to appropriate learning’ was 49pc instead of the ideal 97pc. Illiteracy was reduced by 27pc, not 50pc. The GPI on ‘eliminating gender disparity’ was 0.87 at the primary and 0.74 at the secondary level. The ‘improvement in educational quality’ was not measurable.

Although budget figures show a rise under education heads — not as much as desirable — there has been pilfering and misappropriation. Foreign aid for education has gone up, but has not created the intended impact as donors have in their ignorance misdirected a lot of aid to inappropriate projects.

The responsibility lies squarely on the government which is constitutionally mandated to provide free and compulsory education to children from five to 16 years of age. There is also the debate over quantity vs quality that hasn’t been fully addressed. Hence, the ASER reports — the best independent measure the country has to gauge education quality — show year after year how low the students’ learning output is. Yet five million children from five to nine years remain out of school.

The government has left it to the private sector to fill the gap. This comprises profit-making commercial education entrepreneurs, big and small, who have mushroomed across the country, NGOs who depend on aid and donations to provide affordable education, or madressahs funded by their patrons from abroad. The net result is Pakistan’s education system suffers from lack of uniformity and forms an uneven playing field that promotes inequities. Education is not the equaliser that it should be.

This scenario cannot be transformed without an active role played by the government. Given the size of the population and the geographical area to be covered it is beyond

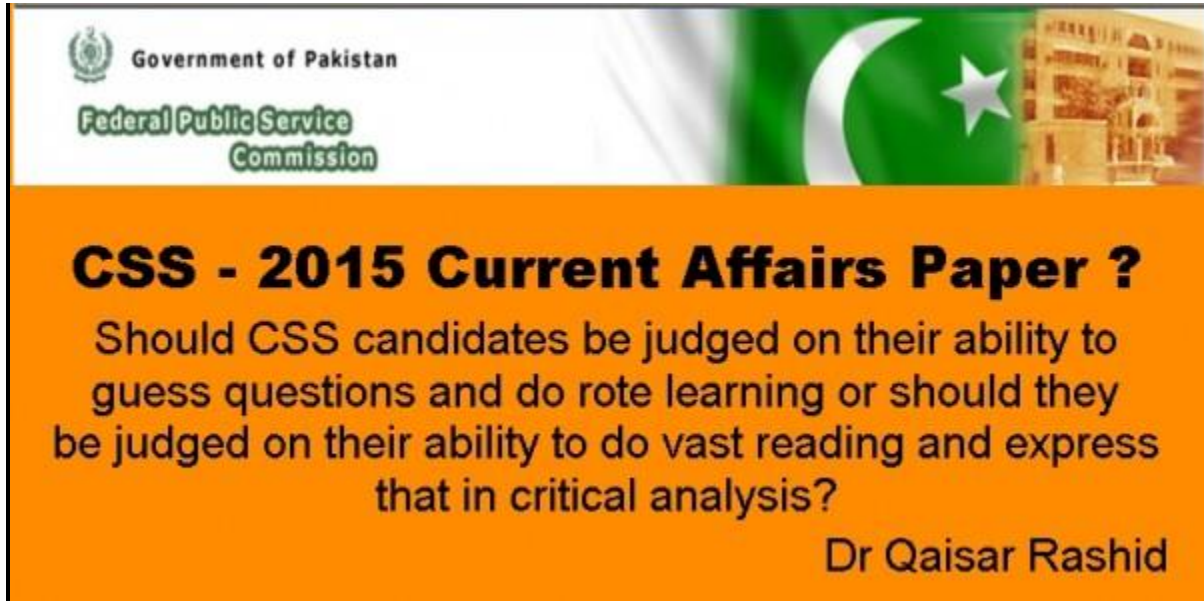
the capacity of the non-governmental sector to provide access to education on a big scale. There are thousands of NGOs working in this area but their impact is limited because each works in isolation. Hardly any join hands to optimise the impact of their efforts.

The NGOs are not even united on a common vision of education in Pakistan. Their strategies vary and there is no collective research being done on classroom approaches, medium of instruction, curricula, textbooks, etc. The numerous NGOs that can be defined as education-related and have good intentions simply follow hit-and-miss methods.

The need is for NGOs to create a common platform. Some of them should become agents for advocacy and research to act as pressure groups to force the government to get its act together. Others should be service providers and run schools to develop a model that succeeds. They should work jointly to share each others' expertise and experience. This platform could pressurise the government to upgrade its own institutions and expand its services rather than find escape routes to shelve its responsibilities.

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CSS - 2015 Current Affairs Paper ?
Should CSS candidates be judged on their ability to guess questions and do rote learning or should they be judged on their ability to do vast reading and express that in critical analysis?
Dr Qaisar Rashid

Should CSS candidates be judged on their ability to guess questions and do rote learning or should they be judged on their ability to do vast reading and express that in critical analysis?

In February, the Federal Public Service Commission (FPSC) conducted the examination of the Central Superior Services (CSS) for the year 2015 to recruit future bureaucrats. Reportedly, more than 8,000 candidates from across the country participated. The knowledge of the CSS candidates on current affairs was tested on February 15.

An outsider to the system thinks that the FPSC must be conducting an examination that tests the analytical talent of the candidates. The subjective part (part two) of the paper of current affairs militates against this idea (part one, having objective type questions, was taken back after the candidates attempted it). In the said paper, the candidates had to attempt only four questions out of a given seven. This is a major structural flaw in the paper. The flaw promotes two trends: first, guessing the paper and, second, doing selective study. If the total number of questions were reduced to five out of which a candidate were to select any four, the trends of who guessed better and how to do selective study can be checked. The subjective part showcases another flaw on what

parameters the candidates should be judged. Should CSS candidates be judged on their ability to guess questions and do rote learning or should they be judged on their ability to do vast reading and express that in critical analysis?

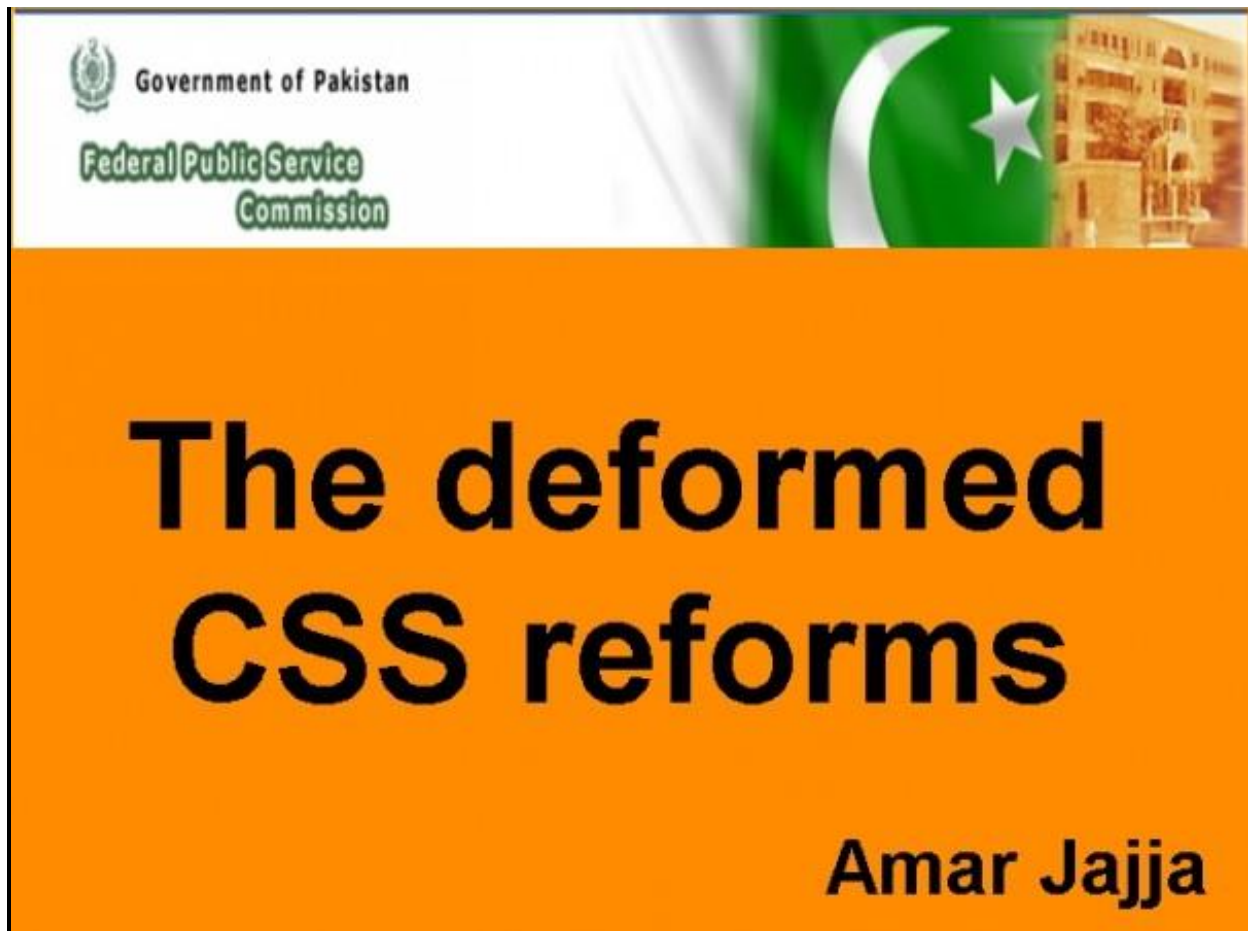
The first question asked was this: “Since 1970, every election was accused of rigging. What electoral reforms will you suggest to improve the electoral system of Pakistan?” In this question, the major emphasis was on giving suggestions in which all Pakistanis, whether literate or not, are expert. Though one can argue that there was an implied emphasis on identifying the problems first before giving suggestions, the question lacked the critical analysis aspect. Candidates could have been asked to make a comparative analysis with, for example, the Indian electoral system, which is functional in a better way. The second question asked was this: “What is the role of education in character building of a nation? Highlight pitfalls in Pakistan’s education systems.” In the first half of this question, the emphasis was on developing a relationship between the role of education and the nation’s character building but, in the second half, the emphasis was changed to education systems. There was no correlation between the first and second halves. The second half completely overlooked the character building aspect. The second half could have been framed like this: Highlight major pitfalls in Pakistan’s education systems and the consequent character building problems.

The third question was this: “Define [the] term ‘good governance’. What measures should the present government take to improve its performance?” In this question, the term good governance is equated with performance despite the fact that governance is nearer to the word control whereas the word performance is nearer to the word enactment. Moreover, governance is only one measure to judge a government’s performance, as constructing roads can represent performance but not governance. The second half of the question should have been framed like this: Critically analyse the steps taken by the present government to improve governance and identify where there is room for improvement. The fourth question was: “Do you believe that [the] main cause of the 2014 floods was Indian ‘water terrorism’ or was it due to awful mismanagement of water resources in Pakistan?” It was a good question but at the end of this question, the examiner could have added, analyse or give arguments. The fifth

question was: “What were the causes of the Arab Spring? Identify their impacts on the future politics of the region.” This question was framed in such a way as to make the meaning of “their” relevant to “causes” and not to “Arab Spring”, though it was another good question. It was confusing if the examiner wanted to know the impacts of the causes of the Arab Spring on future regional politics or of the Arab Spring. Moreover, the second half of the question could have been framed in a better way like this: To what extent can the future politics of the region be vulnerable to its (Arab Spring’s) effects. Analyse.

The sixth question was: “Do you agree that Pakistan’s role in the Afghan jihad against the Soviet Union was the root cause of terrorism in Pakistan or it is a reaction of the US’s invasion of Afghanistan after 9/11 and Pakistan’s U-turn in Afghan policy?” This was another good question but its end remained devoid of words such as analyse, give arguments or discuss. The seventh question was: “Critically evaluate the counter terrorism policy of Pakistan and suggest measures to eradicate this evil.” This was the second question on terrorism, as the implied meaning of “this evil” was terrorism. Moreover, the connection between the first half and the second half of the question was erroneous. There was a sudden shift from policy to terrorism. The question could be improved in this way: Critically evaluate the counter terrorism policy of Pakistan, find out flaws and suggest measures to improve it (i.e. the policy). That is, the focus should have been on the policy and not on terrorism.

Generally, out of these seven questions, three questions (education, governance and terrorism) were oft repeated and were anybody’s guess. In no way could these discriminate between those who studied the subject for a long time, say one year, and those who did not study it at all. Expectedly, most students must have attempted these three questions to be left with one more question to attempt from the rest. Secondly, the answer sheet may not help the examiner sort out those candidates having the critical analytical ability from those devoid of it. Thirdly, though there were certain good questions, they were not framed properly and the options to misunderstand them were plenty. Fourthly, many good topics existing in the syllabus, such as Pakistan’s economy and Pakistan’s bilateral or multilateral relations, were left out for no reason.



The exam for Central Superior Services, better known by its abbreviation CSS, is often considered as a rollercoaster that can Change Social Status, or as a pathogen that afflicts Chronic Sadistic Syndrome. Nevertheless, it is the most popular non-degree examination which allures candidates hailing from all corners of our country, without any distinction of religion or ethnicity (though there is a quota based segregation when it comes to allocation). For the past few years, an exponential increase in the number of candidates has forced the FPSC to brainstorm improvements in the examination procedure. After many speculations, new reforms have finally surfaced with no procedural change, but with convulsive alterations in the exam's contents. The purpose of this reform, in the words of the FPSC, is to 'align the subjects and syllabi of the CSS exam' which is well-phrased and reflects all the changes made therein, precisely.

First, is the alignment or regrouping of subjects, or, more specifically, of the optional subjects. Previously, groups were structured so that similar subjects fell under the same group, for example, all law subjects were placed in one group, philosophy and psychology were placed together in another group, and so on. It encouraged candidates to look for subjects with more commonalities, or which could be cross-referenced. Previously, doctors used to opt for subjects related to biology, while students of arts used to take “refuge” in subjects related to the languages and social sciences. So, FPSC has come up with a new strategy in which one can select only one subject from each group. According to this scheme “unpopular” and “popular” subjects have been segregated in such a manner that one cannot take all of the “popular” subjects freely and he must opt for the “unpopular” subjects, too. But this strategy has not successfully achieved its end as popular subjects among MBAs, CAs and economics students like business administration, statistics and economics have not been placed together rather placed in three different groups so that one can select each one of them. This dichotomy on one side has curbed options for candidates with science and arts backgrounds, while providing wider leeway for those with an economics background.

Ironically, in the previous format, one could not select business administration and economics together. Candidates have already started satirizing and ridiculing this stark exception by reckoning that this measure might have been taken at the IMF’s behest, to induct more economists and auditors in order to covertly further their global ‘capitalization’ agenda.

Moreover, there is another intrinsic flaw in the present regrouping which has practically made the first two groups compulsory because the required marks count cannot be achieved unless at least one subject is selected from those groups. To add insult to injury, those groups house mostly science or economics subjects like economics, computer science, statistics, mathematics, physics, chemistry, etc.. In short, FPSC’s new strategy seems to be hastily or nonchalantly contrived, leaving behind loopholes which resultantly defeat its ultimate objective.

Second in the list of reforms is the introduction of new subjects, which is a reformative measure in the real sense. Subjects like governance and public policy, town planning and urban management, gender studies, and criminology have been added to the pool of subjects, respecting exigencies of a public service job. But there’s still a catch: not only have subjects – or even topics – concerning the development of rural areas been totally ignored, but the formerly separate subjects of agriculture and forestry have also been condensed and coalesced; exhibiting their true position in the eyes of policymakers.

The third feature of the recent CSS reforms is the revision of syllabi. Pertaining to compulsory subjects, most of the changes are “revolutionary”. For example, in Islamic Studies, the Islamic aspect of good governance and public administration has been added, and in General Science, logical and analytical reasoning will cover a significant portion of the overall paper. However, syllabus of Pakistan Affairs has been revamped in a manner that has obscured its distinction in contrast with Current Affairs, another compulsory subject. On the other hand, the syllabi for optional subjects has not been changed much, but the total marks – for some “popular subjects”– have been drastically scaled down. For instance, Geography, which previously carried 200 marks has been scaled down to 100 marks without properly adjusting its syllabus. Now candidates would have to prepare both portions of physical and human geography consuming the same time and energy but with half the reward. Such ignorance raises many bitter questions. One more auxiliary issue has been left unaddressed by FPSC: paper patterns of all subjects have not been clearly mentioned in the new announcement, for example, what would be the ratio of MCQs in the General Science paper, with respect to its subjective portion? The FPSC should understand that owing to massive changes, candidates are not left with much guidance, therefore unelaborated changes will only generate rumours and promote wild conjectures.

After a categorical appraisal, it is evident that FPSC is moving in the right direction albeit it has to scrupulously and prudently remove all shortcomings which might obstruct the achievement of its aspired goals, lest these reforms should discourage, dishearten or even repel prospective – as FPSC has phrased it – ‘quality fabric for the Civil Service’. To state it in an audacious manner: though with ostensibly positive intentions, these new CSS reforms are themselves deformed!

Amar Jajja is an electrical engineer, law graduate and currently a CSS aspirant.

Source:<http://nation.com.pk/blogs/21-Apr-2015/the-deformed-css-reforms>

Education: Where do we Stand? | By Salman Ali



Not only are teachers not available in sufficient numbers, there is also no system of regular training. Teacher absenteeism is also common

All political parties in Pakistan agree in principle that education is the basic human right of every child. In their election manifestoes, they place education in their priority lists but nothing has ever been done. Pakistan's Constitution also declares it an obligation of the state to educate all children without any discrimination. Article 25-A of the Constitution says: "The state shall provide free and compulsory education to all children of the age of five to 16 years in such manner as may be determined by law."

However, the ground situation has always been pathetic, no matter if civilians or the military ruled the country. According to reports, around 25 million girls and boys in the five to 16 age groups are out of school while 23 percent of these children are of primary school age. This proportion increases with the rise in the level of education; almost 85 percent of children do not reach the higher secondary level. The report, which is based on the data of the federal government's National Institute of Policy Studies (NIPS), says that more than half of the country's out-of-school children — about 52 percent — live in Punjab, 25 percent in Sindh, 10 percent in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, seven percent in

Balochistan, three percent in FATA, two percent in Azad Jammu and Kashmir, and one percent in Gilgit Baltistan.

Currently there are 52.91 million children in Pakistan between the ages of five and 16. Statistics show that only 27.89 million attend an educational institute (government or private), leaving 25.02 million children out of school. There are currently 5.1 million children of primary school age out of school. What is of serious concern is that the report also reveals vast regional disparities in providing girls with equal opportunities for education. Nationally, 15.9 million boys, between the ages of five and 16, are enrolled, compared to just 11.9 million girls. As a result, 13.7 million girls and 11.4 million boys are out of school. Region wise, the greatest disparity is in FATA, followed by Balochistan and Punjab. In FATA, 78 percent of girls are out of school compared to 47 percent of boys while 72 percent of girls in Balochistan are out of school with boys at 60 percent.

An analysis of the country's education arena shows that poverty has much to do with lack of access to education. It has been found that the number of the out of school children increases as income levels fall. Among children belonging to the poorest households, 57 percent are not in school while it is 26 percent in the upper middle class and 10 percent in rich homes. The proportion of such children decreases up to the age of eight but then rises sharply, so that by the age of 16 more than 55 percent of children are out of school.

What are the reasons so many children are out of school? Two fundamental problems are shortage of funds and the absence of infrastructural facilities. A recent survey by a non-governmental organisation shows that in 34 percent cases, people do not allow girls to get enrolled because of the incomplete school infrastructure: lack of the requisite teaching staff, drinking water, boundary walls, toilets and other facilities. To accommodate the increasing number of children no new school buildings are being built. Not only are teachers not available in sufficient numbers, there is also no system of regular training. Teacher absenteeism is also common. It is widely alleged that merit is ignored and teachers are appointed on political grounds. Education experts are of the opinion that unless these impediments are removed education will remain inaccessible for a large number of children in Pakistan.

Amina Ahmed, a journalist and a lecturer, said, "The education crisis in Pakistan can be tackled but the first and foremost need is to enhance budgetary allocations for the education sector and ensure that they are efficiently and effectively spent. Moreover, emphasis should also be placed on teacher and staff trainings. I have a firm believe that verbosity or tall claims will not serve the purpose. All governments at the Centre and provinces will have to make education their top priority to achieve the goal of a literate and educated nation," says Amina.

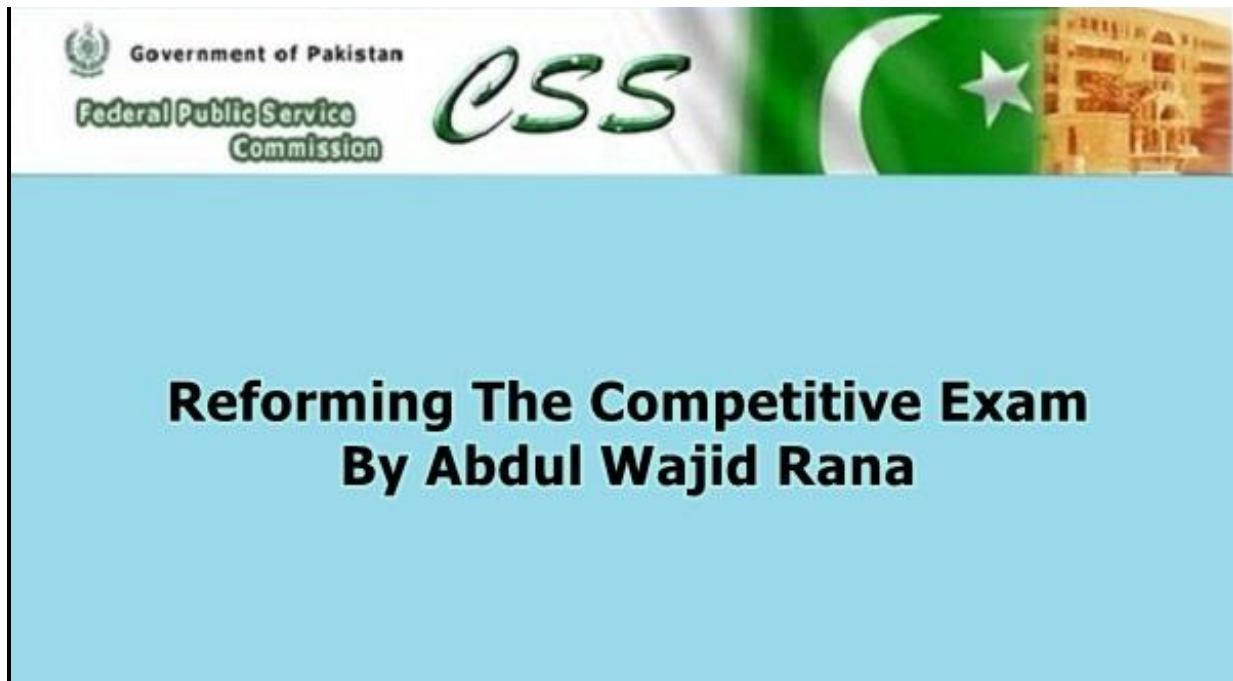
According to the UNs Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), Pakistan has almost 5.5 million children out of school, the second highest number in the world only after Nigeria. Pakistan also has the highest number of illiterate adults in the world, after India and China. UNESCO's report on the state of global primary education points out that Pakistan is among 21 countries in the world that face an "extensive learning crisis". On UNESCO's index, which is based on a number of indicators such as enrollment, dropout rates, academic performance and literacy, Pakistan scores low in every area.

Broadly speaking, global standards of primary education are in a shambles in south and west Asia, and western Africa. Countries in these regions, including Pakistan, are behind in virtually every index. Pakistan has the dubious distinction of belonging to the poorest category that features 17 countries from sub-Saharan Africa, Mauritania, Morocco and India. According to UNESCO's findings, private schools provide a better standard of education than government institutes. The index shows that children even in low fee private schools outperform those enrolled in the top tier of government schools, showing the government's crumbling educational infrastructure. However, even in most private schools, 36 percent of grade five students cannot read a sentence in English, which they should be able to do by grade two.

The most damaging part of the UNESCO report relates to inequalities in education within the country and the impact of the rich-poor divide on educational attainments: "Geographical disadvantage is often aggravated by poverty and gender. In Balochistan, only 45 percent of children in grade five could solve a two-digit subtraction, compared with 73 percent in the wealthier Punjab province. Only around one-quarter of girls from poor households in Balochistan achieved basic numeracy skills while boys from rich households in the province fared much better, approaching the average in Punjab."

A serious education issue is availability and quality of teachers. In the list of countries that have the highest shortfall of teachers, Pakistan was the only non-African country to feature on it. Nigeria was the highest on the list, requiring 212,000 teachers. The study said that between 2011 and 2015, 5.2 million primary school teachers were required globally to make sure that universal primary education is guaranteed. As historical experience has proved, political interference should stop so that appointments are made on merit. In the larger context, we need to study the education system of countries like Sri Lanka to find out how they managed to achieve such a high rate of literacy within a short time.

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[Reforming The Competitive Exam | By Abdul Wajid Rana](#)

Good governance is a key challenge for both developing and developed countries. Governments, today, are confronted with increasingly complex and cross-cutting issues, such as economic and financial volatility, internal and external conflicts, adverse demographic trends, climate change, establishing effective regulatory regimes and bridging huge infrastructure gaps. With a more educated and vocal citizenry, savvy in the use of social media and a highly vigilant mainstream media, public servants are finding themselves under keener public scrutiny. Thus, there is broad agreement among policymakers throughout the world that an [efficient and professional civil service is a necessary](#), though not sufficient, requirement for good governance in any country.

Faced with growing criticism of inefficiency and weakening capacity of public officials, corruption and non-transparent decision-making, governments are pushing the ideas of a 'lean, efficient and facilitative government', 'paperless government' and 'practical government'. To cope with modern-day challenges, many countries have [reformed their civil service recruitment systems](#) and are on the path of reforming the civil service examination systems to ensure efficiency of the public administration. Some countries have adopted the concept of 'incorporation' to foster close public-private sector collaboration in order to transform the civil service into one that promotes competitiveness of the private sector.

Pakistan is facing similar challenges. Major policy shift towards privatisation, deregulation and rapid technological advancements required different sets of skills, expertise, values, attitude and knowledge among public officials. The ubiquitous use of the internet has raised the level of expectations in terms of speed, quality and personalisation of public service delivery. There is intense accountability of policymakers through a vibrant judiciary. Nevertheless, government regulations, processes and the civil service have not kept pace with changing realities, leading to a decline in government effectiveness, rule of law and corruption control.

One of the key instruments for entry-level induction into the civil service is the competitive examination conducted by the Federal Public Service Commission (FPSC). The civil service in Pakistan is essentially based on the philosophy of the amateur (generalist) who is perceived as the gifted layman, moving from job to job within the service, taking a practical view of problems in light of his knowledge and experience of the government machinery. Resultantly, the system is crumbling today and politically incubated bureaucrats are accelerating the process.

The current combined examination for recruitment to the civil service **does not factor in the requirement of different aptitudes**, knowledge and skill-sets for various occupational groups and services. The mismatch between educational attainment and skills required for specified occupational groups has emerged as a constraining factor in the optimal utilisation of selected human resources. The current grouping of optional subjects has facilitated a large number of candidates into taking so-called scoring combinations in the civil service examination, including subjects like Punjabi, Sindhi, Persian, Arabic, Psychology, Geography, Sociology, History of USA, etc. Most candidates take up Punjabi-Persian, Punjabi-Arabic, Geography-Sociology, Sociology-Psychology and Geography-Psychology combinations. The syllabi of both compulsory and optional subjects were last revised in 1981. Since then, they were never aligned with emerging trends in global politics, geography, innovation, etc.

The FPSC, in 2013, undertook a major study in collaboration with the Higher Education Commission and various universities to revise syllabi of compulsory and optional subjects, to include new disciplines and to tighten the groups of optional subjects to provide a level playing field to all candidates and to neutralise the effect of so-called high-scoring subjects. The recommendations were sent to the Establishment Division in May 2014. It took one year to secure government approval and the FPSC has only now notified the revised syllabi. It has also recommended a study on holding a cluster-based competitive examination or a separate examination for each occupational group and service, as well as holding of a two-stage (screening and main) competitive examination. However, the relevant ministry has been slow in reforming the system.

[Worldwide Executions Decrease But Death Sentences Rise in 2014 Amnesty Report](#)



Egypt and Nigeria accounted for well over 1,000 of the death sentences announced last year, more than a third of the world's total, Amnesty International says in its latest annual report on the death penalty.

The London-based human rights group expressed alarm at the 28 per cent jump in death sentences: 2,466 people in 55 countries were condemned to death in 2014.

At least 607 people were executed in 22 countries last year.

Neither of those numbers is complete, as North Korea's closed-off stance means that no estimate there was available. Amnesty International also doesn't report numbers for China, where such information is considered a state secret.

The Dui Hua Foundation, a US-based prison research group, has estimated 2,400 executions happened in China for 2014, which is more than the rest of the world put together.

Amnesty International also said it was unable to confirm whether judicial executions took place last year in Syria, where civil war has raged for four years.

The countries with the most recorded executions last year were Iran with at least 289, Saudi Arabia with at least 90, Iraq with at least 61 and the United States with at least 35, the rights group said.

In Iran, hundreds more executions were “not officially acknowledged” and the total could be as high as 743, the organisation said.

Out of the 90 people executed in Saudi Arabia, two were women, an Ethiopian national and a Nepali national.

The 88 men comprised 53 locals, seven, Syrians, one Iranian, 21 Pakistanis, one Philippine national, two Yemenis, one Indian, one Turkish and one Iraqi.

Once again, the United States was the only country in the Americas to execute people in 2014, the report said. Texas and Missouri each carried out 10 executions.

Other US states that put people to death were Arizona, Florida, Georgia, Ohio and Oklahoma.

The overall number of global executions last year dropped almost 22 per cent from 2013.

“The numbers speak for themselves: The death penalty is becoming a thing of the past, AmnestyInternational’ secretary-general, Salil Shetty, said.

But Shetty condemned the use of death sentences as a way to fight crime or “terrorism”.

Nigeria announced 659 death sentences, mostly for murder and armed robbery, but a military court in December sentenced to death 54 soldiers who had been accused of refusing to join operations against the extremist group Boko Haram.

The soldiers testified that they had not been properly equipped to go after Boko Haram, which has since pledged allegiance to the Islamic State group.

Nigeria’s higher number of death sentences, up from 141 the year before, was also a result of morecomplete data offered by authorities.

Egypt announced at least 509 death sentences last year, many of them in the mass trials that have been held since the ouster of elected President Mohammed Morsi in 2013.

The practice has brought international criticism. In one case in December, 188 people were sentenced to death in the killing of 11 police officers.

In the United States, at least 72 death sentences were announced last year.

Amnesty International also expressed concern about countries that resumed the practice of executions, including Pakistan, which reinstated the death penalty in

December after a Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) attack on an army-run school killed 150 people, most of them children in Peshawar.

At least seven people were executed in Pakistan in 2014 while 231 were sentenced to death.

While the government of India scheduled several executions in 2014, none were carried out. At least 64 new death sentences were awarded in the country.

“An alarming number of countries that used the death penalty in 2014 did so in response to real or perceived threats to state security and public safety posed by terrorism, crime or internal stability,” the new report said.

Other countries resuming executions in 2014 were Jordan, Singapore, Egypt, Belarus, the United Arab Emirates and Equatorial Guinea, the report said.

Indonesia said it would resume executions for drug-related crimes, straining ties in particular with Australia and Brazil, which both have citizens on death row there.

At the end of last year, more than 19,000 people around the world were estimated to be living under death sentences.

Source: <http://www.pakistantoday.com.pk/2015/04/01/foreign/worldwide-executions-decrease-but-death-sentences-rise-in-2014-amnesty-report/>

Yemen Crisis and Pakistan's Role | By Ali Ashraf Khan



In May 1990 Yemen came into being after merger of the Yemen Arab Republic with the People's Democratic Republic of South Yemen. The popular uprising of Yemeni Houthis has plunged the country and region in deep crisis. The US now suddenly realizing the need of political settlement in Yemen appear to have gone on back foot. Evacuated Pakistanis have warned on media that any direct intervention will prove to be another blunder. In 2003, the US withdrew most of its troops from Saudi Arabia, though one unit still remains.

In 2005, King Abdullah's first foreign trip was to China. In 2012 a Saudi-Chinese agreement to cooperate in the use of atomic energy for peaceful purposes was signed. Abdullah also welcomed Russian president Vladimir Putin to Riyadh in 2007, awarding him the kingdom's highest honour, the King Abdul Aziz Medal. Russia and Saudi concluded a joint venture between Saudi ARAMCO and LUKOIL to develop new Saudi gas fields.

As with the US Saudi Arabia has had a longstanding relationship with Pakistan as well. During the 1990s both provided extensive financial and political support to the Taliban and the Afghan mujahideen fighting the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in the 1980s. During the Persian Gulf War, Pakistan sent troops to protect the Islamic holy sites in Saudi Arabia. Along with the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia and Pakistan were the only states to recognize Taliban rule in Afghanistan. In May 1998, Saudi Arabia was the only country that was taken in complete confidence by Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif on Pakistan's decision on performing atomic tests in the region of the Chagai Hills. After he ordered the atomic tests Saudi Arabia, along with United Arab Emirates, were the only countries to back Pakistan and congratulated the country for making the "bold decision". Furthermore, Saudi Arabia promised to supply 50,000 barrels per day of free oil to help Pakistan cope with likely economic sanctions in the aftermath.

Pakistan maintains close military ties with Saudi Arabia, providing extensive support, arms and training for the Saudi Arabian military. Fighter Pilots of the Pakistan Air Force flew aircraft of the Royal Saudi Air Force to repel an incursion from South Yemen in 1969. In the 1970s and 1980s, approximately 15,000 Pakistani soldiers were stationed in the kingdom.

Now with the change in world power equation and the Arab world standing up against cultural and economic westernisation and with the role of US diminishing of the influence Saudi Arabia is on the backfoot as well. US is trying to counter its loss of influence by concluding an agreement with Iran.

Today the international situation has changed and Pakistan has to find a place in the new world order. That means we have to rearrange our foreign relations and policy as well. Pakistan has recently improved its relations with its neighbours Afghanistan and Iran. We are a solid partner in the process that is meant to bring peace to our region and we should not endanger peace in our part of the world by estranging relations with Iran. Pakistan has no interests in Yemen; therefore, it has to make very clear that it would not be in our national interest to join the coalition against Yemen. Such move would not only damage our relations with Iran but upset the volatile peace in our own country. Let at least this time reason prevail! God bless Pakistan and humanity.

—The writer is a senior columnist based in Karachi..

Source: <http://pakobserver.net/detailnews.asp?id=261537>

[Billions Up For Grabs If Nuclear Deal Opens Iran Economy](#)



DUBAI: Iranian investment banker Ramin Rabii says he shouted in joy when he learned that Tehran and world powers had reached a deal which promises to lift economic sanctions on Iran. Then he called colleagues to discuss the business implications.

Rabii, managing director of Turquoise Partners, a Tehran-based investment firm with about \$200 million of assets under management, has been grappling for years with the results of the sanctions: unstable growth, high inflation, international banking restrictions and hard currency shortages.

The agreement on curbing Iran’s nuclear programme, reached on Thursday, will — if confirmed in a final deal by a June 30 deadline — begin to ease those crippling problems for Turquoise and thousands of other Iranian firms.

“We’ve been preparing for this moment for 10 years,” Rabii said by telephone, adding that in the months leading up to the deal Turquoise was in touch with hundreds of potential foreign investors about opportunities for them if sanctions were lifted.

He said the company now planned to develop its asset management and brokerage businesses, and would hold roadshows for investors in Europe and possibly Dubai.

Frozen out of the international banking system, its foreign trade slashed by the sanctions, Iran looks likely to become the biggest country to rejoin the global economy since post-Communist Eastern Europe in the early 1990s.

The resulting boom could create tens of billions of dollars worth of business for both local and foreign companies and shift the economic balance in the Gulf, which has so far been heavily weighted towards the rich Gulf Arab oil exporting countries.

“Precautionary talks have already started between Iran and some big Western investors” in areas such as oil and autos, said Iranian-born economist Mehrdad Emadi of London’s Betamatrix consultancy.

“Now there will be accelerating momentum.”

He predicted annual growth of Iran’s \$420bn economy would rise by as much as 2 percentage points to over 5 per cent in the year after a final nuclear deal. It could accelerate further to 7 or 8pc in the following 18 months — matching the growth of Asia’s “tiger economies” during their boom years.

Iran’s trade with the European Union, which totalled 7.6bn euros (\$8.3bn) last year, could balloon 400pc by mid-2018, Emadi said.

BANKING SANCTIONS: The complex web of financial, shipping, energy and technology sanctions woven by the United States, the European Union and the United Nations is expected to take years to remove, even if a final nuclear agreement is reached and implemented smoothly.

As a result Iran’s oil exports, cut by the sanctions to about 1.1 million barrels per day from 2.5m bpd in 2012, may not start rebounding before 2016.

But the single most damaging sanctions measure, the US Treasury’s use of Section 311 of the USA PATRIOT Act to identify Iran as a money laundering area, could be lifted quickly by the Obama administration, analysts believe.

This would have a big impact on trade and investment by letting foreign banks deal with Iran without fear of being targeted by US officials. Iran could be re-admitted to the SWIFT global payments system, from which it was expelled in 2012, within three months of a final nuclear deal, Emadi said.

Rabii said the boost to Iranian production from easier trade would quickly spur the economy, even if big foreign investment deals took longer to arrange.

“Iranian industry is currently operating at about 60 to 70pc capacity. Around 30pc is idle — that’s because of the sanctions. Getting this working again is the low-hanging fruit of lifting the sanctions.”

The economic benefits would extend across the Gulf, particularly to Dubai, which is a traditional hub for business with Iran and has a large Iranian community.

The sanctions slashed Dubai’s trade with Iran by more than a third; the emirate could now become a jumping-off point for foreign companies going back into Iran.

Airlines and logistics firms around the region also stand to profit. Tarek Sultan, chief executive of Kuwait-listed logistics giant Agility, said Iran was potentially attractive because its isolation had encouraged it to develop indigenous expertise that could allow it to leapfrog other economies.

“When the international situation is resolved and restrictions are lifted, we’ll be among the first ones in there,” Sultan told Reuters late last year.

Other parts of the Gulf economy may at least temporarily be hurt by the rise of Iran. Gulf Arab stock markets are reforming themselves to attract foreign capital; Saudi Arabia plans to open its bourse to direct foreign investment within months. These markets will now have a major rival for funds in Tehran.

Any increase in Iranian oil sales could come at the expense of Saudi Arabia, Opec’s biggest producer, which has lifted its output near 10m bpd. The kingdom already faces a record budget deficit this year because of low oil prices.

Published in Dawn, April 4th, 2015

[Understanding the Yemen conflict](#) | By Tariq Mahmud



The year 1979 was a watershed in the history of Pakistan in many ways — there was the Iranian Revolution that brought a cataclysmic change next door, there was the execution of an elected prime minister, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, and then there was the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan with the Red army stationed just a few kilometers away from Peshawar.

We are still reeling from the combined impact of these three events and one can find certain similarities with modern-day events and those that took place in 1979. There is, however, one key difference. Way back in 1979, it was General Ziaul Haq and his hand-picked coterie of men taking the key decisions, while today we have a parliament with a persuasive influence on the state's responses to a fluid and highly uncertain situation in the region.

While the Soviet occupation in Afghanistan spawned the unremitting phenomenon of jihad, drawing Arab and indigenous warriors to the war of attrition, the Iranian Revolution set the stage for proxy wars along sectarian fault lines. A stage came when there was a complex mix of the two phenomena. The Afghan jihad

was geared through generous patronage from the US and Saudi Arabia, which provided cash and weapons while Pakistan provided the staging ground. Over a period of time, the ideological content that was provided resulted in the throwing up of deadly outfits like al Qaeda, as well as other groups, both Afghan and Arab, and subsequently, the Pakistani Taliban.

The Iranian Revolution, on the other hand, set the pace for movements like Hezbollah in the region. Over a period of time, the other side of the divide threw up forces like the Islamic State, which has now turned Syria and Iraq into permanent war zones. There is, however, a difference between the two discourses. The outfits that were spawned as a result of the Afghan jihad turned their guns against their own benefactors, while the ones resulting from the Iranian Revolution remained closely aligned with Iran. This is mainly because the latter movements are geared more towards political empowerment than ideological pandering with the flexibility to co-opt other partners to meet common objectives whenever the situation so demands.

The events in Yemen are being seen through the sectarian prism while the situation on the ground suggests that the Houthis, who have captured vast swathes of territory and strategic points, have not overloaded their movement with sectarian identity. They have entered into compacts with many diverse groups, including the former president Abdullah Saleh in their fight against the beleaguered Saudi-backed central authority. Despite the much-touted Iranian factor, the conflict in Yemen is primarily internally driven. We need to understand the context before committing ourselves in any manner. In the southern part of Yemen, there are simmering secessionist movements, like that of Al-Hirak al Janubi which is striving for the split of the country along the old lines i.e., between South and North Yemen as had been the case in the past. In 1990, the two countries were merged together. This movement has an eye on the coastline and the strategic strait in the Red Sea navigating the oil trade. The Houthis, on the other hand, have a strong presence in the north and have also moved southwards with the central government's resistance crumbling. In their struggle, they do not press any sectarian strand to the exclusion of their allies against the Saudi-backed central government. They have allies in the security forces and have publicly taken anti-US and anti-Israel stances. Further meltdown and increasing air attacks by the Saudi-led forces may well trigger the influx of displaced persons to Saudi Arabia's eastern province which adjoins Yemen. This is a matter of concern for the Saudis. The GCC states have backed the air strikes against the Houthis but these may not deliver results unless they are backed by on-ground operations. The Gulf armies are hardly trained in this regard as they are mainly meant to quell small-time local rebellions and to maintain internal security. The Saudi request to Pakistan for assistance has to be understood in this backdrop.

Pakistan already has enough on its plate in terms of the ongoing war on terror. Sectarian fault lines continue to burst at the seams from Gilgit to Hazara Town in Quetta. While heeding Saudi concerns, we should be helping the parties to come to some arrangement in handling the crisis. Fingers are being pointed towards Iran for allegedly supporting the Houthis. Pakistan needs to open instant channels with Iran and bring home the seriousness of the situation and elicit its response to the crisis.

Pakistan is eminently placed for this role more than any other Muslim country. The prime minister has met with the Turkish leadership on the issue, but it is more important to engage with Iran to diffuse the situation. Saudi Arabia needs to take stock of its domestic situation as well, more so in its eastern province where there is a growing feeling of having been left out of the system.

The late King Abdullah initiated a commendable process of reforms, improving consultative mechanisms and giving more rights to women. After his death, the process should not falter and the push for a more inclusive society should continue.

Published in The Express Tribune, April 7th, 2015.

[Sixty-Six Years of NATO. This is “Not a Peace Program” | By Danielle Ryan](#)



NATO was established 66 years ago on April 4, 1949.

About three and a half months later, on July 26, Senator Robert A. Taft, the son of President William Howard Taft, made a speech explaining why he voted against its establishment.

It's clear now that he could foresee what those blinded by triumphalism and ideology couldn't see. He was no apologist for communism or the USSR, but he knew that a military pact against Russia was a provocative act and one more likely to lead to aggression and insecurity than peace and stability.

This is “not a peace program, it is a war program,” he said.

*“...the treaty is a part of a much larger program by which we arm all these nations against Russia. A joint military program has already been made. It thus becomes an offensive and defensive military alliance against Russia. I believe our foreign policy should be aimed primarily at security and peace, and **I believe such an alliance is more likely to produce war than peace.**”*

“A third world war would be the greatest tragedy the world has ever suffered. Even if we won the war, we this time would probably suffer tremendous destruction, our economic system would be crippled, and we would lose our liberties and free system just as the Second World War destroyed the free systems of Europe. It might easily destroy civilization on this earth...”

Taft could see the Russian perspective clearly, without necessarily agreeing with it — and he understood that it ought not be disregarded out of hand — the de rigueur starting point in Washington today.

“If we undertake to arm all the nations around Russia from Norway on the north to Turkey on the south, and Russia sees itself ringed about gradually by so-called defensive arms from Norway and Denmark to Turkey and Greece, it may form a different opinion. It may decide that the arming of western Europe, regardless of its present purpose, looks to an attack upon Russia. Its view may be unreasonable, and I think it is. But from the Russian standpoint it may not seem unreasonable.”

“How would we feel if Russia undertook to arm a country on our border; Mexico, for instance?”

Taft went on to argue that there would be only “one real hope” for peace in the world. It would be an “association of nations building itself to abide by a law governing nations and administered by a court of legal justice”. Such a judicial finding “must not be subject to veto by any nation”, he said.

Three years earlier the United Nations had been founded. Taft regarded the young UN as an organisation looking in the right direction, but one that was deeply flawed.

As his predictions on NATO turned out to be true and justified, so too did his criticism of the United Nations. The UN veto power, held by five nations, has added to its ineffectiveness as a supposedly diplomatic and democratic organisation.

There may be some debate to be had about the legitimacy of a veto power — but add to those criticisms Washington’s complete disregard for the UN Security Council and you have an organisation which is essentially useless because one of its members operates outside its bounds at all times.

While the UN these days rarely serves anyone well, NATO serves the interests of only one of its members.

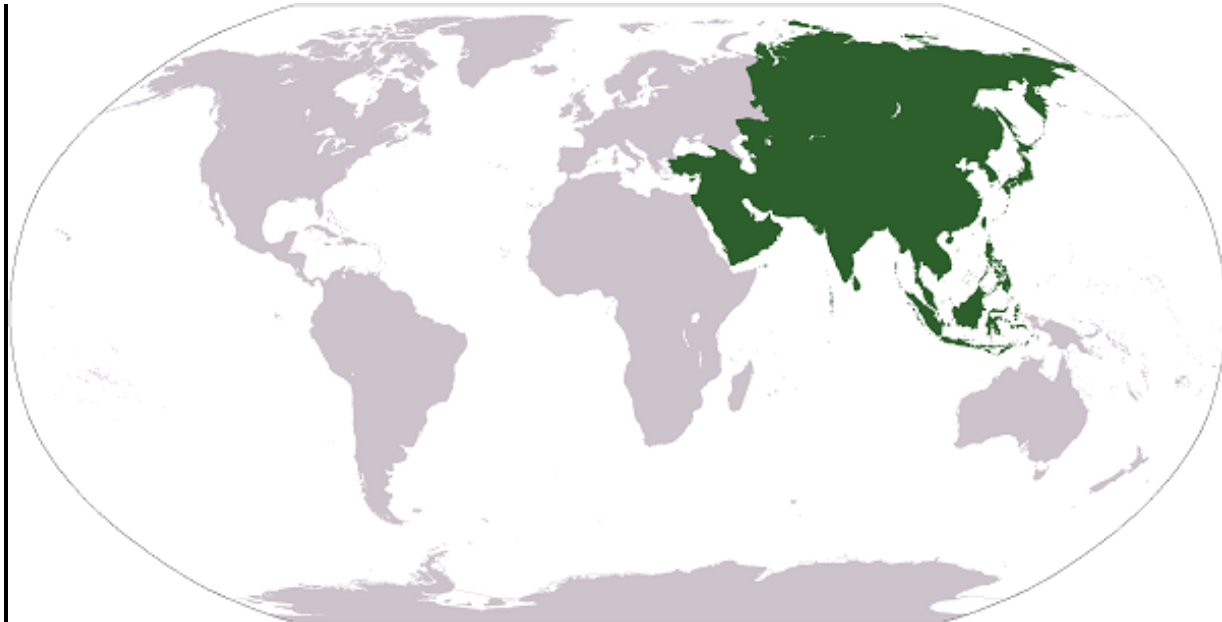
Finally, on NATO, Taft said:

“...as set up, it is a step backward — a military alliance of the old type where we have to come to each others’ assistance no matter who is to blame, and with ourselves the judges of the law.”

Sixty-six years later and NATO still exists, as many have argued, for no good reason; to counteract threats which are either imagined or which only exist because NATO itself exists. Or worse, to lend legitimacy to the geopolitical whims of its only beneficiary.

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[Time to Take a Closer Look at Central Asia | By M Ziauddin](#)



With the economic and financial sanctions against Iran expected to be lifted soon and Afghanistan seemingly moving towards a measure of stability, it is time we took a closer look at the mineral-rich and energy-abundant Central Asian region to see what is happening in the countries located in close proximity to Iran, Afghanistan and Pakistan. Turkmenistan has the fourth-largest natural gas reserves in the world; Kazakhstan has the second-largest oil reserves of the former Soviet Union, second only to Russia; Uzbekistan is a major producer of uranium (as is Kazakhstan) and has large natural gas reserves, as does, quite likely, Tajikistan; and Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan have significant hydropower potential. And the natural beauty of these two countries could boost a lucrative tourism sector, as could Uzbekistan's great Silk Road cities of Samarkand, Bohkhara and Khiva.

Big neighbour and our all-weather friend China's economic influence is growing in the region at a fast pace. Beijing is very active in the region with its ambitious plans to advance Asian connectivity through overland and maritime routes. It is said to have committed tens of billions of dollars to building roads and rails to better connect its factories and markets in Asia and Europe. But that, it is believed, would only be possible if Afghanistan can connect its economy to the countries of Central Asia and South Asia, to China and to Europe, serving as a hub for regional energy markets and with reliable trade and transport links, benefiting the entire region.

Afghanistan expects to become a platform for cooperation in a vast region that extends from India to Azerbaijan and beyond. There is the [Lapis Lazuli Corridor](#) as well which would run through Afghanistan and Turkmenistan, across the Caspian to Georgia, and on to Turkey and Europe. China supports Afghanistan's transition; and it warily guards against extremist ideology among its youth.

Central Asia is located in close proximity to Iran, a country that shares many ancient cultural and economic ties with the region. And if the thaw in its relations with the US develops into business-like ties in times to come, Tehran would find itself in a position to serve as a gateway to Europe, as well as a gateway to India. Iran would also be able to help its Central Asian neighbours in water conservation, combating desertification and curbing drug trafficking. And Turkey is also very much interested in the region, given the Turkic influences there. At the time of disintegration of the Soviet Union, Turkey had declared its intentions to exploit its Turkic influence to gain an economic foothold in the region.

The US, our friend but not of the all-weather variety, is already helping to build a regional energy market to connect Central Asia's tremendous supplies of natural gas and hydropower to 1.6 billion energy-hungry consumers in South Asia. The US support for the [CASA-1000 electricity line](#) is expected to help bring surplus hydro-electricity from Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan to Afghanistan and Pakistan — where over 80 million people lack access to electricity. That's why, as part of the New Silk Road initiative, the US is helping develop the region's connectivity — improving trade and transport infrastructure, standardising customs and border procedures, and strengthening the links between energy producers and consumers. The US is also supporting Kazakhstan's efforts to join Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan as members of the World Trade Organisation, and it is expected that this long-sought goal would be realised this year.

The US does not see China's involvement in Central Asia in zero-sum terms. Its development of infrastructure in Central Asia is being regarded in Washington as fully complementary to US efforts. And in particular, the US sees an important role for China in supporting the transition in Afghanistan and advancing its own integration into the broader Asia region.

Where is Pakistan in this emerging economic and trade equation in a neighbouring region? As of today, no one seems to be even aware of our existence. And the reason why this is so is our continued refusal to see the tremendous economic potential for Pakistan in allowing India a transit route to Central Asia. India seemingly needs the route so badly that it would even be prepared perhaps, to revisit the proposed four-step Kashmir solution.

Published in The Express Tribune, April 8th, 2015.

[The Real Nuclear Threat | By Robert C Koehler](#)



War, the abstraction, is an instrument of policy, an ‘option’ that can be waged or threatened to get one’s way. It is always contained and sure of itself, limited in its goals and, of course, necessary. Its unintended consequences are minimal and quickly neutralised with an official apology, then forgotten. If we didn’t forget, the next war wouldn’t seem like such a viable, enticing option.

The next war that has been gestating for so long now is the one with Iran, and its proponents, I’m sure, will do what they can to dismantle the framework of the agreement recently negotiated between Iran and the P5+1 nations. The incompleteness of the agreement – the fact that only Iran has accountability in the realm of nuclear weapons – raises profound questions about the future of the planet, but this flaw is obscured, certainly in most mainstream coverage, by the “controversy” that the agreement has been reached at all, supplanting the possibility of a military response to Iran’s nuclear energy program.

The interests opposed to the agreement, which wouldn’t be possible without mutual trust, maintain a belief in nothing but one-sided force to achieve their ends: either ongoing sanctions against Iran or military action.

Former Iranian diplomat Seyed Hossein Mousavian, interviewed recently by Democracy Now, noted that the sanctions have been “100 percent counterproductive”, causing an increase, not a reduction, in the Iranian nuclear program.

“Before sanctions,” he said, “Iran had a few hundred centrifuges. After sanctions, Iran reached to 22,000 centrifuges. Before sanctions, Iran had a few hundred kilograms of stockpile of enriched uranium. After sanctions, about 9,000 kilograms. Before sanctions, Iran was enriching below 5 percent. After sanctions, Iran increased the enrichment to 20 percent.

“. . . More pressure, more threat, Iran would become more aggressive. But if you go for mutual respect, negotiating with Iran based on mutual respect and based on international rules and regulations, you would find a very, very cooperative, a flexible Iran.”

Regarding the more extreme option, a military takeout, Robert Parry recently wrote at Consortium News: “Bombing Iran’s nuclear facilities could cause a massive human and environmental catastrophe, unleashing radiation on civilian populations and possibly making large swaths of Iran uninhabitable.”

Here we begin to get at the extreme recklessness and foolishness that is the context of so much geopolitical pontification. War is evoked with such brainless ease. A dozen years ago, Team Bush and its legion of political and media crusaders were screaming for the invasion of Iraq. One pseudo-argument for the invasion invoked World War II: We don’t want another Munich (where Hitler and British Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain reached an agreement to allow Nazi Germany’s annexation of Czechoslovakia).

As Juan Gonzalez noted on Democracy Now, Republican Sen Mark Kirk of Illinois recently dismissed the Iran agreement by proclaiming, “Minister Neville Chamberlain got a better deal from Adolf Hitler.” War and its justifications spring eternal. Scholar Peter Conolly-Smith, for instance, has pointed out that Munich has been invoked to justify virtually every American military action or threatened action since World War II: Korea, Vietnam, Cuba, Grenada, Nicaragua, Iraq.

The icons of military righteousness are endlessly reusable. They’re never damaged, apparently, by the slaughter that follows in the wake of their invocation. But I suggest that hearing this justification for a potential new military action should alert one to the shallowness of the thinking behind it.

The deeper problem with the P5+1 agreement with Iran is not the controversy it has generated among the bomb-Iran contingent but the unacknowledged hypocrisy of the

P5 nations – the US, Russia, China, Great Britain and France – which, of course, are all nuclear powers themselves. They have made no real effort to pursue global nuclear disarmament by getting rid of their own arsenals, as they agreed to do when they signed the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, which went into effect in 1970.

Four and a half decades later, and despite the end of the Cold War, many thousands of nuclear weapons, in nine nations (also including Israel, India, Pakistan and North Korea, none of which have signed the non-proliferation treaty), remain poised to destroy Planet Earth. The focus on the possibility that Iran might someday develop a nuclear weapon too, while perhaps not irrelevant to the goal of global disarmament, is a minute part of the enormous danger we're in.

Indeed, the United States is in the process of investing billions of dollars – as much as \$1 trillion over 30 years – to rebuild its whole nuclear arsenal, “including the warheads, and the missiles, planes and submarines that carry them,” according to Stephen Young of Union of Concerned Scientists, writing at Defense One.

And as Greg Mallo of the Los Alamos Study Group has noted, three privatized nuclear laboratories – LosAlamos, Sandia and Livermore – are behind the immense investment in upgraded, more destructive nuclear warheads. This aggressive pressure from the American business sector is a lot more frightening than any aggression emanating from Iran, and may indicate where the real push for war comes from.

Excerpted from: 'The real nuclear threat'.

Courtesy: Comondreams.org

Source: <http://www.thenews.com.pk/Todays-News-9-311862-The-real-nuclear-threat>

BJP Favours Engagement With Pakistan 'To Root Out Terrorism'



NEW DELHI: India's ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) has adopted a new foreign policy formula, which calls for peaceful and cooperative relations with Pakistan in fighting terrorism, local media reported on Saturday.

They said the BJP adopted a resolution during its national executive meeting on Friday in the southern city of Bangalore, presenting a five-point formula of its foreign policy.

The policy pitched for peaceful engagement with Pakistan to gain the neighbour's cooperation to root out terrorism in the region, said the media reports.

It also praised the government of Prime Minister Narendra Modi for "firmly and appropriately responding to the provocations on the border" allegedly by Pakistani troops.

The BJP is "committed to building peaceful and friendly relations with Pakistan, predicated on an end to terrorism," it said.

Stressing that “terrorism and talks cannot go together”, the BJP resolution said India’s engagement with Pakistan would be based on strategic interests and enunciated Modi government’s foreign policy pillars or “Panchamrit” of dignity, dialogue, security, shared prosperity and culture.

In the first separate resolution on foreign policy brought up in its National Executive here, BJP attacked the previous Congress-led government, saying “a cursory glance at the ‘lost decade’ of the UPA, reveals retreat and a loss of direction in engaging with neighbours, ham-handed diplomacy vis-à-vis Pakistan and a blind-spot in our foreign policy to the Indian Ocean island states”.

It also lauded the Modi government’s initiatives taken on foreign policy, including the prime minister and External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj’s continuous engagements with world leaders in the last 10 months.

On Pakistan, the resolution said, “We have laid out a clear policy for building peaceful and friendly relations with Pakistan, predicated on an end to terrorism.

“There can be no compromise with terrorism. There can’t be any duplicity towards a problem that has become a regional crisis and is fast becoming an international nightmare.”

“All outstanding issues with Pakistan can be resolved through bilateral dialogue in an atmosphere free from terror and violence,” it said.

It said the national ambition is “Bharat’s rise as a strong and respected world power” for which the government had adopted “Panchamrit”.

It spelt out “Panchamrit” or 5Ss of the country’s foreign policy as “Samman” (dignity and honour); “Samvad” (greater engagement and dialogue); “Samridhi” (shared prosperity); “Suraksha” (regional and global security); and “Sanskriti evam Sabhyata” (cultural and civilisational linkages), the party said.

The BJP said Mr Modi had pursued “a bold, proactive and innovative foreign policy that is aligned with our government’s primary goal of accelerating national economic development; and to fulfil Bharat’s global responsibilities as the world’s most populous youth nation and largest democracy.”

The entire resolution described the country as “Bharat” instead of India. The resolution criticised the previous UPA government’s approach in dealing with the international community, saying during the last decade it tended to weigh the nation down when New Delhi punched substantively below its weight in pushing through its foreign policy objectives, while often appearing sidelined in the international arena.

The UPA dispensation seemed grossly incapable of moulding Bharat's foreign policy, national security and economic development imperatives into a composite and coherent policy framework, it alleged.

Published in Dawn, April 5th, 2015

[UN Seeks More Transparency on US Drone War](#)



GENEVA – UN rights experts on Wednesday hailed a US move to review counter-terrorism operations after a botched drone attack in Pakistan killed two foreign hostages, but called for more transparency and accountability.

US President Barack Obama, who has relied heavily on drone raids to hunt down Islamist extremists from Pakistan’s tribal areas to Somalia and Yemen, on Thursday took the rap for a January drone strike on an Al-Qaeda compound in Pakistan in which an American and an Italian died. Lifting the lid on a classified operation, Obama expressed his ‘deepest apologies’ to the families of 73-year-old economic advisor Warren Weinstein and 39-year-old aid worker Giovanni Lo Porto.

‘We welcome president Obama’s apology to the families.

All innocent victims of drone attacks deserve such an apology, regardless of their nationality,' the UNexperts said in a joint statement. Ben Emmerson, the UN's top rapporteur on protecting human rights while countering terrorism, said Washington needed to 'declassify, to the maximum extent possible, information relevant to its lethal extraterritorial counter-terrorism operations'.

These included civilian casualty figures and information 'on the evaluation methodology used', he said. 'It is critical that whenever civilian casualties are suspected, there is a proper procedure in place to ascertain the facts, and that the facts are then made public with a view to securing accountability and reparations for the victims,' the experts said. Juan Mendez, the UN's special rapporteur on torture, said all investigations 'must be prompt, impartial, independent and exhaustive'.

And the legality of any government action should be subject to an independent and effective judicial review both at the domestic and international level, the experts said. 'States using drones have an obligation to respect international standards and prevent violations,' said Christof Heyns, an expert on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions.

Source: <http://nation.com.pk/international/30-Apr-2015/un-seeks-more-transparency-on-us-drone-war>

[The World's Fastest Growing Religion is Islam](#)



(CNN) If tech futurists are to be believed, by the year 2050, robots will do many of our errands and drive our cars. If a new study on religious trends is to be believed, many of those robot-controlled cars will stop and park at mosques and churches.

Yes, despite predictions that religion will go the way of dinosaurs, the size of almost every major faith — sorry, Buddhists — will increase in the next 40 years, according to [a study released Thursday](#) by the PewResearch Center.

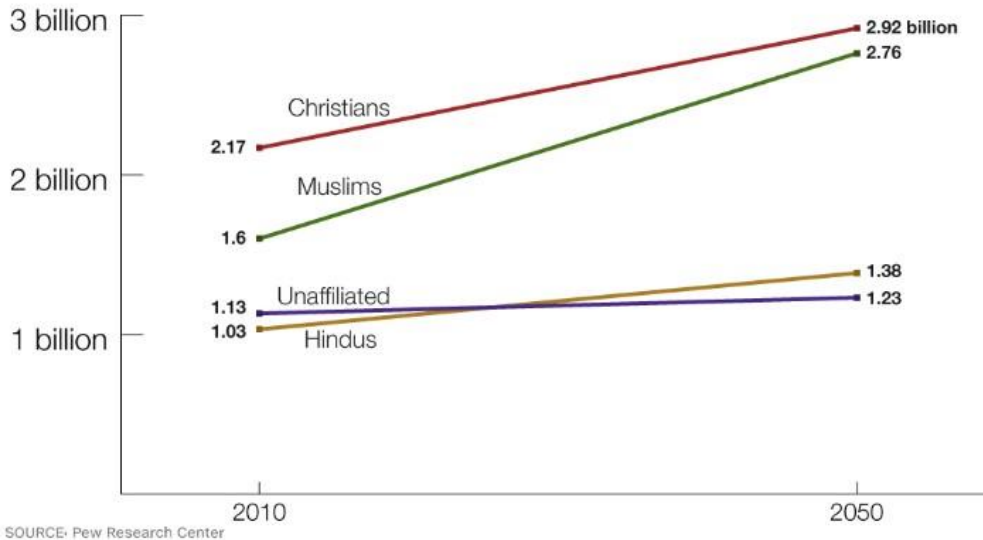
The biggest winners, Pew predicts, will be Islam and Christianity.

Islam, the world's fastest-growing faith, will leap from 1.6 billion (in 2010) to 2.76 billion by 2050, according to the Pew study. At that time, Muslims will make up nearly one-third of the world's total projected population of about 9 billion people.

Christianity is expected to grow, too, but not at Islam's explosive rate. The Pew study predicts Christians will increase from 2.17 billion to 2.92 billion, composing more than 31% of the world's population.

This means that by 2050, more than 6 out of 10 people on Earth will be Christian or Muslim. And, for perhaps the first time in history, Islam and Christianity would boast roughly equal numbers.

PROJECTED CHANGE IN GLOBAL POPULATION



Looking even farther into the future, Islam’s population could pass Christianity by 2100, Pew says, despite Christians’ six-century head start. (It’s possible that Muslims outnumbered Christians some time in the past, perhaps during the Black Plague that decimated Europe. But scholars aren’t certain.)

Based in Washington, Pew is a nonpartisan “fact tank” that regularly produces sweeping surveys of this kind without taking public policy positions. Six years in the making, its study collected data from 234 countries and territories to predict the fate of five major faiths — Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Judaism and Islam — as well as folk religions and the religiously unaffiliated, including atheists.

The study, which Pew says is the first of its kind, bases its projections on the age of populations, fertility and mortality rates, as well as migration and conversion patterns. Simply put, Muslims are having larger families, retaining more members (conversions are illegal in some Muslim nations) and are younger than adherents of other faiths. More than 1 in 3 Muslims is younger than 15. But religious trends have never been measured on the study’s vast scale, Pew says, so a few cautions are in order.

First, the population projections are based on current data and assumptions about demographic trends. For example, Muslim women have an average of three children, the highest of any religious group. In the future, if education and employment rates rise, those numbers could change.

Second, nobody at Pew has a crystal ball, so events like cataclysmic wars, rampaging diseases, natural disasters and economic meltdowns could throw the numbers off.

But it's clear from the [245-page report](#) that Pew and the demographic experts they consulted did their homework, so the study is worth taking seriously. With that in mind, here are some of the study's top findings about what the world will look like — at least, faith-wise — in 2050.

— Atheists, agnostics and religiously unaffiliated people will increase in the United States (from 16% to 26%) but decline as a share of the total worldwide population.

— Also in the United States, Christians will drop from 75% to 66% of population. Muslims will surpass Jews as the largest non-Christian religion in the U.S.

— Sub-Saharan Africa will be home to 40% of the Christian population and Nigeria has more Christians than any other country except for the United States and Brazil.

— India will have the largest Muslim population in the world, passing Indonesia, but Hindus will retain a majority.

— More than 10% of Europeans will be Muslim, while the number of Christians in Europe will drop by 100 million.

— Hinduism (1.4 billion adherents) and Judaism (16 million) will increase, while Buddhists will be about the same size as in 2010 (5.2 million).

— In the coming decades, 106 million people are projected to leave Christianity. (46 million will convert to Christianity, offsetting the losses a little.)

— The number of countries with Christian majorities will drop to 151, as Christians are projected to decrease in Australia, Benin, Bosnia-Herzegovina, France, the Netherlands, New Zealand, the Republic of Macedonia and the United Kingdom.

— Muslims are expected to make up more than 50% of the population in 51 countries, including the Republic of Macedonia and Nigeria.

Source: <http://edition.cnn.com/2015/04/02/living/pew-study-religion/index.html>

[Quranic Solution For Moral Corruption | By Dr Tauseef A Parray](#)

The Spirit Of Islam

FROM the Quranic point of view, there are four (4) factors influencing the rise and fall of nations/Ummah (my Friday Column, dated 24 & 31 October, 2014, were published on this theme in Pakistan Observer). They are Justice and Injustice ('Adl and Zulm); Unity and Disunity; Neglect/abandonment of the principle of Amr Bil Mar'uf wa Nahy an al Munkar; and Moral Corruption and Degeneration. This last factor is much relevant to our present situation, so let me throw some light on this aspect from the Quranic perspective.

Moral Corruption is one of the four factors influencing the rise and fall of nation; and 'Zulm', meaning oppression and thereby committing sin, have also been declared in the Qur'an as vices to be eradicated. There are various verses in the Holy Qur'an in this context also. In a number of verses, luxury, lavishness, and luxuries are regarded to be the cause of destruction, devastation and demolition. There are also a number of verses in which the word 'Zulm' (cruelty, injustice, oppression, tyranny, etc.) occurs. In Quranic terminology, 'Zulm' does not merely mean 'violation of the rights of an individual or group

by other individual or group but also includes injustice to one's own self as well as injustice of a nation to itself'.

Also, according to Holy Quran, any kind of deviation from the right of humanness is injustice. It includes all acts of injustice to others as well as all acts of impropriety (indecent and immodesty) corruption, perversion, and immorality. There are various narrations of the nations and how they were destroyed. Examples are: (i) Madyan, nation of Prophet Sh'uyb, who were indulged in acts of "short measure or weight" (Surah Hud, 11: 84); (ii) the nation of Prophet Lut (Lot), who "used to commit crimes, (sodomy)" (11: 78), was destroyed by the "rain (of stones)" (7:84); (iii) to the 'Ad, nation of Prophet Hud, who were also destroyed by "Torment and wrath" (7:65-71); (iv) Prophet Nuh's nation was also destroyed with flood, "and then the floods overwhelmed them while they were still lost in evil-doing" (29: 14); and (v) the "earthquake seized" the Thamud, the nation of Prophet Salih (7:78).

Our present situation and state of affairs, is no more different or unusual. When we look around, our society, it appears and seems, to be in the race for desiring, longing and aspiring, this world's life and forgetting and overlooking the life hereafter (Aakhirah). Being Muslims, we have the duty of "Amr bil Mar'uf wa nahy an al-Munkar" (commanding good and forbidding evil). To eradicate, eliminate and remove all types of threats (menace) faced by our society completely and to guide the misguided people to the straight and right path is our moral responsibility.

As soon as people commit sins in abundance and plentiful, natural disasters strike that Ummah/ Nation. It is necessary for every Muslim to 'learn a lesson' from the calamities and disasters in the lives of individuals and Nations. We are rapidly and swiftly moving and going away from Allah and are abandoning the Shariah, which has resulted in the 'loss', misplace and mislay of Ummah's consciousness and responsibility, unawareness of goal or destination (manzil) and reform/change (Islah). Every sensitive soul and mind at this occasion, questions: How will Muslim Ummah wake up, change and reform?

The answer to this question, in Qura'nic perspective, is that we have to know our responsibilities, our awareness of goal, our consciousness, our destination (manzil), initiative to change; and we have to change and reform ourselves and our society by following Divine Social Rule mentioned in the Quran (Surah ar-Rad, 13:11), which states: "Verily Allah will not change the good condition of a people as long as they do not change their state of goodness themselves".

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Islamic Principles of Democracy | By Irfan Nawaz



The Spirit Of Islam

Generally, Islamic philosophy contains two categories of ruling; i.e. Shariah, the Islamic system of law based on the Qur'an and Sunnah, beliefs, morals and worship those are characterized as fixed rules. Second one deals with customs, worldly matters and changing conditions by fewer detailed rulings. The foremost category has fixed rulings; however, second category is flexible in wording and means of execution. Therefore issue of state, governance, and politics comes in it. Moreover, it should be clear that flexibility does not mean to entail leniency in the obligation or application of these rulings. The general ruling should be strictly implemented and must be followed because they are supporting pillars of Islamic state, compromise of these may lead to collapse of entire building.

Furthermore, Islam gave fixed ruling in constant matters of people's lives. However, it determines the principles, which is a sign of greatness of Islam, for those matters that are inherently variable, diverse and accepting from different interpretations. These can be modified as per situation of the time. So, it shows the perfection of Islam as it

is flexible where it needs to be and have fix ruling where it feels fit to be strict and these matters are obviously non-variant with time.

Presently, justice is considered as a soul of civilized societies. Therefore, enforcing justice on earth should be chief commitment of Muslim rulers. For fulfilling this commitment, enforcement of justice among people, Allah sent His messengers, sent down His Books and legislation for establishment of justice on earth. In Surat al-Hadid, Allah, Omnipotent, says, “We have sent Our messengers with clear evidence, and sent down with them, Scripture and balance so that people may maintain [their affairs] with justice” (Qur’an, 57:25). So, the prime focus of the ruler to have Justice in affairs of people and for those who govern and judge between people. In brief, implementing legislative rulings of sacred texts is the first step to enforce justice, then, it should be practiced in their true sense and be implemented.

On the other hand, the sublime principle of Islamic welfare state is to have social justice in the state. Islam refers social justice as considering the public interests and rulers are accountable to public. It implies that rulers are not free to administer and manage people’s subjects. However, their decisions are crosschecked by considering people’s interest. Thus, choosing between something good or something better, ruler is not allowed to choose what he feels good. Following Hadith showed strictness of Islam on the matter of public interests. The Prophet (PBUH) once said, “Whoever has been charged with running the affairs of my Ummah, but did not exert effort [constructively] for them, or did not advise [in accordance with the Shariah], then Paradise is forbidden to him.” with the reference of aforementioned textual evidence, Rulers and judges should be prevented, from use 1) greater harm, 2) fewer benefit, 3) equal benefit and harm, or 4) neither harm nor benefit. These, four outcomes, are not in the best interest of the people. Moreover, governance should produce pure benefit, greater benefit, and to avoid harm, or greater harm. The ruler is responsible to eradicate corruption in the state affairs and should avoid the marjûh, less preferred. In brief, no one is above law in political system of Islam whether ruler or layman.

Precisely, Islamic philosophy of politics is so simple and primarily laid emphasis on the issues for whom we as a nation have been striving since independence which are social justice, good governance and accountability mechanism. Thus, implementing Islamic principles of democracy is key to prosperity of Pakistani nation as Quaid-e-Azam, the father of the nation said while addressing the Karachi Bar Association on January 25, 1948, “I cannot understand a section of people who deliberately want to create mischief and make propaganda that the constitution of Pakistan will not be made, based on shariat. Islamic principles today are as applicable to life as they were 1300 years ago.”

Source: <http://pakobserver.net/detailnews.asp?id=262660>

