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**The “New Thirty Years War”  
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# PAKISTAN

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## Indian Default Setting



Pakistan and India are back to their favourite pastime; trading accusations and promising swift vengeance upon one another. The tentative hope of a normalised relationship that was created after the meeting of both countries leaders in Ufa has completely dissipated. The final nail in the coffin may have been the Gurdaspur attack, but the escalation of tensions had begun long before that.

The tragic attack in Gurdaspur is surely condemnable, and in the long history of cross border attacks carried out by groups in both countries, it cannot be ruled out that the attackers came from Pakistan. Yet what is problematic is the fact that the Indian media and politicians began blaming Pakistan while the attack was underway – having no proof or even the slightest indication that the attackers were Pakistani.

By the time the dust settled, Pakistan had been accused, condemned and convicted, before the first investigative officer set foot inside the building the attackers were holed up in. This betrays an established mindset – a default assumption – each violent attack in India is perpetrated by Pakistan, until proven otherwise, and even then the blame isn't

wholly washed away. This is followed by a default reaction; sabre rattling and jingoistic war cries that have become the staple of the ruling BJP. It is this assumption and reaction that the Foreign Office correctly termed 'unfortunate'. Unless the BJP can tone down the jingoism – which had picked up soon after the Ufa meeting – peace is not possible.

For their part, Pakistani authorities don't show prudence either. Every jab from Delhi is met with two from Islamabad. Senior Advisor to Prime Minister on National Security Sartaj Aziz said on Friday that the government is considering highlighting the issue of Indian spy agency Research and Analysis Wing's (RAW) involvement in Pakistan with the United Nations and other international forums. While the action is certainly merited, it seems to be a reply to Indian accusations rather than a separate notion – and the sparring begins again.

Normalised relationships are only possible if both sides make an effort. This requires them to forgo conflict as well as build better bonds. But it is obvious that one side is not prepared to do that; in fact conflict lies at the heart of its politics. It was Nawaz Sharif who extended an olive branch at Ufa, even at the face of criticism from home that he was being too pliant towards Modi. Yet BJP continues to bash Pakistan to garner support at home and burnish its 'strongman' image. Cross-border violations picked up pace as soon as the Ufa meeting was concluded and were followed by the usual jingoism – it is not hard to see who wants peace and who doesn't.

Indian Default Setting

Source: <http://nation.com.pk/editorials/01-Aug-2015/indian-default-setting>

## “Are (Modi’s) India and (Sharif’s) Pakistan Sliding Toward War?” — Let’s Hope Not | Charles Tiefer



John Stimson warns in a detailed, factual article—“Are India and Pakistan Sliding Toward War?” — that rising tensions over Kashmir – and poor relations between Modi and Pakistan – could lead soon to war. I don’t disagree with the points he assembles. Kashmir is always a tinderbox, and right now, is indeed alarming. India and Pakistan have fought four wars since Independence. Terrorist groups, some with ties to Pakistan’s strong ISI, can provoke confrontations. The Subcontinent always seems on edge.

However, here are four points to suggest relations between India and Pakistan may get worse but not reach actual head-on full-scale combat between regular armed forces.

- Modi will hopefully be a calming influence. It is true that he leads the BJP, which is not overly friendly toward Pakistan. But as the old saying goes, “war stifles reform.” If India gets distracted by war, it will stifle his program of forcing through tough economic reforms. That program means far more to him and his party’s future than posturing with Pakistan.
- Each country has a good military reason not to fight. The Indian military weaponry is, frankly, backward. India has been on a shopping spree of foreign arms purchases. But it still has a long way to escape its situation after the Mumbai terror attack by terrorists from Pakistani-supported groups, when India’s land forces were simply not in shape to strike back.
- Pakistan has an internal war against militants, especially the Pakistan Taliban. The war is long past the point of full hostilities. Pakistan’s armed forces would face a two-front war if they took on India. (It must be admitted, though, that it is never far from the minds of the Pakistani military that they might fight with India, and so they are probably ready to cope with India.)
- Other powers will pour oil on trouble waters. The United States has been trying to work with Pakistan about several vital issues, especially Afghanistan; at the same time, the United States is trying to form a low-key alliance with Modi against resurgent China. So the United States will try to cool down both sides. (In a previous article, though, I did suggest that the United States’ sharing of military and nuclear technology with India might rile Pakistan.) China is Pakistan’s ally, but it does not want to be India’s enemy, nor would it want a defeat to destabilize Pakistan. So China will not be an opponent of peace.

So: while war is definitely something to worry about, hope for peace

“Are (Modi’s) India and (Sharif’s) Pakistan Sliding Toward War?” — Let’s Hope Not

Source: <http://www.forbes.com/sites/charlestiefer/2015/07/30/are-modis-india-and-sharifs-pakistan-sliding-toward-war-lets-hope-not/>



## Misplaced Priorities | Syed Saadat



PUNJAB Chief Minister Shahbaz Sharif was visibly upset on a recent visit to flood-affected areas near Dera Ghazi Khan. He vowed to take severe action against those found guilty of the dereliction of duty that had led to the breach in a dyke on the Indus despite only a low-level flood. This is merely half the story; the complete picture is somewhat different and might require the vigilant chief minister to take action against his own self. Here is the complete account.

During his visit, the CM inquired from the secretary irrigation the reason for the breach but the latter could not provide a satisfactory answer. However, the executive engineer serving in the region did not belong to the cadre of astute civil servants who are well versed in the art of staying in the chief minister's good books, and divulged the real reason behind the flood — that too in the presence of all and sundry. Apparently, the PC-1 for reinforcing the embankment in question was approved in October but the funds were released as late as June, which stalled work on the project. Furthermore, only Rs10 million of the proposed Rs70m were released.

This response caught the chief minister off-guard but as is usually the case, he saved himself from embarrassment by launching a strongly-worded counter-attack on the poor official by asking questions such as, ‘Who stopped you from calling the CM office or moving the request for funds earlier?’ In fact, the exact words of the chief minister were: “You should be ashamed to claim something like this.”

A basic principle of leading an educated workforce is to adopt an open-door policy where people can present their ideas without the fear of being penalised. Senior government officials often resort to insulting officers as a smokescreen for their personal shortfalls. Doctors and engineers serving in the public sector are often at the receiving end of such tirades. Had such theatrics been effective the situation would not have been the same every year.

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The poor executive engineer did not argue any further as he was aware of the consequences of annoying the chief minister. Thankfully, not everyone is handicapped by such fears, which brings us to the case of the Chiniot dam where no work has been done despite the project having been given the go-ahead back in 2009.

Villages in the vicinity have been flooded repeatedly since then causing loss of life and property. The estimated cost of the project is Rs24 billion — peanuts compared to the cost of the Metro Bus projects in Lahore and Rawalpindi. I wonder how the honourable chief minister would explain this delay given that

he has been the province’s chief executive all this time, barring four months of the caretaker set-up during the 2013 general elections.

While talking to the poor residents of the flood-affected area, the chief minister went on to say that he had interrupted his medical treatment in London to be with them.

I wish someone among them had asked: is there not even a single hospital in the province that can cater to the needs of your medical treatment? What good is the claim of being able to relate to the misery of the poor when he does not even trust the health institutions of the province he has been ruling for around a decade now? Is there someone who should be ashamed at such a sorry state of affairs?

While raising his voice or losing his temper may conceal the long list of misplaced priorities, it does not exonerate the chief minister from responsibility.

Critically important projects fail to receive adequate funds due to their inability to grab media attention. After all, it is not likely that the chief minister or prime minister would go swimming in the dam — unlike the possibility of travelling via Metro Bus in the full view of the media and amidst plenty of fanfare. Also factoring into the equation may be the fact that Mr Shahbaz Sharif’s gumboots would lose their utility if there were no floods;

the honourable chief minister may want value for the money he spent on them — after all, money from his personal pocket cannot be spent as recklessly as that from the national exchequer.

An adage in the Punjabi language implies that the price one has to pay in the pursuit of a special fondness does not really matter. I wish our leadership would realise that when the price of their misplaced priorities has to be paid by the poor man living on the banks of Indus with his life, then it is time for a lot of soul-searching. I wish some hospital in London would provide that facility as well.

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*Published in Dawn, August 2nd, 2015*

## Population Dilemma



In a new report by the United Nations the organization has projected that the population in Pakistan will exceed 300 million by 2050. During 2015-2050, half of the world's population growth is expected to be concentrated in nine countries: India, Nigeria, Pakistan, Congo, Ethiopia, Tanzania, US, Indonesia and Uganda. At present the population is estimated to be around 190 million. Due to this huge population Pakistan is plagued by various problems like food, water and energy crisis. If the population continues to grow at the projected rate the situation will become even grimmer in the coming years as the country's already stretched resources will simply collapse under the burden of the ever growing population.

Even at present successive Governments in Pakistan have failed to provide the majority of Pakistani's a life over the poverty line. Millions of kids across Pakistan are without access to education. The situation is also complex as many people still don't understand as how to provide their kids with a safe future, the simple answer to this very complex problem is quite obvious, family planning. Unless the topic of family planning is given space on mainstream media the issue will be hard to resolve, the

Government as well as other organizations should raise awareness on the topic else the population will simply become too large to sustain on the depleting resources. Community leaders can be the most effective when it comes to educating people in the rural areas regarding the effectiveness and importance of family planning.

Some of the very serious problems that arise from a population include severe pressure on the energy resources, non availability of adequate food, an increase in unemployment and increased poverty. The increased unemployment also causes severe security problems which are impossible to fix.

**Serious efforts are needed to diffuse the ticking population bomb.**

Population Dilemma

Source: <http://dailythepatriot.com/population-dilemma/>

## China not a Competitor in Pakistan, Afghanistan, Says US



WASHINGTON: The United States does not see China as a competitor in Afghanistan and Pakistan and wants to work with Beijing for restoring peace and stability in the Pak-Afghan region, says a senior US diplomat.

“We welcome China’s engagement in Afghanistan and Pakistan, which we see not as competitive but complementary to our own efforts,” said Dan Feldman, US Special Representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan.

“In 2009, on my first official trip to engage the Chinese, my colleagues in Beijing refused to even have the words ‘Afghanistan’ or ‘Pakistan’ on our agenda. Today we have embarked on a series of collaborative development projects in Afghanistan and convened a trilateral US-China-Afghanistan discussion, both firsts of their kind with the Chinese,” he added.

In a separate statement issued on Friday, the State Department announced that earlier this week, the United States and China held a counter-terrorism dialogue in Beijing.

At the meeting, the two sides reaffirmed their commitment to address the shared threat that terrorism posed to both countries and the international community.

They “reiterated their opposition to terrorism in all forms and ... sought to identify practical ways to strengthen cooperation on counter-terrorism including on how to address the transnational flow of foreign terrorist fighters,” the statement said.

They also addressed terrorist funding networks, and increase information exchange on terrorist threats, the State Department said.

They would soon hold another meeting to discuss curbing the illicit flow of chemical precursors and dual-use bomb components used by terrorists worldwide in improvised explosive devices.

Meanwhile, at his presentation at the US Institute of Peace, Mr Feldman noted that Afghan President Ashraf Ghani was working in a ‘deliberate and strategic manner’ to improve his country’s relations with Pakistan.

“President Ghani deserves great credit for courageously opening the opportunity for rapprochement with Pakistan,” he said. “We similarly appreciate Pakistan’s efforts to further an Afghan-led, Afghan-owned reconciliation process.”

China not a Competitor in Pakistan, Afghanistan, Says US

*Published in Dawn, August 8th, 2015*

## Absolute Power of Parliament Maintained Absolutely | Maira Sheikh



### At the mercy of the House

The nature of the ruling passed down by the Supreme Court regarding the 21<sup>st</sup> amendment is such that it neither requires lengthy introduction nor a cloak of rhetoric. What may be called the infamous paragraph seventy-three from this judgment must be reproduced in part below to initiate further deliberation over its present and future impact. Paragraph seventy-three states, “[T]here are no limitations, express or implied on the powers of the Parliament to amend the Constitution and the amendments brought about in exercise of such power are not liable to be challenged on any ground whatsoever before any Court.”

While, on its face, the power attributed to parliament does not appear problematic the latter part of the quote may elicit some concern. This statement reads as a deafening microphone drop of sorts, a resounding no to challenges on parliament’s amendment making.

***This bar on the Supreme Court’s (or really any court’s) power is a by-product of Article 239, which includes, “No amendment of the Constitution shall be called in question in any court on any ground whatsoever”***



This bar on the Supreme Court's (or really any court's) power is a by-product of Article 239, which includes, "No amendment of the Constitution shall be called in question in any court on any ground whatsoever." Article 239 was introduced under the reign of the notorious former President Zia-ul-Haq and eventually received the approval of parliament. This approval should come as no surprise considering that Article 239 in its present form is a blank check of power, so to speak, to parliament. It openly defies any semblance of separation of powers under a guise of keeping such power close to the people. To have expected parliament to vote against its own considerable self-interest would be foolhardy and thus we have Article 239 in the Constitution, as reinforced by this judgment.

Article 184(3) of the Constitution is the basis for detractors of Article 239 to challenge its scope. Those that brought challenges to the 21<sup>st</sup> amendment did so under the assumed power of this Article because under Article 184(3), the Supreme Court has the jurisdiction to consider questions of "public importance," as they relate to the enforcement of the fundamental rights also provided by the Constitution. The Supreme Court rejected the claim that Article 184(3) allows an amendment to be challenged. An amendment is not even considered to be law for the purposes of Article 8, which essentially provides that laws inconsistent with the given fundamental rights are void. This in turn means that an amendment, if it were inconsistent with the allotted fundamental rights within the Constitution, could not be declared void, except by action of parliament. As a makeshift solution, the judgment of a previous case may provide some guidance:

It is a well settled law that the validity of a constitutional provision cannot be tested on the basis of another provision in the Constitution both being equal in status. The doctrine of ultra vires necessarily implies that one of the two competing provisions or legislations is inferior in status to the other and the validity of the inferior provision or legislation is tested on the touchstone of the superior one.

***These complicated legal and constitutional constructions might as well be written in hieroglyphics for how clearly they come across***

On paper, this solutioneering seems plausible, reasonable even. It seems, however, dubious in practice. If the Supreme Court is not able to review any questions regarding amendments, then how is this status determination made? Is this another implied parliamentary power?

These complicated legal and constitutional constructions might as well be written in hieroglyphics for how clearly they come across. It nonetheless seems that for all the effort to preserve power of Constitutional amendment with parliament, the representatives of the people, this Article 239 barrier only serves to remove an individual's ability to bring a challenge to the Court. To put things bluntly, the law and the people subject to it are at the mercy of their partially elected parliament. The interpretations of the Constitution that support the preservation of Article 239 to the

extent that the Supreme Court has no power of judicial review are dangerous in an already fickle democracy.

Absolute Power of Parliament Maintained Absolutely | Maira Sheikh

Source: <http://www.pakistantoday.com.pk/2015/08/09/comment/absolute-power-of-parliament-maintained-absolutely/>

## Pak-Afghan Relations — A Critical Juncture



The fragile architecture of the rapprochement between Pakistan and Afghanistan is under threat, but it must not be allowed to crumble. Almost since their inception, the governments of President Ashraf Ghani and Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif have sought to recalibrate the fractious relationship that had become characterised by a yawning trust deficit on both sides. Bridging the gap was never going to be easy, but initial indications were positive. That positivity has become diluted after a wave of bombings in Kabul claimed by the Afghan Taliban; and [an angry news conference given by President Ghani](#) in which he was explicit in his condemnation of Pakistan for allegedly harbouring Taliban groups that were attacking his country.

The response by Pakistan has thus far been [measured](#) rather than diving headlong into a blame game, a response that we welcome. President Ghani is under pressure, and not just from the Taliban. His government is far from rock-solid and the country is as politically polarised as it ever was, divided along ethnic and tribal lines. Although he did not offer any hard evidence to back his assertion that bomb-factories and Taliban groups were in Pakistan and attacked Afghanistan from there, we must remember that the Pakistani state for long, followed the policy of 'strategic depth' and while there may have been a disavowing of this policy at the official level, there may still be elements that see the Afghan Taliban as a strategic asset, and have no investment in the peace

process that is currently paused while the Taliban do some belated succession planning. Both Afghanistan and Pakistan need to hold on to the best of what they have achieved thus far. It is no understatement to say that the future peace of the region is going to be dependent on how both countries resolve their differences, as well as the outcome(s) of the peace talks that will, eventually, recommence. Pakistan and Afghanistan are conjoined twins — what ails one, ails the other. Neither can afford a return to the days of acrimony, and both have the potential to take and hold a lead in the peace race. Both must steer a course around this rock in the road and pick up the olive branch on the other side.

Pak-Afghan Relations — A Critical Juncture

*Published in The Express Tribune, August 12<sup>th</sup>, 2015.*

## Pakistan beats India in race for nuclear weapons: ICAN | Nudrrat Khawaja



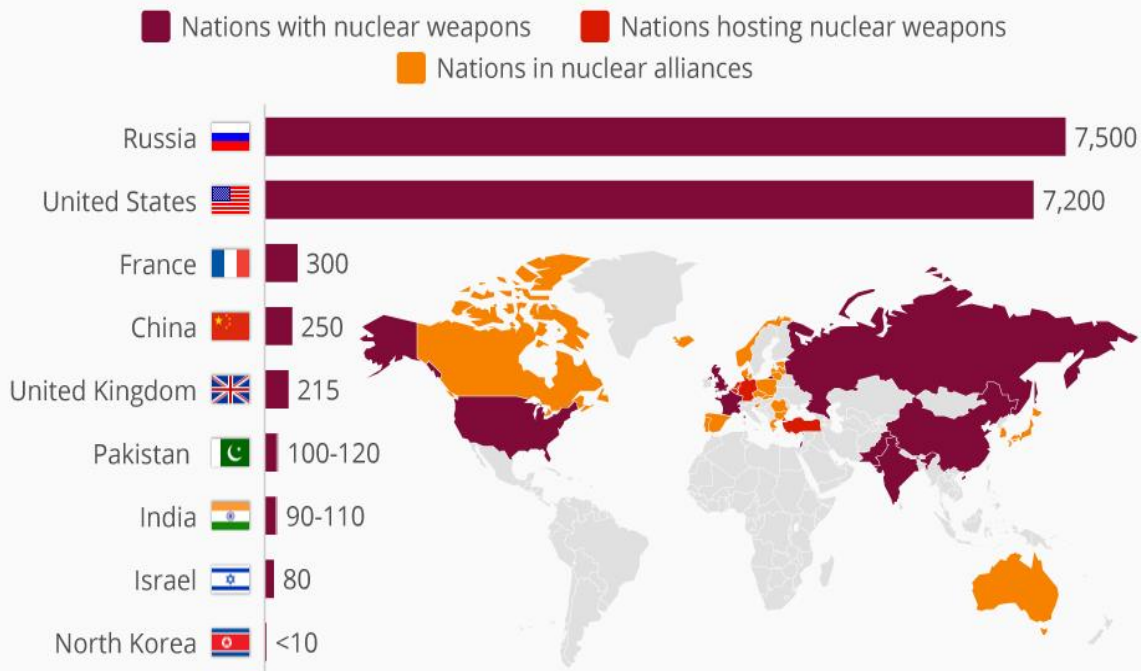
GENEVA (Staff Report) – In the list of ten countries with the biggest nuclear arsenals, Pakistan stands at number six, where as India stands at number seven.

Switzerland based organisation International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN) published the names of ten countries listed according to the the number of nuclear arsenal they possess.

While Russia and United States topped the list with 7,500 and 7,200 nuclear weapons respectively, Pakistan came sixth with 100-120 and India came seventh with 90-110 arsenals.

## The Countries With The Biggest Nuclear Arsenals

Number of nuclear warheads in countries worldwide in 2015



CC BY ND  
@StatistaCharts Source: ican

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ICAN is a global campaign coalition working to mobilize people in all countries to inspire, persuade and pressure their governments to initiate and support negotiations for a treaty banning nuclear weapons.

Pakistan beats India in race for nuclear weapons: ICAN | Nudrrat Khawaja.

Source: <http://en.dailypakistan.com.pk/world/pakistan-beats-india-in-race-for-nuclear-weapons-ican-003/>

## China, Russia And Pakistan: The World's New Superpower Axis



The world is coming toward a bipolar world with China, Russia, Pakistan and a number of other [authoritarian countries](#) of Central Asia on one side, and the U.S., EU, Japan and their Asian allies on the other side.

And that's not a peaceful nor a promising future, it's a rather chaotic future where undecided countries such as India, Brazil, Egypt and others will be squeezed between the two sides.

If you take interest in today's geopolitics, you probably know that the relations between [Russia and Pakistan](#) have recently seen a significant warning. It is reasonable to say that the two countries – who were [Cold War rivals](#) – are getting closer.

Meanwhile, China, who is a traditional ally of Pakistan and has always supported the country against its historical rival India with its military equipment and in the fields of diplomacy, is showing clear signs of forming this new China-Russia-Pakistan triangle, which is likely to lead to the above-described bipolar world.

After the Russian economy had been hit by Western sanctions in the summer of 2014, the Kremlin started to look in the direction of Asia, particularly – Pakistan.

First, Moscow lifted its self-imposed weapons embargo on Islamabad, and then the Cold War rivals signed a historical military cooperation agreement, which was based on exchange of politico-military information, beefing up the countries' defense and counter-terrorism sectors as well as combining their efforts on developments in Afghanistan.

Russia and Pakistan have already started collaborating in the areas of defense and energy resources. It was earlier reported that Islamabad may purchase [Mi-35 combat helicopters](#) in addition to importing of the Klimov RD-93 engines from Russia for its JF-17 multi-role fighters. It must be noted that China and Pakistan are involved in co-production and co-development of JF-17 fighter jets.

Russian state-owned company Rostekh Corporation also announced its plans to build a 680-mile gas pipeline to Pakistan by 2017 costing about \$2.5 billion.

The formidable triangle between Moscow, Beijing and Islamabad has been shaped from scratch as a result of recent geopolitical shifts. Russian annexation of Crimea as well as the presence of Russian troops in eastern Ukraine have significantly worsened the relations between the West and Moscow, which prompted Russian President Vladimir Putin to look for new allies.

Meanwhile, China's claims and repeated disruptive actions in the [South China Sea](#) have rekindled tensions with U.S.-led countries in the region. The above-mentioned circumstances forced both Russia and China to look for new allies, which is why they found one another. Both Moscow and Beijing are distrusted by the West for opposing [U.S. global dominance](#). Both countries do not support the values of democracy distributed by the U.S. and Japan, just as much as they oppose transparent governing.

Both Beijing and Moscow raise their people on nationalism that is based on historical and cultural nature of each nation, which is Confucianism and Russian Orthodoxy respectively. Both countries support the model of authoritarian capitalism as a counter measure to the global dominance of the U.S. Both countries also oppose the freedom of speech and Internet freedom – and the list can go on and on.

However, the two countries were not always fond of one another, but the “enemy of my enemy is my friend” factor plays a crucial role in the developing relations between China and Russia. China's goal is to change the world order – for better or worse – and this change begins with Russia and Asia.

Having been investing into Pakistan for years, Beijing has also participated in building nuclear reactors for Islamabad. It must be noted that Pakistan is the largest importer of Chinese manufactured [defense equipment](#). Furthermore, Islamabad expressed its eagerness to buy eight Chinese's S20 or Yuan-class diesel-electric submarines.

For both China and Russia, Washington presents a challenge and U.S. global dominance must be stopped for the sake of their own security, while Pakistan would not mind to ensure its own safety under the wing of the Chinese and Russians.



What makes China, Russia and Pakistan a perfect fit for one another is the fact that Russia can replace Western military technology enough for both China and Pakistan. In addition, Moscow is known to be a reliable [energy supplier](#) for its allies.

China, for its part, is much more powerful in terms of its economy compared to the two other countries of the triangle. Besides, a great amount of foreign exchange reserves are looking to invest and require energy supplies.

Pakistan, in its turn, has a developing economy and requires both military equipment and energy supplies from Russia and protection from China. In that case, Russia will open a new market for its military equipment, while possibly continuing to supply weapons to India.

Is the world coming towards the above-mentioned new bipolar order or are we approaching the age of international order with present globalization tendencies? To a large extent, it will all depend on the U.S. and its role in tough conditions when the center of power is being scattered and no country in the world is capable of influencing international relations alone.

It must be noted that all presidential campaigns in the U.S. share the [same rhetoric](#) that is directed against Russia and China, while not paying any attention to the fact that the U.S. will have to adapt to the changing world order and the balance of power, especially in the coming years when the new president is elected in 2016.

But that's how political campaigns work: they are focused on tiny issues that mask massive strategic changes in the world.

Source: <http://www.valuwalk.com/2015/08/china-russia-pakistan-superpower-axis/>

## Civil-Military Equilibrium | Babar Sattar



Legal eye

The writer is a lawyer based in Islamabad.

Did Mushahidullah Khan lose his job because he was peddling falsehoods about the dharna and Lt Gen (r) Zaheerul Islam? Was he calling for meddlesome generals to be held to account, or singlehandedly trying to fix the civil-military imbalance? Or were his statements an indiscretion simply because his delving into the past could embarrass the army and its chief by reminding folks that at one time the ISI and the top khaki brass might not have been under the chief's absolute control?

Is it improbable that conversations of everyone important in Pakistan are monitored? To the extent that an ISI chief was encouraging the main opposition party to try and overthrow the government by use of street power, wouldn't (civilian) intelligence agencies not sharing such information with the prime minister be a major intelligence failure? And if the PM had faith that his army chief was an upright soldier, wouldn't the proper thing to do be to hand over information to the army chief and let him manage the ISI chief?

Brig Samson Simon Sharaf of the PTI had first insinuated that if the ISI encouraged the dharna it might have been more of a conspiracy by fellow generals to hurt the army chief than one to make Imran Khan prime minister. The suggestion that top echelons of the army can indulge in palace intrigues is hurtful for the image of our army that prides itself in its discipline and finality of command; an army extremely sensitive to public opinion as it understands that its soft power (especially in relation to politicians) springs from popular support.

When Chaudhry Nisar discredited the insinuation as mindless gossip, he was clarifying that the PML-N had no interest in making this into a civil-military issue. There is no basis to argue that the powerful interior minister was acting on his own because he is close to the military. On this issue the PML-N wasn't playing good-cop-bad-cop. When Kh Asif suggested that ex-DG ISIs had sponsored the dharna, his emphasis was on the PTI's movement not being a popular one and Imran Khan courting khaki support to usurp political power.

In building narratives, emphasis is everything. So long as focus was on the PTI riding khaki coat tails, it helped the PML-N and hurt the PTI. But when focus shifted from what the PTI was doing as alleged by the PML-N to what ex-DG ISI was doing as alleged by Brig Sharaf, it began to hurt the army and its chief, and by extension threatened the state of equilibrium between the PML-N and the khakis that provides the surest guarantee for a PML-N touchdown in 2018. It was thus that Ch Nisar issued the memo. And Mushahidullah Khan was punished because he disregarded it.

It has only been over a year and a half and the difficult position General Raheel Sharif found himself in when he took over as army chief is all but forgotten. It is no secret that General Sharif was not the expected choice for the position of chief. When he assumed command sitting alongside him on head table were Lt Gens Tariq Khan (corps commander Mangla), Saleem Nawaz (corps commander Gujranwala), Khalid Rabbani (corps commander Peshawar), Sajjad Ghani (corps commander Karachi) and Zaheerul Islam (DG ISI).

Notwithstanding ranking on the formal seniority list, all six were contemporaries who had graduated within a course of each other from the PMA. Thus, for almost a year the army chief had the unenviable job of leading a top-heavy team with a bunch of its senior most players afflicted by a betrayed sense of entitlement for his job. This was the time when the dharna had happened, when civil-military relations were strained, and when the corps commander conference tried to bend the PM's ear and 'advised' him to resolve political disputes amicably.

This was a time when Nawaz Sharif could have gotten paranoid and reacted harshly to the ex-DG ISI's meddlesome ways, had he learnt nothing from the 90s. He could have taken the position that the ISI reported to him and fired Zaheer. That would have brought pressure from top generals and the army to bear upon the chief to stand with the DG ISI and defend the army's 'honour' (as had happened during the days of General Musharraf's indictment). It could have made the army chief's position precarious by forcing him to pick sides. But NS did no such thing.

It was August through October 2014 that things could have gone horribly wrong. It was at that time that the PM reposed faith in the army chief and strengthened his hand, and the army chief in turn did what was the right thing to do: not indulge in politicking and discourage everyone under his command from doing so. Upon retirement of the army chief's contemporaries and promotion of those handpicked by the army chief, the

composition of military high command began to change and the seniority gap between the chief and his team began to grow.

All key appointments going to newly appointed Lt Generals (Rizwan Akhtar as DG ISI, Naveed Mukhtar as corps commander Karachi, Hidayatur Rehman as corps commander Peshawar, Hilal Hussain as corps commander Mangla and Ghayur Mahmood as corps commander Gujranwala) was a clear sign that the first exhausting year of General Sharif's command was over. That he wanted his own handpicked and promoted generals to execute his national security policies. Incidentally civil-military relations have also been in a state of equilibrium since.

Once bitten, twice shy they say. With our history of coups and tumultuous civil-military relations, we are programmed to panic anytime ISPR issues a statement and a minister gets fired. In his third term as PM, NS seems to have made his peace with the existing civil-military imbalance. He appears to have understood that the military's role in policy can expand, as it can contract. But that this is a time for the military's expanded role primarily as terrorism is the main challenge confronting the state and the military is best placed to fight it.

There has been no manifestation so far that the PM is threatened by the army chief or sees him as a competitor. He appears to have understood that even if the army chief is the most popular army chief in history or the most popular public office holder at the moment, he exists and functions in a parallel universe. Just as Abdul Sattar Edhi's popularity as philanthropist shouldn't bother NS, he is not in competition with the army chief so long as the army chief doesn't have the ambition of usurping political power.

Post-APS the army chief has shown true grit and leadership. He has come to be seen as the long-needed commander laying down the foundation of a terror-free Pakistan: he has led our domestic war against terror from the front; he has rallied public opinion to stay the course in this hard fight; he has campaigned with foreign countries to get them behind Pakistan's anti-terror strategy; he has broken from tradition and begun holding errant generals to account; he appears to understand public mood better than politicians; and ISPR's par excellence PR campaign makes him picture perfect.

As the army chief enters the final year of his term, it is time to raise his guard against vanity, ambition and sycophancy. This is the time to ensure that the military leadership he leaves behind stays with the National Action Plan he has authored and promotes the newly minted self-accountability drive within the military. This is a time to begin succession planning, think about his legacy and be very weary of those who tell him that he is indispensable.

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Civil-Military Equilibrium | Babar Sattar

Source: <http://www.thenews.com.pk/Todays-News-9-335595-Civil-military-equilibrium>

## Foreign Policy Woes | Lal Khan



The antics of the Saudi and UAE despots shatter the notion of Islamic bonds and religious fraternity

In the current juncture, Pakistan's foreign policy and diplomatic stature have taken a nosedive. It was probably the first time diplomats from its main western and eastern neighbours, Afghanistan and India, were summoned to the foreign office to protest border 'violations' on the same day. The surge in terrorist attacks in Kabul in recent weeks prompted Afghan President Ashraf Ghani to blame Pakistan, even threatening the unleashing of a full scale war. All the diplomatic manoeuvres, including facilitating the Murree talks by Pakistan's military and political elite in the last six months, have botched.

The border skirmishes on the eastern border and the Line of Control (LoC) in Kashmir have escalated in the last few weeks. Media rhetoric on both sides of the Radcliff Line has become more and more belligerent. Rows on agenda and Kashmir in the talks between the national security advisors in Delhi on August 23 were in jeopardy less than a day before schedule. Kashmir has been on the backburner for years now apart from odd references dictated by Pakistan's military establishment in official news bulletins. The question of a UN plebiscite is now a nostalgic fiction.

The stalemate will continue. The notion of the Hindu fundamentalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) regime in Delhi being the cause of increased hostility in relations and an impediment to the resolution of issues is an exaggerated alibi. For the last 68 years these issues remained unresolved when the 'secular' Congress-led governments ruled India. In reality, the Indian and Pakistani ruling elites have a common objective in keeping these conflicts simmering to whip up national and religious chauvinism to crush the class struggle and internal dissent. These nuclear-armed states can neither afford to go for a full-scale war nor can they forge durable peace and friendship.

The US and its western allies have increasingly treated Pakistan as a C-grade country in the South Asian subcontinent. How could they not when they have a readymade market of 300 million Indian middle-class to exploit? The friendship 'higher than the Himalayas' is more of a contractual relationship of the Pakistani ruling class with the Chinese oligarchy. Since 1978 there has been not a single grant from the Chinese ruling clique. The aid for natural disasters has been miniscule compared to that of the west. China is on an investment spree everywhere from Africa to Asia and Latin-America. The so-called 'corridor' is an investment of Chinese capitalists under the tutelage of the regime in Beijing. With up to 27 percent interest rates the \$ 46 billion loan will be an extensive burden on the Pakistani toilers already fraught with burgeoning foreign debt. The other elder Islamic brother, Saudi Arabia, has been recently infuriated at the reluctance of the Pakistani state to send troops in to join the Saudi aggression in Yemen, resulting in the furious scolding of the elite for this disobedience. However, the reactionary UAE regime has contemptuously ridiculed and insulted Pakistan publically.

The extraordinary visit of Narendra Modi to the UAE last week bruised egos and chagrined the obscurantist elite intelligentsia that sets ethics, morality and concepts of friends and foes in Pakistan. It rubbed salt on the wounds of their perverted egos and ethos. Modi was given full honours by the rulers of this despotic Sheikhdome. Modi opportunely lambasted Pakistan in his speech: "Those who were responsible for horrendous terror attacks in the country like the 1993 Mumbai blasts and the 26/11 attacks still being harboured by Pakistan ought to be punished. In order to combat terrorism, India and UAE will share intelligence in counter-terrorism operations."

Crown Prince Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, along with his five brothers, welcomed Modi at the VIP airport in Abu Dhabi discarding the official protocol wherein a visiting dignitary to the country is only welcomed by the foreign ministry head. The UAE has also extended support to India's candidature for a permanent seat in the UN Security Council. The UAE hosts specially flew in India's leading chef, Sanjeev Kapoor, to cook Modi's vegetarian meal. Startlingly, the UAE's Islamic monarchs allotted land for the first-ever Hindu temple in Abu Dhabi. Modi thanked them for this 'landmark' decision. However, the most significant outcome of this visit has been the announcement by the Sheikhdome to invest \$ 75 billion in India. This has sent shock waves to the Pakistani elite's economic establishment.

For decades the Pakistani rulers have laid red carpets for these Gulf sheikhs. They come to Pakistan not just for houbara hunting but have indulged in all sorts of hedonic pursuits. The state slavishly facilitated them in their obscene luxuries for mere crumbs, including putting huge tracts of arable, fertile land at their disposal for exploitation and forcing peasants towards destitution and homelessness. The antics of the Saudi and UAE despots shatter the notion of Islamic bonds and religious fraternity. It is farcical that the 'highly educated' bureaucrats and politicians in Pakistan from 'top' western universities seriously believe they will help Pakistan in being an 'Islamic state'. These upstart reactionary Gulf monarchs only use religion to perpetuate their own despotic rule. They have accumulated mammoth wealth from oil revenues and have filled the coffers of western imperialists for providing them security and prolongation of their oppression and drudgery of the Pakistani and other migrant workers in these artificially carved out 'countries'.

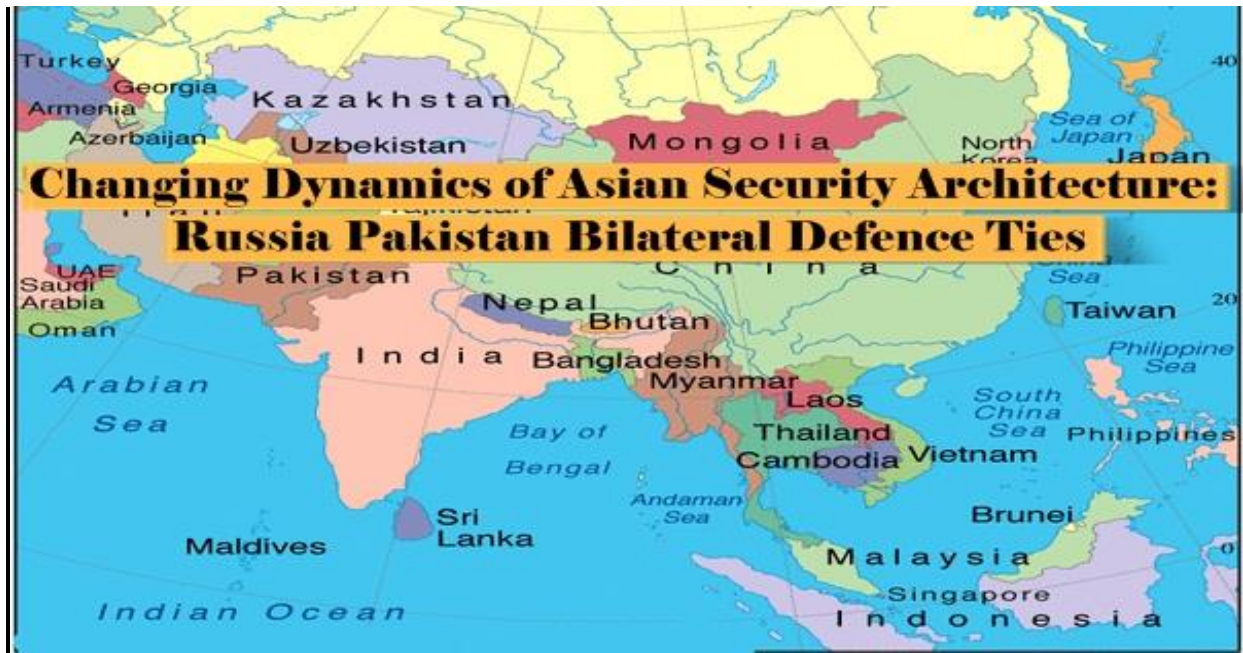
In the last analysis, foreign policy is the continuation of domestic strategies. Under capitalism all these policies are engineered to preserve exploitation for the accumulation of capital and a consistent rise in the rate of profit. Whatever dictatorial or 'democratic' political superstructure is employed to sustain capitalism does not matter. These are means to an end. If Pakistan's foreign policy is facing disaster, its society and people are also suffering the catastrophic torments of capitalist crisis. The massaged macroeconomic figures of Pakistan's economic establishment can be used by imperialist financial institutions and agencies to upgrade the ratings of this right wing bourgeois government but the plight of the masses hardly figures either in statistics or in the domestic and foreign policies that are exclusively devised to serve the interests of the ruling class.

However, the socioeconomic predicament is palpable. The system has lost its capacity to develop society. The masses have suffered for generations but it is only they who can arise on a class basis to carry through a revolutionary transformation. This will not just change the economic system from market vandalism to a democratically planned socialist economy but every other aspect of state and society will also be transformed. Foreign policy designed for the lust of corporate profits will be abolished. All treacherous anti-people pacts and treaties will be exposed as was done after the victory of the Russian revolution in 1917. A revolutionary foreign policy designated on a class basis will relate to the interests of the working people of different countries and not their oppressive rulers. Such a policy will lead to the spreading of the revolution far and wide.

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Source: <http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/opinion/23-Aug-2015/foreign-policy-woes>

## Dynamics of Asian Security Architecture: Russia Pakistan Bilateral Defence Ties | Shahzadi Tooba Hussain Syed



While Modi was making deals with UAE and Indians gloating over “filling the vacuum,” Pakistan went ahead and bought defense equipment from the traditional Cold War rival of Pakistan and an ally of India, Russia. The strategic realities are changing and decisive shifts occurring to shape the future Asian security architecture.

Pakistan and Russia on Wednesday signed a landmark defence deal that includes the sale of four Mi-35 ‘Hind E’ attack helicopters to Pakistan. In addition, Russian state-owned firm Rostekh Corporation is planning to build a 680 mile gas pipeline in Pakistan in 2017 at an estimated cost of \$2.5 billion. Pakistan currently has a number of Mi-17 helicopters delivered by the United States to assist in the fight against militancy.

Chief of Army Staff General Raheel Sharif had also visited Russia in June, after which a draft contract for the delivery of four Mi-35M ‘Hind E’ combat helicopters was sent to Pakistan from Russia. Both countries were negotiating the deal for the past year, signalling a major thaw in relations between the two cold-war rivals.

The Mi-35 helicopter is an exceedingly modernized version of the Mi-24 (Hind) combat helicopter with new onboard equipment and avionics. Avionics play a critical role in modern combat and this is why the electronic core of Mi-35 underwent numbers of fundamental modifications. Wide spectrums of latest avionics were incorporated in the cockpit.



The Mi-35M is fitted with improved sensor package as well including a night vision system which has turned this helicopter into a deadly prey during the night missions. To enhance the operational freedom and combat accuracy, Mi-35M is fitted with electro-optical rangefinder/targeting system with thermal imaging guidance channel, satellite positioning and navigation system, electronic multifunction displays, onboard computer and new generation jam-proof communications equipment.

All these modifications have made this system a natural attraction for Pakistan Army in its long pursuit of a reliable and affordable gunship to be used in ongoing counter-insurgency and counter-terrorism operations all across the country. It also has a more powerful engine and a different tail rotor.

The main feature of this multirole versatile helicopter is that can also carry 8 fully loaded army troops. Four helicopters can drop 32 SSG troops and then can provide them with aerial cover as well.

To test the machine robustly in mountainous regions especially in FATA, initially Pakistan has placed a smaller order of only 4 machines. Pakistan Army is likely to place a larger follow-up order depending upon the outcome of the performance of these machines.

The deal had to be followed by another 'technical cooperation agreement' to pave the way for sale of defence equipment to Pakistan. Besides helicopters, Pakistan also appears interested in other Russian hardware as well.

After the US drawdown in Afghanistan and lessening the influence in the region these ties after Tehran Pakistan It's the best time to have such relations in the region when US is Russia is an alternate source for Western military technology and energy supplier and Pakistan despite its structural problems is a growing economy with young population in need of both energy supplies and defense equipment.

Historically Pakistan has the reputation of being a strong ally of USA and India towards Russia. Pakistan should realize now the Henry Kissinger's statement that "America has no permanent friends or enemies, only interests".

Sanctions-hit Russia will have a new market for its defense equipment and now it is not willing to wait and watch. It needs a new, powerful friend in the region who can act as a supporter, if not necessarily an ally against the threat of Western (US + NATO) hegemony in the region.

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## Kashmir: An Unfinished Agenda | Afzal Hussain



On August 21, 2015, the breaking news was that “India-Pakistan Talks Hang in the Balance over Kashmir”. Pakistan’s National Security Advisor Sartaj Aziz was scheduled to land in New Delhi for meetings with his Indian counterpart Ajit Doval. The reason behind the breaking news that was Ajit Doval, published by national and international media was that Mr. Aziz and Kashmiri Hurriyat (Freedom) leaders from the Indian Occupied Kashmir (IOK) were also scheduled to meet at a reception at the Pakistan High Commission, New Dehli. The Indian government led by Hindu extremist party BJP hardened its stand against Pakistan’s decision to meet with Kashmiri leaders from the Indian Occupied Kashmir (IOK).

Traditionally, Pakistani officials have been meeting leaders of the All Parties Hurriyat (Freedom) Conference during their visits to India but in 2014 India cancelled talks between the foreign secretaries of the two countries after Pakistani emissary Abdul Basit met with Hurriyat leaders. It is significant that a high-level meeting chaired by Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif and also attended by Chief of Army Staff General Raheel Sharif and important members of the Federal Cabinet in Islamabad decided that India’s

demand not to meet Kashmiri leaders is unacceptable for Pakistan. Therefore, in response to the Indian government's threat to cancel the scheduled meeting of the National Security Advisors; Pakistan conveyed to the Indian High Commissioner in Islamabad that this attitude is not acceptable for Pakistan. The social media in Pakistan also followed the breaking news with tweets such as "Kashmir is Pakistan".

Earlier in the week, Pakistan cancelled the 61st Commonwealth Parliamentary Association Conference (CPA) (53 States representative body), scheduled to be held in Islamabad in last week of September 2015. The Speaker of Pakistan's National Assembly stated the causes behind the extraordinary decision in press conference. He said that the CPA secretariat in London along-with other member states such as Speaker of the Bangladesh Assembly have requested him to officially invite the speaker of the Indian Occupied Kashmir (IOK) Assembly but he has categorically refused and he had forwarded the UN resolutions on Kashmir, along with his written reply stating that Kashmir is a disputed territory in the light of the UN resolutions therefore, it is not possible for him to extend such an invitation. However, eventually, due to their persistence he has decided to cancel the CPA conference. Undoubtedly, it is not successful diplomacy but still the decision has conveyed a strong message to the international community regarding the Pakistan's unflinching stance on the Kashmir issue.

We must not forget the reasons that led to the creation of Pakistan. The Partition of the subcontinent was one of the most significant events in the recent history. What was the agenda of Partition? To simplify, Pakistan was founded for the social and political empowerment of the subcontinent Muslims, who were a minority in a Hindu majority subcontinent. Our Founding Father, Quaid-i-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah wanted to transform a piece of land into a progressive welfare state for subcontinent Muslims. Quaid-i-Azam had declared Kashmir as Pakistan's jugular vein. It exemplifies the importance of the Kashmir for Pakistan. Kashmir was and still is part and parcel of the agenda of partition. Pakistan cannot obviously abandon Kashmir under any conditions.

Since independence to August 2015, it has been sixty-eight years but the objectives are not completely achieved yet. One basic reason of the failure in achieving the objectives of the partition is the Kashmir dispute between India and Pakistan. The Indian occupation of the Kashmir led to three wars (excluding Kargil war) between the two countries. Resultantly, Pakistan had been obligated to entirely focus on its defence to counter Indian nefarious designs. Pakistan has a legitimate and lawful claim over the State of Jammu and Kashmir.

Kashmir was and still is famous for its enthralling beauty and natural scenery throughout the world. However, after the partition of the subcontinent, unfortunately, the paradise has turned into hell, underlining a sad saga of human rights violations, extrajudicial killings and gang rapes. The Indian Occupied Kashmir (IOK) is a heart-breaking tale of oppression, atrocities and woes; whereas, those who are living under the Indian tyranny have to face misery and anguish, and go through traumatic experience almost daily.

The most melancholic feature of this saga is that the Kashmiris have yet to articulate their fundamental rights like the rest of the world. That is, to exercise the right of self-determination to decide their future; this was guaranteed by the UN resolutions. The Kashmiris are still awaiting the implementation of the UN resolutions regarding plebiscite in Kashmir but the world remain silent over the miseries of the Kashmiri people, who are being butchered by the Indian troops almost every day.

India has been trying its best to destabilize Pakistan by sponsoring terrorists groups in Pakistan with particular emphasis on Indian sponsored terrorist activities in Baluchistan, Karachi and Pakistani Tribal Areas (FATA). Unfortunately, over the last decade, Pakistan's Foreign Office had miserably failed to appropriately highlight the Indian State sponsored terrorism in Pakistan. Our diplomats have also failed inaptly representing the Kashmir issue before the international community in general, and governing world bodies in particular.

The Indian government led by PM Narendra Modi is all-out to undermine the legal Kashmir Freedom Movement and Pakistan's legitimate claim over Kashmir. Kashmiris a disputed territory in the light of the UN resolutions. It is time that Pakistani diplomats must exercise extreme caution and they should vigilantly and vigorously work to secure Pakistan's interest.

Pakistan's unwavering stance on Kashmir issue was recently reiterated by our brave and brilliant Chief of the Army Staff General Raheel Sharif at National Defence University, Islamabad. General Raheel Sharif said, "Kashmir is an unfinished agenda of partition. Pakistan and Kashmir are inseparable." Therefore, if India is not willing to hold meaningful peaceful dialogue on the Kashmir issue than there will be no permanent peace and stability in the region. It is time to remind the Indian government and the world that another conventional war on Kashmir has the potential to turn into a nuclear exchange that could be disastrous not only for South Asia, but also for the world at large. Pakistan wants peace, and stability in the region but it is only possible, if the agenda of partition is accomplished. That is, "just resolution of Kashmir issue in the light of UN resolutions and as per the aspirations of Kashmiris".

Source: <http://nation.com.pk/columns/25-Aug-2015/kashmir-an-unfinished-agenda>

## Nuclear Mainstream | Michael Krepon



PAKISTAN seeks to join the mainstream of the international nuclear order with Beijing's support. Washington has offered words of qualified encouragement. A June 2015 US-Pakistan joint statement "emphasised the desirability of continued outreach to integrate Pakistan into the international nonproliferation regime." But Pakistan's path to the mainstream faces many obstacles.

The immediate objective of Pakistan's mainstreaming diplomacy is to be accorded a civil nuclear deal like that given to India by the Nuclear Suppliers Group in 2008. Islamabad also seeks to become an NSG member, alongside India. Or, failing this, to block India from becoming a member. The NSG operates by consensus, meaning if India became a member it could block Pakistani membership in the future.

India is pushing hard for admission in 2016, with support from the Obama administration and other NSG members, including Australia, Canada, France, Japan, Russia, and the UK. There is not yet consensus about Indian membership, but New Delhi's case is advancing. The window for Pakistan's mainstreaming into the global nuclear order is closing.

Since Pakistan is already receiving nuclear reactors from China — and since it cannot finance reactors elsewhere — why does it need or want to be an NSG member? Presumably, the answer has to do with standing in the nuclear order equivalent to India and not being frozen in an ‘inferior’ position.

India was able to secure a nuclear deal by leveraging international commercial interest in its nuclear market, and by offering improved strategic political relations to the US and others. Pakistan lacks these means of suasion, making a commercial N-power path to mainstreaming unlikely. For Pakistan, the path to success lies in n-weapon-related initiatives.

Pakistan has worked hard to build diverse nuclear capabilities, which it will retain as a necessary deterrent against perceived existential threats from India. At this juncture, Pakistan’s military leadership can choose to accept success in achieving a ‘strategic’ deterrent against India, sufficient to prevent nuclear exchanges and a major conventional war. Alternatively, it can choose to continue to compete with India in the pursuit of ‘full spectrum’ deterrence, which would entail open-ended nuclear requirements. These choices lead Pakistan to two starkly different nuclear futures and places in the global nuclear order.

Pakistani officials reiterate their intention not to enter an arms race with India, but the growth in Pakistan’s N-weapons complex suggests otherwise. More nuclear weapons and more fissile material will not deter India to a greater extent than is already the case. On the other hand, more nuclear weapons and more fissile material will not help Pakistan address its internal political, economic, and security challenges. Nor will these programmes help Pakistan join the nuclear mainstream.

By choosing to accept success in achieving the requirements of “strategic” deterrence, Pakistan is in a position to consider nuclear initiatives that would clarify its commitment to strengthening nuclear norms, regimes, and practices, and that would address widely held perceptions that its nuclear weapons are a major source of danger in South Asia. We propose that Pakistan consider five nuclear weapon-related initiatives that have previously been inconceivable: Shift declaratory policy from ‘full spectrum’ to ‘strategic’ deterrence; commit to a recessed deterrence posture and limit production of short-range delivery vehicles and tactical nuclear weapons; lift Pakistan’s veto on FMCT negotiations and reduce or stop fissile material production; separate civilian and military nuclear facilities; sign the CTBT without waiting for India.

These initiatives are easy to dismiss — but none would impair Pakistan’s successful accomplishment of strategic deterrence against India. By rejecting them and continuing to compete with India, Pakistan is unlikely to be mainstreamed. By adopting them, Pakistan places India in a position of having to match Pakistan or risk losing entry into the NSG. Adopting these initiatives would, however, require difficult and fundamental adjustments to Pakistan’s thinking about nuclear weapons. Precisely because these initiatives would be so difficult and unusual for Pakistan, they would change perceptions about Pakistan and its place in the global nuclear order.

Taking even some of the five initiatives would clarify Pakistan's commitment to adopt similar practices as other states with nuclear weapons. They would reduce risks of escalation that could lead to nuclear war. And they could facilitate Pakistan's entrance into the nuclear mainstream, while strengthening nonproliferation norms, bolstering global disarmament hopes, and setting the bar higher for new entrants into the NSG.

The steps we propose lend themselves to mainstreaming. More importantly, these steps would advance Pakistan's national, social, and economic security interests.

*The writers have authored the report A Normal Nuclear Pakistan, published by the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, and the Stimson Centre.*

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## Our Foreign Policy Quagmire | Shireen M Mazari



So what has gone wrong? There we were patting ourselves on the back for successfully brokering talks between the Afghan government and the Taliban when the talks stood cancelled and the Afghan government turned on Pakistan. Again, there we were thinking we had salvaged Ufa's diplomatic disaster and Sartaj Aziz would make it to New Delhi for the talks on terrorism when India sabotaged the talks by laying the APHC ban and the government in Pakistan came under heavy attack on the Ufa declaration yet again.

Meanwhile on the sidelines, great preparations for the Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference (CPC) were going full steam ahead when India once again managed to instigate a successful sabotage of the event.

Pakistan has two major failings in the domain of foreign policy: One, we rarely seem to see the larger and more long-term picture (when we do it does stand us in good stead); and, two, we create precedence after precedence all of which come to haunt us at critical junctures.

We have been doing this since our disastrous adventure into Cento and Seato – which upset the nationalist Arab World, China and the emerging non-aligned states and won us no kudos from the US and its western allies. In fact, after the Sino-Indian conflict, India despite its closeness to the Soviet Union and its leadership role in the non-aligned



movement (NAM), was getting more economic and military assistance from the US than Pakistan despite our membership of Cento and Seato! But history has never been our strong point as reflected in our constant rewriting of 'history' for our children!

So coming to the present, two events have once again reflected this dilemma in the foreign policy domain: the cancellation of the CPC, followed by the cancellation of the Pakistan-India National Security Advisers meeting in New Delhi. The scale of relevancy of the two events is of course entirely different but there is a pattern in our behaviour that links the two events.

ZAB's decision to exit the Commonwealth, a colonial institutional hangover where the British Queen remains the head, defined a brief period where Pakistan was moving into evolving an independent structure within the foreign policy domain, but our retraction through pleading to get back in, revealed the lack of any long-term core foreign policy guiding principles. More disturbing, we take decisions that are not carefully thought out and which come to haunt us and weaken our foreign policy credibility.

In 2007, the Senate under Mohammad Mian Soomro allowed representatives from Occupied Jammu and Kashmir's legislature to attend the Commonwealth parliamentary association Asia-India region moot in Islamabad and that came to haunt and undermine our principled position on Kashmir and eventually compelled us to cancel the CPC under pressure from India, Bangladesh and Australia.

Even more critical has been the absurd drama over the dialogue with India, which began at Ufa, where a bizarre joint statement came into being in which the composite dialogue was abandoned and Pakistan accepted Indian diktat seeking the holding of a meeting of the national security advisers of Pakistan and India to discuss all issues relating to terrorism but with the word 'Kashmir' missing.

Absurdly, the joint declaration also mentioned micro details of the Mumbai issue to be discussed but nothing of RAW's activities in Balochistan, Karachi and other parts of Pakistan! Of course such a lopsided joint declaration was bound to create major ripples in Pakistan and that is exactly what happened. So the groping-for-a-way-out PML-N government found a ready pretext to cancel the NSA meeting when the Modi government, either rather foolishly or out of an overdose of arrogance, insisted Sartaj Aziz could not meet the APHC leaders when he arrived in New Delhi for the NSA talks.

However, this hard posturing by India on the APHC meeting the Pakistani NSA was simply the result of a costly precedence set by Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif when he became the first Pakistani leader who did not meet the APHC on his visit to India. So we land ourselves in these situations because we do not think of the repercussions of our actions in the long term.

Because we do not do any long-term policy analysis with proper discussion on unexpected fallouts of various policy options, we also seem unable to connect events to see the larger picture. Presently, we have seen the following simultaneous

developments: Progress on the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC); the US first stating it would not pay CSF beyond 2015 and then declaring it was stopping CSF payments under the old hackneyed mantra of 'do more'; Afghan rapprochement altering into outright Afghan hostility culminating in an attack on our border post; the cancellation of the CPC; the cancellation of the NSA talks. We need to connect these dots to understand the environment in which we must make our decisions.

Can we not see the bigger picture of a hostile US which has already destroyed the strong Arab states of the Middle East – we should really ask why the IS never mentions Israel – and has questionable designs in this region? Are we deliberately ignoring the strategic partnership, including on missile defence, between India and the US, which has also allowed India to gain ground and influence in Afghanistan?

Finally, just to see beyond our immediate region, we need to also pay greater attention to the resurgence of Japan as a military power. The Abe government is getting legislation through which will allow Japan to use its military force in support of allies overseas even if Japan itself is not under attack. This is a major shift in Japanese policy and comes at a time when not only is the Sino-Japanese territorial conflict becoming more accentuated, but when the US is challenging China in the South China Sea.

Pakistan has to realign its policies in the light of these global and regional alignments that are being created. For instance, the CPEC is a strategic goal but it will be subject to increasing pressures from external players strongly opposed to this project because it extends China's reach into West Asia and beyond. We have to rethink our relations with our Arab neighbours, especially with the IS threat that is being extended across West Asia into our region. We cannot simply be the supplier of mercenary forces to protect monarchies.

Most critically, we have to have a rational approach to both Afghanistan and India – that is not strewn either with unrealistic euphoria or sudden despair, both of which lead to erratic behaviour premised on short-term gains which normally tend to translate into long-term losses.

With India, especially, we should not be in a hurry for rapprochement. Let the Modi government take a long, hard look at its negative policies and their regional repercussions. Meanwhile we should evolve a clearly stated position on our terms and conditions for any dialogue. Most importantly we need to get out of a psychological confidence deficit our ruling elite has thrust us in since 9/11 and which external powers continue to exploit.

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## Pakistan's Foreign Policy Conundrums | Luavut Zahid



### Not all bad news?

After seesawing over dialogue with India for the umpteenth time Pakistan is indeed back to square one. It's doing no better on the Afghanistan front with Ghani thumbing his nose to leaders on the other side of the border. On the US front, Pakistan exists in a constant state of stagnating disappointment, interrupted occasionally with mild appreciation for some efforts or the other.

Nevertheless, it isn't all bad news for the country's foreign policy and foreign relations; there are also countries like China and Iran, who still see scope where others do not.

Under the current government the seat of the foreign policy throne is being shared by two men i.e. Sartaj Aziz, who acts as the Advisor to Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif on Foreign Policy and Tariq Fatemi, who is the current Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Foreign Affairs.

For Pakistan Muslim League – Noon (PML-N) it seems that Aziz's status as an advisor removes the need for a foreign minister.

"Sartaj Aziz is the foreign minister. The status of an advisor to the PM is no less than that of a minister. Aziz is the minister for national security and foreign affairs. To say that we don't have a minister is extremely wrong," minister of information, mass-media broadcasting, and national heritage, Pervez Rashid, explained.

The responsibilities and requirements of a foreign minister are plenty. Some have criticised the post being allotted to Aziz because of the plethora of duties that come part and parcel with the title. However, Rashid doesn't understand what the big deal is.

"A foreign minister needs to have a brain, he doesn't need to go wrestle anyone. He doesn't need to go and indulge in physical violence, he just needs to know how to talk to people," he explained.

"There aren't many men that have the kind of knowledge and experience that Sartaj Aziz has. People like him that have lived an entire life the way he has are an asset. A foreign minister needs to be such that the world knows who he is, and he knows the world, too — Aziz fits that bill, no?" he asked.

Rashid spoke about the advisor's role in previous governments at length. "He has worked with many PMs. His relationships span back 20-30 years. Many foreign ministers have worked as his students or colleagues. A man that has so much knowledge and so many relationships cannot be liability," he explained.

On the other hand, ex MNA and former chairman of the Public Accounts Committee Nadeem Afzal Chan finds the lack of a foreign minister alarming.

"This is a failure of the government. The biggest failure of any government is not appointing the right people," he said.

***For Pakistan Muslim League – Noon (PML-N) it seems that Aziz's status as an advisor removes the need for a foreign minister***

"Someone at this post needs to be someone who understands domestic politics and has experience with foreign policy. Right now you have Fatemi and Aziz and both are technocrats and both are old — what can they possibly deliver?" he asked.

The issues, according to Chan, go back to the party not having many options to begin with. "They don't trust anyone beyond their kitchen cabinet... that's not how you run a country," Chan observed. "They have limited themselves quite a bit because of this".

Sartaj Aziz himself is tired of the discussion over Pakistan's missing foreign minister. "The thing is that there is little difference between an advisor and an actual minister," he said irritably.

“You must have seen before during the PPP government that Malik was the advisor on interior for a long time after which he took on the role of the finance advisor for a long time. The only difference is that I’m not a part of the parliament and cannot be called a minister, therefore I am an advisor,” he said of his shared role with Tariq Fatemi.

“I am heading the foreign office and heading it fully, I’m there almost the whole day. This issue has been created for no reason,” he adding while listing the various ministries he has had control of during his career.

If anything Aziz has had his responsibilities doubled. Not only is he the advisor on foreign policy, but he’s also the advisor on national security. Both the portfolios are substantially important ones — both are key to Pakistan’s survival right now. How prudent is it to allot both positions to one person? Aziz felt that it was a good decision.

“National security and foreign policy share a deep connection. This is a logical combination and it isn’t like this is the combination of two diverse things. National Security encompasses social security, economic reality and defence requirements,” the advisor explained and added: “My experience in the past, including my time as a finance minister, becomes all the more relevant.”

“In the start if you bring in a national security advisor that doesn’t have the support of the foreign office, he will fail. In that manner, it is an advantage I have both the portfolios,” he asserted.

Verily, having an advisor instead of a minister does not in itself pose a problem. However, Pakistan faces a multifaceted and diverse set of issues. Right now, instead of putting one man or woman at the helm of affairs the current government has given the same job to two men.

“Sartaj Aziz is a brilliant technocrat and economic manager but for foreign policy someone more suitable, a former career diplomat perhaps, would be needed,” says Irfan Shahzad, lead coordinator at the Institute of Policy Studies (IPS).

“The situation is that he’s the national security advisor and the foreign affairs advisor. We then have Fatemi, who is the special assistant to the PM on foreign affairs as well. Not having a foreign minister is one thing, but having two people doing the same job is something else,” he said.

Foreign policy matters require substantial attention and intricate planning. Having two people for the same job means big trouble.

“When you have two people, there is trouble. You can have two people doing the same kind of job but in general you who know the senior is or the junior or how they are meant to collaborate. When they were first appointed they also clashed and they aren’t in a favourable situation,” Shahzad observed.

Would Pakistan benefit from some fresh blood when it comes to foreign policy? The answer isn't all that simple.

"I'm personally in favour of new people in top policymaking, but this is one forte that you need experience, tolerance and patience for. I would not suggest someone like Hina Rabbani Khar, and the likes of her for the post," Shahzad said.

Instead of one core minister, there are two advisors. And in this case two heads may not be better than one. To start with, both Sartaj Aziz and Tariq Fatemi are old. "A senior person is always an asset, but to what extent? Aziz has crossed 80 and Tariq Fatemi is slightly younger but he's also into his 70s while our PM is somewhere in his mid-60s. I believe that one should be senior but not too old. The post requires agility," he explained.

### **Who cares about the foreign minister anyway?**

An interesting problem that Pakistan's foreign policy faces is the hidden hands that know when to pull the right strings.

"The military as an intuition has always been stronger than the civilian leaderships. We have some betterment now but there isn't a huge substantial change. We can't say that the military is running our foreign policy, but their shadows are very obvious," Shahzad notes.

Whether it's Pakistan's perpetually fractured relations with India or its tumultuous exchanges with Afghanistan — it wouldn't be a stretch to say that the military's scent is all over the foreign policies that this country chooses to execute.

As has been the case with many other avenues, where the civilian government failed the establishment stepped up. Is that the reason Pakistan's lack of a foreign minister troubles no one? Chan believes that it would be incorrect to assume that the military is blatantly running the show; however, to say that they aren't at all involved would also be wrong.

"Well when it comes to the military... there's a difference between coordination and influence. I think that till politicians deliver what they are supposed to, they shouldn't crib about not having a role in foreign policy. Our democracy is not as strong as it should be and it will take time," he said.

Chan believes that the current government doesn't do enough for foreign policy for it to be a relevant party at the table.

***Pakistan's position in terms of its foreign policy in the last few months has gone from complicated to troubling***

“What have they done for foreign policy, that is the question. They are towing the policy that was already present under the PPP government. Relations with Afghanistan and Iran were getting better during PPP rule and they have ruined things there.

“The only foreign policy they did bring to the table was that they wanted to fix relations with India — and they have backed off from that themselves. So what policy do they have? Call it their strategy or their weakness; their foreign policy is a joke,” he said.

Pervez Rashid feels that the military’s involvement is nothing to get too excited over. “First of all, the entire world, when they are working on their foreign policy, get input from their defence. This is nothing new. Even the Americans do it; when they go to get their foreign policy they go to the pentagon, for instance. That input is taken and then moulded into the foreign policy, we’re not doing anything too unique.

“Secondly, we have our own special circumstances. We almost always have security issues on the eastern border. The Afghan border has been war ridden since the last 30-40 years. When you live between such neighbours and these are the borders that you are sharing then it becomes even more necessary for the defence establishment to give their input because they are the ones tackling the situation on the ground at the end of the day,” he said.

On the other hand, Sartaj Aziz feels that the perception that the military is calling the shots from the background is an ignorant one. “To start with the defence establishment has a deep interest in these portfolios because their defence capacity, their entire strategy depends on it. The civilian government is in charge, however,” he said.

Aziz went on to speak about the progress that has been made in terms of both Afghanistan and India. While progress was en route in terms of Afghanistan, the recent vibe has been chilly at best. “Their recent attitude has nothing to do with us or what we have done. It is their internal situation in their country,” he said.

“The consensus we achieved on how to deal with them is still very much relevant and there,” he added.

Pakistan’s position in terms of its foreign policy in the last few months has gone from complicated to troubling. Internal policies continue to bang against foreign policies and little has been done to put the problems on the back burner.

“The thing is that our geopolitical location, and being an Islamic country, along with global fault lines that have travelled to us, have put us in a tight spot,” Aziz observed.

“A lot has improved in the last two years. There are some concerns but on the whole things are improving,” he added.

The answer to whether Pakistan’s foreign relations have truly improved varies depending on who is asked. The reality is that a more coherent approach to how we deal with our neighbours and our allies needs to be made obvious, and soon.

## National Language | M. Khalid Shaikh



It is indeed positive news that Urdu, the national language, is finally to get the status it deserves. The grace period given in 1973 for making arrangements to formally adopt Urdu for official and other purposes ended several years ago.

Today, what is really important is using Urdu as a medium of instruction and providing books in the national language for all levels of education. Obviously, it is not practically possible to overturn the medium of instruction currently in use all over Pakistan, and switch immediately from English to Urdu; however, what is doable is a conscious effort to provide books and lecture resources in Urdu to students, along with the same in English for the sake of clarity and comprehension.

Most of our students find it difficult to understand what books written in English have to say. Checking copies of students for many years, I have come to the conclusion that students, even at university level, really don't understand the subject they are studying, mainly because of their lack of command over the English language. The unfortunate result is that most students resort to rote learning without understanding most of the content.



A small percentage of students are lucky enough to attend GCE O/A-level schools and get a chance to learn English properly and to cope with their subjects in that language. These students normally end up acquiring prestigious positions in society; the others who either go to low-fee private schools or public schools come under the 'mediocre' category.

Though different languages are spoken in Pakistan, even in this multilingual setting Urdu is providing a social cohesiveness which is perhaps the best reason for providing books and lecture resources in the national language. In Pakistan, fluency in English is linked to one's social and economic class; however, a partial education in Urdu does increase chances of entry to high positions for all groups.

I am not saying that Pakistan should abandon English as a medium of instruction at all levels; nor do I suggest that students should access knowledge in Urdu only. In fact, schools, colleges and universities should seriously consider bilingual (English and Urdu) development of teaching material. Adopting this policy is essential for Pakistani students who fail to understand lectures or learning material made available to them in the English language.

In the absence of subject specialists who can write academic books for students in Urdu, the only alternative left is the translation of books written by international authors. The Higher Education Commission (HEC) has not, at least of late, announced any scheme to promote translation of books by university teachers. The result is that many university teachers who do opt to undertake this rigorous activity are discouraged in the absence of any guaranteed monetary benefit.

On the face of it, translating a book appears a fairly straightforward task; however, it is not that simple, and can be quite challenging. There is a need to actively promote the art of translation. Well-known translators should be hired by the HEC to conduct workshops at universities. To encourage the production of textbooks and lecture resources in Urdu, a criterion for promotion to the highest academic positions, such as professorship or associate professorship, could be to have demonstrated experience in translation — especially in an academician's area of expertise.

Translation has historically played a major role in the spread of knowledge. Who can forget the famous Bayt al-Hikma (House of Wisdom) founded by Abbasid caliph al-Mamun in Baghdad in 830 AD? It was a huge library and academic centre specialising in the translation of knowledge, particularly philosophy and science, into Arabic. Similarly, in Muslim Spain, Toledo was a centre of culture for people speaking different languages; it had an institute of knowledge and translation (school of translators). The school translated the work of ancient philosophers and scientists into Arabic.

This enabled Arabic-speaking populations at the time to learn many traditional disciplines that were not known. Arabic-speaking scientists also contributed significant works.

The prime minister should take the initiative and establish a dedicated institution that can undertake the task of translating textbooks and other education resources into Urdu. The PML-N government should also rectify the lack of progress in building up learning resources in science and philosophy. The proposed institution can be set up for a limited period, say 10 years. After this, the task of translating educational material should be shifted to the universities. This will not only engage many scholars in the pursuit of academic excellence, it will also make knowledge more accessible to many who have not had the resources to ensure a sound education.

*The writer is an assistant professor at the Federal Urdu University Karachi. The views do not reflect the opinion of the university.*

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# EDUCATION

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## Why Are We Discouraging Higher Education in Pakistan? | Asif A. Malik



Higher Education sector is one of the major victims of electronic and print media these days in Pakistan where every other day, an intellectual is coming up with rhetorical questions on its growth and development without knowing the ground realities. These people also ignore the fact that Higher Education Commission (HEC) of Pakistan, which is striving hard to develop sustainable educational growth, is only 14 years old.

It was very sad to read Mr Pirzada's narrative in the Daily Jang, dated June 23, 2015 which is a vivid example of negativity being spread creating an atmosphere of mistrust among the people of Pakistan who have strong faith in the prestigious universities of Pakistan and the honorable scientific community of the country.

Huma Yusuf threw whole English dictionary in her narrative in the DAWN on August 6, 2012 where she stated that Pakistani universities are *"under resourced"* *"poorly staffed"*, *"highly politicized"* *"incapable of producing original research"* which is a very alarming opinion despite the fact that compared to the only 816 research publications by

Pakistani universities/HEIs in international journals in 2002, before the establishment of Higher Education Commission (HEC), there were 7966 impact factor research publications by Pakistani universities/HEIs, in the year 2014.

In this race of self-accentuation, well-known Prof Pervez Hoodbhoy also did not spare the higher education sector and lashed at it in his narrative in Express Tribune on January 4, 2013, putting Quaid Azam University (QAU) Islamabad and Punjab University (PU) Lahore as example of the academic corruption in research and PhD thesis evaluation. He further opined that *“Pakistani University teachers had roughly the same moral and ethical standards possessed by our policemen, politicians, generals and shopkeepers”*. He added that the academic research being conducted in Pakistani universities is *“kill count”* based on *“wholesale plagiarism”* which has pushed academics ethics into a *“free fall”*. QAU and PU are the two most historic, prestigious and the trusted universities of Pakistan and have matchless contribution towards the educational lift and development of this country. It would have been great if honorable Prof Hoodbhoy would also have highlighted the international achievements of these universities specially and of the higher education sector of Pakistan generally – like getting the prestigious TWAS award from Italy and highest civil awards conferred by the government of Austria on the basis of quality and relevance of research of Pakistani academics to the socio-economic development of Pakistan.

One of our colleagues Shehnika Zardari wrote a comprehensive blog in the DAWN on Nov 2, 2014 in which she wrote that *“[Pakistani universities are in a] sloppy state where universities pay no attention to communicating and disseminating the research of their teachers due to indolence, poor networking and relations, jealousy and an entrenched culture that has accepted mediocrity as its hallmark.”*

Although the list goes on but I would stop here, quoting the news report of Mr. Abbasi in the News and the Daily Jang on June 25, 2015 hitting one of the most vibrant higher education institution of Pakistan i.e., COMSATS Institute of Information Technology (CIIT), stating mismanagement in its financial matters, hiring of retired bureaucrats, stoppage of funds by the government of Pakistan and the excessive foreign tours of the officials and the students. This seems to be highly exaggerated if one looks at the substantial development and progress of CIIT in last one decade, becoming of the leading universities of Pakistan in impact factor research publications and general categories as announced and acknowledged by the HEC of Pakistan.

CIIT is a Centre of Excellence of the Commission on Science and Technology for Sustainable Development in the South (COMSATS), which is an inter-governmental organization with 21 member states in three continents; Asia, Africa and Latin America. It has 7 other fully functional campuses in various parts of the country including one virtual campus. CIIT currently comprises of six faculties, 18 departments and ten research centers. Presently 97 degree programs are on offer in which more than 37,500 students are enrolled in degree programs at Bachelor, Master and Doctorate level in the broader areas of Information Sciences & Technology, Business Administration, Natural

and Biological Sciences, Engineering as well as Architecture and Design. There are 2,950 faculty members working in CIIT out of which 1,003 faculty members and academic managers have PhD qualification, which is more than that of any other university in Pakistan. 538 faculty and staff members are undergoing advanced education leading to MS and PhD degrees from well reputed universities of technologically advanced countries in Asia, USA and Europe. This vibrant institute has produced 119 PhD graduates so far within 16 year of its inception.

Coming to the point, let me emphasize to my fellow colleagues that we must criticize the loopholes and the drawbacks in our education system but our criticism must be constructive and guidance based, proposing a strategic way out to the educational leaders and the administrators so that they can amend their strategies to achieve the goals.

As a nation, we feel happy to be sad and disappointed, like masochists. Great things are happening around us every other moment but those are not our headlines. The QAU has recently been ranked 496th among the 500 Best Global Universities for 2015, according to the US News and World Report. Share of Pakistan's research has gone up by 300 percent. As per reports of Scimago, an independent research organization and ranking platform which analyses scientific output of institutions and countries by monitoring over 30,000 journals, three countries stand out and show the most drastic increase in research rankings: Iran, Malaysia and Pakistan. Iran moves ahead from number 19 to number 4, Malaysia from 30 to 13, and Pakistan from 43 to 27. The expected output of research in Pakistan moving up 16 notches, which is the second highest increase worldwide, primarily due to the innovative higher education policies and reforms taking place in Pakistan under the Higher Education Commission (HEC). Scimago forecasts that by 2018, the research output of Pakistan will exceed 29, 661 research publications.

I must say in conclusion that Pakistani academic community is doing great in spite of scarcity of resources. The efforts of our scholars and educational administrators are commendable in this regard which must be appreciated, promoted and showcased to the international community. Along with highlighting the problems in our education system, we need to encourage and highlight the achievements of our universities.

It is so encouraging when foreigners acknowledge Pakistan, like Professor Michael Rode, Chairman of the United Nations Commission on Science, Technology and Development, wrote in 2008: *"Never before have I seen such rapid positive changes in any country in the higher education sector as witnessed in Pakistan in a short period of six years. Around the world when we discuss the status of higher education in different countries, there is unanimity of opinion that the developing country that has made the most rapid progress internationally in recent years is Pakistan."*

Why can't Pakistanis do the same?

Why Are We Discouraging Higher Education in Pakistan? | Asif A. Malik.

## Education: Overstepping Constitutional Limits | Asghar Soomro



Can the federal government still make education policy after the devolution of education to the provinces under the 18<sup>th</sup> Amendment? This question has been haunting me since the day it was decided in the Inter-Provincial Education Ministers' Conference (IPEMC) that all provincial and area governments would hold a policy dialogue on the [National Education Policy 2009](#) and propose tangible recommendations. In the wake of the conference, a series of policy dialogues started across Pakistan. Now, it is said that a revised National Education Policy will be announced in January 2016. Silence on the part of provinces, particularly smaller ones, amounts to volunteering surrender of their constitutional right.

There is no ambiguity in the Constitution as far as education is concerned. After the 18<sup>th</sup> Amendment was passed, the concurrent legislative list was abolished and responsibilities of policy, curriculum, syllabus, planning, centres of excellence, standards of education and Islamic education were transferred from the federal government to the provinces. In order to confirm that there is no misunderstanding or misinterpretation of constitutional clauses, I consulted some legal experts. One legal

expert was of the view that after the insertion of [Article 25A](#) in the Constitution, education has become a part of fundamental rights; and fundamental rights come under the federal legislative list, part II. So, the federal government might have based its argument on those lines. Otherwise, education should come under the purview of provincial governments. Barrister Zamir Ghumro has maintained a very clear position on this. According to him, education is a completely provincial subject and the federal government cannot make education policy. If it does, this should be considered a violation of the Constitution. He quoted the [Article 142 \(c\)](#) which categorically states, “A provincial assembly shall, and Majlis-e-Shoora (parliament) shall not, have power to make laws with respect to any matter not enumerated in the federal legislative list.” So, how can the IPEMC approve the revised education policy when the Constitution clearly forbids this, asks Barrister Ghumro.

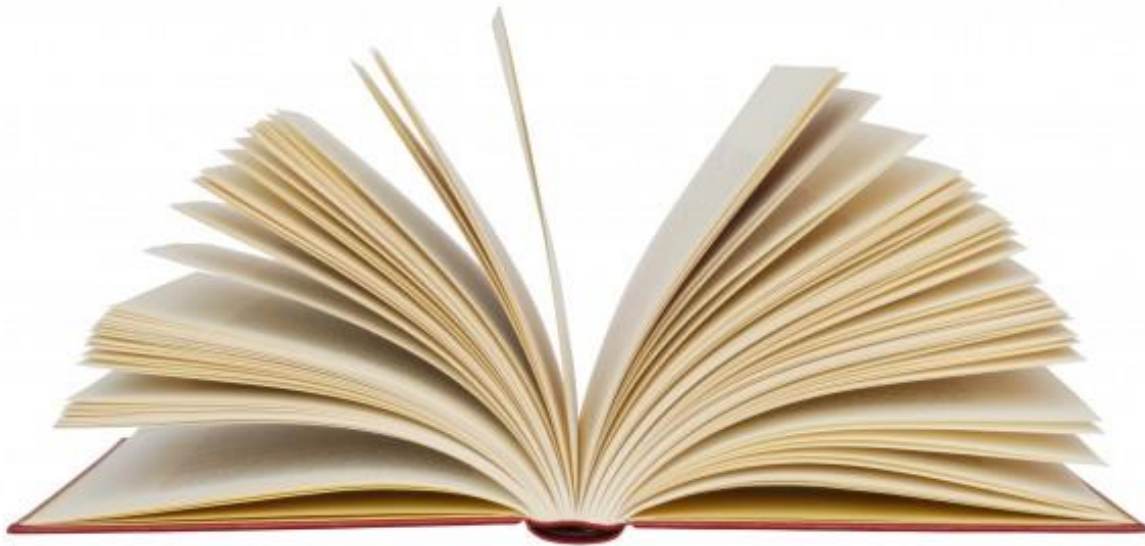
Unfounded apprehensions regarding devolution have led to overstepping of constitutional limits. Those who believe that the federal government should formulate education policy and curriculum fear that if this work is given to the provinces, it will [harm national integration and cohesion](#), and promote provincialism. Furthermore, they doubt the capacity and technical expertise of provinces to implement plans, and say that the National Education Policy 2009 will go to waste, which was formulated after lots of hard work and research of experts, educationists, public representatives, planners and other stakeholders. Let’s take these arguments one by one.

From 1973 to 2010, education has been in the hands of the federal government. During that period, we have seen many education policies developed and implemented by democratic governments and powerful military rulers. But did they achieve the goals of national integration and cohesion? No, rather, the impact has been quite the opposite if we look at the ongoing insurgency in Balochistan, prevailing religious extremism in educational institutions, even in elite institutions, and violation of rights of minorities, women and smaller nations. What provinces lack is autonomy and empowerment, not necessarily capacity. Earlier, we used to hear that provinces will not be able to carry out the duties related to revenue collection when the Sindh Revenue Board was set up. Everyone is quick to point out its inadequate capacity to undertake the assigned task. But the board was not only able to accomplish the revenue collection target, it even exceeded it within a short span of time.

Punjab is making very good progress in the field of education and its efforts are praised at national and international levels. Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa is also doing well. All this is creating a culture of positive competition rather than promoting provincialism. So, we need to learn how to trust provinces and not view them as suspicious entities as that widens the trust deficit. I think we must honour the Constitution and trust provinces if our agenda is to achieve true integration and cohesion in Pakistan.

*Published in The Express Tribune, August 21<sup>st</sup>, 2015.*

## Education, Extremism and the Elite | Imtiaz Gul



Why shouldn't young minds turn towards extremist ideologies — I'm not talking of terrorism — if they are marginalised, their basic rights grossly violated, or if they are under-paid or unemployed? What role are many private educational institutions playing in promoting extremist tendencies among young academics? Is the state attentive to this? Is education a market economy product determined by the demand and supply principle, or is it a government responsibility (as promised under [Article 25-A](#) of the Constitution)? The state is the guarantor of the right to education, bound to provide decent livelihoods as well as protect the youth from exploitation. These are some of the questions that must be posed to the Sharifs, the Zardaris, the Shahs, the Khans and all those political luminaries who tirelessly speak of turning Pakistan around. Not to forget those members of mainstream political parties who are running educational institutions. These include the Kasuris, the Chaudhrys, the Syeds and the Niazis.

Under-paying highly educated young people employed by high-flying institutions affiliated with Oxbridge and other leading systems, is a perennial issue. Exploitation of the educated youth — both as teachers and students — is prevalent even in Islamabad, the capital, but this curse is omnipresent in its most oppressive forms in under-developed regions and those where the ruling elite control education boards or sit in



parliaments. Although Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa (K-P) has seen a proliferation of private universities and colleges, there has been little check on their fee and salary structures. The Abbottabad, Peshawar and Mardan boards seem to be hubs of corruption that are under the control of the political elite and their henchmen. Many of them are involved in issuing fake degrees and under-paying teachers, often invoking the demand-and-supply principle as if teaching were a commodity obtainable at a negotiable price.

Some of Imran Khan's colleagues in K-P are among those running private education institutions, a practice that has turned into an unchecked money-minting enterprise in the absence of a regulatory framework. The PTI has made a strong point about the [accountability of the electoral system](#). Now, it must also embark on an accountability of those running educational institutions, especially its own members appointed to important positions in the K-P government. Of course they are not the only ones. Scores of private educators are exploiting students, often in collusion with officials of education boards and higher education departments. Why shouldn't the highly educated young slip into confusion and extremist thought streams if, after a 17-year education, they either remain unemployed or extremely under-paid — earning paltry sums between \$40-150 a month? This way, many private institutions are disincentivising education among those who come from poor families.

Another alarming issue is of fake degrees being issued by many private institutions and government education boards. Ironically, the business of fake degrees in Pakistan is nothing new, but really came to the fore only recently because of the activities of [Axact](#). Many universities running under the charter of some London-based institutions have been doing the same thing. Even official education boards have been involved in this as illustrated through the disqualification of a PML-N legislator, Chaudhry Arif Hussain, for holding a fake degree issued by the Lahore Board of Intermediate and Secondary Education. Before Hussain, several other legislators also lost their seats for possessing fake degrees.

It is correctly believed that the government should not interfere in private education; however, it carries the responsibility to prevent fraudulent practices and preempt exploitation of students and teachers. Private educators have the right to determine fee structures, but they are also bound to pay teachers fairly and ensure quality education. They cannot, must not, be allowed to equate market economy principles with exploitation of young academics. Shouldn't the government ask private institutions if there is a balance between the fees they charge and the salaries they pay to their teachers who hold master's degrees?

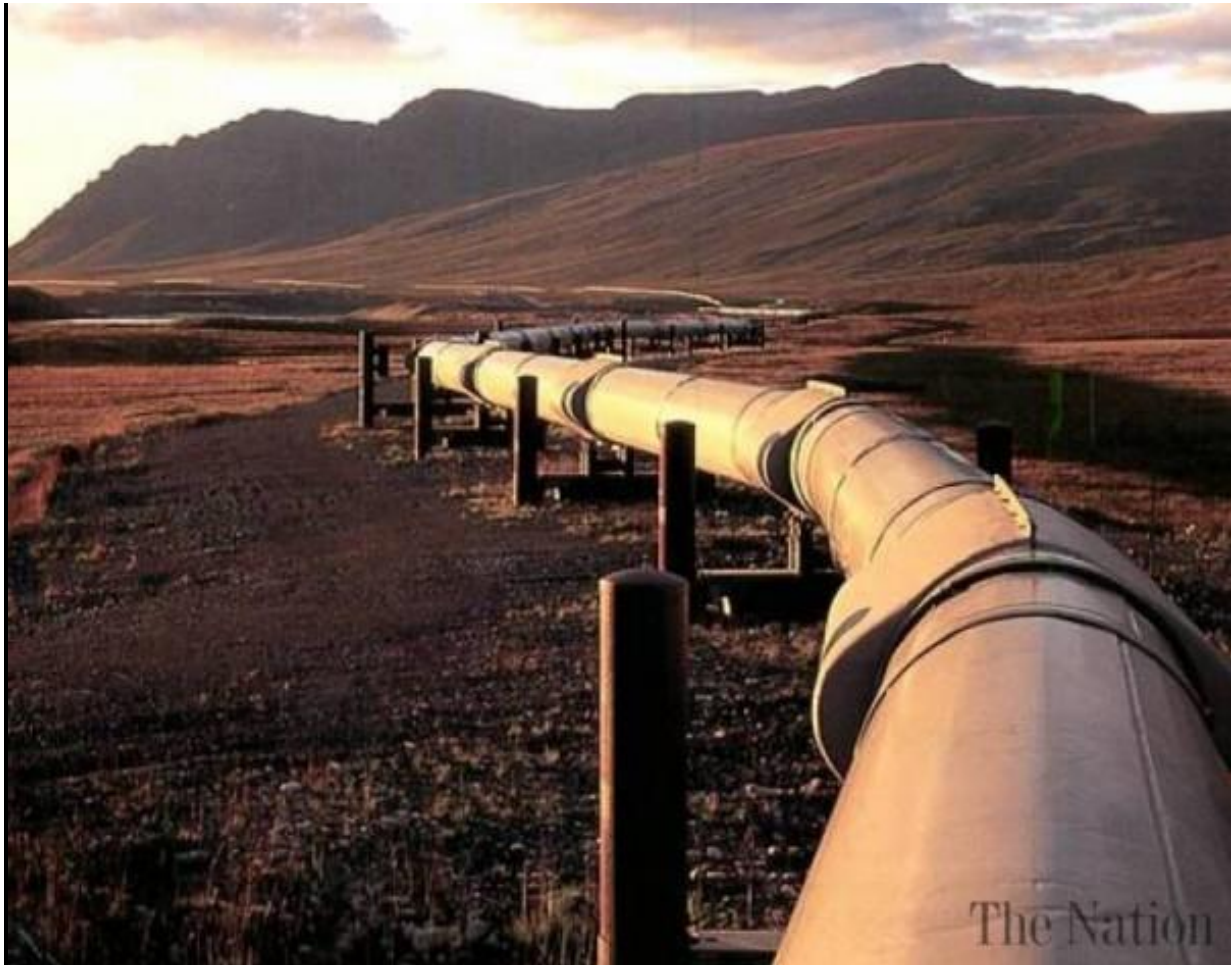
The Sharifs and Imran Khan can turn Pakistan around only if they handle education on a war-footing and start meaningful reform of the sector. When will they crack down on the moth that is eating away the vitals of the education sector, stunting real intellectual development?

*Published in The Express Tribune, August 26<sup>th</sup>, 2015.*

# ECONOMY

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## Potential Energy



With any international deal signed by our government come a host of problems and insecurities. In Pakistan, nothing is simple, whether it is Chinese dollars or American aid. The problem boils down to bad governance, nothing else.

Iran, after relief from sanctions that targeted its energy sector, is the newest seller to Pakistan. It is expected that woeful energy sector governance, with risks including rampant theft, poor maintenance, and transmission and distribution losses of around 20 percent, will slaughter the benefits from gas supplied from Iran. LNG imported from Qatar was also hailed as a great idea, but then there were a myriad of associated administrative and management problems; from Qatar refusing to send us its container,

issue of price regulation and the final demise of the Oil and Gas Regulatory Authority (OGRA).

Even if the pipeline is completed in Pakistan, national distribution networks probably won't be able to handle the additional volumes of natural gas coming from Iran. Last year Pakistan moved away from the Iranian gas pipeline project, saying it was unable to generate revenue needed for the development of the project because of sanctions. Its completion can fill some gaps in the Pakistani energy sector because Iranian natural gas could be significantly less expensive than LNG imports. But do Shahid Khaqan Abbasi, and his team at the Ministry of Petroleum have plans to improve distribution and set and regulate prices? LNG is coming from Qatar, gas from Iran, China is building power plants, and over the last year oil prices have fallen thanks to the shale oil boom in the US. What have we achieved from all this? Fewer power outages? Lower petrol and gas prices?

Every few days, there are reports in the papers of IMF funds being released or the Asian Development Bank pledging money. The ADB in February said it was supporting efforts to help Pakistan build its first liquefied natural gas terminal with a \$30 million loan. With the LNG facility, the bank said the Pakistan government would save about \$1 billion per year on its fuel import bills. But how much will we have to pay back in debt?

Power supply has been short for decades, and aid and loans from international institutions have also been coming in for decades. We are still operating only at subsistence levels. When will we see any real results?

Potential Energy

Source: <http://nation.com.pk/editorials/01-Aug-2015/potential-energy>

## Economy: Looming Challenges | Dr Kamal Monnoo



“Believing things which we know to be untrue, and then, when we are finally proven wrong, impudently twisting the facts so as to show that we were right.”  
– George Orwell.

IMF thumbs-up, some feel-good reports (a recent one by Daniel Runde) and government’s usual rhetoric aside, the fact remains that the economy for most Pakistanis is not performing. What the recent budget should have done was to set the stage in the country for growth along with social equity. Clearly this has not happened. As national competitiveness and subsequently manufacturing falters, jobs are fast evaporating in a demography where urbanisation is taking place at an extremely fast pace (to reach 50% by year 2050) and where nearly 200,000 jobs are required annually to accommodate a young population attaining employable age each successive year. Given such a situation, for any thinking and caring government the most important aspects of its economy ought to be a real move towards comprehensive social support for the public at large and shoring up of its home industry to spur job creation. And no one argues this better than the Cambridge economist, Amartya Sen, by stressing in his various works on South Asia that whereas “poverty can be partially alleviated through relief; but it can ‘only’ be eliminated through creation of jobs and equitable growth in

economies such as of India and Pakistan.” The problem though, often seen, is that economic managers invariably forget that growth is not merely a statistic and it actually needs to be flesh and blood if it is to truly mean anything other than a few extra numerals in an economic report. If there are no jobs and if there are no opportunities for talent, the economy is only the crackle of a paper tiger – Our leadership also seems to be falling in this very trap. For Pakistan’s progress to be meaningful it has to primarily accommodate public welfare, both by facilitating the domestic private investment in industry to generate mass employment and by prioritising state’s revenue towards health, education, basic amenities and small housing over fancy infrastructure showboat projects.

Instead, we witness a false sense of optimism being promoted by the government quarters on the state of the Pakistan economy, which if not checked can have larger long-term negative implications. First, complacency can set in and the much awaited economic reforms, necessary to correct the underlying malaise of the economy, will once again be put on the back burner. Second, once the present geo-strategic cum military need of Pakistan tapers off (as has invariably happened in the past) and when this low commodity price cycle begins to reverse, we will yet again find ourselves at point zero, confronted by our age old problems of poverty, inequity and unemployment. More to the present, this illusion unnecessarily raises expectations on exaggeratedly enhanced revenue generation by the government. As it is, today the whole tax collection drive by the government is rather poorly crafted and causing more pain than joy for all stakeholders. The fact of the matter is that while every successive Pakistani government keeps on moaning about the low tax to GDP ratio, the taxpayers on the other hand keep reminding their leaders on the need for serious reforms in our tax system in order to seek meaningful progress in tax collection. It is only natural and to be expected that people go to a great length to avoid paying tax or rather staying out of the ‘tax-net’.

One popular trick in the Middle Ages was to become a monk; these days, shell companies in the Caribbean are a more common retreat in the West and in an environment like ours a simple avoidance to become a part of the documented sector is considered to be the best option! Point being that it is really up to governments to create an environment and a culture that induces people to pay their fair share of taxes. For example, the value added-added tax allows firms to deduct tax paid on inputs from their sales-tax bill, in effect performing a duty on behalf of the government to police their respective suppliers; in return they and not the evaders face the brunt in shape of coercive audits and penalties; now who would want to be a part of it? And then this whole meaningless business of first collecting a tax and then refunding it to the exporters where invariably the government collects less and pays more! Why not make it zero-rated as in the past? Last but not least, in taxation, the government’s undue emphasis has been on indirect taxation instead of endeavouring to broaden the tax base. The General Sales Tax (GST) is the main vehicle of indirect taxation being used at home. The share of sales tax in our overall tax collection was recorded at 44% in FY14, overriding the share of direct taxation, which stood at 39% in FY14. Currently

charged at 17%, the rate is too high when compared with both neighbours and competitors; only Turkey has a higher rate at 18%. However, in Turkey there exists a reduced rate of VAT (Value Added Tax) of 8% and 1% on essential items including foodstuffs, textile products, etc. In fact these very focused cum sector-specific measures have been mainly instrumental in Turkey's attainment of a tax to GDP ratio of 20.38%, which is almost double that of Pakistan at 10.93%. It is interesting to note that Taiwan and Thailand charge only 5% and 7% sales tax and have tax to GDP of 12% and 16% respectively. Also, Malaysia that charges sales tax at 10% has tax to GDP ratio of 16.10%, and this despite applying a reduced sales tax rate of 5% on essential food items.

Clearly Pakistan needs to dwell on the taxation models of these comparable nations in order to improve its taxation strategy. Also, some promising new research in behavioural economics can give the government yet another tool for boosting tax payment: the psychological nudge. Economists have long understood that psychology matters in tax systems. Studies repeatedly find that tax gaps are much smaller than one would predict given the rarity of audits and the benefits of underpayment. Many taxpayers are motivated by more than just pecuniary concerns. Feelings of patriotism and civic duty ease the pain of paying tax (or dodging them less attractive). Guilt, or the perceived moral cost of violating social norms, also seems to enter the equation. A recent working paper from 'America's National Bureau of Economic Research', documents experiments conducted by economists from Imperial College in London and University of Chicago, with the British government, and explains how a government chooses to spend the tax it collects, plays heavily on the emotions of the taxpayers. The less return the taxpayers feel they are getting for their money, the more likely they are to avoid paying. Also, if taxpayers discover that the government's priorities are more out of step with their preferences than they had previously believed, collections may fall. Rings a bell?

Lastly, to our mounting debt: Post 2008 Euro-zone experience tells us alarming stories on hardships that high borrowings can bring about on people of an indebted country with the main lesson of the global financial crisis being about how poorly planned borrowings and more so, poorly planned spending of those borrowed funds, can render even developed and emerging economies virtually bankrupt. More importantly, it has rekindled the debate on a longstanding conundrum of economics: when is a country bankrupt? At what point are government debts simply too great to bear? Unlike for companies, there is no clean answer for countries. From Adam Smith (in his *Wealth of Nations*) to modern day Kenneth Rogoff (in his *This Time is Different*), economists are unanimous on the point that there are likely to be "multiple equilibria" points for dangerous debt levels. In the canonical model, if a country's fundamentals are sufficiently strong, it is at no risk of debt crisis, and if the fundamentals are sufficiently weak, it is almost certain to happen. And this, 'weak fundamentals', is precisely where we also need to be careful. Economic Growth – the simplest solution to excessive debts – cannot be conjured up by magic, and often proves stubbornly elusive when it is needed most. And no one knows this better than the Turks. Back in the 2000s, it was

only through concentrating on the 'basics of the economy' by their then Economic/Finance Minister; Kemal Dervis that Ankara was able to pull back from the brink. The sooner we also realise this Economics-101 lesson, the better!

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Economy: Looming Challenges | Dr Kamal Monnoo

Source: <http://nation.com.pk/columns/12-Aug-2015/economy-looming-challenges>

# WOMEN

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## Empowered Women | Naween A. Mangi



It was past 1am in a village in upper Sindh and an entire neighbourhood in a darkened alley was booming with the thumping sound of music on loudspeakers, enthusiastic clapping and cheering. Once you made your way through a narrow street, past a whirring generator, colourful laser lights were dancing on a brick wall and muddy ground — someone's courtyard had been cleared for the night's festivities.

At the front, three charpoys had been covered and converted into a stage above which hung a string of lightsaver bulbs. On one side, two men hired to run the music for the night sat before a sound system. The entire courtyard was crowded with women young and old and scores of children; there was an open invitation to all the women in the village to attend. The occasion: a naming ceremony for a baby boy born to a woman in the village who had lost three children before bearing this one.

Women wore their best dresses – embroidered, flowing clothes, glittering jewellery and their hair loose, decorated with flowers and colourful accessories. In pairs, they



clambered on stage, without a trace of self-consciousness, ordered a song of their choice and began to dance. They appeared no less than professionals; focused, practised and brimming with self-assurance.

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Many cast off sandals and tossed dupattas to girls waiting by the stage. Others crowded around the stage, awaiting their turn or touching up their make-up. Men were not visible anywhere. A few teenage boys from the family joined in the dancing. Other men in the family kept away; they either lay sleeping, sat minding small children or sought refuge at the village tea shop, waiting for the event to end. It didn't end till after 5am. When the hired music men began to wind down, women were still high with excitement, chattering, giggling and singing.

While village women are known to occasionally gather at weddings and sit in a circle playing the dhol and singing traditional songs, a full-on dance party is unexpected. It raises the question of whether rural women are really locked up at home and denied both the ability to take decisions and enjoy any form of fun.

Women across villages in upper Sindh share the same stories. Weddings and birth ceremonies are most enjoyable events and they ensure they don't miss a single one even if it means preparing the evening meal early. It is understood that then they'll dress up and go out after 9pm, and won't be home before dawn. Women also visit the shrines of Sufi saints, heading out in a group and enjoying the outing and spiritual experience. They're also the ones who decide on what level of relations to maintain in the extended family and schedule visits and invitations at their own convenience.

Then, women plan and relish shopping trips in the city, carefully selecting which trunk or bedding they want to buy. While out in the city, they relish a glass of sugarcane juice or a favourite snack. For occasions like Eid, they enjoy choosing new clothes and shoes for everyone at home. Women also control the television, scheduling cooking and feeding around the timing of their favourite drama serials. And they all have mobile phones, keeping in touch with relatives elsewhere and sharing ideas and experiences.

Even when it comes to income generation and savings, women are the controlling authority. They decide whether embroidering traditional caps or making bedcovers and pillows is more profitable; from their own earnings and those handed to them by the men in the family, they participate in savings committees and choose how to use the proceeds. When a child falls sick, women take the decision of where to take them for treatment. Even when it comes to children's education, women often save up or stand in line to ensure their child gets into school.

Men, many of these women say, are just facilitators. They are financial providers. They take decisions when it comes to house repairs or construction. They do the running

around when tasks are pending at government offices. They conduct deals such as the sale of livestock, even though women will usually decide which animal to sell. Of course they still hold authority over women's more extended movements such as those outside the village and decisions relating to whether young women will receive an education, work outside the home or marry out of choice. Plus they arrange the festivals women enjoy.

Times have changed. No longer is the village woman in upper Sindh restricted entirely to the home and relegated to the tasks of running the household. While she also does that, she clearly has plenty of power over vital decisions affecting the family and has found several avenues to have a lot of fun too.

*The writer is a journalist and founder of Ali Hasan Mangi Memorial Trust.*

<http://www.alihasanmangitrust.org>.

Empowered Women | Naweem A. Mangi

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## Pakistan's Growing Gender Gap | Rukhsana Shah



In 2013, Pakistan ranked 135th out of 136 countries in the Global Gender Gap Index Report of the World Economic Forum. In 2014, eight more countries were included in the report, but Pakistan remained second last at 141 out of 142 countries. It is significant that Pakistan ranked at 112 in 2006, the first year of the report, and since then, its position has been steadily deteriorating every year.

Even in the 'Political Empowerment' sub-index of the GGGI report, Pakistan had slipped from 64th place in 2013 to 85th in 2014 due to the weakening of women's position in parliament. In comparison, Bangladesh was at 68th position, while Rwanda and Burundi ranked as seventh and 17th respectively. These three are low-income countries, while Pakistan is rated as a low middle-income country.

The main purpose of the GGGI is to provide a framework for measuring gender-based disparities in different countries and tracking their progress in four key areas: access to economic opportunities, political representation, education facilities and health services. Since the first global gender gap index in 2006, about 80pc of countries have managed

to reduce their gender gaps. On the other hand, there are a few countries that have either made no progress, or are even falling behind their previous rankings.

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In Pakistan, the situation is steadily deteriorating: women remain sidelined from mainstream economic activities mainly due to the dominant religious and patriarchal ideology that continues to confine, subjugate and violate their space despite their having equal rights under the Constitution. The percentage of female employment in the non-agricultural sector in Pakistan was last measured at 13.2pc in 2013 by the World Bank. Needless to say, this percentage is abysmally low. It is also one of the 10 lowest-performing countries on the GGGI sub-index of 'Economic Participation' and one of the three countries with the lowest percentage of firms with female participation in ownership.

Before the 18th Amendment, the ministry of women development, social welfare and special education used to work on issues related to the improvement of women's status in society, and implemented the global agenda of CEDAW (Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women) and the Beijing Platform for Action in conjunction with forums such as the UN Commission on the Status of Women, the Commonwealth, UNIFEM and UNDP. During its existence from 1979 to 2010, the ministry took many initiatives designed to improve women's access to education, health and legal services, and enhance their participation in the political economy of the country.

For example, it was on the recommendations of this ministry that the principle of reservation of seats for women in the National Assembly and the provincial assemblies was revived and their representation ensured in the local bodies. The First Women Bank Ltd was established with the ministry providing credit lines for micro-credit facilities for women to set up bakeries, boutiques, beauty parlours, catering centres, tuition centres, grocery stores, and poultry, dairy and fish farming. Women study centres were established at various universities, while skill development centres, women's polytechnics, computer centres, literacy centres, crisis centres for women in distress, child care centres and working women's hostels were set up in different parts of the country.

Subsequent to devolution, the ministry was dissolved and its functions transferred to the provinces which do not appear to have the capacity or political will to develop an alternative narrative to the rampant obscurantism proliferating throughout the country. The state needs to emerge from its stupor to stop this shameful slide of half of its population into the dark ages, keeping in view not only global requirements, but also its own economic imperatives.

In order to improve outcomes for the women of Pakistan, the government needs to create a new organisational mechanism on the pattern of World Economic Forum's gender parity task forces for Turkey, Japan and Mexico to reduce national gender gaps in three years. These task forces comprise members of the government from the relevant ministries of gender, human rights, law or population welfare in each country, and representatives of private-sector organisations and corporations. This composition allows for greater dialogue between the government and the private sector to discuss the rationale behind reducing gender disparity, developing a common vision and aligning all stakeholders in a well-articulated policy framework, so that realistic targets can be set, strategies chalked out, and benchmarks introduced for mobilisation, accountability and impact.

The recommendations of the Gender Parity Group are available for any country that wishes to improve the status of women in their own national interest. These are based on best practices such as women-focused education and health initiatives, mentoring and training women for high-level professional positions, flexible working hours, salary parity, career planning, etc that can be implemented through government policy, legislation and private-sector support. Top-down approaches towards promoting women's leadership have also been very successful. For example, in Norway, public-listed companies are required to have 40pc women on their boards.

Some top-down policy measures can be taken immediately by the government in Pakistan, such as announcing high job quotas in the civil service, accelerated promotions, nominations to high-profile positions in the public sector, and making it mandatory that women are represented in greater numbers on the boards of private-sector companies, banks, chambers of commerce and industry and other similar institutions. The private sector should also be urged to ensure that women are adequately represented in the employment force, including the supply and distribution chains of manufacturing companies.

These measures, though only skimming the surface, will nevertheless increase women's visibility, generate confidence, create role models and provide increased space for leveraging their access to education and health, the other sub-indices which are critical prerequisites for inclusive and sustainable economic growth.

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# WORLD

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## How Times Change | Shahab Jafry



### IS, a new Middle East, America and Pakistan

In the zero-sum game of Middle East politics, you are either at the table doing the carving, or on it getting carved, Winston Churchill famously said as he divided Allied mandate Arabia into post-colonial nation-states literally with a pen on his hanky. Truer words have not been spoken about this 'zero sum game'. And so it is today.

So much is changing. Talk of US-Iran rapprochement would have sent the state department into a tail spin as recently as George W's administration. The prospect of reducing the al Saud to second-fiddle in the Middle East – unravelling the Kingdom's oil muscle and, subsequently, its notorious *Riyal Politik* – too seemed far-fetched. But nobody, from Washington to Tel Aviv, would have imagined the spat that came about between Bibi and Barak. This is clearly anything but the Middle East where the Shi'a Iran-Syria-Hezbollah resistance backed Sunni, Muslim Brotherhood offshoot Hamas in its war against Israel, Washington considered Tehran a part of Bush's "axis of evil", Egypt made war and Syria made peace in the region like the old days, and Israel was America's unquestionable blue-eyed.

Suddenly, alliances and structures enduring since the Great War are breaking down. Sykes-Picot is unravelling. Iran and America have reached an understanding. GCC – the Wahabi stretch, particularly Saudi Arabia, that made a business out of leveraging mullah militias for foreign policy penetration – is no longer the favoured client, despite its oil wealth. And Israel does not enjoy the patronage it used to.

The strain first appeared shortly before Obama's visit to Riyadh last year. If you believe certain sidelined sections of the Arab press, the White House, without warning, furnished Saudi Arabia with a 'Syria dossier', which detailed the kingdom's financial and political patronage to radical Islamist militias fighting to unseat the Assad regime in Damascus. The support was supposed to be restricted to the Free Syrian Army (FSA) – a group of secular Syrian activists that Washington approved of. But it was found, upon closer CIA investigation, that petro dollars were being channelled towards more radical groups that later came to be known as Jabhat al-Nusra, the Syrian al Qaeda franchise, and IS, the so called caliphate that drew America once more to the war in Iraq.

By then Washington had also begun parleying with Tehran, much to Riyadh's, and Tel Aviv's, apprehension. Yet by mid '13, when the Syrian civil war was in full swing and talk of formal US-Iran talks was gathering pace, analysts and journalists from the Gulf to the Levant to Israel refused to acknowledge a convergence of interests between the House of Saud and Israel's far right leadership.

***The strain first appeared shortly before Obama's visit to Riyadh last year. If you believe certain sidelined sections of the Arab press, the White House, without warning, furnished Saudi Arabia with a 'Syria dossier', which detailed the kingdom's financial and political patronage to radical Islamist militias fighting to unseat the Assad regime in Damascus***

A hint, of sorts, appeared when Khaled Mashal decamped from Damascus. With the Brotherhood (then) entrenched in Cairo, and Assad seemingly on way to meeting a fate similar to Gaddafi's, Hamas bet on the opposition and relocated to Qatar, but only to discover that GCC encouraged nothing beyond maintaining the status quo vis-à-vis Israel. How Mashal then went from Doha to Cairo, then back to Doha, then decided to flee to Tunis – where Arafat sailed off to too, with little success, after being booted out of Beirut – and then knocked at Iran's door again, would be unbelievable anywhere but in the Middle East.

Now, though, Iran has clearly come out the winner. The US-Saudi romance is over – there is talk that Washington might even consider Tehran its now oil partner, as opposed to the al Saud whose obsession with Wahabi sectarianism across the Muslim world no longer suits American interests. And Israel no longer commands the pat on the back that it used to.

It is no coincidence, of course, that this de-escalation coincided with the emergence of Da'ish. The Americans long sided with the Saudi narrative regarding the Syrian civil war. But now they seem to have realised that they have a more trustworthy, and natural,

partner in this war in Iran. They were the first to act against Saudi influence in Syria; even when Turkey, GCC, EU, NATO, and the US, were backing Riyadh. But now that Da'ish has taken over large swathes of land in both Iraq and Syria, and seem unfazed by constant US drone bombardment, surely Washington realises that its real partners in this war lie at the other end of its traditional spectrum.

And that, strangely, puts Pakistan in a very awkward position; a long border with Iran but long an ally of Saudi Arabia, to the extent that we allowed their *madrassa* policy to long outlast the Afghan war, even as Wahabi sectarianism, typical of Saudi outreach, led to a planned genocide of the minority Shi'a. It also ruled out any meaningful economic cooperation with Iran. Even the Iran-Pakistan pipeline, which would have gone a long way in addressing our energy shortage, was not important enough to upset the old arrangement.

But a new opportunity presents itself with Iran back in the international fold at a time when Pakistan is fighting its own existential war against terrorism. The Taliban, al Qaeda and Da'ish threats at our gate originate from the Wahabi petro wealth that Riyadh learnt to use so well in the days of the Soviet war, when Pakistan facilitated the so called jihad against infidels. Now, some powers that helped with that arrangement, in a different time and in a different setting, and those that opposed them throughout, have come to an understanding about the need to finally eliminate it. We, too, have played with proxies since that war of the '80s, and only cast them aside when they had eaten into too much of the state and society.

How Pakistan really responds to this tectonic shift remains to be seen. It could, once again, bury its head in the sand and hang on to the old ways. That would mean fighting terrorism while supporting its sponsors, even as the world leaves them behind. Or it could embrace the international political modification that is so close to its door. That would bring in economic benefits; oil, electricity and the advantages of Iran's fabled *bazaar*. And it could bring political dividends, like the aid of a genuine partner in the war against terror.

How Times Change | Shahab Jafry

Source: <http://www.pakistantoday.com.pk/2015/08/01/features/how-times-change/>



## Iranian Nuclear Deal and Pakistan | Javid Husain



The historic deal concluded between Iran and the major world powers at Vienna on 14 July boils down essentially to a simple bargain between the two sides: in return for the lifting of sanctions by the UN and the West, Iran has accepted stringent restrictions on its nuclear programme to ensure that it is not used for the development of nuclear weapons. Once Iran has fulfilled its obligations under the deal, all nuclear-related sanctions against it, whether imposed by the UN Security Council or the world powers like the US and EU, would be lifted in a specified manner. The lifting of these sanctions would have the effect of reopening the Iranian economy to international trade and finance, thus providing it a major boost. Besides the reintegration of Iran with the global economy, the deal would have far reaching repercussions on regional and global politics. Pakistan must take note of these repercussions to safeguard its own national interests.

To recapitulate briefly, the deal would reduce Iran's capacity to enrich uranium by two-thirds through the reduction of first generation centrifuges from 19138 to 6104 at Natanz

for ten years. The advanced centrifuges at the underground Fordow facility, numbering 1034, will be placed in IAEA-monitored storage. The facility will be converted into a physics research laboratory open to international collaboration. Iran will cut its stockpile of low-enriched uranium from 19,211 lbs to 660 lbs for 15 years.

The stockpile of medium-enriched uranium would be totally eliminated for the same period. The heavy-water reactor at Araq would be redesigned so as not to produce weapon-grade plutonium. No new heavy-water reactor would be built for 15 years. The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) will have free access to Iran's nuclear sites, and in some cases even to military facilities, to verify and ensure Iran's compliance with these restrictions.

The sanctions will be lifted in a phased manner, when Iran makes good on its commitments. The process of the lifting of economic sanctions will begin as soon as IAEA can confirm Iran's compliance with its obligations under the nuclear deal. Consequently, the nuclear-related economic sanctions against Iran's financial and energy sectors may be lifted later this year or early next year. The ban on the sale of conventional offensive weapons to Iran would end in 2020. The embargo on the supply of ballistic missile components and technologies to Iran would come to an end in 2023.

The UN Security Council passed a resolution on 20 July enabling the lifting of UN sanctions against Iran subject to its compliance with its commitments under the nuclear deal. However, the UN arms embargo against Iran will continue till 2020. The European Union also on the same day took a similar decision to put in motion its own process for the lifting of its sanctions against Iran including those relating to the purchase of oil from and financial dealings with Iran. The deal has also been separately submitted by the US administration for review by the Congress which has a period of 60 days starting from 20 July to support or reject it. In view of President Obama's threat to veto a rejection by the Congress, it is almost certain that the deal will go through the US approval process despite the strong opposition by the Republicans. As for Iran, the expectation is that the deal would not face any insurmountable hurdle in the way of its approval by the Majlis, despite some criticism by ultraconservatives, because of the support by the Iranian Supreme Leader Khamenei and the enthusiastic welcome by the general public.

By the end of this year or certainly by the beginning of the next year, Iran would be free of the onerous financial and oil related sanctions which have crippled its economy. Iran would be able to increase its oil and gas exports substantially with consequential beneficial effects on its economy. The end of financial sanctions would facilitate its foreign exchange transactions and enable its reintegration with the global economy. The implementation of the deal would also enable Iran to have access to billions of dollars of its assets which had been frozen because of the US and EU sanctions. The Iranian nuclear deal would also have the side effect of confirming the right of non-nuclear weapon states under the NPT to enrich uranium under the IAEA safeguards, a right which had hitherto been questioned by the nuclear-weapon states.

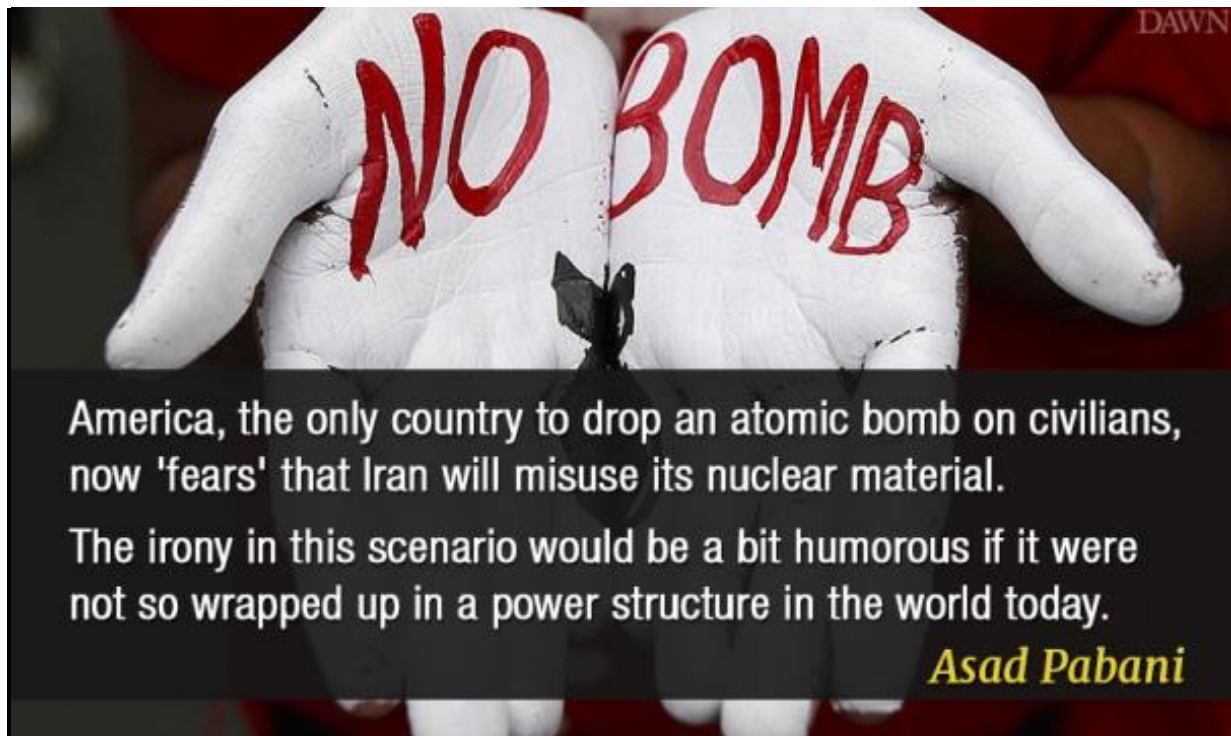
But it must be noted that terrorism and human rights related sanctions against Iran, especially those imposed by the US, would remain in place. Consequently, US trade and investment ties with Iran will remain under considerable constraints. Even otherwise the fundamental contradictions between the US and Iranian strategic interests like those concerning Israel, Palestine, Syria and the US hegemonic military presence in the Persian Gulf region would continue to cast their negative repercussions on Iran-US relations.

As expected, Israel under PM Benjamin Netanyahu has severely criticized the Iranian nuclear deal calling it a “historic mistake”. Saudi Arabia and its GCC allies, while publicly welcoming the nuclear deal, have privately voiced concerns that it would embolden Iran in meddling in Iraq, Syria, Lebanon and Yemen while enabling it to develop nuclear weapons in the long run. US Defense Secretary Ashton Carter’s visit to Saudi Arabia on 22 July was aimed at allaying these concerns. En route to the Middle East, he emphasized that the deal did not mean that the military option was off the table if it became unavoidable for preventing Iran from obtaining the atomic bomb.

The Iranian nuclear deal offers attractive opportunities to Pakistan while posing serious challenges for its diplomacy. The lifting of economic sanctions against Iran should enable us to expedite the completion of the Iran-Pakistan gas pipeline project which would play an important role in meeting our rapidly growing gas requirements. Iran can also re-emerge as a significant supplier of oil to Pakistan. The Iranian market can become an important destination for our exports of such items as textiles, rice, wheat and fruit. For Iran, the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) would provide an easy access to markets in China’s western provinces. The forthcoming visit of the Iranian Commerce Minister to Pakistan should enable the two sides to take full advantage of the emerging trade and investment opportunities following the Iranian nuclear deal. Ministerial and senior official level visits to Iran should be planned from our side also to develop mutually beneficial economic and commercial cooperation between the two countries both bilaterally and within the framework of ECO.

On the political side, the nuclear deal would enable Iran to play a more effective role in the handling of regional and global issues. In view of the close link between the security of Pakistan and Iran, we should engage Iran in close consultations on such issues as cross-border security, facilitation of the peace process in Afghanistan, and the security situation in the Persian Gulf region. Mutual understanding and coordination between Pakistan and Iran on these issues will serve to strengthen the security of the two countries. Above all, we should avoid repeating the mistakes of 1990’s in dealing with the Afghanistan situation, which prolonged the armed conflict in Afghanistan and damaged Pakistan-Iran relations. In view of our close friendly ties with both Saudi Arabia and Iran, we should play a proactive role in promoting mutual understanding between the two brotherly countries. The situation in the Persian Gulf region calls for mutual restraint and accommodation among the regional countries and a forum for discussing security-related issues and peaceful settlement of disputes.

## Hiroshima 70 years on — The irony behind America's refusal to apologise



Exactly 70 years ago, on August 6, 1945, at 08:15, a United States Air Force B-29 Superfortress bomber, Enola Gay, dropped a 16 kiloton atomic bomb nicknamed “Fat Boy” on the city of Hiroshima in Japan.

Unlike most bombing campaigns, Fat Boy was not targeting any sensitive industrial or military infrastructure. Instead, it was dropped near the geographical centre of the city with the deliberate aim to maximise Japanese civilian casualties.

In that it was successful; at least 70,000 perished almost instantaneously, being obliterated by the detonation or burning to death in the fires that raged afterwards, while thousands more perished in the weeks after the bomb due to the lingering effects of radiation poisoning.

By the end of 1945, the death toll had risen to about 140,000 and Hiroshima, and later Nagasaki, once-modestly sized towns, were reduced to rubble and destined to be haunted by irregular levels of radiation for decades to come.

Yet, 70 years later, there is still no apology from the United States for this horrific, indiscriminate attack on civilian life.

The United States President at the time, Harry S. Truman, [preferred to label the bomb](#) as a “marvel” and an “achievement of scientific brains” and considered the bombing as nothing more than a repayment of debt for the Japanese attack on a military facility at Pearl Harbor.

Another more recent US President, George H.W. Bush, [stated quite bluntly](#) in 1991, “No apology is required, and it will not be asked of this President, I can guarantee you.”

Even the supposedly revolutionary President, Barack Obama, has yet to give a formal apology for the bombings.

Instead, a brief glance at the politics surrounding the Iran nuclear deal today, seven decades after the atomic decimation of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, reveals a case of bitter irony – a situation where the United States, the only country in the world to have ever used an atomic bomb on a civilian population, is trying to bully Iran into not developing nuclear weapons, the rationale being that Iran could potentially use such a bomb on civilians.

The irony in this scenario would be a bit humorous if it were not so wrapped up in a power structure in the world today, where possession of nuclear weapons is a privilege allowed only to a select few countries which benefit from the prestige and defence offered by them.

These countries are the bullies of international security, the self-appointed protectors of the world by virtue of their capability to cause immense harm to others, and the US, with its supremely sophisticated nuclear arsenal, is the undisputed leader and bully-in-chief of this group of countries.

And so, as the world marks the 70th anniversary of the bombing of Hiroshima, the US juggernaut rolls on; the country that invented, used and advanced the threat of nuclear weapons is still somehow being allowed to dictate the moral guidelines on the possession and use of nuclear energy by other lesser, supposedly “evil” nations.

Maybe the irony is worth a chuckle after all.

Hiroshima 70 years on — The irony behind America’s refusal to apologise By [ASAD PABANI](#)

Source: <http://www.dawn.com/news/1198777/>

## The “New Thirty Years War” in the Middle East: A Western Policy of Chaos? | Steven MacMillan



*The Middle East has been in a state of chaos for years now, with each passing year bringing a new wave of instability, carnage and human suffering to the people of the region. From Afghanistan to Iraq, Libya to Syria, Western foreign policy has directly caused or exacerbated much of the chaos we see in the region today and has contributed to a growing trend of instability.*

A pertinent question of our time however is whether this instability and destabilization is a result of inept strategy by Western nations, or a calculated strategy by the West to intentionally create chaos, balkanize nations and increase sectarian tensions in the region?

### **The “New Thirty Years War”**

Certain individuals within the US establishment have been drawing the comparison between the Middle East today and the Thirty Years War in Europe in the 17th century, with [Prof. Larry Goodson](#) of the US Army War College being one of the latest individuals to make the comparison. Even though the parallels between Europe and the Middle

East are by no means exact, it has become somewhat of a talking point within Western geostrategic circles.

The Thirty Years War is a complex historical period, pertaining to numerous wars and conflicts fought by an array of power blocs for a variety of reasons. According to the [Encyclopædia Britannica](#): “Although the struggles that created it erupted some years earlier, the [war](#) is conventionally held to have begun in 1618, when the future Holy [Roman](#) emperor [Ferdinand II](#), in his role as king of [Bohemia](#), attempted to impose Roman Catholic absolutism on his domains, and the [Protestant](#) nobles of both Bohemia and [Austria](#) rose up in rebellion.”

The war quickly spread to embroil the majority of Europe’s major powers who either believed there was an opportunity to conquer neighbouring powers or were drawn into the conflict by a force invading their lands, and is regarded by historians as one of the most destructive periods in European history. Villages, towns and cities were raped and pillaged by mercenaries who were fighting for different power blocs, devastating the European continent.

The Thirty Years War was brought to an end when a series of treaties was signed in 1648 known as the Peace of Westphalia, establishing a new political order in Europe in the form of co-existing sovereign states (although some historians dispute the significance of Westphalian sovereignty). James Bissett, the former Canadian Ambassador to Yugoslavia, Bulgaria and Albania, described the Westphalian system in a [2007](#) speech as laying “down the basic tenets of sovereignty—the principle of territorial integrity and of non-interference in the affairs of national states... The Westphalian order has frequently been violated, but age has not diminished the principles themselves.”

In July of 2014, the former director of policy planning for the US Department of State and the President of the Council on Foreign Relations (CFR), Richard Hass, compared the Middle East of today to 17th century Europe, in his article “[The New Thirty Years War](#)”. Hass proclaims that the Middle East will likely be as turbulent in the future unless a “new local order emerges”:

*For now and for the foreseeable future – until a new local order emerges or exhaustion sets in – the Middle East will be less a problem to be solved than a condition to be managed.*

*As I reported a year ago, this “new local order” may be in the form of a [Middle Eastern Union](#).*

## Fragmenting the Middle East

Ubiquitous evidence indicates that there is an agenda by at least some strategists within the US to destroy the nation state and balkanize the region into feuding rump states, micro-states and mini-states, which will be so weak and busy fighting each other that

they will be unable to unify against foreign colonial powers – most notably Western multinational corporations. After a prolonged period of destruction and chaos in the region, the people of the Middle East may be so weary of the horrors of war that they will accept a Western imposed order as a means of ending the fighting, even though the very same Western forces have been responsible for creating much of the intolerable chaos.

The strategy of balkanization can be traced back to at least the early 1990's, when British-American historian Bernard Lewis wrote an article published in the 1992 issue of the CFR's publication, 'Foreign Affairs', titled: [Rethinking the Middle East](#). He envisages the potential of the region disintegrating "into a chaos of squabbling, feuding, fighting sects, tribes, regions and parties." Even though Lewis writes in his article that this is only one "possibility" of many other possibilities, it is starkly similar to the situation that we see in countries such as Iraq and Libya today:

*Another possibility, which could even be precipitated by fundamentalism, is what has of late become fashionable to call "Lebanonization." Most of the states of the Middle East—Egypt is an obvious exception—are of recent and artificial construction and are vulnerable to such a process. If the central power is sufficiently weakened, there is no real civil society to hold the polity together, no real sense of common national identity or overriding allegiance to the nation state.*

Lewis continues:

*The state then disintegrates—as happened in Lebanon—into a chaos of squabbling, feuding, fighting sects, tribes, regions and parties. If things go badly and central governments falter and collapse, the same could happen, not only in the countries of the existing Middle East, but also in the newly independent Soviet republics, where the artificial frontiers drawn by the former imperial masters left each republic with a mosaic of minorities and claims of one sort or another on or by its neighbours.*

Speaking at the Ford School in 2013, former US secretary of state and CFR member, Henry Kissinger, reveals his desire to see Syria balkanized into "more or less autonomous regions", in addition to comparing the region to the "Thirty Years War" in Europe:

*There are three possible outcomes. An Assad victory. A Sunni victory. Or an outcome in which the various nationalities agree to co-exist together but in more or less autonomous regions, so that they can't oppress each other. That's the outcome I would prefer to see. But that's not the popular view.... I also think Assad ought to go, but I don't think it's the key. The key is; it's like Europe after the Thirty Years War, when the various Christian groups had been killing each other until they finally decided that they had to live together but in separate units. ([from 27.35 into the interview](#)).*

### **Creating a "Salafist Principality" in Syria**



In May of this year, Judicial Watch released a series of formerly classified documents from the US Department of Defense and Department of State after the watchdog group filed a Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) lawsuit against the two government agencies. One important document contained in the release was a 2012 Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA) report which reveals that the powers supporting the Syrian opposition – “Western countries, the Gulf states and Turkey” – wanted to create a “Salafist principality in Eastern Syria in order to isolate the Syrian regime”:

*Opposition forces are trying to control the Eastern areas (Hasaka and Der Zor), adjacent to the Western Iraqi provinces (Mosul and Anbar), in addition to neighbouring Turkish borders. Western countries, the Gulf states and Turkey are supporting these efforts... If the situation unravels there is the possibility of establishing a declared or undeclared Salafist principality in Eastern Syria (Hasaka and Der Zor), and this is exactly what the supporting powers to the opposition want, in order to isolate the Syrian regime, which is considered the strategic depth of the Shia expansion (Iraq and Iran). (p.5)*

The document adds:

*ISI [the Islamic State of Iraq] could also declare an Islamic State through its union with other terrorist organisations in Iraq and Syria. (p.5)*

### **Balkanizing Iraq**

Fragmenting Iraq into three separate regions has been the goal of many within the US establishment since the 2003 invasion of the country, although NATO member Turkey has vocally opposed the creation of a Kurdish state in the North. In 2006, a potential map of a future Middle East was released by [Lieutenant-Colonel Ralph Peters](#) which depicted Iraq divided into three regions: a Sunni Iraq to the West, an Arab Shia State in the East and a Free Kurdistan in the North.

Even though the map does not reflect official Pentagon doctrine, it gives a glimpse into the minds of some of the top military strategists and corroborates with many other Western voices on the strategy for Iraq. As geopolitical analyst [Eric Draitser](#) noted in a recent article for New Eastern Outlook, the President Emeritus of the CFR, Leslie Gelb, argued in a 2003 article for the [NY Times](#) that the most feasible outcome in Iraq would be a “three-state solution: Kurds in the north, Sunnis in the center and Shiites in the south.”

Syria is shown as still being a unified country in the above map, although this may be because the Syrian proxy war did not begin until years later. Israel could also come to occupy more territory in the coming decades.

### **Different Country, Same Strategy**

The same pattern of balkanization and chaos that we see in Iraq and Syria is also true in Libya. Following the NATO’s 2011 war in the North African nation, the country descended into an abyss of chaos and has essentially been split into three parts, with Cyrenaica comprising the East of the country, and the West split into Tripolitania in

the Northwest and Fezzan in the Southwest. Libya is now a [failed state](#) which is devoid of central government and is stricken by tribal warfare, where rival militias who were once fighting alongside each other are now battling against one another.

The Iranian nuclear deal could mark a new beginning for Western geopolitical strategy in the Middle East, where they would work with regional powers to promote stability and refrain from military intervention (or intervention through proxies). Let's hope this is true, and the West will halt the plethora of destabilization programs it has engaged in for years.

But the most probable scenario will be a continuation of the balkanization strategy that we have all come to expect; until a "new local order emerges" – an order that will be designed by, and for, Western interests of course.

The "New Thirty Years War" in the Middle East: A Western Policy of Chaos? | Steven MacMillan.

**Steven MacMillan** is an independent writer, researcher, geopolitical analyst and editor of [The Analyst Report](#), especially for the online magazine ["New Eastern Outlook"](#).

Source: <http://www.globalresearch.ca/the-new-thirty-years-war-in-the-middle-east-a-western-policy-of-chaos/5469351>

## NPT Role in Non-Proliferation | Beenish Altaf



The indefinite extension of the NPT in 1995 represents the strong will of the majority of signatory states to work on creating a non-proliferation regime that makes the cost of non-compliance high enough to deter potential violators. Since then, the NPT has been the most adhered to arms control arrangement up until recently. Signatories recently met at the 2015 NPT Review Conference (RevCon) to strengthen the non-proliferation regime, but could not come to an agreement. The question of why the 2015 RevCon could not produce a workable concrete document for the adherence to nuclear non-proliferation regime will be taken into account in this op-ed.

Reasons for disagreement over the final document Andrey Baklitsky narrates the reasons for the NPT Rev Con's failure to produce any final document in his article titled "The 2015 NPT Review Conference and the Future of the Nonproliferation Regime." (1) Concluding the NPT RevCon without an agreement is nothing unusual. Since 1970 – when the treaty entered into force – the parties could not reach a multilateral consensus at four of the last nine RevCons: 1980, 1990, 2005, and 2015. Indeed, this is a poor record for a treaty that is considered to be a universal treaty. The conclusion of 2015 NPT RevCon is assessed to be disappointing because it could not wrap-up into a final document especially in the field of non-proliferation. On the other hand, even though the implementation is still debatable, the 2000 and 2010 review conferences are considered to be successful as they agreed on two concrete documents: 13 "practical steps" and the 64-point action plan RevCon in 2000 and 2010 NPT respectively.

(2) Since 1985, the outcome of NPT review conferences has not been changed much. The world order changed from the bipolar world and also a few countries got

nuclearized by conducting their nuclear weapon tests, i.e., Pakistan, India and North Korea but the focus of attention of the NPT RevCon remained on the Article VI of the treaty related to disarmament. On the other hand the blazing issue of the creation of a Nuclear Weapons Free Zone (NWFZ) in the Middle East debated a lot in the 2015 NPT review Conference remained a subject of concern back from 1974.

(3) It is evaluated in the NPT RevCon that both countries, Russia and the US still criticize each other over the suspected disobedience with the international agreements despite of implementing few arms control agreements still, e.g., the New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty and the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty. There is another positive sign that Moscow and Washington also continue to work together in the P5 process.

Talking about the disarmament initiative, the contemporary situation of Russia and the US initiatives was assessed. The point of concern is Russia's apprehensions on the reduction of nuclear warheads from their countries to 1000 warheads apiece. Since it is the strategic stability in between both countries, a precondition to reduce or cut down the number of nuclear warheads, Russia apprehends that the US is violating or undermining it by developing prompt global-strike systems, expanding its ballistic missile defence and opposing the draft treaty banning weapons in outer space. So, for initiating the disarmament talks again whether bilateral or multilateral, one needs to deal with it through new inter-governmental dynamics or by use of a creative diplomacy; this would positively add on from the non-proliferation perspective too.

Lack of consensus at the NPT review conference is hardly new, but the willingness to cooperate or reconcile differences and find consensus is fading. As a result, states that cannot find satisfaction from this forum are beginning to look towards other alternatives to fulfill their disarmament and non-proliferation demands. There have been suggestions to shift non-proliferation discussions that make decisions by majority instead of consensus, such as the United Nation General Assembly or another ad hoc body. Leaving the outcome aside as if whether such a move results in the desired change or not, it would definitely weaken the NPT review process and consequently the nonproliferation regime itself.

Despite any short-comings of the 2015 review conference, no other nuclear disarmament arrangement has made substantial progress in restraining the proliferation of nuclear weapons. Progress over the next five years and at the next NPT RevCon will be crucial for the permanence of this vital piece of international law.

— The writer works for Strategic Vision Institute, Islamabad.

NPT Role in Non-Proliferation | Beenish Altaf

Source: <http://pakobserver.net/detailnews.asp?id=270846>

## Modi Steps into Pakistan-UAE Breach



NEW DELHI: Has Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi stepped into the recent breach between Pakistan and the United Arab Emirates over Islamabad's refusal to actively join the Yemen war against the Houthi fighters?

Indian media was clear that Mr Modi, on the last day of a two-day visit to Abu Dhabi and Dubai on Monday, made veiled but unmistakable references to Pakistan, particularly in the context of terrorism, during a large public address to the Indian community.

"I am sure those that are being discussed here know it's about them," he said at the Dubai cricket stadium to loud applause. A joint statement between the two countries has a few pointers to the implicit Pakistan angle.

He mentioned every South Asian country, from Afghanistan to Bangladesh, as a partner in India's progress, saying: "Those who do not wish to join us can choose their own destiny."

The first prime ministerial visit from India "after 34 years marks the beginning of a new and comprehensive strategic partnership between India and UAE in a world of multiple transitions and changing opportunities and challenges," the statement said.

The joint statement spoke of an extensive framework of agreements, including economic, defence, security, law enforcement, culture, consular and people-to-people contacts constitute solid bedrock for elevating bilateral cooperation across the full spectrum of our relationship.

“The two nations reject extremism and any link between religion and terrorism. They condemn efforts, including by states, to use religion to justify, support and sponsor terrorism against other countries,” the statement said. “They also deplore efforts by countries to give religious and sectarian colour to political issues and disputes, including in West and South Asia, and use terrorism to pursue their aims.” Only in April this year, as Pakistani lawmakers called for the government to remain neutral in the crisis in Yemen, they evoked a strong response from the United Arab Emirates.

“The vague and contradictory stands of Pakistan and Turkey are an absolute proof that Arab security — from Libya to Yemen — is the responsibility of none but Arab countries,” UAE’s Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Dr Anwar Mohammed Gargash said at the time. References that might have once applied to ties with Pakistan were replete with India in Monday’s statement. It said: “Proximity, history, cultural affinity, strong links between people, natural synergies, shared aspirations and common challenges create boundless potential for a natural strategic partnership between India and UAE.

“Yet, in the past, relations between the two governments have not kept pace with the exponential growth in relations between their people or the promise of this partnership. However, the need for a close strategic partnership between UAE and India has never been stronger or more urgent, and its prospects more rewarding, than in these uncertain times.”

Several references to terrorism and related issues that India usually applies to Pakistan featured in the joint statement.

The two would “coordinate efforts to counter radicalisation and misuse of religion by groups and countries for inciting hatred, perpetrating and justifying terrorism or pursuing political aims. The two sides will facilitate regular exchanges of religious scholars and intellectuals and organise conferences and seminars to promote the values of peace, tolerance, inclusiveness and welfare that is inherent in all religions.”

Most significantly perhaps, they denounced and opposed “terrorism in all forms and manifestations, wherever committed and by whomever, calling on all states to reject and abandon the use of terrorism against other countries, dismantle terrorism infrastructures where they exist, and bring perpetrators of terrorism to justice.”

India and the UAE will enhance cooperation in counter-terrorism operations, intelligence sharing and capacity building. They plan to work together for the adoption of India’s proposed Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism in the United Nations.

With implications for the underworld, they would come “together to control, regulate and share information on flow of funds that could have a bearing on radicalisation activities and cooperate in interdicting illegal flows and take action against concerned individuals and organisations.”

They plan to strengthen cooperation in “law enforcement, anti-money laundering, drug trafficking, other trans-national crimes, extradition arrangements, as well as police training.”

Indian newspapers say they have not been able to find any other reason for Mr Modi’s sudden rush to the UAE.

Modi Steps into Pakistan-UAE Breach

*Published in Dawn, August 18th, 2015*

## Nuclear tensions rising in South Asia | Jawad Iqbal



The time, attention and effort devoted to reaching a deal with Iran over its nuclear ambitions has unwittingly tended to obscure the growing dangers of nuclear proliferation elsewhere in the world.

South Asia, a volatile and unstable region, has been witnessing an escalation in military and nuclear rivalry, somewhat overshadowed by the understandable fears of a nuclear arms race in the Middle East.

This part of the world, according to analysts, is fast becoming a race for nuclear supremacy between three powers – India, Pakistan and China (while technically not classified as South Asia, the country shares borders with both India and Pakistan). This rivalry in the eyes of many analysts is dangerous in itself but is made even more complex by the mutual suspicions and historical enmities that bedevil the region.

First, take Pakistan. The country is plagued by economic and political insecurity but is locked in a fight for military bragging rights with India. The country is believed to have one of the world's fastest growing nuclear arsenals. A [recent report](#) indicated that it had tripled the number of warheads it had a decade ago.

*China's nuclear strength is a worry to India, as is its more advanced strategic weapons and its numerically superior military force*



Nuclear strength is a political and military strategy in the eyes of the Pakistani governing class, a way of countering India's political and military clout. Pakistan has no official nuclear doctrine, but official communiques speak of "restraint" and "deterrence".

The Pakistan government recently approved [the purchase of eight submarines from China](#). It is not clear from reports whether they have the capacity to be equipped with nuclear missiles. The deal, said to be worth billions, is one of China's biggest arms deals. It also threatens to intensify a growing battle for military supremacy in the Indian Ocean, a stretch of sea that has long been a source of rivalry and tensions in the region.

The reported deal sheds light on one other area of conflict and rivalry. China has long been one of Pakistan's main arms suppliers, accounting for half of Pakistani weapons imports, according to a report published by the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute.

China and Pakistan have been close for decades, based largely on their mutual suspicion of India.



China is one of Pakistan's main suppliers of weapons

In other developments, the Pakistanis are [reported to have test-fired a missile](#) recently that appears capable of carrying a nuclear warhead. Pakistan possesses the medium-range Shaheen-III missile with a range of some 1,700 miles, leaving India easily within range. A recent [leader article in the New York Times](#) reported claims that Pakistan

continues to develop short-range tactical nuclear weapons. Again, leaving India well within range.

No-one should underestimate the rivalry between the two countries, informed by their troubled history, which includes outright wars in 1947, 1965 and 1971.

*The fierce nuclear competition in South Asia is seen by many as a recipe for instability in a region already burdened with problems*

India is estimated by analysts to have some 110 warheads but continues to expand its nuclear programme but at a slower pace, according to some reports. The country has a mixed strategy, combining short and long-range ballistic missiles, nuclear submarines and cruise missiles. It tested its first nuclear device in 1974.

India has a No First Use doctrine, recently confirmed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Security is a key part of India's nuclear strategy. China's nuclear strength is a worry to India, as is its more advanced strategic weapons and its numerically superior military force. Also a worry is the traditionally close relationship between China and Pakistan, India's erstwhile enemy.

Informed analysis estimates that [China's nuclear weapons number some 250 warheads](#) – a mixture of short, intermediate, and long-range ballistic missiles. China's ambitions encompass land, air and sea-based nuclear delivery systems.

China's nuclear ambitions took off in the 1950s, in the wake of the Korean War. Its first nuclear test is believed to have been conducted in 1964. It is a view among informed commentators that the country's nuclear capability will continue to grow in the coming years. China has always maintained that its own No First Use policy is defensive. The country is a signatory to the Non-Proliferation Treaty, the NPT. It is also a signatory to the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) but has yet to ratify it.

The fierce nuclear competition in South Asia is seen by many as a recipe for instability in a region already burdened with problems.



Narendra Modi recently confirmed India's No First Use doctrine

It is a potentially lethal addition to the cocktail of territorial disputes and cross-border terrorism. The capacity of other world powers to influence the situation is hampered by the fact that neither India nor Pakistan belong to the NPT.

Pakistan's economic and political instability also poses huge and troubling questions. The country is persistently challenged by militant groups and fears persist that these groups could get their hands on nuclear materials, despite strong insistence from Pakistani officials that its nuclear facilities are secure.

America and Russia still possess more than 90% of the world's nuclear weapons but South Asia, home to three nuclear states, remains a growing worry, perhaps one that will get more attention in the coming months.

Nuclear tensions rising in South Asia | Jawad Iqbal.

Source: <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-south-asia-32289368>

## UN and OIC can resolve Kashmir dispute & Middle East challenges: Maleeha Lodhi



Ambassador Maleeha Lodhi told the Security Council that the OIC in cooperation with the UN has the capability to deal with the longstanding dispute of Kashmir and address the Middle East's current security challenges.

Speaking in the Security Council debate on “Regional Organizations and Contemporary Challenges of Global Security”, Pakistan's Permanent Representative said that OIC is also capable of promoting global peace and security. Underlining its unique character she said the organisation includes 57 UN member states and spans four continents that today confront imposing security challenges.

Pakistan's UN envoy told the 15-member Council that while some regional organizations had proved their worth while others, like the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), had much potential but have yet to fulfill that promise. SAARC, she pointed, has been “constrained because of the deep differences among its members and attempts to utilize it for regional domination.”

Focusing on the need to address the root causes of conflict around the world, Ambassador Lodhi called upon the UN to actively promote cooperation with the OIC in areas such as mediation and conciliation of disputes; peacekeeping and peace building; humanitarian assistance, especially to refugees and displaced people.

Ambassador Maleeha Lodhi said that the Council was meeting at a time of unprecedented and complex global and regional challenges. “Large parts of the Middle East are in flames, afflicted by multiple inter and intra state conflicts, the spread of terrorism, external intervention and power struggles, and massive human dislocation and suffering”.

Ambassador Lodhi also said that confrontation between the major powers had returned to Europe and threatened to encompass Asia. “Poverty stalks Africa and persists in South Asia”, she added.

She warned the Security Council that the global threats to peace and world order were multiplying from diverse sources, including climate change, poverty, unemployment, water scarcity, record number of refugees and forced migrants, and the gross violations of human rights.

But, Ambassador Maleeha Lodhi declared, “this is also a time of opportunity”. She said that an interconnected and interdependent world possesses the financial, scientific and organizational capabilities to address these imposing and myriad challenges. “What is needed is political will, especially among key global and regional powers, to utilize these capabilities effectively and cooperatively”. She urged leading global regional powers to rise above their narrow interests and competing agendas.”

Source: <http://www.pakistantoday.com.pk/2015/08/19/foreign/un-and-oic-can-resolve-kashmir-dispute-middle-east-challenges-maleeha-lodhi/>

## Is The Global Warming ‘Hiatus’ Over? | Kevin Trenberth



There are many ongoing signs that the planet is heating up, even “on fire.”

In the western region of North America, the prolonged drought has led to high temperatures and many [wildfires](#), from Canada and the Northwest earlier this summer to California more recently. The Pacific is very active with hurricanes, typhoons and tropical cyclones, and with several damaging hits in Japan, China and Taiwan, in particular. So far, by contrast, the Atlantic tropical storm season is [quiet](#).

Globally, surface temperatures have been setting record high values (see figure below). US temperatures this year are well above normal as a whole, running [1.7 Fahrenheit above the 20th-century average](#) (through July; the 10th highest on record). However, precipitation has been well above average in much of the country outside of the West, making temperatures lower than they otherwise would have been (owing to more cloud and evaporative cooling).

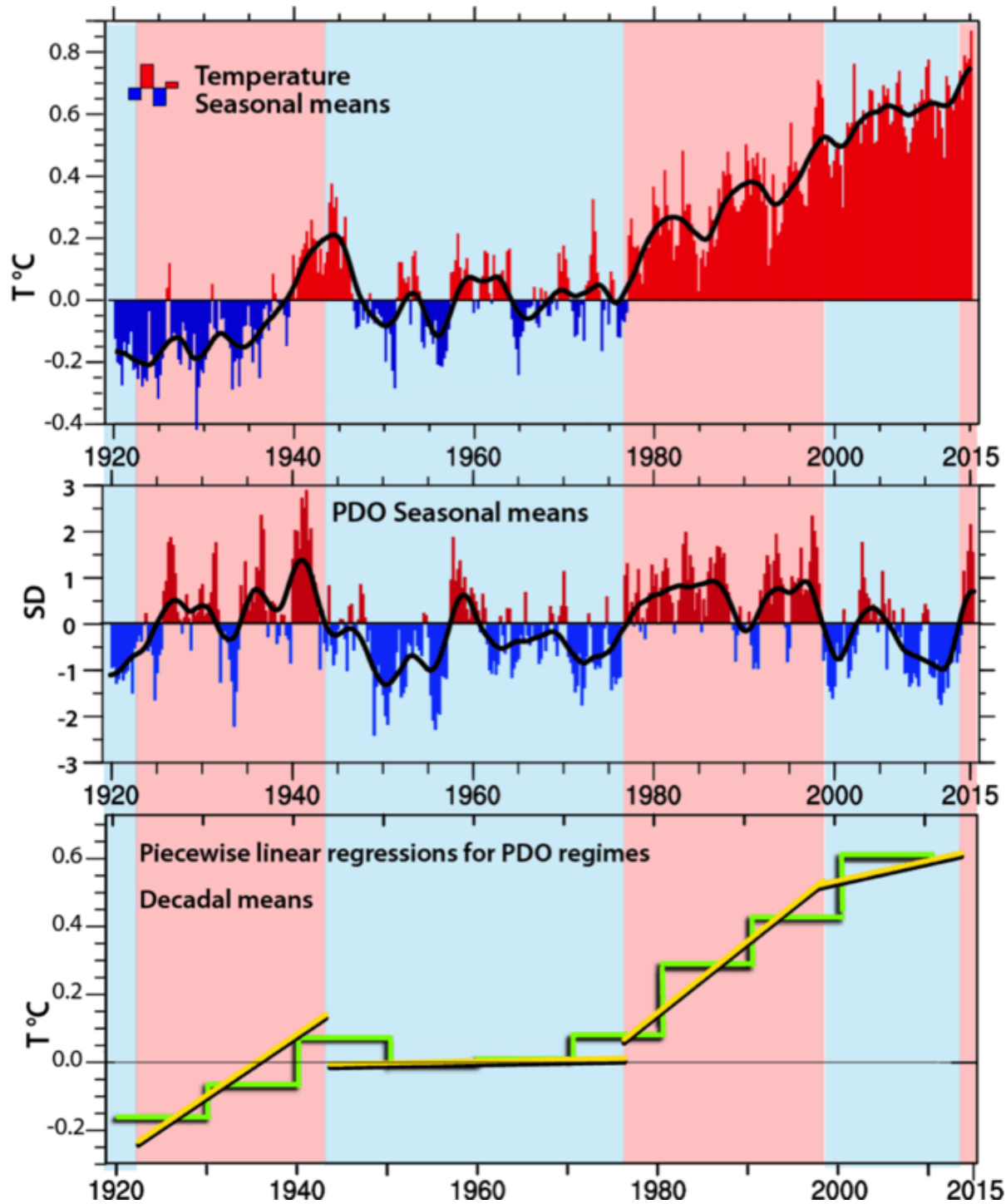
So what’s going on? Increased warming is expected because human activities are leading to increases in heat-trapping greenhouse gases, mainly carbon dioxide from burning of fossil fuels. And indeed, the global mean surface temperature (GMST) has

been rising fairly steadily: every decade after the 1960s was [warmer than the one before](#), and the decade of the 2000s was the warmest on record by far; see figure.

At the same time, it is readily apparent that there is variability in GMST from year to year and decade to decade. This is expected and known to arise largely from internal natural variability. While the rate of surface temperature increase has been mostly upward from about 1920 and the recent rate is [not out of step overall](#), there are two hiatus intervals with much lower rates of temperature increase. The first was from about 1943 to 1975, and the second was from 1999 to 2013.

In a [paper](#) entitled Has There Been a Global Warming Hiatus?, I find that natural variability through interactions among the oceans, atmosphere, land and ice can easily mask the upward trend of global temperatures. For climate scientists to improve climate models, better understanding of these variations and their effect on global temperatures is essential.

The warmest year in the [20th century was 1998](#). However, since then there has been an apparent absence of an increase in GMST from 1998 through 2013. This has become known as the “[hiatus](#).” While 2005 and 2010 GMST values slightly exceeded the 1998 value, the trend upwards slowed markedly until 2014, which is now the warmest year on record. Moreover, there are excellent prospects that 2015 will break that record – the past 12 months through June 2015 are indeed the warmest 12 months on record (see figure). It looks like the hiatus is over!



Seasonal global mean surface temperatures from NOAA, after 1920, relative to the mean of the 20th century. The seasons are defined as December-February, etc. A 20-term Gaussian filter is used to show the decadal variations (heavy black curve). (middle) The seasonal mean Pacific Decadal Oscillation (PDO) anomalies, in units of standard deviation. The positive (pink) and negative (light blue) PDO regimes are indicated throughout the figure. (bottom) Decadal average anomalies (starting 1921-1930) of



GMST (green) along with piecewise slopes of GMST for the phases of the PDO (yellow). [Kevin Trenberth/Data from NOAA](#), Author provided

A closer look at the events during these hiatus periods sheds light on the role of natural variability on the long-term trend of global warming.

The year 1998 was the warmest on record in the 20th century because there was warming associated with the biggest El Niño on record – the [1997-98 event](#). Prior to that event, ocean heat that had built up in the tropical western Pacific spread across the Pacific and into the atmosphere, invigorating storms and warming the surface especially through latent heat release, while the ocean cooled from evaporative cooling.

Now, in 2015, another strong El Niño is under way; it began in 2014 and has developed further, and in no small part is responsible for the recent warmth and the pattern of weather around the world: the enhanced tropical storm activity in the Pacific at the expense of the Atlantic, the [wetter conditions](#) across the central United States, and cool snowy conditions in New Zealand.



Are we in for more heat? [suburbanbloke/flickr](#), [CC BY-SA](#)

There is also strong decades-scale variability in the Pacific, known in part as the Pacific Decadal Oscillation ([PDO](#)) or Interdecadal Pacific Oscillation ([IPO](#)) – the former is

Northern Hemisphere focused, but the two are closely related. The positive phase of the PDO pattern, which affects ocean temperatures, is similar to that of El Niño.

The PDO is a major player in these hiatus periods, as has been well-established by [observations](#) and [models](#). There are major changes in Pacific tradewinds, sea level pressure, sea level, rainfall and storm locations throughout the Pacific and Pacific rim countries, but also extending into the southern oceans and across the Arctic into the Atlantic.

There is good but incomplete evidence that these changes in winds alter ocean currents, ocean convection and overturning, which leads to changes in the amount of heat being [sequestered at greater depths in the ocean](#) during the negative phase of the PDO. The effects are greatest in [winter in each hemisphere](#). The result is that during the positive phase of the PDO, the GMST increases, while during the negative phase it stagnates.

Results suggest that the Earth's [total energy imbalance](#) – that is, the growing amount of the sun's incoming energy trapped by greenhouse gases – is largely unchanged with the PDO. But during the positive phase, more heat is deposited in the upper 300 meters of the ocean, where it can influence the GMST. In the negative phase, more heat is dumped below 300 meters, contributing to the overall warming of the oceans, but likely irreversibly mixed and lost to the surface.

The internal climate variability can also be modulated by external influences, including the various human influences.

Increased warming from increases in heat-trapping greenhouse gases can be offset by visible pollution (in the form of particles called [atmospheric aerosols](#)), which are mostly also a product of fossil fuel combustion. Indeed, from 1945 to 1970 there were increases in pollution in the atmosphere arising from post-World War II industrialization in Europe and North America, especially over the Atlantic, and some volcanic activity that increased aerosols in the stratosphere. However, regulations in developed countries, such as the US Clean Air Act of 1970, brought that era to an end.

Climate model simulations and projections of GMST suggest that the signal of human-induced climate change emerged from the [noise of natural climate variability](#) in about the 1970s. Expected rates of change were very much in step with the rate observed from 1975 to 1999, but not the slower rate from 1999 on. (This is another reason to say there has been a hiatus from 2000 to 2013.)

Human-induced climate change is relentless and largely predictable, even though at any time and especially locally it can be masked by natural variability, whether on interannual (El Niño) or decadal time scales. But the predominant driver of the slowdowns in GMST is the PDO. There is speculation now as to whether or not the decadal variability has reversed – going to a positive phase (see figure). With this

change and the latest El Niño event, the GMST is taking another step up to a higher level.

The role of natural variability paints a different picture than one of steadily rising global mean temperatures. Indeed, the combination of decadal variability plus a heating trend from increasing greenhouse gases makes the GMST record more like a rising staircase than a monotonic climb.

Source: <http://theconversation.com/is-the-global-warming-hiatus-over-45995>

## The Pros and Cons Of Globalization | Mike Collins



A story in the Washington Post said “20 years ago globalization was pitched as a strategy that would raise all boats in poor and rich countries alike. In the U.S. and Europe consumers would have their pick of inexpensive items made by people thousands of miles away whose pay was much lower than theirs. And in time trade barriers would drop to support even more multinationals expansion and economic gains while geo political cooperation would flourish.”

There is no question that globalization has been a good thing for many developing countries who now have access to our markets and can export cheap goods. Globalization has also been good for Multi-national corporations and Wall Street. But globalization has not been good for working people (blue or white collar) and has led to the continuing deindustrialization of America.

Globalization is a complicated issue. It is necessary to evaluate the pros and cons before drawing any conclusions.

Pros

Supporters of globalization argue that it has the potential to make this world a better place to live in and solve some of the deep-seated problems like unemployment and poverty.

1. Free trade is supposed to reduce barriers such as tariffs, value added taxes, subsidies, and other barriers between nations. This is not true. There are still many barriers to free trade. The Washington Post story says “the problem is that the big G20 countries added more than 1,200 restrictive export and import measures since 2008
2. The proponents say globalization represents free trade which promotes global economic growth; creates jobs, makes companies more competitive, and lowers prices for consumers.
3. Competition between countries is supposed to drive prices down. In many cases this is not working because countries manipulate their currency to get a price advantage.
4. It also provides poor countries, through infusions of foreign capital and technology, with the chance to develop economically and by spreading prosperity, creates the conditions in which democracy and respect for human rights may flourish. This is an ethereal goal which hasn’t been achieved in most countries
5. According to supporters globalization and democracy should go hand in hand. It should be pure business with no colonialist designs.
6. There is now a worldwide market for companies and consumers who have access to products of different countries. True
7. Gradually there is a world power that is being created instead of compartmentalized power sectors. Politics is merging and decisions that are being taken are actually beneficial for people all over the world. This is simply a romanticized view of what is actually happening. True
8. There is more influx of information between two countries, which do not have anything in common between them. True
9. There is cultural intermingling and each country is learning more about other cultures. True
10. Since we share financial interests, corporations and governments are trying to sort out ecological problems for each other. – True, they are talking more than trying.
11. Socially we have become more open and tolerant towards each other and people who live in the other part of the world are not considered aliens. True in many cases.
12. Most people see speedy travel, mass communications and quick dissemination of information through the Internet as benefits of globalization. True

13. Labor can move from country to country to market their skills. True, but this can cause problems with the existing labor and downward pressure on wages.

14. Sharing technology with developing nations will help them progress. True for small countries but stealing our technologies and IP have become a big problem with our larger competitors like China.

15. Transnational companies investing in installing plants in other countries provide employment for the people in those countries often getting them out of poverty. True

16. Globalization has given countries the ability to agree to free trade agreements like NAFTA, South Korea Korus, and The TPP. True but these agreements have cost the U.S. many jobs and always increase our trade deficit

### Cons

- The general complaint about globalization is that it has made the rich richer while making the non-rich poorer. “It is wonderful for managers, owners and investors, but hell on workers and nature.”
- Globalization is supposed to be about free trade where all barriers are eliminated but there are still many barriers. For instance 161 countries have value added taxes (VATs) on imports which are as high as 21.6% in Europe. The U.S. does not have VAT.
- The biggest problem for developed countries is that jobs are lost and transferred to lower cost countries.” According to conservative estimates by Robert Scott of the Economic Policy Institute, granting China most favored nation status drained away 3.2 million jobs, including 2.4 million manufacturing jobs. He pegs the net losses due to our trade deficit with Japan (\$78.3 billion in 2013) at 896,000 jobs, as well as an additional 682,900 jobs from the Mexico –U.S. trade-deficit run-up from 1994 through 2010.”
- Workers in developed countries like the US face pay-cut demands from employers who threaten to export jobs. This has created a culture of fear for many middle class workers who have little leverage in this global game
- Large multi-national corporations have the ability to exploit tax havens in other countries to avoid paying taxes.
- Multinational corporations are accused of social injustice, unfair working conditions (including slave labor wages, living and working conditions), as well as lack of concern for environment, mismanagement of natural resources, and ecological damage.
- Multinational corporations, which were previously restricted to commercial activities, are increasingly influencing political decisions. Many think there is a threat of corporations ruling the world because they are gaining power, due to globalization.

- Building products overseas in countries like China puts our technologies at risk of being copied or stolen, which is in fact happening rapidly
- The anti-globalists also claim that globalization is not working for the majority of the world. “During the most recent period of rapid growth in global trade and investment, 1960 to 1998, inequality worsened both internationally and within countries. The UN Development Program reports that the richest 20 percent of the world’s population consume 86 percent of the world’s resources while the poorest 80 percent consume just 14 percent. “
- Some experts think that globalization is also leading to the incursion of communicable diseases. Deadly diseases like HIV/AIDS are being spread by travelers to the remotest corners of the globe.
- Globalization has led to exploitation of labor. Prisoners and child workers are used to work in inhumane conditions. Safety standards are ignored to produce cheap goods. There is also an increase in human trafficking.
- Social welfare schemes or “safety nets” are under great pressure in developed countries because of deficits, job losses, and other economic ramifications of globalization.

Globalization is an economic tsunami that is sweeping the planet. We can’t stop it but there are many things we can do to slow it down and make it more equitable.

What is missing?

Leadership – We need politicians who are willing to confront the cheaters. One of our biggest problems is that 7 of our trading partners manipulate their currencies to gain unfair price advantage which increases their exports and decreases their imports. This is illegal under WTO rules so there is a sound legal basis to put some kind of tax on their exports until they quit cheating.

Balanced Trade – Most of our trading partners can balance their trade budgets and even run a surplus. We have not made any effort to balance our trade budget and have run a deficit for more than 30 years resulting in an \$11 trillion deficit. The trade deficit is the single biggest job killer in our economy, particularly manufacturing jobs. We need the government to develop a plan to begin to balance our trade deficit even though this is not a political priority in either party.

Trade Agreements – Both the NAFTA and the South Korean Korus trade agreements might have been good for Wall Street and the multi-national corporations but they eliminated jobs in America and expanded our trade deficit. The upcoming Trans Pacific Trade Agreement will do the same thing and Congress should not fast track this bad agreement for a dozen reasons.

Enforcing the rules – China ignores trade rules and WTO laws with reckless abandon. Besides currency manipulation they subsidize their state owned companies to target our markets, and provide funding to their state owned companies that dump their products in America. They also steal our technologies, sell counterfeit versions of our products, and impose tariffs and other barriers anytime they want – as we do nothing to stop them. China does not deserve to be on our most favored nation list and we need to tax their exports to us until they stop these illegal activities.

What is good for third world countries, like Kenya, or countries with tremendous growth, like China, has not been good for American workers. Globalization is deindustrializing America as we continue to outsource both manufacturing blue collar and white collar jobs. Supporters of globalization have made the case that it is good because it has brought low priced imported goods, but they have not matched the decline of wages in the middle class and will not offset the loss of many family wage jobs

Globalization is like being overwhelmed by a snow avalanche. You can't stop it – you can only swim in the snow and hope to stay on top. I would like to make the argument that the US should try a lot harder to swim in the snow and stay on top. We can't stop globalization but there are many policies and strategies we can use to make it more equitable. We can enforce the trade laws, force the competition to play by the same rules, and stop giving our competitors the tools (technology and R& D) to ultimately win the global war.

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## Diplomacy – Regional Currents and Cross Currents | Rabbia Nasir



### Looking for the silver lining

Pakistan's standing in the comity of nations is at a historical low currently. The seventh nuclear power in the world seems looking hither and thither for directions. Apparently, something wrong has been done diplomatically which needs to be corrected.

The relations with India are on the lowest ebb. The Indians miss no opportunity of displaying their hatred. The controversial movie *Phantom* is one example. Again, India's attempted closeness to UAE with the open intention isolating Pakistan speaks volumes of its intolerance. And Afghanistan seems to be very angry with Pakistan, as evident by Ashraf Ghani's statement. Whatever happened to the Murree talks? Uncle Sam too is

not very fond of us at the moment. It seems that problems have enveloped the country from all sides. Does every dark cloud have a silver lining? Well, maybe not.

China still seems to like us, though, and continues to be generous both in financial and non-financial measures. But that's about it.

While the situation might seem scary, PML-N senator Nehal Hashmi seems to think that our foreign policy is moving in a new direction.

“There is a major shift in foreign policy these days,” he told *DNA*.

“Earlier, our entire focus was on the US rather than the region. Now our focus is shifting and getting more diversified.”

But what are the results of this diversified focus? Are they any good? The answers do not seem to be in the affirmative, but let us delve deeper before forming a conclusion.

### **US-India-Afghanistan: A lethal triangle**

The post-Cold War period marks the conversion from a bipolar world to a unipolar one, with US being the only superpower. The only emerging superpower that is threatening the existence of US is China, and China seems to be friendly with Pakistan. On the other hand, India does not like China much because of India's own ambitions about becoming a regional power. Chinese hegemony in the region is definitely disturbing. And Pakistan's closeness to China too does not send out a good image of Pakistan.

These thoughts were forwarded by Hashmi too.

“US and India have vested interests in the region,” he explained.

“These vested interests are threatened by China's towering stature, which in turn disturbs both the countries. Pakistan's ties with China hence disturb both India and US. It is not a foreign policy flaw that is firing upon Pakistan, rather it is something else. Afghanistan too is not an independent country; rather it is still dictated to by the US. So Afghanistan's spite towards us is natural.”

***While the situation might seem scary, PML-N senator Nehal Hashmi seems to think that our foreign policy is moving in a new direction***

This point, if true, highlights that Pakistan is being made the victim of a proxy war, which has nothing to do with our foreign policy. Rather there are externalities which are badly affecting Pakistan.

“US-India-Afghanistan,” Hashmi emphasised. “This is a triangle we need to focus on.”

Makes sense; but can we really attribute all of our diplomatic failure to externalities? That may not sound very rational.

## Good neighbours, bad neighbours.

Geographically and culturally speaking, Pakistan is in an interesting neighbourhood. With India and Afghanistan always giving us trouble, and missing no chance of exhibiting their vengeance, Pakistan always has to be on the high alert both in the east and the west. Any diplomatic efforts hardly bear fruit. Recently, PM Nawaz was entirely overshadowed by Modi in their meeting. Movies and information come under Track 9 diplomacy and this is funny how all tracks of Indian diplomacy are continuously purging hatred toward Pakistan. On the west, Ashraf Ghani too openly lambasted the Pakistani government, effectively implying the end of peace talks. And what did our Foreign Office do?

We gave out a very empathetic statement, stressing the fact that we do understand what our “brotherly” people are going through. Well, this won’t grant us any strategic depth. We are just determined to downplay our own stature.

These unfriendly neighbours of ours justify their venom by calling us home to terrorist sanctuaries. This label itself is badly affecting Pakistan’s formulation of any effective foreign policy. This fact was highlighted by Dr Hassan Askari Rizvi, eminent political scientist.

“The perception outside that Pakistan still tolerates some terrorist groups that help it is making it difficult for Pakistan to pursue diplomacy,” he said.

But right now, India and Afghanistan are not the only countries in the region. We have other good neighbours whom we need to focus on.

“Pakistan is now scrapping the flawed foreign policy it followed in the past,” Hashmi said. “Earlier our sole reliance was on US, a country that is seven seas across from Pakistan. Now we are focusing in the neighbourhood, and China has been our long-lasting friend.”

Iran also lies in the region, and has got an elevated status recently because of the nuke deal.

“We enjoy sufficient ties with Iran,” Hashmi went on. “This relation is neither too good nor too frail. But yes, we have been living with them for thousands of years, and there are common cultural aspects. So yes, there are ties. But after the deal, Iran is more of an ally of US and India. “

“By shifting our diplomatic policy toward China and Central Asia, we will benefit more. We are already benefitting in fact. The evidence lies in Russia not siding with India against Pakistan any longer.”

South Asia is a happening region, when it comes to regional dynamics. And Pakistan shifting its diplomatic focus toward the region will have long-standing implications. The looming threat on east and west, and some amiability of China, the region presents an

interesting scenario for Pakistan. But it is to be remembered that the world happens to have seven continents – not just Asia. Pakistan needs to keep that in mind.

### **Minister/advisor – Just a word apart**

Another criticism that the government faces is the lack of a foreign minister, which sounds weird in some way. But is it of some significance diplomatically?

“There is just the difference of a word,” Nehal Hashmi asserted. “There is a word minister, and then there is this word advisor, that’s all.”

He went on explaining the fact.

“A minister has to be elected, and since Sartaj Aziz is not elected, he is not the minister. However, he has been a foreign minister in the past, and he is an expert in this domain. This is precisely why he is heading the foreign ministry portfolio. Now what difference does it make if he is not a minister? Lack of a minister is not affecting our work, our performance or our diplomatic policy in any way. Tariq Fatemi is also assisting in this domain and he too is a world renowned person.”

Coming from a ruling party senator, this explanation presents no surprise. It is natural to defend the ruling party. So it is important to take the opinion of neutral bystanders on this regard.

“I don’t think this is affecting our diplomacy,” said Dr Rizvi. “We don’t lack command in the foreign office. Too many people might be running the FO, and that could be a mess. But the lack of a foreign minister is not affecting us materially. That’s what I think.”

Following the discussion, it is obviously not affecting us whether there is a foreign minister or not. But something is definitely making it difficult for Pakistan to stand tall in the comity of nations. What is that exactly? It needs to be singled out and worked upon.

### **Whither foreign policy?**

So yes, there are regional challenges. And well, the regional dynamics are shifting. A lot of recent events have important implications for our foreign policy. And in what direction is the foreign policy moving – if there is a policy at all.

***China still seems to like us, though, and continues to be generous both in financial and non-financial measures. But that’s about it***

Diplomatic efforts to get closer to India won’t really do us any good, unless the important issues are first sorted out. Any attempt to move closer to Afghanistan does not really help in the long run. With the troublesome traffic along the Durand Line, things hardly ever improve. China is our long-lasting friend, and it has always supported us. But Pak-China friendship is something that India and US don’t seem to eye with affection.

A new turn is Iran. Iran-Pakistan gas pipeline seems feasible now. But because of certain historical factors, new ties with Iran might distance us from Gulf countries – and particularly KSA.

Nehal Hashmi however rejected the idea.

“Well, KSA is our time-tested friend,” he explained.

“And Iran is our neighbour. Because of the past and because of our religious sentiments, I don’t think the relationship with KSA is going to be affected. I think Pak-KSA ties are above such factors as our association with our neighbours.”

Well is it so? Time will tell. Everyone who claims so needs to rummage their memory and recall that we refused to meddle in KSA-Yemen conflict, and UAE officials did not give very pleasant statements in return either. So where is our foreign policy heading in the Gulf is a question whose answer will take time.

Meanwhile we need to be introspective and see why we are being rejected by almost everyone in the world.

“This moment Pakistan needs to critically examine why it has problems with a number of countries,” said Dr Rizvi.

“Why is diplomacy failing? Well maybe, the FO is not doing enough thinking or maybe too many people are managing the foreign affairs, making it difficult to take the right decision at the right time.”

Something is definitely wrong. Maybe it’s the label of terrorism, or maybe it’s the result of the geo-political and geo-strategic forces. But we better pull our socks up, and do something about our diplomatic standing before it is too late.

Failing to do so will result in us being surrounded on all sides by dark clouds. And not every cloud might have a silver lining.

Source: <http://www.pakistantoday.com.pk/2015/08/29/features/diplomacy-regional-currents-and-cross-currents/>