

April 2018

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*Compiled By Shahbaz Shakeel*

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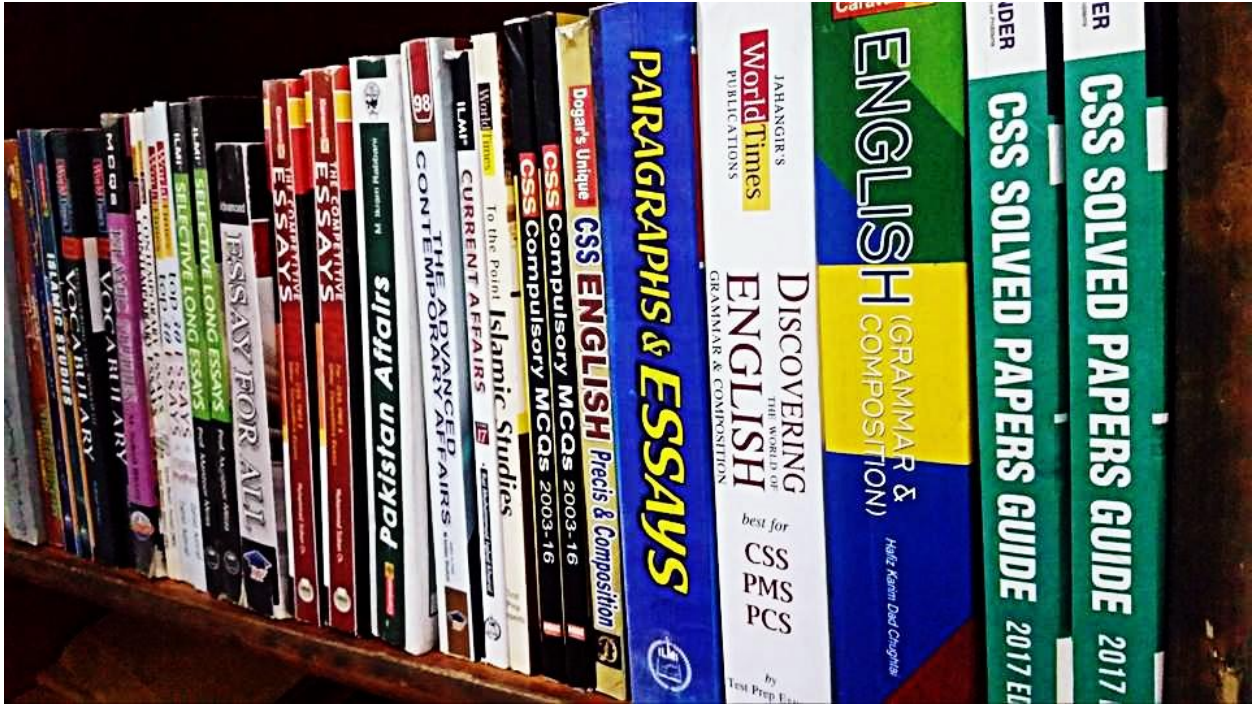
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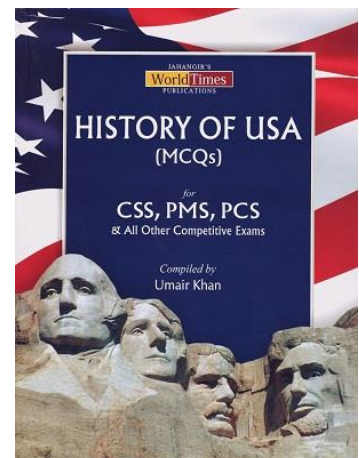
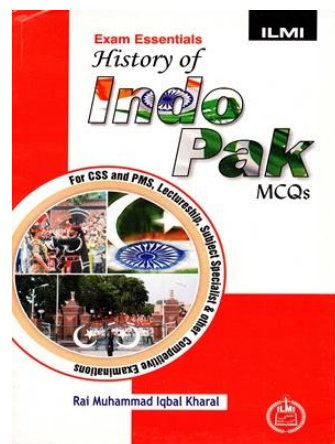
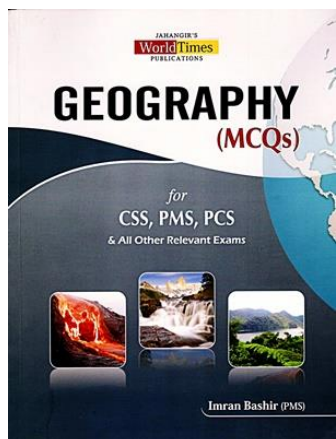
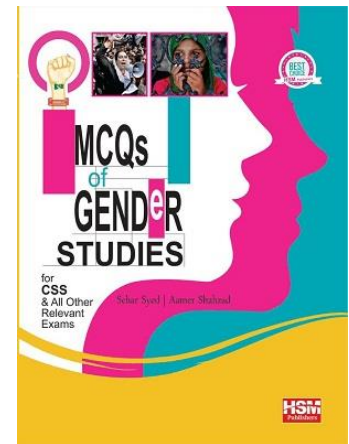
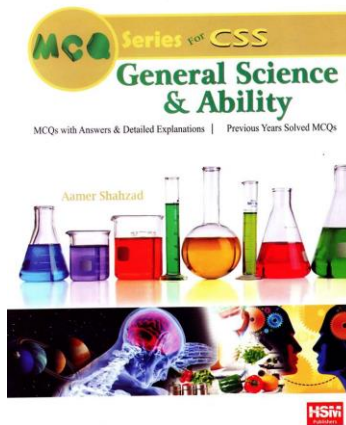
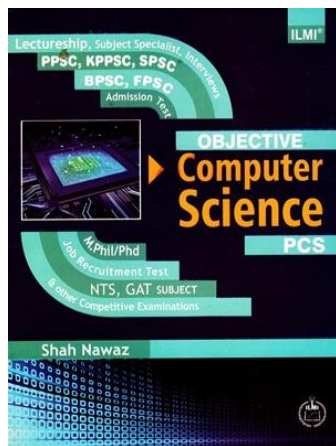
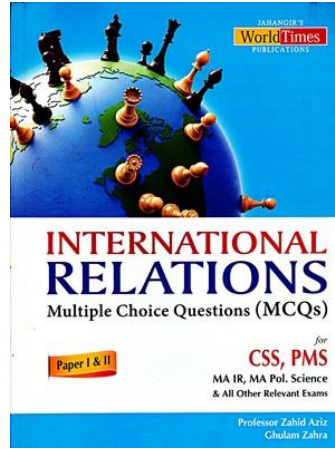
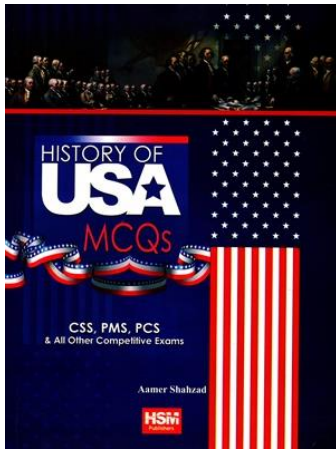
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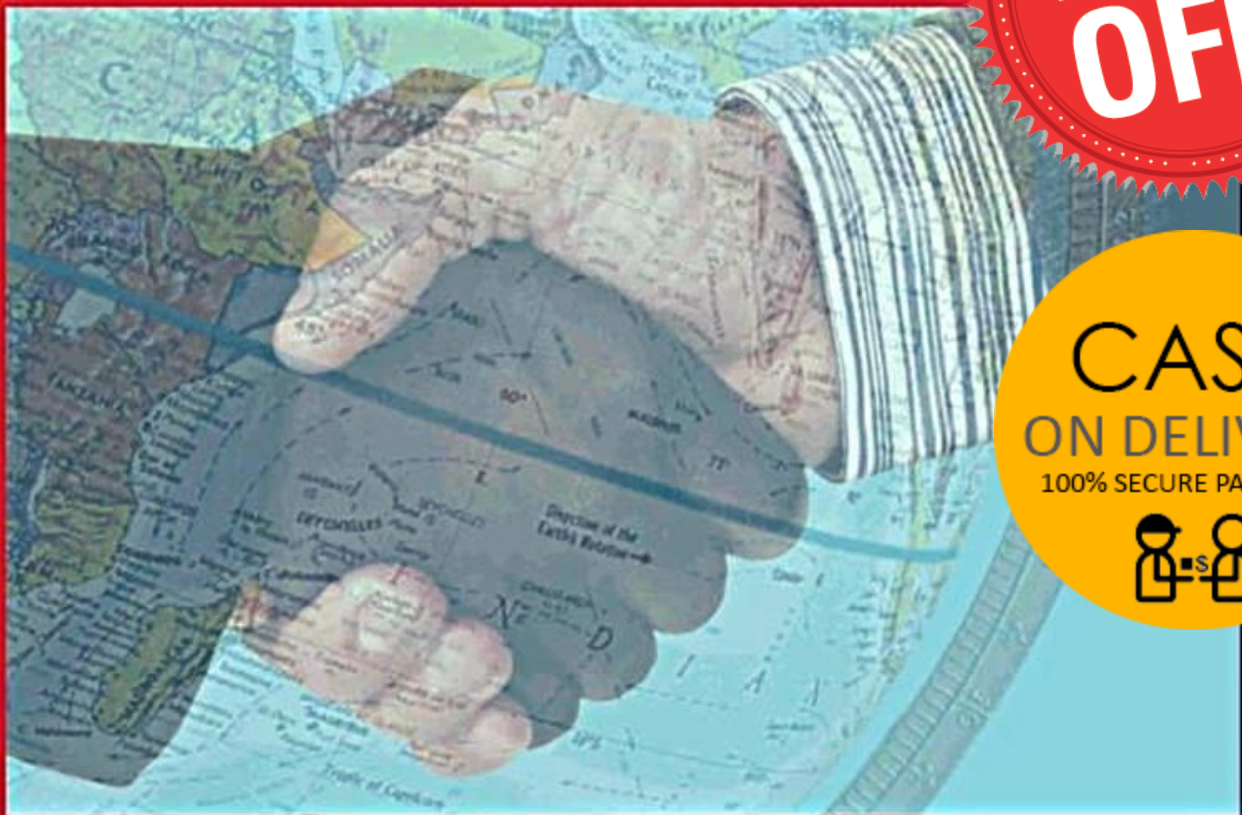
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# PAKISTAN

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## Is Russia-China-Pakistan Axis Becoming A Reality? – Analysis By Harsha Kakar

The west, led by the United States, is presently involved in a new cold war with Russia. Post the re-election of President Putin and Donald Trump's congratulatory call, it appeared that the relations could again be moving forward. However, to support the United Kingdom on its tough stand against Russia over the poisoning in London on 4 March of Sergei Skripal, a former Russian Military Intelligence officer who acted as a double agent for the UK in the 1990's and 2000's, the US led the way by expelling 60 Russian diplomats, including 12 from its mission to the UN in New York. It also ordered the closure of the Russian Consulate in Seattle.

The US termed all the diplomats it expelled as intelligence operatives and its reason for closing the Seattle Consulate was its proximity to a US submarine base and Boeing. Alongside the US and Canada, a host of nations belonging to the EU also expelled varying numbers of Russian diplomats. A total of 27 nations expelled 150 Russian diplomats. The US statement on the expulsion read, "Today's actions make the US safer by reducing Russian ability to spy on Americans and to conduct covert operations that threaten America's national security. With these steps, the US and our allies and partners make clear to Russia that its actions have consequences."

Earlier, the UK had expelled 23 Russian diplomats over the incident, with Russia responding similarly. For the UK, this attack on its soil was a violation of international norms. Russia has denied its involvement. It criticised the US and the European Union on their step and responded expelling the same number and closing the US consulate in St Petersburg.

This tit for tat action has pushed relations already strained since its annexation of Crimea, further downhill. The Russian Ambassador to Australia stated that the western action could lead the world into a cold war situation. Simultaneously, the



Russian Ambassador to Indonesia added that it could escalate beyond a cold war to an ice war, which could be fatal.

President Putin had to respond in kind, failing which he would be considered weak. Obama's expulsion of Russian diplomats in his final days in office over possible Russian interference in the US presidential elections, had received no immediate Russian response, as it hoped Trump would take a different view. Not this time.

In Syria, the worsening of relations now places US and Russia on different sides of the fence, adding to increased casualties, more brutality by the Syrian regime and no end to the conflict. The only sufferers would remain the local population. There is no way that the US would be able to push any further strictures through the UN Security Council on Syria. Trump frustrated with no progress announced a possible withdrawal from Syria.

Further, Russia has supported North Korea in multiple ways, as it also shares a small land border with it. The recent visit of Kim Jong Un to China indicates Chinese proximity to the nation re-emerging. This would open doors for Russia to wander back in, adding to an already doubtful case of any early resolution of North Korea's nuclear status. There are reports that the North Korean Foreign Minister would shortly travel to Russia, even before the meeting between the two Korean heads.

Simultaneously, the Russian involvement in Afghanistan has also witnessed an upswing. The US even accused Russia of arming the Taliban. In an interview to BBC, General John Nicholson, the head of US forces in Afghanistan, stated, "We know that the Russians are involved". He added that Russian weapons were being smuggled to the Taliban across the Tajikistan border.

For Russia, the rise of the ISIS in Afghanistan is a major threat. Hence it is seeking to enhance its involvement in that country. It is also aware that without the support of Pakistan, it could never become a major player there. Thus, there is a sudden warming of relations between the two. Joint military exercises, diplomatic exchanges and even a decision to sell military hardware are on the cards. Russia is known to be in direct parleys with the Taliban, a fact accepted by

their foreign minister. The official reason being quoted is the Taliban's enmity with the ISIS.

With India moving closer to the US, there is already a slow distancing with Russia. Though we continue to purchase military equipment from them, the warmth and support which existed earlier appears to be waning. Russia continues to fulfil diplomatic essentials with India, including the hosting of bilateral agreements and summits, but its decision to enhance its ties with Pakistan against Indian requests, indicates a change. Similar problems would flow by the increased warmth between China and Russia. It is unlikely that India could depend on Russia in the days ahead, as it had previously.

India has neither commented on the Sergei Skripal incident nor on the actions undertaken by the US and its allies. It is attempting to follow the middle path, ignoring both sides. However, while its silence may be appreciated by the west but could be misconstrued by Russia. For Russia, silence would imply tacit support to western actions, while even commenting on maintaining diplomatic norms and avoiding plunging the world into a cold war, could be considered more favourable.

India must act more professionally in the diplomatic sphere, if it desires to maintain steady relations with both camps. The defence minister is scheduled to visit Moscow shortly, and is expected to firm up agreements on the purchase of the S-400 Triumf Missile system. The minister is also expected to place Indo-Russian ties back on a firm footing. Whether there would be any success on either of the two issues, time would tell. However, assuring Russia of Indian support and seeking to reduce Russian tilt towards Pakistan should remain her priority.

Source : <http://www.eurasiareview.com/05042018-is-russia-china-pakistan-axis-becoming-a-reality-analysis/>

## Whither ill-starred SAARC By Khalid Saleem

News from New Delhi has it that India is dropping broad hints of its intention to 'sabotage' the already postponed Saarc summit in Islamabad. It may be recalled that the summit scheduled to be held in 2016 was postponed after Indian intention to 'boycott' it surfaced. The very future of this regional organisation now hangs in the balance.

Saarc, as a regional bloc, emerged ill-starred virtually from day one. The one fundamental precept relating to international groupings is that top priority is invariably accorded to strengthening of the moorings and establishing of the infrastructure. Only after the fundamentals have been suitably taken care of the attention is diverted towards what may be termed embellishments. Mentors of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation surprisingly turned every precept on its head.

Since its inception, Saarc has been engaged more in superficial ostentation, less in resolution of the impediments that hinder a fruitful regional integration. So many ancillary bodies have sprouted under its benign shade making it difficult to discern the original organism. One reason for this sad mix-up of priorities has probably been the general atmosphere of suspicion and distrust that has characterised the relations between the two biggest member states and the smaller states of the region.

When a regional organisation of this genre is set up, the initial step is invariably based on the concept of 'notional equality' of member states. Bilateral frictions and hang-ups are made subservient to the overall interests of the organisation, as whole, only then political differences are minimised by emphasising the commonality of interests. Asean is a case in point, where Indonesia — the largest member state — took the conscious policy decision to lower its profile so as not to give the small member states a feeling of having to deal with a 'big brother'. Malaysia, too, played a positive role.

In Saarc's case, the Indian establishment appears to have missed the opportunity to play a benign role. Due to (unfounded) fears of small state members ganging up against it, India made it a policy to deal with each neighbour individually on a bilateral basis and on its own terms. The two

landlocked member states — Nepal and Bhutan — were singled out for some heavy-handed treatment. Sri Lanka had to contend with an insurgency that can hardly be called indigenous. The Maldives barely manages to keep its head above water.

Saarc summits and meetings, unfortunately, have been a missed opportunity for the member states' leaders to settle regional issues of vital concern. It is true that the charter discourages references to 'bilateral issues', yet there are several issues that are no longer of purely bilateral nature and are crying out for solutions. Few of which are natural disasters; apportionment of water resources; sharing of energy resources; preservation of environment; poverty alleviation; education for all; and curbing extremism and terrorism.

Despite the imminent need to tackle such issues, nothing tangible has been achieved so far. If anything, more schisms than convergences have emerged over the years. Albeit, the one noteworthy element that stands out is the extremely positive and constructive contribution of the smaller member states. Nepal, Sri Lanka, the Maldives and Bhutan have played a pivotal role in the association's somewhat erratic march through the minefield of South Asian politics. These states have perforce to manoeuvre within restrictive parameters, while giving evidence of their commitment to the principles and ideals of Saarc.

The leaders of the Saarc region would do well to take a good, hard look at the way the regional organisation is headed. If the present trend is not checked, there is growing fear that Saarc may be headed for a future that the regional powers that be and their leaders may live to regret in the times to come.

Source : <https://tribune.com.pk/story/1683224/6-whither-ill-starred-saarc/>

## **Pakistan — an honest partner in war on terror BY Malik Muhammad Ashraf**

The vision of shared regional prosperity undoubtedly is linked to peace and security in the region, particularly Afghanistan, which has become the epicenter of terrorism with a spillover effect on the neighbouring countries including Pakistan. Viewed in that context the renewal of the dialogue between Pakistan and Afghanistan is a welcome development because dialogue and continued engagement are the essential ingredients in regards to resolving conflicts and removing kinks in relations between the states.

For Pakistan, which has suffered the most in the war against terrorism and is still grappling to overcome it, peace in Afghanistan is utmost necessary to ensure peace within its own territory. It is the realisation of this reality which underlines the efforts made and being made by Pakistan to promote process of Afghan-led and Afghan-owned process of reconciliation in that war-torn country and also strengthens her credentials as an honest partner in the war against terror, notwithstanding the thinking permeating in the US administration to the contrary. The visit of Prime Minister Shahid Khaqan Abbassi to Afghanistan on the invitation of the Afghan President Ashraf Ghani surely reflects that commitment and honesty of purpose.

Reportedly the two leaders discussed the whole range of bilateral relations including peace and reconciliation in Afghanistan, counter-terrorism, return of Afghan refugees, regional connectivity and bilateral trade. It was agreed between the two sides that peace, prosperity and stability of the two countries were interlinked and they also reaffirmed their commitment to regional connectivity as they had done in Herat on 23rd February 2018 while jointly inaugurating the entry of TAPI Gas Pipeline from Turkmenistan into Afghanistan. The other outcomes of the bilateral parleys were: agreement for reviving Afghanistan Pakistan Action Plan for Peace and Solidarity (APAPPS) which provided a broad-based and structured engagement on all issues of mutual interests; early convening of the Joint Economic Commission to take forward planning and implementation of key rail, road, gas pipeline and energy projects that would integrate Pakistan and Afghanistan with Central Asia; moving forward on Chaman-Kandahar-Herat railway line, Peshawar-Kabul Motorway and other connectivity projects which can

help realize the tremendous potential of South and Central Asian Regions by providing shortest access through the sea ports of Gwadar and Karachi; emphasis on early completion of TAPI and CASA-1000 projects; renewing the call to the Taliban to respond positively to the peace offer and to join the peace process without delay; acknowledgement by the two leaders that terrorism was a common enemy and threat and the need for not allowing their soils to be used for anti-state activities against each other.

Perhaps the most important commonality of views was on the point that the Afghan conflict could not be resolved through military might and the political solution was the best way forward. That was exactly Pakistan's response to the new policy announced by President Trump on Afghanistan and South Asia. Afghanistan now endorsing this stance has actually made a departure from its earlier reaction when it fully agreed with the new Trump initiative.

The US attempts to destabilise the region are actually an important ingredient of its global politics whereby it desires to obstruct China's emergence as number one economic and military power in the world

Although no major break-through occurred but the very fact that the two-sides recognised the importance of dialogue to resolve the contentious issues, is a very positive move. We have seen similar initiatives in the past as well but unfortunately no credible headway could be made to achieve the desired objectives and the relations between the countries have remained mired in an ambience of mistrust and mutual blame-game.

No person in his right mind would take an issue with the fact that peace in Pakistan is linked to peace in Afghanistan and the former would be the last country to wish the continuation of conflict in the latter. Peace in Afghanistan is also crucial to regional connectivity and the success of CPEC in which Pakistan has the highest stakes. Any view to the contrary is a negation of the ground realities. The US suspicion regarding Pakistan reflects her inability to understand the complexities of the situation and its impulsive streak to find a fall guy for its failures in Afghanistan even after sixteen years of war that has cost trillions of dollars and innumerable casualties.

Though Afghanistan and Pakistan have an abiding interest in ending the war in Afghanistan and regard terrorism as the common enemy, unfortunately the conflict in Afghanistan and peace in the region were not possible until and unless the US not only realised and acknowledged the ground realities but also changed its position accordingly.

The reality is that the government in Afghanistan is not in a position to take any major decision without approval from the US. The policy announced by Trump on Afghanistan and South Asia is a perfect recipe for aggravating the conflict as is already evident from the increased incidents of terrorism in that country since the announcement of the new policy. Much therefore depends on change in the US policy and the sincerity of purpose in finding an amicable and lasting solution to the Afghan conundrum.

Having said that it is my considered view that the US is not sincere in finding a solution to the Afghan war and it would not leave the country, notwithstanding her expressed commitment to do so. It would keep the situation in Afghanistan fluid to foment instability in the region for achieving its strategic interests. The appearance of IS in Afghanistan, many including the former President of Afghanistan Hamid Karzai believe, has the blessings of the US.

The US attempts to destabilise the region are actually an important ingredient of its global politics whereby it desires to obstruct China's emergence as number one economic and military power in the world. It has found an ally in India to further her strategic interests and checking the burgeoning influence of the Chinese in the region and beyond. Therefore peace in the region does not suit her. In connivance with India it would go to any extent to sabotage CPEC which it considers as a major initiative that could help China in becoming number one in the world in the near future.

The portents for peace in the region, therefore, are not very encouraging. We could very well see the re-emergence of the cold war era as is indicated by the recent tit for tat expulsion of the diplomatic staff by US and its allies and Russia with all its negative repercussion for the region. The Trump initiated trade war with China is yet another indicator for the things to come. In the building scenario the best way for Pakistan to protect its strategic and economic interests would be to align itself (not joining in any formal pact) with the countries of the region like

Russia, China and Iran and strengthening its role in the SCO. Pakistan's belongs to this region and its security and prosperity are inextricably linked with this region.

Source : <https://www.pakistantoday.com.pk/2018/04/11/pakistan-an-honest-partner-in-war-on-terror/>



## Women in politics By Shazia Nizamani

IN most countries, including ours, women are given token representation in political parties and institutions eager to appear progressive, while maintaining structural barriers that prevent their elevation, despite their merits, to senior positions. While most parties have women wings, these wings hardly have any say in policy and organisational issues. And though there are reserved seats for women, parties treat these as a formality without investing in their election campaigns. Women elected on such seats make significantly little progress in getting policies and resource allocations to reflect women's interests.

This represents a failure to institutionalise gender mainstreaming. Rather, political parties are complicit in the systematic exclusion of women and minorities, and in some cases even collude to prohibit them from voting.

Like many institutions, the Election Commission of Pakistan has no women at senior levels; its wide gender balance at all levels is, in fact, striking. The ECP has worked on voter registration drives, and, more recently, even held a re-poll in Dir because women were previously excluded. Yet how is it expected to develop and implement sustained gender reforms if its own body does not reflect this mandate?

Parties have failed to institutionalise gender mainstreaming.

The situation is worse for minority women — almost entirely politically excluded, deprived of rights and access to opportunities. There are exceptions that bring solace, such as the election of Senator Krishna Kumari. More significant would be to see her able to use her position to advocate for legislation on issues that affect her impoverished Hindu community, particularly its women. Her tenure will be a test case to see how much support she gets in her bid to change the system and bring the needs of her people to the mainstream political table. Time will tell if it is a one-off, or a trend that other parties will follow.

Another positive sign is Sherry Rehman's election as leader of the opposition in the Senate. The PPP has appointed women to senior positions before, but it should reflect on how much it has substantively contributed to empowering all women politicians.

The 2013 elections, during which 419 women candidates ran on general seats, shows a growing trend of women contesting general seats. The PPP brought the highest number of directly elected women to the National Assembly and the Sindh Assembly. Pakistan has 17 per cent women's reserved seats, whereas Nepal is in the lead with 33pc in its constitutional assembly, followed by Afghanistan with 27pc in its parliament. India has 33pc female representation at the panchayat level. In Nepal, quotas for women in local governments were introduced, and its election commission carried out intensive campaigns to engage women.

Countries in the global south that have committed to promoting women in leadership through affirmative action have far more women in political leadership positions than in some Western countries. By making pro-women policies and laws, they have encouraged more women to run for elected office and attain senior leadership roles. For instance, Uganda promotes gender mainstreaming in all government ministries, and has made it mandatory to have women in the leaderships of district governments. Such actions are now needed in Pakistan's political arena.

There is a gradual realisation that just and sustainable economic development depends on women having agency and a voice in decision-making at all levels. However, this cannot be enabled in a patriarchal system that denies women a support system within political institutions. Women politicians depend in large part on male counterparts who deny them the space to participate meaningfully in decision-making.

As such, all political parties must undergo comprehensive gender- and minority-inclusion audits. The state and all other stakeholders need to devise and implement a national gender action plan to eliminate political inequality. The plan should address issues ranging from increasing the number of seats, gender balance in the ECP, ensuring senior positions in party and other local bodies, awareness and education on political rights, mandatory representation of women in policymaking, national and local budgeting, ensuring free and safe environment for women voters, facilitating mobility of women politicians, providing legal support and assistance to women politicians to challenge

electoral malpractices, adopting best practices of other countries' women's development programmes, etc.

Strengthening women lawmakers' roles will pave the way for laws, policies and programmes that can improve women's status with regard to health, education, livelihoods, land rights and enabling environment for equal opportunities. Women will have to break the multiple layers of the glass ceiling with their own resolve, support from their parties and civil society.

Source : <https://www.dawn.com/news/1401914/women-in-politics>

# Pakistan heading towards sustainable democracy

## By Shahid Javed Burki

If there are no surprises between now and the coming summer, it appears that Pakistan is well on the way towards bucking the global trend. Some time later this year, it should hold elections to select new members of the national and provincial assemblies. This would be the third successive election in recent years, following those in 2008 and 2013. These will be the contests between competing parties. They are also likely to be reasonably fair. There will be a number of issues in play this time around. Among these the most important would be the matter of corruption on the part of the rulers.

Corruption will be defined broadly and include not only the public resources that were reported to be pocketed by the rulers at all levels, thus depriving the people of the services they expected to receive. Large-scale corruption was resulting in the transfer of huge sums of money to foreign accounts by processes called 'money laundering'. These moves were revealed by the so-called Panama Papers which recorded the working of a large Panama-based firm that had helped thousands of powerful and allegedly corrupt people to indulge in these practices. The Panama Papers became the basis of the unseating of prime minister Nawaz Sharif even though he had the support of a large majority of the members of the national assembly. While Sharif left the office, he held a number of well-attended rallies across the country maintaining that the verdict against him was not legitimate. He was, in his words, going to the "court of the people" to pronounce the final judgment in his case. The coming elections, in other words, would be a referendum on the removal of Sharif from office.

The elections will also be important since the citizenry will have the opportunity to pronounce judgment on the structure of institutions in the country and their relations with one another. Three such institutions are important. The first is the system of accountability called the National Accountability Bureau. The corruption watchdog was established by the government of president Pervez Musharraf with broad authority. It can detain people on the basis of suspicion of corruption. Some of its recent moves have caused a great deal of angst and anxiety among the senior ranks of the administration. Should the law that

established the bureau be amended? This question will have to be taken up by the new parliament.

Then there is the role of the judiciary. Under the present chief justice the Supreme Court has ventured into the areas that are the domain of the executive branch of the government. The judge has extensively used the suo motu provision in the Constitution on the ground that those in authority are failing to provide the services citizens expect from the government.

The third issue that will get addressed by the new administration concerns the role of the military in politics, in particular Pakistan's relations with the external world. It is unlikely that the military will ever intervene directly and take over the functioning of the government. That said, the men in uniform consider themselves to be better custodians of the country's strategic interests. They don't believe that politicians in charge of policymaking would fully protect Pakistan's interests. This is certainly the case concerning the handling of the country's nuclear arsenal. But to get back to the importance of the coming elections.

If all goes along the plans in place, Pakistan would be an exception to what is happening in much of the world. "Democracy faced its most serious crisis in 2017," Freedom House, a democracy watchdog, reported in January this year. "Seventy-one countries suffered net declines in political rights and civil liberties, with only 35 registering gains."

There was a time not too long ago when the United States' political system was seen by other parts of the world as the example to follow. After the collapse of the Soviet Union and the death of Communism in Eastern Europe, there was the strong belief that the world had settled down to follow one system of governance: western liberal democracy in which power flowed from the citizenry to those elected to manage government affairs. Elections were to be held on a regular basis as a way of the citizens to register their views about the quality of governance.

In a situation such as this, the world would have looked at America for leadership. But Freedom House said America has "retreated from its traditional role as both champion and an exemplar of democracy." President Trump has special affinity with the world's authoritarian rulers. According to one

commentator, Fred Hiatt, editor of the editorial pages of The Washington Post, the American president “glamorises dictators more than democrats: cheering when China’s ruler declared himself president for life; laughing with the Philippines’ strongman as he demonised reporters; congratulating Egypt’s dictator for his sham reelection; itching to withdraw from Syria to leave that field to Iran and Russia; abandoning human rights improvement as a policy objective anywhere in the world; and so on.”

It has been revealed that some of President Trump’s former senior advisers were distressed about the direction the United States was taking under President Trump. “Revisionist and repressive powers are attempting to undermine our values, or institutions, and our way of life,” said Lt Gen HR McMaster, who was until recently the national security adviser in the Trump White House. He was speaking at the Atlantic Council. “We are presently engaged in competitions with repressive and authoritarian systems to defend our free and open societies. We must be confident. We must be active. We cannot be passive and hope that others will defend our freedom.” Pakistanis can follow the same advice. Its likely success in building a democratic order could set an example for the world at large.

Source : <https://tribune.com.pk/story/1686609/6-pakistan-heading-towards-sustainable-democracy/>

# The Indo-Iran Syndrome & Pakistan By Imran Malik

India's strategic posturing in the IOR continues unabated. Its acquisition of bases/port facilities at Duqm, Oman and Chahbahar, Iran in particular pose real threats to Pakistan and its interests in the region. These positions straddle the Hormuz Straits and place Pakistan's SLOCs and Mekran Coast within Indian strategic reach. The Indo-Iran Defense Pact of 2003 accentuates these threats manifold. The strategic environment thus continues to unravel ominously. Pakistan must get into serious contingency planning at all appropriate levels!

Relations between Iran and Pakistan have oscillated variously between the sweet and the bitter. Geopolitical vagaries and their conflicting alliances/alignments at particular points in time and history have mostly defined their bilateral relations. And so is it now.

Currently, both sides have more than enough reasons to feel miffed by one other.

Iran feels that Pakistan's strategic alliance with the KSA boosts the latter's ambitions to dominate the Greater Middle East Region (GMER) much to its detriment. It fears that Pakistan's military contingents in the KSA may be used to harm its interests in the GMER, especially Yemen. Iranian FM Javad Zarif's statement in Islamabad recently equating Indo-Iran relations with Pakistan-KSA relations was rather ingenuous, to say the least. That was a pretty sorry play on words as both relationships are very dissimilar in nature, operate at entirely different levels and have differing strategic connotations for one another and the GMER at large. Pakistan's troops in the KSA pose no direct threat to Iran or its interests in the region. Pakistan has no Defense Pact with the KSA or any other country that specifically permits it to use Pakistani military bases against Iran; whereas the Indo-Iran Defense pact of 2003 specifically allows India the use of Iranian bases/facilities against Pakistan in case of an Indo-Pak war! Thus the Indo-Iran Defense Pact directly threatens Pakistan while Pakistan provides no country any such facilities/opportunities against Iran. And that is where the underlying dichotomy in the relationship, amongst other factors, lies. Mr Javad Zarif will know well that good strategists prepare themselves keeping the adversary's (here India's hostile presence in Chahbahar) current and potential

capabilities in mind rather than its professed intentions. Pakistan of necessity must initiate the necessary counter measures – political, diplomatic, economic, and military – to neutralize this very potent threat.

Iran is apparently miffed too because of the much delayed Iran-Pakistan Gas Pipeline Project. Pakistan feels constrained by the international sanctions on Iran, the inherent weakness of its own economy and its inability to absorb any potential punitive international sanctions. Iran is further wary of Pakistan's alternate arrangements to get LNG from Qatar and gas through the TAPI Gas Pipeline. Furthermore, the Russians have also evinced interest in the US \$ 2 Billion North-South Gas Pipeline from Lahore to Karachi and in supplying LNG to Pakistan. So Iran probably feels cheated out of an agreed contract- and not entirely without reason too! Iran also feels that the KSA is destabilising its border areas by sponsoring virulently anti-Shia groups like the Jaesh-e-Adl which reportedly operates cross border from Pakistan. Pakistan denies it and must evict these terrorists from its soil, if present.

Pakistan too has some grievances. It considers the rather explicit anti-Pakistan nature of the Indo-Iran Defense Pact of 2003 as a real threat. Iran is clearly committed to facilitating Pakistan's sworn enemy in harming it. The fact that the Indian presence in Chahbahar literally threatens Pakistan with double envelopment is not lost on the Pakistanis. Despite rhetoric to the contrary, Chahbahar's close proximity to the Mekran Coast/CPEC and its potential of being converted into a future multipurpose military base for intelligence gathering, radar and communication stations, naval, submarine, missile, logistics and/or air force assets must weigh heavily with Pakistani strategists right now. Is then the Indian need for a new trade corridor for Afghanistan/CARs a smoke screen for deeper sinister strategic designs? In a worst case war scenario, could the Indians place some of their nukes/missiles in Chahbahar, Duqm or any of the other military bases they are desperately acquiring all over the IOR to retain their second strike capability? Can such a possibility, even if remote, be ignored outright? Will it demand a preparatory/pre-emptive response from Pakistan? Is the GMER getting rapidly destabilised by all this strategic posturing and counter measures thereto?

Pakistan also has serious concerns on the reported return of the "Zainabiyoun Brigade" from Syria. Allegedly, a number of volunteer Pakistani-Shias were



trained by the Iranian Revolutionary Guards Corp and were operationally deployed to fight for President Assad in Syria. They are now infiltrating back into Pakistan as battle hardened and experienced fighters. They might reportedly be employed as a force to protect the hapless Hazara community from the anti-Shia terrorists operating with reckless abandon in Balochistan. This will lead to clashes and severe destabilisation of Balochistan, Pakistan and the CPEC. This is a deadly threat for Pakistan's solidarity, sectarian harmony and territorial integrity and must be forcefully pre-empted by the governments, LEAs, intelligence agencies and armed forces.

Iran and Oman must reconsider their arrangements with India and their impact on their relations with Pakistan. If Indians use these bases/ports to harm Pakistan or its interests, then in times of hostilities they will automatically become legitimate targets for Pakistan. That would inevitably draw Oman and Iran into the conflict raising it to the regional level. Is this then a desired end state for India – to thus restrict Pakistan's operational responses by default? Pakistan's COAS has visited both Iran and Oman for some bare boned military-diplomacy, recently. It is hoped that his efforts will bring some sanity and balance back into the rapidly degenerating regional strategic environment.

Pakistan and Iran must overcome their mutual mistrust. Their allies/adversaries must never have a defining or overwhelming effect on their mutual ties. These must evolve on their own, independent of all extraneous pressures and compulsions. China's investments in the South Central Asian Region (CPEC/OBOR) are a major interest of convergence and should become the catalyst for a renewed, stronger and vastly improved start to bilateral relations!

Source : <https://nation.com.pk/17-Apr-2018/the-indo-iran-syndrome-pakistan>

## Pakistan and its rural dilemma | Editorial

Poverty has remained Pakistan's legacy and its quantum has deepened over the years. The country's poverty crisis is largely concentrated in its more than 45,000 villages.

The real challenge of alleviating poverty, therefore, lies in developing the rural sector. Our rural belt primarily consists of the land of small farmers and landless labourers who are categorised among the rural poor. About 35 percent of the rural population lives below the subsistence level where social services are extremely inadequate.

Pakistan's economy, security, solidarity and integrity is based on its rural sector, which presents a dismal picture of poverty; ill-health; alarmingly low rates of literacy; malnutrition; high population growth; poor social and physical infrastructure; low production and productivity; unemployment; massive exploitation; and the abuse of the poor by landowners and government officials.

Pakistan is blessed with an ideal climate and vast alluvial plains along with a river system that is capable of stimulating the highest level of agricultural production. Its economy derives its strength from the agricultural sector. It would not be wrong to assume that the safety, security, solidarity and future of this country largely depend on its villages. Therefore, rural development becomes the heart of Pakistan's economic development crisis.

Pakistan was far ahead of India in almost all sectors of development – particularly in terms of agriculture – in the early years of Partition. In the decade after Partition, India began a balanced approach towards rural and urban development by giving due priority to the rural sector and focusing on its infrastructure; electrification; village tubewells; and subsidies on inputs required by small farmers.

Since rural development programmes intend to reduce poverty, it must be clearly designed to increase production and raise productivity by adopting the time-honoured integrated rural development approach and selecting the production areas of between 50 and 60 villages with a will to improve the socioeconomic status of the target group: the rural poor. The initial focus should be on increasing

agricultural production and productivity through the intensification, diversification, and commercialisation of agriculture based on a sound physical, organisational and institutional infrastructure. Rural development depends on sustained growth as rural income is primarily derived from agriculture and has the capacity to meet the cost of any development programme.

In Pakistan, a number of rural development programmes were launched to increase its agricultural production and productivity. They were implemented with the intention of creating abundant job opportunities to improve the social and physical infrastructure in rural areas. Unfortunately, the most important element that has been overlooked is the human development.

Successive governments have launched various well-publicised programmes. These include Village Aid in the 1950s; the basic democracies system in the 1960s; Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP) in the 1970s; and the five-point programme in the 1980s. However, the beneficiaries of all these initiatives were large, influential farmers who had already received patronage from the governments. Small farmers were mostly sidelined.

While formulating the concept of the IRDP, all shortcomings were taken into consideration. This programme remained operational through political will and commitment for seven years between 1972 and 1979. With the sudden change of the government, the IRDP also met the same fate and was rolled back without any cogent reasons and evaluation.

Unfortunately, it seems that doing away with rural development programmes started by previous governments has become a tradition. This has happened in the case of Village Aid, basic democracies and the IRDP – though the IRDP was a time-tested programme that was duly approved and applauded by the international community and UN organs.

These programmes did not create the desired impact owing to the absence of political commitment; non-participation of the people at the grassroots level; a lack of local resource mobilisation; and the dearth of an empowered local government system and people-centric institutions, including NGOs and CBOs.

To sum up, we can say that very little emphasis was placed on integrated rural development and most of the government programmes were run for a single purpose, with isolated efforts imposed by the political leadership from above. Little or no effort was made to evolve a leadership from the grassroots and above that implements programmes on the principles of self-reliance, self-support and accountability that monitored these initiatives.

Pakistan's future relies on its rural sector as a majority of our population lives in villages. Therefore, steps should be taken to develop this sector on a priority basis. The emphasis should not only be on improving poverty alleviation, but also on introducing strategies to promote poverty eradication. The solution lies in strengthening rural infrastructure and ensuring that all villages are accessible through road links. Villages should also be provided electricity and gas, with subsidised rates for tubewells.

Modern technology should be introduced for pre- and post-harvest. Such technology should especially be provided to small farmers at their doorsteps.

Growth centres should be established for every 10 union councils that should work towards marketing produce and establishing small and medium-sized industries to create jobs for the rural population so they don't have to migrate to cities. Arrangements for setting up agro-based industries through local raw materials should also be prioritised. In addition, the local leadership should be encouraged.

As an agrarian economy, Pakistan strongly relies on its rural sector. While planning and developing the urban and rural sectors, priority should be given to rural areas so as to ensure that small farmers – who are the backbone of our economy – reap the benefit and production and productivity improves.

The provincial administrations ought to implement local government programme and revive the IRDP by ensuring that it has the political commitment to reduce rural poverty.

Source : <https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/305740-pakistan-and-its-rural-dilemma>

## Nuclearisation of Indian Ocean pushing Pakistan, India closer to war: report

The acquirement of nuclear-armed submarines by Pakistan and India has increased the chances of a destructive war between the two countries, reported Vox.

Islamabad has publicly stated that the decision to arm Pakistan Navy with nuclear submarines is a direct response to New Delhi, which announced the deployment of its first nuclear submarine, in August 2016, according to the American news website.

In theory, the presence of nuclear missiles on submarines had made any war between the two adversaries potentially unwinnable, and ultimately, futile, the US-based news website underlined.

As Pakistan and India have now achieved completion of the nuclear triad, both have the capability to strike each other by land, air and sea. In the event of a nuclear war, the submarine is traditionally considered the 'safest' bet, as it can survive a first strike by the enemy, and retaliate effectively.

My nuclear button is 'bigger and more powerful', says Trump to Kim

Pakistan and India are arch enemies and bilateral relations between the two countries have been uneasy at best ever since becoming independent in 1947. More recently, they have also been locked in a nuclear arms race.

Vox notes that as the race spirals over into the Indian Ocean, the number of atomic weapons on the sub-continent is increasing, the chain of command and control over these weapons is at risk of being loosened, and they are now being placed in an environment where things can go horribly wrong.

"The nuclearisation of the Indian Ocean has begun," Zafar Jaspal, a nuclear security expert at Islamabad's Quaid-e-Azam University, told Vox. "Both states have now crossed the threshold," he added.

The report has compared the situation in South Asia to the nuclear standoff on the Korean peninsula, although it admits that Islamabad and New Delhi have managed to avoid international scrutiny over their nuclear programmes. It has also warned of a nuclear conflict arising from a surprise attack, as inexperienced officers control atomic weapons in contested waters.

### Accidents, mishaps and attacks

According to Vox, United States, Russia, China, United Kingdom and France all have nuclear-armed submarines that are also powered by nuclear propulsion. They can travel underwater, virtually undetected, for months, limited only by the availability of food for their crew, for which they have to come to the surface.

Pakistan, Israel and India, on the other hand, have nuclear-armed submarines that are powered by diesel-electric engines. Compared to the elite class of hardware owned by major world powers, these tend to make a lot more noise, and can only stay submerged for two weeks at most. These submarines are, therefore, easier to track.

Vox further reported that despite spending billions of dollars on the Arihant, India came close to a colossally embarrassing disaster when a hatch on the submarine was left open and seawater flooded the propulsion compartment. The Indian Armed Forces blamed a 'human error' for the mishap, and the defence ministry tried to 'hush-up the whole incident'.

### China slams 'wild guesses' in US nuclear review

In a startling revelation, the American website claims that even the political leadership in India was kept in the dark about events surrounding the incident.

The Hindu later reported that the submarine was undergoing 'extensive repairs'.

The US-based news website also highlighted that another Indian nuclear submarine is sitting dry in the dock after 'an unspecified accident' damaged sonar equipment on it. INS Chakra was on loan from Russia, and Moscow has already billed India US\$20 million for repairs.

Pakistan has also announced that it has successfully tested a submarine-launched cruise missile which has the ability to carry nuclear payloads and is in the process of putting nuclear-tipped warheads onboard its French-built nuclear submarines.

It has also reached a deal with China to buy eight more diesel-electric attack submarines that can be equipped with nuclear weapons. These are scheduled for delivery in 2028, according to Vox. Islamabad has also signalled its willingness to put nuclear missiles on surface vessels, as it moves away from a doctrine of 'minimum credible deterrence' to 'full spectrum deterrence'.

### Command and control

Putting nukes in the hands of officers at sea weaken the chain of command and control over atomic weapons, the American website claims. It also adds to chances of an accidental exchange of fire which could result in a full-on nuclear war on the sub-continent.

As Pakistan and India look for the membership of the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG), both have implemented vigorous checks for the safety and security of their existing arsenals.

The ultimate authority over nuclear weapons in both countries rests with civilian leaders. Pakistan, for its part, has established a state-of-the-art system for the safety of its nuclear weapons. There is a National Command Authority (NCA), headed by the prime minister in Islamabad, which must authorise the decision to use nuclear weapons.

### With an eye on Russia, US to increase nuclear capabilities

However, Pakistan and India keep their nuclear systems de-mated, which means that the nuclear warheads that power missiles are kept in different locations. Vox further reported that India also keeps its 'trigger or detonator far from the fissile core'. At sea, in contrast, these measures are not implementable.

The website revealed that warheads and missiles have already been assembled and stored in the same place at sea, and individual submarine captains have 'significant freedom to decide whether to launch their nukes'.

"The new danger for both countries is that the problem of command and control over the submarines becomes very tenuous," Pervez Hoodbhoy, a nuclear physicist and frequent visiting scholar at Princeton University, told Vox.

"With land-based weapons, the warhead is separated from the delivery system. You can't do that with warheads on a submarine. When it leaves the port, it is already armed."

"Either you do not give the arming code to the captain ... or you give it to him before he leaves the port and he can, of his own accord, launch a nuclear missile," he stated.

Traditionally, the weakest link in the chain of nuclear command at sea has been the problems associated with communicating with submarines.

Normal radio communication is not possible with a submerged sub, and to communicate with central command, these machines use very low frequency (VLF) and extremely low frequency (ELF) radio transmissions. Voice messages are not possible at these frequencies, so only coded messages and text messages are put through. These dispatches are also one-way, and submarines cannot reply or ask questions of the central command.

"Essentially the submarine is on its own," Hoodbhoy said to the news website, adding that "it can't communicate back" unless it sticks an antenna above the water surface and compromises its location.

There have also been concerns that if a first strike by any nation destroys land-based communications networks of the other, nuclear-armed submarines of the country will essentially operate on their own.

Pakistan's nuclear arsenal is managed by an elite agency within the military called the Strategic Plans Division. The American website notes that the SPD projects an image of calm professionalism.



In Islamabad, Vox reporters also met Director SPD Arms Control Brig Gen Zahir Kazmi who told them that the country “is very much alive” to the dangers of managing nuclear weapons at sea. “We are confident but not complacent,” he was quoted as saying.

### Dense smog leads to closure of nuclear power plants

Kazmi recognised the responsibility of safeguarding the weapons in the face of a challenging domestic security environment but bristled at any suggestion from Americans that Pakistan’s military might not be up to the task of protecting its most important assets.

“Managing nuclear safety and security is not a white man’s burden only,” he said. “Pakistan is managing its responsibilities quite well. There is a deliberate tendency to forget that Pakistan’s record is as good, if not better, than that of the US.”

The involvement of the United States in the affairs of the Indian Ocean has been met with fierce criticism. Publicly promoting the facade of neutrality, the Americans have in secret signed commercial agreements with India that allow New Delhi some benefits afforded only by signatories to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, Vox outlined.

Pakistan is also moving towards ‘full spectrum deterrence’, which represents a significant shift from the doctrine of ‘minimum credible deterrence’ it previously followed. The development of low-yield tactical nuclear weapons is the clearest example of this, Vox noted.

Source : <https://tribune.com.pk/story/1676160/9-nuclearisation-indian-ocean-pushing-pakistan-india-closer-war-report/>

# Electoral Reforms: The only way forward for sustainable 'Peace & Governance' By Kanwar Dilshad

Since its inception in 1947, Pakistan has endured tremendous suffering at the hands of inefficient and ineffective governance, which has, in turn, caused great unrest in society. This is unfortunate because Pakistan possesses a great treasury of natural and human resources but it has not been able to create an organizational structure that can allow it to capitalize on these resources.

There are a number of factors that have contributed to this misfortune namely; unsustainable governance, an inefficient bureaucracy, and an arbitrary democratic system which is also plagued with the disease of corruption. The dynastic system of control that lies beneath the facade of democracy along with the political penetration that has seeped into the judicial system in Pakistan, has caused the all-encompassing corruption present within these systems to rise to the surface creating a widespread need for a radical transformation.

Read more: Democracy and education: The indivisible duo

Despite these challenges, Pakistan is currently availing a major opportunity that is transforming the entire landscape of the nation in the form of CPEC. However, an imminent concern that arises out of this regional venture is that the economic benefits will not trickle down to the poor masses, who are not only living beneath the poverty line in rural areas but also in urban ones. It is completely incomprehensible how a labourer that earns a meagre amount of 2-3 thousand rupees [equivalent to US \$ 20-30] per month is even able to manage basic survival.

The rampant mismanagement that is present in government social safety net programs, such as BISP, that make the headlines of various newspapers every other day, is simply the result of inefficient governance at every level. The pensions that had once allowed people to peacefully retire have now become uncertain due to the fact that government saving schemes are now at the mercy of open market interest rates. Meanwhile, to further fuel the economic

discrepancies between the different social classes, the rich continue to shamelessly evade taxes causing the lower and middle classes to suffer from over taxation that is a direct result of mounting indirect taxes.

Since Pakistan is now a key player of the One-Belt One-Road program (OBOR), sustainable peace and governance is a mandatory prerequisite for ensuring that the program is successful; keeping in mind the fact that it aims to bring radical transformations in many countries throughout the region and beyond. Sustainable peace and governance is fundamentally dependant on an efficient and transparent electoral system – something the electoral system has failed to achieve.

Read more: [Is Democracy merely rule of the majority?](#)

The 2013 elections and the subsequent process that followed has not only been questioned but severely criticized by all the major political parties, resulting in unprecedented chaos and turmoil throughout the country for four long years. The incompetence of the Election Commission to ensure transparency in their procedures has disrupted the country at every social, political and economic level. Although this conclusion may come across as harsh, the indisputable truth of the matter is that the present, as well as the previous dynastic regimes that have been operating under the veneer of democracy, have managed to waste 10 years of the nation.

Furthermore, the incorporation of the 18th amendment in the constitution while being completely devoid of transparency has also given these oligarchs limitless power that has caused the federation to be drastically weakened. It is absolutely crucial for the peace and political stability of the nation that electoral reforms are introduced before the coming 2018 elections. Free, fair and transparent elections are the cornerstone upon which the foundation of democracy stands; making it an indispensable component, that is absolutely necessary in guaranteeing the success of CPEC and ensuring regional peace.

Most citizens that have a certain level of awareness truly believe that the main opposition party, PTI, should have demanded rigorous electoral reforms, rather than wasting time in mass protests, that diluted the significance of these reforms by giving importance to less crucial matters. They should have aimed to address

the central problem of electoral reforms, instead, they focused on the issue of corruption and lamented inefficient governance.

In fact, the Electoral System itself is what causes chaos and turmoil for the masses, the political groups, and military interventions.

The dynastic system of control under the facade of democracy, and politically penetrated judicial system in Pakistan are now widely seen to be arbitrary and corrupt and have to be transformed.

The National Democratic Forum, a strong advocate for electoral reforms, has submitted 25 recommendations to the Chairman of the Parliamentary Committee for Electoral Reforms, Mr. Ishaq Dar, Chief Justice of Pakistan, Speaker of National Assembly, Chairman Senate, heads of all the political parties and important politicians. The following are the long-term necessary recommendations that have been proposed:

1. The appointment of a caretaker Prime Minister: This is one of the most important points to ensure fair and unhindered elections – the caretaker Prime Minister should be a vibrant personality who is physically and mentally fit to handle a stressful workload. A committee comprising of the Prime Minister, Leader of the Opposition, and Chairman Senate should jointly select 3 names for the caretaker Prime Minister, and final vetting should be done by the Army Chief and Chief Justice of Pakistan. Since, the Army Chief has to manage the internal and external security of the country, he should be highly vigilant with the national, political, financial, environmental and social issues, and his role in the selection of caretaker Prime Minister should be recognised.

2. The tenure of the government should be reduced to 4 years, meaning thereby that all assemblies including local government should be dissolved after every 4 years for re-election. The speed of technology and international development directly impacts the velocity of time, therefore, the window of opportunity for a government to perform should be rationalized in line with the aspirations of people and international developments.

Read more: Democracy under threat from Nawaz Sharif?

3. The quota for dedicated seats for women in parliament should be abolished and it should be mandatory for every contesting party to allocate 10% of the seats to female candidates.

4. Political leaders should be allowed to function as political party office bearers for only two consecutive terms to ensure that dynasty politics does not grow in our political culture and that cross-section of the political party members get the opportunity to rise to the leadership cadres. This move will minimize the emergence of smaller parties or pressure groups.

5. An additional category of 'none of the above' should be added to the ballot paper to give a legitimate right to the voters who are not satisfied with any of the election contesting candidates. Thus, paving the way for re-elections for constituencies where the majority of voters reject candidates, nominated by political parties or independent candidates. The present system forces voters to vote for candidates listed on the ballot paper and eliminates the overall opinion of the people.

Read more: Democracy is a beauty; Accountability is a necessity

6. The ECP should work like an independent institution and it should not be under the influence of the government. The Election Commission should be constituted by the joint parliament and vetted by the Judicial Committee instead of the parliamentary committee. This system is being successfully practiced in Canada, Thailand and Indonesia.

7. The Election Commission of Pakistan should be given an observer role in the intra-party elections under Political Parties Order 2002 Article 11 and 12.

8. The development funds at the disposal of members of parliament are grossly misused. Projects needed in the community are ignored simply on the pretext that the voters have not voted for x, y, z candidate. Furthermore, the projects completed by the development fund quota are not integrated or linked with any other development project and grossly lead to mushrooming of slums. This practice of corruption and discrimination among parliament members should be discontinued and all the funds should go to the local government and be spent on projects benefiting masses rather than on the basis of political affiliation.

Read more: Is democracy consistent with Islam?

9. The electronic voting machine system has become controversial in the USA and France. In India, high courts of three states declared this system as unreliable. The Assembly of State of Delhi has also declared that the electronic voting machine system can be tampered with. Therefore, the political parties and ECP should drop the idea of electronic voting machines as it will further complicate the system and will create more doubts and litigation.

10. It should not be mandatory for independent candidates who win to join a political party. Instead, they should be allowed to form independent groups in parliament.

11. If any political party wins less than 10% of the National or Provincial assembly seats, then all the seats of that party should be transferred to the majority party. This will ensure eradication of blackmailing and pressure groups tactics. This system is also being successfully practiced in Turkey.

Read more: End of Charter of Democracy?

12. There should be separate returning officers for the National and Provincial assembly seats, which will reduce the workload on them for legal and administrative matters.

13. In each polling station, a polling assistant should be appointed only for election-day who will observe the execution of the election and closely scrutinize the attitude and behaviour of political parties, polling agents, elections and administrative staff. He/she should be a retired civil or military official or a community notable from the same constituency without an affiliation with any political party.

14. The polling agent at each polling station should be given observer status and his/her attendance in the polling station should be mandatory during the election hours and his/her attendance sheet should be submitted to ECP along with the election result of a given constituency after due verification by the concerned presiding officer.

Read more: Political elites of Pakistan: Promoting or subverting democracy?

15. The consolidation of the results should be done under section 39 of the Representation of People Act 1976 and not rely on Form 14. The returning officer must physically verify [recounting] the votes to validate the contents of Form 14, in order to fill accurate and verified data on Form 16.

16. Along with Form 16 [polling station wise result summary by the returning officer] and Form 17 [candidate wise result summary by the returning officer], the returning officer must submit Form 14 [summary of counting by the presiding officer] and Form 15 [ballot paper count by presiding officer]. By adopting this recommendation, the ECP will have a complete record in its possession rather than being dependent on lower government tiers. It will automatically reduce the number of complaints to the election tribunal.

17. Form 14-16-17 should be uploaded on ECP website as soon as these are received.

18. The returning officers in person should be held responsible for rigging. For this purpose, an amended version of Section 68 of the Representation of People Act 1975 should be adopted.

Read more: Pakistan in the last decade: Democracy, Corruption, or Development?

19. The ECP should be required to submit all collected records about the sources of party funds to the outgoing Speaker of the National/Provincial Assembly for debate. Discussion and conclusion on it should be held within the initial six months of the National/Provincial Assembly.

20. The qualification of any parliamentarian on Section 62 and 63 is an important parameter and it has been grossly ignored. The parliamentary ticket board of all the political parties should be held accountable for the issuance of party tickets to candidates. In case any candidate is disqualified by the court on the basis of section 62 and 63, then the ECP should also disqualify members of the party

ticket board who had voted for him/her for at least 2 terms. This system is successfully practiced in both Bangladesh and Turkey.

The research and information that is available on electoral reforms is steadily evolving as a direct consequence of new situations and conflicts that keep arising within the different political parties while simultaneously engendering the widespread misuse and misinterpretation of election procedures and rules. All the departments of the government such as the administration, judiciary, parliament and media should aim to function in harmony for the welfare of the masses as well as the overall stability of the entire nation which can only happen if the necessary measures to strengthen the governance of the country are taken under each and every circumstance.

Source : <https://www.globalvillagespace.com/45369-2/>



# ECONOMY

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## **How to stop a US-China trade war before it starts** **By Daniel Moss**

IT may be one of the most opportune flubs in economics.

A slip of the tongue by the US Treasury's top international official offers one way out of the trade skirmish between the US and China. Few serious people want tariffs ordered by President Donald Trump and the Chinese import restrictions imposed in response to degenerate into a trade war that would harm both countries. The trick is to find a decorous way for each side to back off. Maybe that formula already exists in a shelved channel for formal talks between the two nations.

To set the scene, recall an awkward moment that occurred on March 18, far from Washington and Beijing. Treasury officials were in Argentina when they delivered a confusing message about the status of the US-China Comprehensive Economic Dialogue, a long-standing framework for negotiations.

The trick is to find a decorous way for each side to back off. Maybe that formula already exists in a shelved channel for formal talks between the two nations. The Comprehensive Economic Dialogue is the latest iteration of a discussion launched with much hype in 2006 by former Treasury Secretary Hank Paulson to provide a formal framework for twice-yearly discussions of economic issues between the US and China. Under subsequent secretaries, the process waned. Reluctant to formally kill it, officials have been wondering what to do with it.

Enter Trump and last month's threat to impose tariffs on American imports from China, apply restrictions on investment in key technologies and address shortcomings in Chinese trade practices. The administration left a few ways out, but resuming the Comprehensive Economic Dialogue didn't appear to be one of them.

David Malpass, undersecretary for international affairs, told reporters in Buenos Aires a few days earlier that Treasury had “discontinued” the dialogue.

But then something odd happened: Malpass reappeared to say, “I misspoke.” He added that Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin would engage in “high-level” discussions with China. Both men muddied the waters more by refusing to clarify the status of the existing framework for talks. Was it alive, dead or cryogenically frozen? Nobody could tell.

Though the dialogue was a brainchild of the US, American officials have grown frustrated that it hasn’t yielded a lot. Timothy Adams, who had Malpass’s job when Paulson launched the project, doesn’t fault the US “They’re looking for different ways of bringing about a change of Chinese behaviour,” Adams, now president of the Institute of International Finance, told Bloomberg News’s Saleha Mohsin.

The Treasury officials’ mixed message appears to signal that the US is looking for a way to negotiate a deal during the two-month period before a list of products subject to tariffs is finalized and published. That would be consistent with Trump’s own praise of Chinese President Xi Jinping at the very March 22 event he used to announce the actions against China.

They just need a structure that’s already there so it doesn’t look like one is ceding too much ground to the other. There’s that Comprehensive Economic thingy they’ve been pondering what to do with. Just call it something else: maybe the US-China Trade Resolution Forum?

Source : /www.dawn.com/news/1398926/how-to-stop-a-us-china-trade-war-before-it-starts

## Peace, trade and open borders | Editorial

The BOAO Conference is over. Instead of matching sanctions with sanctions President Xi has taken a flexible stand that best serves the international economic order. Xi's conciliatory approach combined with four major proposals is likely to bring down the trade tensions unleashed after Trump's protectionist moves.

Speaking at the conference Prime Minister Abbasi linked regional peace with increased trade and open borders. Trade and development, he said, are a key to the promotion of tolerance and denying space to extremism. China has in the past suggested to Pakistan to keep its differences with India on the back burner for the time being and enter into trade relations with it. A section of Pakistani businessmen has all along supported improved economic relations between the neighbouring countries. However, whenever the two countries are on the verge of giving a positive dimension to their ties something unexpected invariably takes place to bring the relations back to square one. Terrorist attacks in Mumbai, Pathankot and Uri are some of these incidents.

Politicians in Pakistan have tried to improve relations with India so that an enabling environment is created to take up and resolve more complicated issues. The unelected strategists however remain adamant on a maximalist approach. The mindset has already isolated Pakistan from the US and its European allies. Two incidents underline the growing trust deficit with China caused by the approach. These are the 2017 Brics summit resolution and withdrawal of support for Pakistan at FATF meeting by both China and Saudi Arabia.

The Indian attitude has meanwhile hardened. Modi and Abbasi were both at Davos early this year but they failed to meet. Modi who has become a prisoner of his own rhetoric has adopted an unrealistic "no talks" policy with Pakistan. Since the ceasefire was put in place in November 2003, the year 2017 witnessed the highest number of violations. India needs to realise that war is no option and the only way out is dialogue with Pakistan leading to improvement in ties and resolution of all outstanding disputes including Jammu and Kashmir. Meanwhile there should be no place for "good" or mainstreamed Taliban in Pakistan.

Source : <https://www.pakistantoday.com.pk/2018/04/12/peace-trade-and-open-borders/>

## CPEC — challenges and solutions By Sadruddin

Gilgit-Baltistan is home to over 50 mountain peaks above 7,000 metres and three of the world's largest glaciers that are also the greatest pure water storage assets for Pakistan. According to estimates by G-B's Water and Power Department, around 45,000MW of hydropower can be produced through utilisation of these water resources. Yet due to the altitudinal factors, G-B has a mountain ecosystem vulnerable to climate change and one likely to be affected by the industrial and business developments in future.

G-B has been in the spotlight following CPEC's initiation. A project of scale as huge as CPEC is pivotal to the economic and social development of the populace of the region, generating more of income avenues, investment options and opportunities of capital utilisation. While simultaneously providing more prospects for cultural exchange, interaction and diversification. Nevertheless it has an unavoidable cost attached to it.

Massive industrial development along the routes starting from Kashgar in Xinjiang, China, to Abbottabad in K-P, Pakistan, will damage the ecological system and the scenic beauty of the region. The biggest threat will be of the traffic emissions moving through this route.

With CPEC, demand for petroleum products set to grow

According to a research study, a single 22-wheeler truck vehicle produces 931g of carbon dioxide per km. From Khunjarab Pass to the Bhasha Dam site, a 427km-long northern and southern boundaries of G-B, stretching on the Karakoram Highway, a single truck will emit 396.6kgs of carbon dioxide. CO2 emission will be heavier, 2913.1kgs, in one trip from Kashgar to Gwadar. With current capacity of KKH, for less than 1,000 trucks per day from China to Pakistan, with the expected maturity of road routes, by around 2035, it is projected that about 12,000 trucks will enter and leave Pakistan, making a total of 24,000 trucks running through the route per day.

Currently, about 2,000 trucks running on both sides emit 793.2 tons in and a total of 5,826.2 tons of CO2 from cargo vehicles per day. In future 9,508.8 tons of

CO<sub>2</sub> will be emitted per day in G-B territory and a total of 69,914.4 tons of CO<sub>2</sub> will be emitted into the atmosphere along the entire route in a single day.

In general, CO<sub>2</sub> is a heavy gas that does not move upwards into the atmosphere and with high mountains in surroundings remains trapped in between, this will be apocalyptic to the region's ecosystem. The high volume of the greenhouse CO<sub>2</sub> trapped in mountains will significantly increase atmospheric temperature causing a heavy melting of glaciers. For a water-stressed country like Pakistan, this will initially cause floods and then alarmingly severe water shortage.

High concentration of pollutants in atmosphere will drastically deteriorate the air quality in the area and substantially increase the level of air pollution.

Scientific research and advanced technologies provide solutions to threats like global warming and environmental degradation. One such solution to have eco-friendly energy sources for transportation is hydrogen. Hydrogen, an energy carrier, can be used as fuel in vehicles, as most beneficially it emits water vapour but no harmful gases. Moreover, due to greater energy density than conventional fossil fuels efficiency of hydrogen-fuelled vehicles is significantly higher than that of conventional vehicles.

### Key to CPEC success

Germany is currently leading in hydrogen technology and plans to make hydrogen accessible in all its big cities by 2020. In G-B's case, hydrogen can be produced here by local hydropower resources with a zero carbon footprint. the G-B government needs to be proactive in decision-making, planning and strategising for future while collaborating with market leaders in this technology. As CPEC infrastructure is developed in stages and will take at least 10 to 15 years to complete and run on its optimal targets, a proactive initiative in this regard is vital to protect the environment.

As China is investing in development of environmentally-sustainable technologies, agreements with its government can be made to make CPEC an emission-free route.

Source : <https://tribune.com.pk/story/1688108/6-cpec-challenges-solutions/>

## Our economic quagmire | Editorial

If media reports are to be believed, the value of the US dollar has increased to Rs115 as per the inter-bank rate and stands at Rs119 according to the open market rate. The relevant authorities are of the view that Pakistan's exchange rate was undershot. When it was left at the disposal of market forces, it rose to its equilibrium level.

If we consider the argument that market forces are to blame for this development, a series of question may arise. For instance, why did market forces result in the depreciation of the exchange rather than an appreciation? Why didn't they generate the opposite effect? The answer is simple: the demand and supply of foreign exchange reserves (FER).

Pakistan's exchange rate in terms of the dollar can be considered as the price of dollar in terms of the rupee. Economic thought suggests that the price of any item is determined by the forces of demand and supply. As a result, Pakistan's currency has depreciated either due to the diminishing supply of foreign exchange reserves and an increase in the demand for these reserves.

If we examine the statistics of Pakistan's economy, foreign exchange reserves have declined from \$19 billion to \$12 billion, which includes almost \$6 billion of the reserves deposited with commercial banks. This, in principle, cannot be included within these reserves because they belong to citizens, not the state.

On the other hand, the country's trade deficit climbed to \$36 billion, which indicates the high volume of imports. In order to meet the needs of the import bill (at least for three months), the country needs foreign exchange reserves. Therefore, the demand for foreign exchange reserves has to increase. The burgeoning demand for foreign exchange reserves along with their depleting supply compels the exchange rate to depreciate – as it is happening nowadays.

The repercussions of a depreciating exchange rate are long-lasting and multidimensional. Countries like Pakistan, which are import-oriented, face problems in terms of escalating import bills and the increasing cost of production. An increase in the cost of production is directly reflected in the price levels. This

negatively impacts the competitiveness of a country's industrial sector and decreases the volume of exports.

Every economic policy has its pros and cons – and the same can be said about a depreciated exchange rate. In order to get the maximum benefits from a depreciated exchange rate, the country needs to do its homework and summon the political will to ensure economic welfare.

Pakistan needs to improve its production function that is aimed at gaining economies of scale. This will make the industrial sector more competitive and, in turn, improve the volume of exports, which will have multiple effects on the economy. For a country to achieve economies of scale, it needs inputs to be provided cheaply in order to produce output at a larger scale. For instance, electricity – a major input for any industrial unit – is not provided according to its rising demand. As a result, industrial units may not be able to produce at a potential level and, hence, cannot achieve cost-efficiency. When the exchange rate rose to Rs115 against the dollar, the cost of imported inputs also increased and directly affected price levels.

While the general elections of Pakistan are imminent and the final budget is likely to be presented by the current government in April, the intentions of the government are to restrict its expenditure on development projects and instead focus on non-development projects (which can be gauged from the pre-budget sessions). This will increase money supply in the economy without positively affecting the potential volume of the economy. As we know, a rupee spent on a non-development budget will have no impact on the output, but will increase the price level of the economy.

Disastrous economic conditions and limited political will leave the country in a crisis that the new government will have to deal with. It doesn't matter which party wins the next general elections. Under such murky economic conditions, the next government will have no choice but to opt for another IMF programme to guarantee the country's survive. As a result, we will be bound by restrictions imposed by the IMF and lose our economic independence.

All parties that are going to contest the general elections should have a clear economic policy within their manifestoes to tackle the current crisis. They should

do their homework before assuming public office. Without this, it will once again become difficult for the next government to pull the economy out the quagmire it finds itself in these days.

Source : <https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/305014-our-economic-quagmire>



# Adapting to Pakistan's economic challenges

By Dr Abid Qaiyum Suleri

Keeping aside the exogenous factors responsible for the improvement of Pakistan's economic indicators, it is clear that Pakistan's economy is much better off than it was in the 2012-13 period. Let us compare the economic indicators over this period. GDP growth improved from 3.68 percent in 2012-13 to 5.28 percent in 2016-17. Inflation has reduced from 7.36 percent to 4.16 percent. During the last four years, FBR revenue has increased from Rs 1,964.4 billion to 3,367.9 billion which has not only helped in increasing development spending (PSDP) from Rs 348.3 billion to Rs 733.3 billion, but also provided a cushion for increased transfer to provinces from the divisible pool. Likewise, the budget deficit has reduced from 8.2 to 5.8 percent in this time.

Ofcourse, this is not to say that all has been well during the last four years, we also observed certain indicators deteriorating. Before discussing them let us compare the average performance on economic indicators between 2008-2013 and 2013-2017.

During the PPP tenure, the GDP grew at an average of 2.82 percent, whereas average GDP growth in the last four years stands at 4.47 percent. Average industrial sector growth during the PPP tenure was down to 1.20 percent, and it remained at 5.13 percent in the PML-N tenure. The average service sector growth in the last four years was 5.09 percent, whereas in the PPP tenure it was 3.60 percent. The average fiscal deficit during the PPP tenure was 7.20 percent, while it has been 5.33 percent during the last four years. A significant change was observed in inflation (11.83 percent to 5.04 percent), average credit to private sector (Rs 96.20 billion to 457.15 billion) and average transfer to provinces from the divisible pool.

One must be mindful that when the 2008 government was formed, most economic indicators were much worse than in 2013. Keep in mind that besides other problems, two important factors affected PPP's economic performance very badly. These were the floods of 2010, 2011 and the unprecedented rise of oil prices in the international market.

One must be mindful that when PPP formed its government in 2008, most of the economic indicators were much worse than what it left for the PML-N in 2013

Having said that, in the end, economics is a numbers game. In Pakistan's case, the numbers clearly tell that on most counts, the PML-N government fared well. However, the PML-N government has been unable to capitalize on all the exogenous and endogenous factors that helped it on the economic front during the last four years.

One such challenge is the balance of payment meant to honour debt servicing commitments, as well as meeting essential import demands. It is expected that external debt and liabilities could touch \$93 billion by December 2018. On top of this, in the July — February 2018 period, the current account deficit has expanded to \$11 billion.

Another challenge is falling exports (which have increased during the last quarter) which has led to a \$23 billion trade deficit. Energy circular debt, and loss making public sector organisations are also some of the areas where the government has failed.

The question arises, what is it that the government can do in its last sixty days and through its last budget which is planned to be presented on April 27.

Some say the government should not present a budget at this stage as article 86 of the constitution provides for the caretakers to authorise expenditures for 120 days. However, if the government wants to go ahead with its plans then its last budget should try to contain fiscal and current account deficits.

The proposal to bring overseas assets to Pakistan may help in improving our foreign exchange reserves. However, it will not be enough to manage our balance of payments (BoPs). To take care of BoPs, in the short run, the following measures can be taken;

The debt management strategy should focus on persuading our creditors to restructure the debt servicing liability. This is easier in the case of official programme lending. More energetic diplomatic efforts could also result in

rescheduling of the \$ 1.5 million owed to the Paris Club and non-Paris Club creditors.

The government can also curtail the import and inflow of three key items; non-essential food, armoured and luxury vehicles, and smartphones through the finance bill. This could result in \$6-7 billion in savings.

Third, the Pakistani diaspora should be encouraged to send more remittances through official channels. The Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) and Ministry of Finance need to slash down on taxes, including withholding taxes on banking transactions to encourage remitters.

In the medium term measures, the government can encourage exports through consolidation and rationalisation of taxes. The refunds of exporters stuck with the FBR since 2010 need to be immediately cleared to allow greater working capital. The SBP's export finance scheme and long term finance scheme need to be tailored for SMEs, so that more exporters can benefit.

Pakistan's dollar-denominated transit trade can increase if shipping, transport and container rates are made competitive. Currently a large volume of dollar-denominated transit trade previously routed through Pakistan and destined for Central Asia and Afghanistan is now being serviced by Iran.

Pakistan should expedite four key structural reforms in taxation, energy, public sector enterprises and the reorientation of the Ministry of Finance and other economy related ministries. The latter is important to benefit from emerging regional blocks under OBOR and CPEC.

Going forward, the Prime Minister, who will now be chairing the 'Economic Advisory Council' as well, should try to get a political consensus on the 'Charter of Economy'. The structural problems facing our economy can never be resolved if we keep on politicising them. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) will never succeed in bringing structural reforms to Pakistan. It is the political parties who have to agree on certain reforms and then stick to implement them whether they land on treasury benches or on opposition benches after the next general elections.

Source : <https://dailytimes.com.pk/223405/adapting-to-pakistans-economic-challenges/>

## IMF concerned at Pakistan's weakening economy By Khaleeq Kiani

The IMF executive board asked the government to immediately refocus on near-term policies to preserve macroeconomic stability and get back to fiscal discipline shown under the three-year \$6.64 billion multi-tranche Extended Fund Facility (EFF) to minimise risks and economic distortions.

In its first post-programme monitoring (PPM) after the completion of fund programme in September last year, the IMF board also raised questions over the medium-term debt sustainability and called for additional revenue measures and containing expenditures.

The board expressed its anxiety over the deteriorating assessment that the country's fiscal deficit was set to hit 5.5 per cent of GDP — almost Rs505bn or 1.4pc — higher than 4.1pc budgeted by the government and current account deficit to touch 4.8pc of GDP with the economic growth rate staying conservative at 5.6pc instead of budgeted 6pc.

Real GDP estimated to grow by 5.6pc due to improved power supply, CPEC-related investment

The IMF said the near-term economic growth outlook was broadly favourable but “continued erosion of macroeconomic resilience could put this outlook at risk”. Therefore, “Directors also emphasised the need for prudent debt management and caution in phasing in new external liabilities, and the urgency of tackling rising fiscal risks stemming from continued losses in public sector enterprises”, the IMF said in a statement issued two days after the executive board meeting that took place on March 5 in Washington.

The IMF said that real GDP was estimated to grow by 5.6pc during the fiscal year 2017-18 due to improved power supply, investment related to the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), strong consumption growth and ongoing recovery in agriculture. Inflation has remained contained and is estimated at 5.4pc.

Following significant fiscal slippages last year and current year deficit estimated at 5.5pc of GDP, with risks towards a higher deficit ahead of upcoming general elections, surging imports have led to a widening current account deficit and a significant decline in international reserves despite higher external financing.

The IMF noted gross international reserves further declining in a context of limited exchange rate flexibility. Against the backdrop of rising external and fiscal financing needs and declining reserves, “risks to Pakistan’s medium-term capacity to repay the Fund have increased since completion of the EFF arrangement in September 2016”.

The board directors welcomed move to allow some exchange rate adjustment last December, but stressed the importance of greater exchange rate flexibility on a more permanent basis to preserve external buffers and improve competitiveness. They also encouraged the authorities to phase out administrative measures aimed at supporting the balance of payments as soon as conditions allow them to minimise potential economic distortions.

The executive board noted that the external sector pressures were in part linked to the fiscal deterioration during the last fiscal year and an accommodative monetary policy stance, as well as high imports related to the CPEC projects.

The directors called upon the authorities to “strengthen fiscal discipline through additional revenue measures and efforts to contain current expenditure while protecting pro-poor spending”, and emphasised that complementing the recent increase in the policy interest rate with further monetary tightening would be important to address inflationary risks and help reverse external imbalances.

The directors underscored the importance of accelerating structural reforms to reinforce macroeconomic stability, raise competitiveness and promote higher and more inclusive growth.

In the aftermath of recent setback at the Financial Action Task Force, the IMF board called for further enhancing anti-money laundering/counter-terror financing regime and strengthening the fiscal federalism and monetary and financial policy frameworks. The IMF also advised the authorities to improve the business

climate, continue to strengthen governance, achieve cost recovery in the energy sector and expand social safety nets to protect the most vulnerable.

Because of substantially higher credit outstanding from the IMF, the borrowing members have to face closer monitoring of the policies under the PPM and undertake more frequent formal consultation with the Fund than is the case under surveillance, with a particular focus on macroeconomic and structural policies that have a bearing on external viability.

Source : <https://www.dawn.com/news/1393806>

## Pakistan, China pledge to work for regional stability through SCO | Editorial

BEIJING: Foreign Minister Khawaja Mohammad Asif has said that Pakistan and China have resolved to enhance bilateral cooperation with the pledge to play a key role for regional stability through the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO).

Talking to media, along with his Chinese counterpart Wang Yi after their meeting on the sidelines of the SCO Council of Foreign Ministers (CFM) moot held here at Diaoyutai State Guest House on Monday, he said Mr Wang termed Pakistan and China close friends, all-weather strategic and cooperative partners during their meeting.

He said Mr Wang also appreciated Pakistan's active participation in the SCO and expressed Beijing's strong support to Islamabad's efforts in enhancing regional peace and cooperation besides its tireless efforts in countering terrorism in the country.

Foreign Minister Khawaja Asif, along with foreign ministers of other SCO member countries, also met Chinese President Xi Jinping here at the Great Hall.

Asif meets Chinese president, foreign minister

Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi, SCO Secretary-General Rashid Alimov and Director of the Executive Committee of the SCO Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure Yevgeniy Sysoyev also attended the meeting.

Welcoming the foreign ministers, President Xi said the SCO set a new pilot model for mutual respect, as well as a just, fair, win-win relationship, since its founding 17 years ago.

Mr Asif in his meeting with Mr Wang highly appreciated the vibrant role of the SCO in the region and said it was significantly vital forum for regional cooperation.

He said Pakistan was looking forward to productive and fruitful meeting of the heads of states of the SCO at Qingdao in June this year. President Mamnoon Hussain would participate in the summit.

The foreign minister expressed his appreciation for the Chinese initiative of Pakistan-China-Afghanistan Foreign Ministers Trilateral Mechanism for enhancing cooperation with Afghanistan.

He also apprised Mr Wang of grave situation prevailing in India-held Kashmir.

Mr Asif congratulated Mr Wang on his re-election as foreign minister and his elevation as state councillor. He also congratulated him on re-election of Xi Jinping as president of People's Republic of China and as core leader of the Communist Party of China (CPC).

He informed him about Prime Minister Shahid Khaqan Abbasi's visit to China earlier this month and his participation in successful and productive Boao Forum for Asia conference.

Mr Wang said that China and Pakistan were all-weather strategic and cooperative partners and friendship between the two countries had received support from the peoples' hearts, with solid public opinion foundation.

"No matter how the international and regional situation changes, the mutual trust between China and Pakistan remains unbreakable. No matter how domestic situations of the two countries change, the friendship between China and Pakistan is as stable as always. No matter how geopolitical structure adjusts, the cooperation between China and Pakistan enjoys continuous development," he added.

He said that China-Pakistan relations showcased strong soundness, stability and persistence, which were not only conducive to both countries, but also increasingly becoming an anchor of regional peace and stability.

Mr Wang said China firmly supports Pakistan in defending its sovereignty and national dignity, its constant development and growth, and in fighting terrorism and safeguarding national security.

Source : <https://www.dawn.com/news/1403523/pakistan-china-pledge-to-work-for-regional-stability-through-sco>



# EDUCATION

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## Rescuing higher education By M Zeb Khan

If the fundamentals are wrong, window dressing will not save a system from crumbling under its own weight. Our higher education, founded on weak foundations and run on the basis of borrowed education models, seems to be taking the youth away from its promising future. There can be no greater harm than churning out degrees and research papers that have no substance or impact on society and economy. A few things need to be fixed before it is too late.

First, the existing criteria for selection of vice chancellors in public-sector universities is highly skewed in favour of professors with an academic background in mathematics and physical sciences such as physics,

chemistry, computer science and biotechnology, among others, because their research are published in journals that have impact. It is an established fact that social sciences and humanities can never come close to natural sciences in research output, given the different character and orientation of both the fields.

As a matter of tradition and fact, the role of vice chancellor has to do more with managing a university than producing research. Recently, two professors with PhDs in mathematics and but no administration expertise were appointed vice chancellors in two universities of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP). Those who had PhDs in management as well as considerable experience in administration were left out of the race owing to their low research profile.

Second, the way universities are ranked is problematic. Presently, the ranking is mainly based on documentary evidence vis-a-vis faculty, infrastructure and other facilities. Physical verification, performance audit and third-party confirmation of assertions contained in the documents are rarely done. It has been observed that many universities manipulate data to paint a glossy picture of their programmes and facilities just to appease the HEC and mint money. Although the HEC has closed some programmes over low quality and deficient infrastructure, there is

still more to be done to identify and do away with such institutions that act like vultures.

Third, the faculty's pay and promotion are linked primarily to their research output. Teaching, co-curricular or services to the university do not receive due recognition which, as a result of the law of effect, translates into goal displacement. Realising this, many professors are tempted to produce research papers (mostly published in low quality and paid journals) by all means – fair or foul. Some smart ones even produce more than 40 papers per annum. Incentivising research on the basis of quantity has virtually killed real scholarship. Genuine research requires inquisitiveness and intrinsic motivation to produce knowledge in any field. Digging out the dead from one graveyard and burying them in another hardly matters in research.

To top it all, the semester-based education system is not in sync with our socio-cultural context. It gives teachers too much autonomy on matters such as deciding the content of the courses, teaching methodology, paper-setting, and evaluation of students. This system assumes that teachers have impeccable integrity, recognised competence in their respective fields and have opted to join the teaching profession with missionary zeal.

Having been associated with this profession for the last 18 years, I have observed that unchecked autonomy has caused tremendous harm to the quality of teaching. Unwary of any independent external checks, most teachers tend to play with the system. To strike a balance between professional autonomy and independent evaluation, developing an indigenous model of higher education, with good features taken from both the conventional and semester systems, seems necessary.

Instead of the proverbial escalation of commitment, in which an individual or group despite persistently facing negative outcomes from some decision or action continues the same behaviour, the HEC should revisit some of the reforms that it introduced in 2002 and afterwards. There is no harm and shame in altering a course that only makes the journey problematic and distances you from destiny.

Source : <https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/304110-rescuing-higher-education>

## Education for trans people |Editorial

For the subcontinent's transgender community, this right was eroded by the ethnocentrism of the British Raj that codified their status in 1871 as a 'criminal tribe' inherently 'addicted' to crime.

In many ways, our nation has yet to correct this divergence from our tolerant roots to the systemic discrimination of trans Pakistanis.

There are glimmers of hope, however, and with it the hope that these glimmers could be signs of a broader commitment.

One such sign this week was the inauguration of Pakistan's first school for trans people in Lahore, with plans to open more schools in Karachi and Islamabad.

The school is dedicated to providing education from primary level to matriculation, and technical and vocational training, for trans people of all ages — a welcome step to ensure that adults, too, can access education hitherto denied to them, and with it the opportunity for gainful employment.

Such initiatives by civil society and NGOs deserve to be lauded, but should not lull our elected representatives into complacency.

The existence of specialised private services is an indictment of their failure to ensure trans Pakistanis' access to mainstream public services.

The task of righting the wrongs of our colonial past — and enabling trans Pakistanis to move out of the margins and into the mainstream — requires progressive codification of its own.

Last month, the Senate passed such legislation in the form of the Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Bill, 2017.

The bill defines a trans person as anyone who self-identifies as having non-binary gender, and that any such person has inalienable fundamental rights, including the right to free and compulsory education as per Article 25-A of the Constitution.

This is affirmatively guaranteed through anti-discrimination provisions, admission quotas in both public and private higher education institutes, and supplementary vocational training programmes.

Its passage in the National Assembly and enactment by the president must be expedited before it is allowed to lapse upon parliament's dissolution.

source :<https://www.dawn.com/news/1402275/education-for-trans-people>

# Higher education and HEC By Dr S Zulfiqar Gilani

After extensive research, consultation and deliberation, the Task Force on the Improvement of higher education made some fundamental and radical recommendations for the higher education reform. Most importantly, it rightly concluded that the goal of reforming higher education can be best achieved by upgrading and academically strengthening higher education institutions. It further recognised that universities will need technical and other support to reform and raise their academic quality.

The HEC, established in 2002, has made some useful contributions to higher education. However, overall its performance in terms of improvement in the quality of higher education has been underwhelming, with performance of our universities being lacklustre and the overall quality of the graduates being poor.

From the outset the dictatorial, all-knowing attitude towards the universities was a warning sign that the HEC has morphed into a typical Pakistani public-sector bureaucratic institution, with many of their unfortunate characteristics. Its functioning is characterised by unilateralism and regulation. It initiates change/s and implements them without any meaningful consultation with stakeholders and almost exclusively through diktat. Consequently, the autonomy and institutional strength of universities has been eroding and self-initiated internal reform is now close to non-existent in any university.

The HEC needs to be a resource that fosters and facilitates the strengthening of universities, and not just a regulatory authority. An absolutely necessary first step would be a paradigm shift in the power-relationship/s between the HEC and universities, as well as between the federal HEC and provincial HECs. It needs to move away from regulation and towards reforms primarily through cooperative partnerships. Universities can only be strengthened when with the support and cooperation of the HEC they themselves initiate and take forward a process of ongoing reform, systemic institutional development and self-regulation.

The federal one seems to have adopted an adversarial stance towards provincial ones and is engaged in some unnecessary battles. Given the 18th Amendment

and the ever-increasing number of universities in each province, provincial HECs are the need of the hour. The federal HEC can contribute to the establishment and functioning of the provincial ones such that they can reform higher education in their provinces. That can be achieved by the federal HEC engaging with the provincial ones to agree on defining strategic and operational boundaries, ensure dovetailing of work and develop synergies through sharing of resources and mutual learning.

Besides the aforesaid, the strategic priorities, institutional systems and modes of operation of the HEC also need to be revamped and streamlined, so that it can achieve its purposes in a more efficient, purpose-oriented and cost-effective manner.

The key performance indicator of a university, and by that token the federal HEC and provincial HECs, is improvement in the quality of the university graduates. The goal is that our universities produce graduates who have well-rounded knowledge, well-developed critical thinking abilities, an evidence-based habit of mind, the attitude and habit of lifelong learning, well-developed civic sense and citizenship qualities and the requisite knowledge and skills to contribute to economic, social and human development. Such a cohort of graduates will bring huge tangible academic, economic and social benefits, and a host of intangible benefits.

Our higher education system, universities and indeed the HEC itself are bedevilled by numerous complex problems and difficult challenges at the policy, systems and operational levels. These challenges can only be addressed with a re-envisioned and functionally improved HEC, which can in turn take forward a process whereby the provincial HECs, universities and the academic community themselves become champions and practitioners of higher education reform and transformation.

Source : <https://tribune.com.pk/story/1688096/6-higher-education-hec/>

# Right to education without discrimination By Naumana Suleman

In March 2018, The UN Human Rights Council adopted the outcome report of Pakistan's third Universal Periodic Review (UPR). The Pakistani government accepted 168 out of the 289 recommendations it received from the UN member states, while 117 recommendations were 'noted' and four were rejected. Several recommendations that Pakistan accepted and noted, call for an end to all forms of discrimination against minorities. Recommendations 87, 148, 149, 224 and 225 in particular, call to ensure that all children enjoy a right to education without discrimination and protection of freedom of religion or belief of religious minorities.

Besides this, during Pakistan's review in 2016, the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child showed serious concern over the discriminatory hate material in school textbooks against religious minorities. The said committee in its recommendation number 31 strongly urged Pakistan to protect freedom of religion of all children, including children from minority groups. The committee also recommended the removal of all derogatory statements about religious minorities from school textbooks and the promotion of tolerance, non-discrimination and human rights. Pakistan has a binary obligation to adhere with the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the recommendations by its committee, first as a state party to the convention and second as a beneficiary of the European Union's Generalized Scheme of Preferences Plus (GSP+) status.

Conversely, the 2009 education policy which is currently in use, contravenes the international treaties to which Pakistan is a state party. For instance, Article 14 and 29 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, guaranteeing freedom of religion to every child in member states and the development of child's personality in the spirit of understanding, peace, tolerance and equality among all peoples. The said policy also infringes Article 13 (1 and 3) of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, and Article 18 (4) of International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights guaranteeing religious freedom and religious education to children in conformity with their parents' convictions. Besides this, the 2009 education policy violates Articles 20, 22, 25 and 36 of the Constitution of Pakistan, which guarantee freedom of religion,

safeguards at educational institutions in respect of religion, equality among citizens and protection of minorities, respectively. The proposed education policy 2017 also overlooks the constitutional guarantees under Articles 22, 26 and 36 about safeguards against discrimination in educational institutions with respect to religion and rights of religious minorities.

Our textbooks carry material biased against minority religions, which create negative feelings about them among Muslim students, resulting in incidents of violence

Prohibition of religious discrimination is enshrined in the constitution of Pakistan as well as international human rights law. However, the education policy and textbooks in Pakistan are discriminatory on the basis of religion, particularly on four counts.

First, textbooks carry material biased against minority religions, which create negative feelings about them among Muslim students, resulting in several incidents of violence. One example is the killing of Sharoon Masih in Vehari in 2017 by his fellow students. This hateful propaganda in the syllabus is among the major causes of growing religious intolerance in society, and diminishes the probability of peaceful coexistence. Hence, it is imperative that besides removing hate material from syllabi, appropriate material should be included in the curriculum to promote a culture of religious and social tolerance. For instance, the role of religious minorities in the creation and progress of Pakistan and Quaid-e-Azam's speech to the constituent assembly on August 11, 1947. In addition, teachers' training, the school environment and co-curricular activities should be designed to maintain respect for all religious traditions, values and acceptance for religious diversity in Pakistan. In order to promote peace and a culture of religious and social tolerance in Pakistan, a swift and comprehensive implementation of the Supreme Court's judgment of June 19, 2014 would be a step in the right direction.

Second, the option for minority students to study ethics in lieu of Islamic studies is impractical. Islamic studies is a compulsory subject for Muslim students at school and college levels, and most of the minority students are forced to study Islamiyat, due to fear of enhanced discrimination against them during examination marking. This discrimination can be addressed through an arrangement to



ensure that minority students can study their own religions as a substitute for Islamiat and Nazrah.

Thirdly, besides Islamiat, the curriculum of subjects such as history and social studies also contain a significant amount of Islam related topics. Students belonging to religious minorities have to study these topics to pass as well. To end this discrimination, religion related topics should be limited to religious studies only, and should not extend to other subjects.

Fourthly, a Hafiz-e-Quran (one who has learnt Quran by heart) is eligible for 10-20 extra marks for admissions in professional colleges and jobs at the Public Service Commission since 1992. However, no such provision is established for the minority students for learning their own religion. It is best to do away with this provision completely to ensure equality of opportunity.

In order to increase access to education at all levels, under the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) number four of 'Quality Education', the Federal and Provincial governments should keep in view the socio-economic marginality of the religious minorities, and introduce a five percent education quota for admissions for the minority students, especially in public colleges, universities and technical training institutes. This initiative would also be helpful for the successful implementation of the five percent job quota policy for religious minorities.

Exclusion of religious discrimination from the education policy and curriculum is a prerequisite to ensuring quality education in Pakistan, which can be achieved through adherence to the constitutional guarantees under Articles 20, 22, 25 and 36, and the international human rights law.

Source : <https://dailytimes.com.pk/229458/right-to-education-without-discrimination/>

## WORLD

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# The Right Way to Coerce North Korea By Victor Cha and Katrin Fraser Katz

### Ending the Threat Without Going to War

When it comes to North Korea, U.S. President Donald Trump's policies have been whiplash inducing. On February 23, he appeared to be gearing up for a conflict when he said that if sanctions against Pyongyang didn't work, Washington would have to move to "phase two," which could be "very, very unfortunate for the world." But just two weeks later, Trump abruptly changed course and accepted an invitation to meet with North Korean leader Kim Jong Un—a decision that caught even his own White House and State Department by surprise.

Trump's newfound enthusiasm for diplomacy has temporarily lowered the temperature on the Korean Peninsula, but it also underlines a bigger question: Does the United States have a strategy for North Korea, or are these twists and turns merely the whims of a temperamental president? In the past, rash and uninformed decisions by U.S. officials on the peninsula—such as acquiescing to Japan's occupation of Korea in 1905 and excluding Korea from the U.S. Cold War defense perimeter in 1950—have had grave consequences. The United States cannot afford a similar outcome today.

Trump's unpredictability has had some upsides. His self-proclaimed "madman" behavior may have played a role in bringing the North Koreans to the table, and the Trump administration's policy of applying, in the White House's words, "maximum pressure" has yielded some impressive results. An unprecedented summit between the U.S. and North Korean leaders could indeed bring lasting peace to Asia. But it could also go wrong: if negotiations fail, the administration might conclude that a military strike is the only way forward, greatly increasing the chance of war.

The Trump administration must ground its summit diplomacy and overall approach to North Korea in a strategy of comprehensive coercion that clearly defines U.S. objectives, leverages Washington's most effective diplomatic and military tools, and aligns its Korea policy with the broader U.S. strategy in Asia. Failure to do this would only benefit Kim and increase the likelihood that the United States will get "played," as Trump has characterized past negotiations. After a year of saber rattling, and with North Korea likely to be just months away from possessing the capability to launch a nuclear attack on the continental United States, the stakes could hardly be higher. In the not unlikely event that talks break down, the United States will need a strategy that prevents the parties from sliding into a disastrous war.

## WHIPLASH

During Trump's first year in office, North Korea conducted more than twice as many ballistic missile tests (20) as it did during the first year of Barack Obama's presidency (8). The result was a constant exchange of recriminations between the United States and North Korea. After North Korea tested its first intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM), in July, Trump promised to rain "fire and fury" on Pyongyang. After North Korea threatened a nuclear attack on "the heart of the U.S.," Trump's national security adviser hinted that a preventive attack was becoming increasingly likely. Meanwhile, rumors swirled that the Joint Chiefs of Staff and U.S. Pacific Command were drawing up plans for a limited military strike to give Kim a "bloody nose." Combined, we have decades of experience working on this problem, and one of us, Victor Cha, was once under consideration for U.S. ambassador to South Korea, before the Trump administration withdrew his candidacy. Never before have we witnessed more discussion about possible military escalation than in the past year.

But 2018 has brought a dramatic shift. The government of South Korean President Moon Jae-in, who is much more open to engagement with North Korea than his predecessor, decided to capitalize on what it perceived as toned-down language in Kim's New Year's address. In January, it achieved a reopening of the long-suspended inter-Korean dialogue channels and facilitated an all-expenses-paid invitation for the North Korean team to attend the Winter Olympics in Pyeongchang. While briefing Trump on the phone about these developments, Moon recalled Trump's campaign pledge to have a hamburger with Kim.

Ultimately, Moon managed to elicit a promise from Trump to consider meeting the North Korean leader—a message that Seoul dutifully conveyed to Pyongyang. At the Olympics, despite exchanging little more than icy stares with U.S. Vice President Mike Pence, Kim's younger sister presented a letter to Moon that suggested her brother's interest in improving relations with the United States.

In early March, shortly after the Olympics concluded, Kim warmly welcomed a group of South Korean envoys to Pyongyang, led by the South Korean national security adviser, Chung Eui-yong. After two days of meetings, Kim agreed to cross into the South for an inter-Korean summit by the end of April. He also promised a moratorium on missile and nuclear testing contingent on dialogue with the United States. According to the South Koreans, Kim said that the “denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula” was possible if the U.S. threat to his country were removed.

Not to be outdone, on March 8, Trump scrapped his daily White House schedule to host the South Korean national security adviser in the Oval Office soon after his delegation landed at Dulles Airport (Chung was supposed to brief the president on his recent North Korean trip the next day). Trump called for an immediate summit with Kim (which he was eventually persuaded to push to May) and, in a dramatic moment recalling his television show *The Apprentice*, made an impromptu visit to the White House briefing room to tease an imminent “major announcement” on North Korea, which he later let the South Koreans deliver in front of the West Wing. Shortly afterward, he conveyed his enthusiasm for diplomacy in a flurry of optimistic tweets.

## WINGING IT

The South Korean government deserves credit for turning an impending crisis into an opportunity. It is possible that a face-to-face meeting between Kim and Trump, who are both fond of making surprise decisions, could bring progress on one of the world's most dangerous problems. But it is easier to understand Seoul's and Pyongyang's motives for engaging in diplomacy than Washington's. For South Korea, the imminent threat of North Korean aggression during the Winter Olympics, as well as long-term concerns about a renewed campaign of

North Korean missile and nuclear tests after the conclusion of the Paralympics in late March, made engineering some form of détente a strategic imperative.

Meanwhile, North Korea's apparent change of heart likely stems from the economic bite of Trump's maximum-pressure campaign, which has cut oil imports and coal exports, dried up hard-currency inflows, and made commodity prices spike in the country. According to Trump administration officials, the sanctions have caused North Korean gas prices to triple and have reduced the country's exports by more than \$2.7 billion. Today, paper is so scarce in the North that the state-run newspaper has been forced to cut its circulation. There have even been reports in South Korean media that North Korea used telephones, rather than global VSAT communications, to speak with South Korean air traffic controllers when coordinating the arrival of high-level North Korean delegations for the Olympics, since the state had lost access to satellite networks after defaulting on payments. The news that the Trump administration was seriously considering a military strike may also have contributed to this turnaround. But Kim also has other motivations for reengaging. A pause in weapons testing at this point would do little to set back Pyongyang's nuclear program. Moreover, a meeting with Trump would give the rogue leader the all-important recognition that he craves and, depending on what Trump relinquished in exchange for a freeze in North Korea's weapons testing and development, could advance the North's long-standing goal of getting the United States to accept the country as a nuclear power.

What about the United States? Although there is an internal logic to North and South Korean actions, inconsistencies abound in the U.S. approach. After spending most of 2017 discussing military options, the administration backpedaled in January and denied that such plans even existed. Officials have said that the sanctions campaign is designed to compel the North Korean regime to return to the negotiating table, but the amount of attention Trump's National Security Council and State Department have paid to preparing for negotiations pales in comparison to the considerable effort devoted to developing sanctions and military strike options. The administration's diplomatic strategy to date has amounted to little more than a list of don'ts: don't reward talks, don't let up on sanctions, don't make the mistakes of past administrations.

Furthermore, because Trump has jettisoned the interagency process, which brings in experts and policymakers from across the U.S. government to advise the president, negotiations will occur amid ominous conditions. Trump will be flying blind into meetings with Kim, acting on little more than his gut instincts, without the advice of experienced foreign policy and Asian affairs experts, who would undoubtedly counsel him to avoid verbose but meaningless summit statements and to press Kim on making tangible steps toward denuclearization. Meanwhile, the North Koreans are probably only a few tests away from gaining the capacity to reach the continental United States with nuclear-tipped ICBMs. The moratorium on testing that Pyongyang offered the South Korean envoys will merely maintain the status quo. Since the pause is contingent on talks, Pyongyang will be able to resume testing the day the talks end, and it will likely continue covertly working on its programs all the while. Finally, there is no reason to believe that North Korea has changed its long-standing aims of achieving recognition as a nuclear power, ejecting U.S. forces from South Korea, and undermining the U.S. defense commitment to South Korea.

To counter these negotiating traps, Trump might offer incremental energy and economic assistance and sanctions alleviation in exchange for a freeze in and the eventual dismantlement of North Korea's nuclear weapons and long-range ICBM programs. North Korea's missile program, in particular, has not been the topic of negotiations in almost two decades, and Trump could score a victory on this count. Or he might choose a bolder path that would put much bigger carrots on the table, including the normalization of relations or even a peace treaty formally ending the Korean War. It would be ironic if Trump, an avowed hawk on North Korea, adopted an approach to diplomacy that doves have advocated for years, but it is not out of the question.

## WHAT TRUMP SHOULD DO

Regardless of how talks do or do not play out, the United States must base its policy going forward on a set of sound principles. North Korea's effort to develop nuclear missiles capable of reaching the United States demands an urgent response. Past behavior suggests that Kim will try to share these weapons with other states and nonstate actors. Down the road, he might use them in an attempt to intimidate the United States into offering concessions or even withdrawing its troops from South Korea, which would leave the country

vulnerable to an invasion. More broadly, North Korea's acquisition of these weapons, if left unchecked, could undermine the global nonproliferation regime. The United States must keep North Korean denuclearization at the top of its strategic priorities. Accepting North Korea as a nuclear power and building a new relationship from that basis would legitimize its pursuit of nuclear weapons and send a dangerous signal to other countries that are considering starting their own programs.

Trump's pursuit of a diplomatic solution has the best chance of success if it is bolstered by a strategy that ramps up the regional and international pressure on North Korea. The Trump administration's approach to North Korea thus far has involved swings between confrontation and engagement without a clear link to broader U.S. strategic objectives in the region. A comprehensive coercive strategy for denuclearization diplomacy would build on the strengths of the maximum-pressure campaign while more fully leveraging the support and resources of regional allies and partners in pursuing shared long-term goals. This strategy would involve five key components.

Trump's pursuit of a diplomatic solution has the best chance of success if it is bolstered by a strategy that ramps up the regional and international pressure on North Korea.

First, Washington must continue to strengthen the global coalition that it has mustered in its highly successful sanctions program. Unlike the so-called smart sanctions campaign 13 years ago, Trump's effort has the backing of ten UN Security Council resolutions, which grant the United States virtually unlimited authority to punish violators. Moreover, compliance with the sanctions has increased because the Trump administration is more willing than past administrations to share intelligence information with third parties to help them stop sanctioned activities in their countries.

Second, the United States should buttress this sanctions campaign with a statement on nonproliferation. This message should signal unambiguously to North Korea and any recipients or facilitators of its nuclear weapons that the United States will hold accountable any state, group, or individual found to be complicit in a transfer of nuclear material—if necessary, through the use of force.

Third, the United States must upgrade its alliances with Japan and South Korea. Militarily, that means improving capabilities regarding integrated missile defense, intelligence sharing, antisubmarine warfare, and conventional strike missiles to deter North Korean threats. The political scientists Michael Green and Matthew Kroenig have outlined a useful wish list: adding more missile defense systems in the region, deploying B-1 and B-2 bombers to new locations, undertaking cyber-operations to impede North Korea's missile program development, and encouraging South Korea to purchase shorter-range missile defense systems (similar to Israel's Iron Dome) to defend against North Korean artillery. The United States should also remain open to additional conventional strike capabilities for Japan and South Korea, the use of which would require U.S. sign-off.

At the political level, the United States should push for a joint statement with Japan and South Korea that pledges that an attack on one will be treated as an attack on all. Affirming collective defense is important because North Korea's long-term strategy is to decouple South Korea's security from Japan's and the United States'. Indeed, one of the purposes of North Korea's long-range missile tests last year was to reduce South Korea's confidence in the U.S. commitment to deterring an attack against South Korea and raise doubts in Japan and the United States about their willingness to trade Tokyo or Los Angeles for Seoul in the event of war. In order to convey a clear deterrent message to Pyongyang, the collective-defense statement should commit all three allies to the use of force in response to a North Korean attack.

These military and political measures should be complemented by diplomatic and economic strategies that treat U.S. alliances more holistically. For example, the United States should approach updates and adjustments to the existing free-trade agreement with South Korea or U.S.–South Korean defense cost-sharing negotiations with an awareness that tension in one area of these relationships can make progress elsewhere more difficult, if not impossible, particularly if the Japanese public or the South Korean public is paying attention and anti-U.S. sentiment has been rallied.

Although the North Korea problem is immediate, the longer-term strategic competitor in Asia is China, whose challenge to U.S. preeminence has been augmented by Russia's spoiler role across the globe. Bolstering U.S. alliances



would strengthen Washington's hand against these threats, as well, by significantly improving military defense capabilities, counterproliferation efforts, and diplomatic coordination among U.S. allies and partners in East Asia. Reinforcing the U.S. military posture in the region would also increase the costs to China and Russia of subsidizing the Kim regime, not complying with sanctions, or undertaking other problematic behavior.

Fourth, although Washington may seek an assurance from Pyongyang that it will not proliferate, the Trump administration must also push for the establishment of a counterproliferation coalition that shares intelligence about maritime nuclear smuggling and cooperates on law enforcement. Japan's and South Korea's port authorities, coast guards, and navies, along with the United States' considerable assets, should work together to prevent nuclear material from leaving the country. Most of this enforcement activity would likely take place in ports, but the allies should be prepared to carry out interceptions at sea as needed. The United States should also approach China and Russia about the possibility of building a five-party counterproliferation regime in Northeast Asia. Beijing and Moscow should see benefits to stopping any North Korean loose nukes, but if they are not willing to participate, then they should be prepared to face the diplomatic and economic consequences of allowing North Korean proliferation across their borders.

Finally, the United States must continue preparing both diplomatic and military plans for North Korea. This is critical to, on the one hand, upholding deterrence against Pyongyang and, on the other, creating a credible off-ramp for the regime. Washington should maintain its existing high-tempo military exercises in the region, preposition ammunition stocks for a possible conflict, and rotate strategic assets such as B-52 bombers, stealth warplanes, nuclear submarines, and aircraft carriers regularly to the peninsula. All these steps should prevent North Korea from spreading its nuclear weapons, threatening the United States, or taking offensive actions in the region.

Given the limited amount of time to prepare for a Kim-Trump summit, the meeting is unlikely to bear immediate fruit beyond some grandiose statements about a normalization of relations, a peaceful end to the Korean War armistice, and denuclearization, statements that the leaders would then authorize their governments to begin negotiations over. This outcome would itself be significant,

but it should not lead to a lifting of sanctions unless North Korea backs up its promises with actions.

Whether the summit succeeds or not, the United States must move beyond broad statements and invite Pyongyang to reiterate the denuclearization pledges it made during the six-party talks in 2005 and 2007. The documents outlining these pledges are the only place where North Korea has ever been forced to dump its noncommittal and vague formulations about a “nuclear-free peninsula” in favor of specific and written commitments to “abandoning all nuclear weapons and existing nuclear programs.” These agreements are also of value to North Korea (and China) because they state that the United States will not attack North Korea with conventional or nuclear weapons, the only written security assurance that addresses North Korean concerns about “hostile” U.S. policy. Washington should also compel the regime to improve its human rights record as a good-faith demonstration of the authenticity of its diplomatic intentions. North Korea will undoubtedly have its own long list of wants, but for the United States, the summit must establish zero tolerance for any plutonium- or uranium-based nuclear weapons stockpiles or the deployment of long- or intermediate-range ballistic missiles and call for substantial reductions in the stocks of short-range ones. Absent the preservation of these core security interests, neither summit diplomacy nor working-level agreements will be worth much.

Following this overall strategy would enhance the credibility of Washington’s negotiating position, while also securing U.S. interests in the event of failure. Broadly speaking, comprehensive coercion would get the United States out of crisis management mode and demonstrate U.S. resolve without unnecessarily risking war. It would also strengthen U.S. alliances in Asia for the long term, directly address the proliferation threat, increase the costs to those who subsidize Pyongyang, and complement the United States’ regional commitments.

## WHAT NOT TO DO

When it comes to North Korea, the only American voice that really matters is Trump’s. By agreeing to meet with Kim, Trump has improved his media ratings, but he has also inadvertently increased the chances of war. If his latest diplomatic gamble doesn’t pay off, the administration may come away from negotiations more determined to use the military option.

Indeed, even amid talk of negotiations, some senior officials in the Trump administration have continued to contemplate using a limited military strike to prevent North Korea's development of a long-range nuclear missile. The rationale is that a strike on North Korea's nuclear and missile facilities, perhaps after its next test, would give Kim a "bloody nose" painful enough to compel him to begin the process of denuclearization, but not so damaging as to start a wider war on the peninsula.

The logic behind a limited military strike is that North Korea will be undeterrable once it acquires the ability to hit the continental United States with a nuclear weapon—because the regime is unpredictable, economically desperate, and has used chemical weapons against a civilian target as recently as last year. If Kim can strike the continental United States, the argument goes, then Washington will not be able to prevent nuclear proliferation or nuclear blackmail. A strike would constitute an immediate, decisive action to prevent that outcome. It would also demonstrate the capability and willingness of the United States to employ all options to stop North Korea's nuclear program, a message that would no doubt resonate beyond the region.

Yet this logic is flawed. If Kim would be undeterrable if he had nuclear weapons able to reach the continental United States, then why would a limited military strike deter him from responding in kind? And if Kim did respond militarily, then how could the United States prevent the crisis from escalating given that Kim would have just proved himself not to have a clear and rational understanding of signals and deterrence?

Some Americans argue that the risks are worth taking because it's better that people die "over there" than at home. That, too, is a misguided sentiment. On any given day, there are 230,000 Americans living in South Korea and another 90,000 or so in Japan. Evacuating them would be almost impossible. The largest American evacuation in history was about 60,000 from Saigon in 1975. An evacuation from South Korea would be infinitely more difficult. Even if the State Department tripled the number of consular officers in South Korea, the process would likely take months. Moreover, the normal evacuation points south and east of the peninsula would not be feasible to use in a war scenario because of the North Korean missile threat, which would mean that the only way out would be

through China. But in a crisis, the waterways around the peninsula would be clogged with a million Chinese seeking to leave, as well.

Under a rain of North Korean artillery, American citizens in the region would most likely have to hunker down until the war ended. Although those in Japan might be protected by U.S. missile defense systems, the U.S. population in South Korea would not be as lucky. To be clear: by launching a preventive strike, the president would be putting at risk an American population the size of that of Cincinnati or Pittsburgh, not to mention millions of South Koreans and Japanese, all based on the unproven assumption that an undeterrable and unpredictable dictator would be cowed into submission by a demonstration of U.S. power. Trump cannot solve the problem of a nuclear North Korea with a preventive military strike.

Some may argue that U.S. casualties and even a wider war on the peninsula are worth risking if a preventive strike would preserve the post–World War II regional and international order in the long term. But this proposition is highly problematic. A military strike would only delay, not stop, Kim’s missile and nuclear programs. Washington does not know where all of North Korea’s nuclear installations are, and even if it did, many are hidden deep underground and in the side of mountains, beyond the reach of even large “bunker buster” weapons. Furthermore, a limited strike would not stem the threat of proliferation. In fact, it would only exacerbate it, turning what might be a moneymaking endeavor for the Kim regime into a vengeful effort to equip actors arrayed against the United States.

This strategy also risks fracturing the impressive coalition that the Trump administration has brought together for its maximum-pressure campaign. A unilateral military attack would undercut what has so far been a successful bid to deplete the currency reserves North Korea has been using to build its programs. Finally, a strike could harm key U.S. alliances. Japan and South Korea insist that they must be consulted before the United States considers a strike. Going it alone is always an option, but doing so could fracture, if not end, the very alliances that the Trump administration has declared it seeks to strengthen in the face of a rising China.

Ultimately, Trump cannot solve the problem of a nuclear North Korea with a preventive military strike. This assessment is widely shared by former members of the intelligence community, the National Security Council, the State Department, and the Defense Department who served in both Democratic and Republican administrations. As Steve Bannon, Trump's former chief strategist, put it in an interview: "Until somebody solves the part of the equation that shows me that ten million people in Seoul don't die in the first 30 minutes . . . there's no military solution here, they got us."

## THE BEST OF LOUSY CHOICES

Going forward, Washington should build on the maximum-pressure campaign, embed negotiations in a broader regional strategy, and forgo a military strike in favor of new efforts to strengthen regional deterrence and counterproliferation through close cooperation with U.S. allies. Such a strategy could deliver the same potential benefits as a limited strike without the costs. And if the Kim-Trump summit fails, it could also keep the two countries from immediately going to war.

China and Russia would not like this approach, but from their perspective, it is preferable to a military strike, which could lead to a U.S.–North Korean nuclear exchange in their neighborhood. Moreover, few states, including China, are comfortable with the proliferation risk posed by a nuclear North Korea. In fact, under this strategy, China and Russia may decide to participate in counterproliferation efforts or even in an enduring multilateral security institution. Some in the global community fear that China and North Korea could frame certain actions, such as an embargo to prevent proliferation, as an act of war. To counter this, the United States and its allies should, to the extent possible, seek legal authorization for their actions through UN Security Council resolutions keyed to the next set of North Korean provocations or to proliferation.

Doves may argue that this strategy would generate insecurity in Pyongyang that would further justify the regime's pursuit of weapons. They may think that a better alternative would be to throw a diplomatic Hail Mary—as Trump may well do—such as declaring peace on the peninsula and pulling U.S. troops out of South Korea. Over the long term, a peace treaty might be possible, but first, the facts on the ground must change. The regime's intention to pursue nuclear-tipped

ICBMs presents grave new threats to the U.S. homeland and allies in the region that must be addressed. The pressure of sanctions must be maintained, but that doesn't mean there is no room for subtlety in efforts to shape North Korean behavior. The sanctions campaign, if handled carefully, might be designed to target the regime while leaving space for market development, information dissemination, and humanitarian assistance among ordinary people. Still, a Hail Mary without tangible North Korean actions toward denuclearization might be great for TV ratings, but it would also give Kim what he wants (nuclear recognition) while offering the United States nothing but empty promises.

Finally, critics might argue that a strategy of comprehensive coercion would simply take too much time, and time only plays into North Korea's hands as the country continues its nuclear sprint. This critique is not unwarranted; in recent decades, sensitive historical and domestic issues have hampered Japanese–South Korean military cooperation, which could impede defense planning among U.S. allies. In the past, however, crises involving North Korea have led to security cooperation between Japan and South Korea in a timely and prompt fashion. In addition, although the push for a Kim-Trump summit is dramatic, it may have shifted the play to a longer game, as bold statements by leaders who love flair and drama will have to be translated into action by policy minions in painstaking detail over weeks and months, if not years. The United States should use this time to invest in its alliances and strengthen its position in the region.

Coordinating and developing the capabilities needed for security cooperation with Japan and South Korea will take time, but it will put the United States in a better position in the long run. It's important to distinguish between strategy and tactics. Tactical responses are always possible in the near term, but tactics without a strategy can lead one down undesirable paths. As former U.S. Deputy Secretary of Defense John Hamre has argued, recent U.S. claims that “time has run out,” which were designed to pressure the North Koreans, have only pushed Washington further into a corner, under pressure to carry out a threatened military attack, and they have done nothing to advance a strategy outlining what the United States should be doing before, during, and after any negotiations.

In the land of lousy options, no plan is perfect. But some are demonstrably better than others. A comprehensive coercion strategy for denuclearization diplomacy would significantly increase the pressure on North Korea. It would strengthen

U.S. alliances in Asia against threats not just from North Korea but also from China and increase the costs to Beijing of subsidizing the Kim regime. It would not risk hundreds of thousands of American lives with a preventive military attack. And it would strengthen the United States' hand at the negotiating table in a way that primed Washington for success, but also prepared it for failure.

Source : <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/north-korea/2018-04-01/right-way-coerce-north-korea?cid=int-fls&pgtype=hpg>

# Has a New Cold War Really Begun By Odd

**Arne Westad**

Why the Term Shouldn't Apply to Today's Great-Power Tensions

For about four years now, since Russia's occupation of Crimea and China's launch of the Belt and Road Initiative, there has been much speculation about whether another Cold War between East and West is coming. In the last month alone, headlines have proclaimed that "The New Cold War Is Here," heralded "Putin's New Cold War," and warned that "Trump Is Preparing for a New Cold War." But are we really returning to the past? Contemporary politics is full of false analogies, and the return of the Cold War seems to be one of them.

At its peak, the Cold War was a global system of countries centered on the United States and the Soviet Union. It did not determine everything that was going on in the world of international affairs, but it influenced most things. At its core was an ideological contest between capitalism and socialism that had been going on throughout the twentieth century, with each side fervently dedicated to its system of economics and governance. It was a bipolar system of total victory or total defeat, in which neither of the main protagonists could envisage a lasting compromise with the other. The Cold War was intense, categorical, and highly dangerous: strategic nuclear weapons systems were intended to destroy the superpower opponent, even at a cost of devastating half the world.

Today's international affairs are in large part murky and challenging, but they are a far cry from Cold War absolutes. Calling twenty-first-century great-power tensions a new Cold War therefore obscures more than it reveals. It is a kind of terminological laziness that equates the conflicts of yesteryear, which most analysts happen to know well, with what takes place today. Although many echoes and remnants of the Cold War are still with us, the determinants and conduct of international affairs have changed.

Although many echoes and remnants of the Cold War are still with us, the determinants and conduct of international affairs have changed.



Russia's truculent and obstructionist foreign policy under President Vladimir Putin comes from a sense of having lost the Cold War in the 1980s and having suffered the consequences of the defeat in the 1990s. Many Russians hold the West responsible for the chaos and decay that befell their country under Boris Yeltsin's presidency. They miss the respect that the Soviet Union got as the other superpower (even though few miss the dreariness of the Soviet state itself). They cherish a strong president who, they believe, has given Russia its self-respect back by sticking it to the West as often as possible, just as they welcome the inner stability that they believe Putin has given Russia.

China, on the other hand, believes that its unprecedented economic growth has given it the status of a predominant power in the region—it is no longer a pawn for others as it was during the Cold War. If the Cold War was holding China back, then the post-Cold War era has set China free to act on its own behalf, as many Chinese believe. Meanwhile, Communist Party leaders are obsessively studying how the Soviet Union collapsed, in order to avoid a similar fate for their country. China (and everyone else) has inherited the North Korea imbroglio from the Cold War, as well as a deep resentment of what most Chinese see as U.S. global hegemony.

On the U.S. side, the main echo of the Cold War is a sense—very prominent among President Donald Trump's voters, but also apparent elsewhere—that Washington has been taken advantage of by others. As the argument goes, throughout the Cold War, the United States delivered security on the cheap for the rest of the capitalist world while American allies helped themselves to U.S. money and jobs, giving little in return. Many U.S. voters feel that their country, having won the Cold War, gained next to nothing as a result. The current administration is thus shedding systemic responsibilities in favor of much narrower U.S. interests.

These are aspects of how the Cold War created the world we live in now. But today's international affairs have moved beyond the Cold War.

Bipolarity is gone. If there is any direction in international politics today, it is toward multipolarity. The United States is getting less powerful in international affairs. China is getting more powerful. Europe is stagnant. Russia is a

dissatisfied scavenger on the fringes of the current order. But other big countries such as India and Brazil are growing increasingly influential within their regions. Ideology is no longer the main determinant. China, Europe, India, Russia, and the United States disagree on many things, but not on the value of capitalism and markets. China and Russia are both authoritarian states that pretend to have representative governments. But neither is out to peddle their system to faraway places, as they did during the Cold War. Even the United States, the master promoter of political values, seems less likely to do so under Trump's "America first" agenda.

Nationalism is also on the rise. Having had a hard time reasserting itself after the ravages of two nationalist-fueled world wars and a Cold War that emphasized non-national ideologies, all great powers are now stressing identity and national interest as main features of international affairs. Cold War internationalists claimed that the national category would matter less and less. The post-Cold War era has proven them wrong. Nationalists have thrived on the wreckage of ideology-infused grand schemes for the betterment of humankind.

Whatever international system is being created at the moment, it is not a Cold War. It may turn out to be conflict-ridden and confrontational, but using "Cold War" as common denominator for everything we don't like makes no sense. Instead, we should try to understand how perceived lessons from the past influences thinking about the present. If we want to apply history to policymaking, we must learn to be as alert to differences as we are to analogies.

Source : <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/china/2018-03-27/has-new-cold-war-really-begun?cid=int-now&pgtype=hpg&region=br2>

# Why China Won't Rescue North Korea By Oriana Skylar Mastro

U.S. officials have long agreed with Mao Zedong's famous formulation about relations between China and North Korea: the two countries are like "lips and teeth." Pyongyang depends heavily on Beijing for energy, food, and most of its meager trade with the outside world, and so successive U.S. administrations have tried to enlist the Chinese in their attempts to denuclearize North Korea. U.S. President Donald Trump has bought into this logic, alternately pleading for Chinese help and threatening action if China does not do more. In the same vein, policymakers have assumed that if North Korea collapsed or became embroiled in a war with the United States, China would try to support its cherished client from afar, and potentially even deploy troops along the border to prevent a refugee crisis from spilling over into China.

But this thinking is dangerously out of date. Over the last two decades, Chinese relations with North Korea have deteriorated drastically behind the scenes, as China has tired of North Korea's insolent behavior and reassessed its own interests on the peninsula. Today, China is no longer wedded to North Korea's survival. In the event of a conflict or the regime's collapse, Chinese forces would intervene to a degree not previously expected—not to protect Beijing's supposed ally but to secure its own interests.

In the current cycle of provocation and escalation, understanding where China really stands on North Korea is not some academic exercise. Last July, North Korea successfully tested an intercontinental ballistic missile capable of reaching the United States' West Coast. And in September, it exploded a hydrogen bomb that was 17 times as powerful as the one dropped on Hiroshima. U.S. rhetoric, meanwhile, has inflamed the situation. Trump has mocked the North Korean leader Kim Jong Un as "Little Rocket Man," threatened that North Korea "won't be around much longer," and announced that "military solutions are now fully in place, locked and loaded." To back up these threats, the United States has brought its long-range bombers and naval vessels conspicuously close to North Korea.

The real possibility of chaos on the peninsula means that the United States needs to update its thinking about Beijing's motivations. In the event of an escalation, China will likely attempt to seize control of key terrain, including North Korea's nuclear sites. The large-scale presence of both American and Chinese troops on the Korean Peninsula would raise the risk of a full-blown war between China and the United States, something neither side wants. But given how weak Beijing's ties to Pyongyang are, and given China's own concerns about North Korea's nuclear program, the two great powers may find surprising common ground. With some forward thinking, the United States could lessen the risk of an accidental conflict and leverage Chinese involvement to reduce the costs and duration of a second Korean war.

## UPDATING THE RECORD

As the conventional wisdom has it, China is unwilling to push North Korea to denuclearize on account of its own insecurities. This thinking is based on three assumptions: that China and North Korea are allies, that China fears instability on the peninsula and the refugee problem that may result, and that Beijing needs North Korea to survive as a buffer state between China and South Korea, a key U.S. ally. These assumptions were true 20 years ago, but Beijing's views have evolved significantly since then.

China and North Korea long enjoyed a closeness born of mutual dependency. Just one year after the birth of the People's Republic of China, Beijing came to the assistance of its fledgling communist neighbor during the Korean War. To prevent future "aggression" against Pyongyang, the two signed a mutual defense pact in 1961. And when the end of the Cold War robbed North Korea of its Soviet benefactor, Beijing stepped in to provide economic and military assistance. But today, China and North Korea can hardly be characterized as friends, let alone allies. Chinese President Xi Jinping has never even met Kim, and according to Chinese scholars with government access or ties to the Chinese Communist Party, he despises the North Korean regime. The rumor in Chinese foreign policy circles is that even the Chinese ambassador in Pyongyang has not met Kim.

Xi has publicly stated that the 1961 treaty will not apply if North Korea provokes a conflict—a standard easily met. In my travels to China over the past decade to discuss the North Korean issue with academics, policymakers, and military officials, no one has ever brought up the treaty or a Chinese obligation to defend

North Korea. Instead, my Chinese colleagues tell me about the relationship's deterioration and Beijing's efforts to distance itself from Pyongyang, a change that a Global Times public opinion poll suggests enjoys wide support. As the Chinese scholar Zhu Feng has argued in *Foreign Affairs*, giving up North Korea would be domestically popular and strategically sound.

Understanding where China stands on North Korea is not some academic exercise.

In fact, the bilateral relationship has gotten so bad that officers in the People's Liberation Army (PLA) have suggested to me in private meetings that Beijing and Pyongyang may not take the same side in the event of a new Korean war. The Chinese military assumes that it would be opposing, not supporting, North Korean troops. China would get involved not to defend Kim's regime but to shape a post-Kim peninsula to its liking.

These policies have shifted alongside China's increasing confidence about its capabilities and regional influence. Chinese thinking is no longer dominated by fears of Korean instability and a resulting refugee crisis. The PLA's contingency planning previously focused on sealing the border or establishing a buffer zone to deal with refugees. Indeed, for decades, that was probably all Chinese forces could hope to achieve. But over the past 20 years, the Chinese military has evolved into a far more sophisticated force by modernizing its equipment and reforming its organizational structure. As a result, China now has the ability to simultaneously manage instability at its borders and conduct major military operations on the peninsula.

If Kim's regime collapsed, the People's Armed Police, which has approximately 50,000 personnel in China's northeastern provinces, would likely be in charge of securing the border and handling the expected influx of North Korean refugees, freeing up the PLA for combat operations further south. China currently has three "group armies" in the Northern Theater Command, one of the PLA's five theater commands, which borders North Korea. Each of these armies consists of 45,000 to 60,000 troops, plus army aviation and special forces brigades. And if it needed to, China could also pull forces from its Central Theater Command and mobilize the air force more extensively. When China reorganized its military regions into "war zones" in February 2016, it incorporated Shandong Province into its

Northern Theater Command, even though it is not contiguous with the rest of the command, most likely because military leaders would require access to the shoreline to deploy forces to North Korea by sea. The last two decades of military modernization and reform, along with China's geographic advantages, have ensured that the Chinese military would be capable of quickly occupying much of North Korea, before U.S. reinforcements could even deploy to South Korea to prepare for an attack.

In the past, part of what explained China's attachment to North Korea was the notion that the latter served as a buffer between China and a once hostile capitalist, and later democratic, South Korea. But China's increased power and clout have all but eliminated that rationale, too. Beijing may have previously been wary of a reunified Korea led by Seoul, but no longer. Some prominent Chinese scholars have begun to advocate abandoning Pyongyang in favor of a better relationship with Seoul. Even Xi has been surprisingly vocal about his support for Korean reunification in the long term, albeit through an incremental peace process. In a July 2014 speech at Seoul National University, Xi stated that "China hopes that both sides of the peninsula will improve their relations and support the eventual realization of an independent and peaceful reunification of the peninsula."

Still, the Chinese calculus on South Korea has not completely changed. Enthusiasm for reunification peaked between 2013 and 2015, when South Korean President Park Geun-hye prioritized bilateral relations with Beijing. But after a nuclear test in early 2016 by North Korea, Seoul reinforced its alliance with Washington and agreed to deploy THAAD, a ballistic missile defense system, causing consternation among Chinese officials that their charm offensive was not gaining enough traction. China's chief concern remains the prospect of U.S. forces in a reunified Korea. Although China still supports Korean reunification, it also wants to shape the terms. And its approach will likely depend on the status of its bilateral relationship with South Korea.

## WHAT CHINA REALLY WANTS

Given the costs of a war on the Korean Peninsula, U.S. planners have long thought that China would do everything it could to avoid becoming entangled in a major conflagration involving South Korean and U.S. forces. If China did

intervene, policymakers assumed that Beijing would limit its role to managing refugees close to the border or supporting the Kim regime from a distance through political, economic, and military aid. Either way, Washington believed that China's role would not significantly impact U.S. operations.

This is no longer a safe assumption. Instead, Washington must recognize that China will intervene extensively and militarily on the peninsula if the United States seems poised to move its forces north. This is not to say that China will take preemptive action. Beijing will still attempt to keep both sides from leading everyone down the path to war. Moreover, if an ensuing conflict were limited to an exchange of missile and air strikes, China would most likely stay out. But if its attempts to deter the United States from escalating the crisis to a major war failed, Beijing would not hesitate to send considerable Chinese forces into North Korea to ensure its interests were taken into account during and after the war.

China's likely strategic assertiveness in a Korean war would be driven largely by its concerns about the Kim regime's nuclear arsenal, an interest that would compel Chinese forces to intervene early to gain control over North Korea's nuclear facilities. In the words of Shen Zihua, a Chinese expert on North Korea, "If a Korean nuclear bomb explodes, who'll be the victim of the nuclear leakage and fallout? That would be China and South Korea. Japan is separated by a sea, and the United States is separated by the Pacific Ocean."

China is well positioned to deal with the threat. Based on information from the Nuclear Threat Initiative, a U.S. nonprofit, if Chinese forces moved 100 kilometers (about 60 miles) across the border into North Korea, they would control territory containing all of the country's highest-priority nuclear sites and two-thirds of its highest-priority missile sites. For Chinese leaders, the goal would be to avoid the spread of nuclear contamination, and they would hope that the presence of Chinese troops at these facilities would forestall a number of frightening scenarios: China could prevent accidents at the facilities; deter the United States, South Korea, or Japan from striking them; and block the North Koreans from using or sabotaging their weapons.

Beijing is also concerned that a reunified Korea might inherit the North's nuclear capabilities. My Chinese interlocutors seemed convinced that South Korea wants nuclear weapons and that the United States supports those ambitions. They fear that if the Kim regime falls, the South Korean military will seize the North's

nuclear sites and material, with or without Washington's blessing. Although this concern may seem far-fetched, the idea of going nuclear has gained popularity in Seoul. And the main opposition party has called for the United States to redeploy tactical nuclear weapons to the peninsula—an option that the Trump administration has been reluctant to rule out.

Beyond nuclear concerns, China's stance on North Korea has shifted as part of its more general geopolitical assertiveness under Xi. Unlike his predecessors, Xi is not shy about China's great-power ambitions. In a three-and-a-half-hour speech he gave in October, he described China as "a strong country" or "a great country" 26 times. That is a far cry from the dictum that one of his predecessors, Deng Xiaoping, preferred: "Hide your strength, bide your time." Under Xi, China is increasingly playing the role of a major power, and he has pushed for military reforms to ensure that the PLA can fight and win future wars.

China is no longer wedded to North Korea's survival.

Most important, a war on the Korean Peninsula would represent a litmus test of China's regional competition with the United States. Indeed, Chinese concerns about Washington's future influence best explain why China is unwilling to push North Korea to the degree that the Trump administration wants. China will not risk instability or war if the outcome could be a larger U.S. role in the region. Given this, China no longer feels comfortable sitting on the sidelines. As one PLA officer asked me, "Why should the United States be there but not us?" For this reason alone, Chinese scholars and military leaders argue, China will need to be involved in any contingency on the peninsula.

## WORKING TOGETHER

The bottom line, then, is that Washington should assume that any Korean conflict involving large-scale U.S. military operations will trigger a significant Chinese military intervention. That does not mean that the United States should try to deter China: such a response would almost certainly fail, and it would increase the chances of a direct military confrontation between Chinese and U.S. forces. Moves that could damage the relationship between Beijing and Washington would also impede contingency planning or coordination before and during a crisis, raising the risks of miscalculation.



Instead, Washington must recognize that some forms of Chinese intervention would actually be beneficial to its interests, especially with regard to nonproliferation. First and foremost, U.S. officials should note that Chinese forces are likely to make it to North Korea's nuclear sites long before U.S. forces, thanks to advantages in geography, force posture, manpower, and access to early warning indicators. That is a good thing, since it would reduce the likelihood that the collapsing regime in Pyongyang would use nuclear weapons against the United States or its allies. China could also prove helpful by identifying nuclear sites (with the assistance of U.S. intelligence), then securing and accounting for the nuclear material at those sites, and finally inviting international experts in to dismantle the weapons. The United States, meanwhile, could lead multilateral efforts to intercept North Korean nuclear materials at sea, in the air, or traveling overland and to guarantee their accounting, safe storage, and disposal.

More than anything, U.S. policymakers must shift their mindset to view China's involvement as an opportunity instead of as a constraint on U.S. operations. For example, the U.S. Army and the Marines must accept that although securing nuclear facilities is currently a key mission in North Korea in the event of a conflict, they will have to change their plans if the Chinese get there first.

At the political level, Washington must be willing to take greater risks to improve coordination with China in peacetime. This may mean bilateral consultation with Beijing, even though that would conflict with Seoul's preference to keep China at arm's length. Granted, sharing intelligence with China and jointly planning and training for contingencies would seem unnatural, since the United States is simultaneously engaged in a long-term strategic competition with China. The U.S. Defense Department considers China to be one of its top five global threats, along with Iran, North Korea, Russia, and extremist organizations. But strategic challenges and severe threats often bring together potential adversaries, and rightfully so. With North Korea out of the way, the United States would have more resources at its disposal to address other threats.

Of course, such an effort to cooperate would require a massive degree of coordination. China has long opposed engaging in discussions with the United States on how it would behave in the event of a conflict on the Korean Peninsula or the North Korean regime's collapse because of its distrust of U.S. intentions and fears that Washington would use those conversations to sabotage Beijing's

attempts to resolve the nuclear crisis peacefully. But China appears to be softening its position. In a September op-ed in the East Asia Forum, Jia Qingguo, a professor at Peking University, argued that China should cooperate with the United States and South Korea, especially on the question of North Korea's nuclear weapons arsenal. In Jia's words, "The omens of war on the Korean peninsula loom larger by the day. When war becomes a real possibility, China must be prepared. And, with this in mind, China must be more willing to consider talks with concerned countries on contingency plans."

If Beijing continues to resist proposals to work together, Washington should consider unilaterally communicating aspects of U.S. contingency plans to reduce the risk of accidental clashes. It could even provide the Chinese side with intelligence to help the PLA secure the most important nuclear facilities. Alternatively, the two countries could use established mechanisms for nuclear security cooperation in the civilian sector, such as the jointly established Center of Excellence on Nuclear Security, or organizations such as the International Atomic Energy Agency to conduct technical training. No country has more experience dismantling and securing nuclear weapons than the United States. Although China has the manpower to seize control of the sites, it is unclear whether it has the expertise necessary to render safe, transport, or destroy nuclear weapons and material. Sharing best practices would help ensure that China can safely handle what it will find at these sites.

Every strategy has its tradeoffs. Coordinating with or conceding to Chinese involvement in a Korean contingency does have a number of downsides, as critics are bound to point out. For starters, the South Koreans completely oppose the idea of any Chinese involvement on the peninsula, let alone Chinese boots on the ground. U.S. moves to coordinate efforts with China would harm U.S. relations with Seoul, although the benefit of managing the demise of North Korea at a lower cost would be worth it.

Potentially more worrisome is the fact that Chinese intervention in North Korea would entail the loss of some U.S. influence on the peninsula. At a fundamental level, China would be acting not to assist the United States but to ensure that a reunified Korea would not include U.S. troops. But that may not be so bad, after all. In frank discussions, Chinese interlocutors have insinuated that Beijing may yet accede to a U.S. alliance with a reunified Korea. In that case, the end of a

permanent U.S. military presence on the peninsula would be a reasonable price to pay to ensure that a second Korean war had the best possible outcome.

Source : <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/asia/2017-12-12/why-china-wont-rescue-north-korea?cid=int-lea&pgtype=hpg>

## How the Peace Process (Probably) Killed the Two-State Solution By Khaled Elgindy

President Donald Trump's decision last December to recognize Jerusalem as Israel's capital, overturning seventy years of U.S. policy and international consensus, marked a turning point in the American-sponsored peace process between Israelis and Palestinians. As one of the thorniest issues of the conflict, as well as a powerful religious and political symbol for billions of people around the world, Jerusalem has long been seen as the key to a final peace settlement. Trump's announcement was met with praise and jubilation on the Israeli side as well as anger and condemnation by Palestinian leaders, who have since declared that they would no longer participate in an American-sponsored peace process. In retaliation, the administration cut U.S. assistance to Palestinian refugees by nearly 80 percent while promising further aid cuts if the Palestinians do not agree to return to the peace process. The bulk of the international community meanwhile, including most European nations and Washington's Arab allies, have lined up against Trump's Jerusalem declaration. For its part, the administration has rejected accusations that the move was aimed at predetermining the status of the Holy City, insisting it was merely "recognizing reality."

Trump's Jerusalem declaration however was not a "new approach" to resolving the conflict, as the administration has claimed, but the culmination of the steady erosion of U.S. policy and declining effectiveness of American mediation during the last twenty-five years. The decision to recognize Jerusalem may be seen as an attempt to resolve the many underlying contradictions of the peace process, not by restoring the internationally-accepted norms on which it is based or working to level the playing field between the two sides, but by rewriting the rules of the diplomatic game. While the prospects of an American-brokered peace deal were already quite slim, Trump's approach to the conflict may have finally convinced Palestinian leaders that they have more to lose by remaining in an American-dominated peace process than from walking away. The increasingly dim prospects for a two-state solution however are not without cost for the United States.

## Power and Politics

For decades, the world has looked to the United States as the only actor capable of brokering an Israeli-Palestinian peace agreement. This was true despite the uniquely close bonds between the United States and Israel and the extraordinary influence of the pro-Israel lobby on American decisionmakers, particularly on Capitol Hill. As peace process veteran, Aaron David Miller, put it, “We, the United States, may not be an honest broker, but we can be an effective broker.” This proposition assumed, however, that ending the Israeli-Palestinian conflict was in fact a major priority for the United States, if not a “vital” national-security interest as various administrations have claimed, and more importantly that American presidents were willing to overcome the constraints of domestic politics and the “special relationship” on at least those issues and moments that mattered most. Both of these assumptions were already in doubt before Donald Trump’s election and since his arrival in the White House have all but been laid to rest.

Since the early 1990s, the American-led peace process has operated on two core assumptions: first, that a credible peace settlement could be achieved without addressing the vast imbalance in power between Israel and the Palestinians, and secondly, that it would be possible (if not desirable) to subordinate internal Palestinian politics to the perceived needs of the peace process. Israel was not merely a party to a conflict but an occupying power that ruled over millions of Palestinians with whom it was negotiating. Yet throughout the last quarter century, successive U.S. presidents have been increasingly reluctant to use their considerable leverage with Israel to advance the peace process while actively working to prevent such pressure from the United Nations and other forums. This was based on a belief that Israeli leaders would be more willing to “take risks for peace” if they felt secure politically and militarily. Not every president agreed with this logic, but most have adhered to it, whether out of conviction or as the political path of least resistance.

Whereas Israel’s special relationship with the United States was largely immune from the ups and downs of the peace process, Washington’s engagement with Palestinian leaders remained heavily dependent on both Israel and the peace process. It wasn’t simply that American officials had a “tin ear” for Palestinian domestic politics, for many policymakers on both ends of Pennsylvania Avenue peace would also require transforming certain aspects of Palestinian politics to

turn them into a suitable peace partner. Given the Palestinian Authority's (PA) heavy reliance on foreign aid and Israeli goodwill for its survival, Palestinian leaders were subject to an array of conditions and restrictions, many of which were enacted into U.S. law, regarding their security performance, internal governance and diplomatic activities.

Source : <http://nationalinterest.org/feature/how-the-peace-process-probably-killed-the-two-state-solution-25219>

# Is America's Greatest Fear Coming True? Is a Russia-China Alliance Forming? By Dave Majumdar

Russia and China are drawing closer together as Washington ratchets up pressure on Moscow and Beijing.

In recent months, the United States has enacted sanctions against Moscow and has imposed a series of trade tariffs on Beijing, antagonizing both great powers simultaneously. As result of American pressure, the two powers—which already had grievances against Washington—have formed a strategic partnership to balance against the U.S-led liberal hegemony.

“I am visiting Russia as a new defense minister of China to show the world a high level of development of our bilateral relations and firm determination of our Armed Forces to strengthen strategic cooperation,” People’s Liberation Army Gen. Wei Fenghe, China’s minister of national defense, said at the Moscow International Security Conference according to the Russian TASS new agency.

Wei explicitly told the conference attendees that he was there to demonstrate to Washington that China is there to support Russia in their common struggle against an American dominated liberal international world order.

“Second, to support the Russian side in organizing the Moscow International Security Conference the Chinese side has come to show Americans the close ties between the Armed Forces of China and Russia, especially in this situation. We’ve come to support you,” Wei said. “The Chinese side is ready to express with the Russian side our common concerns and common position on important international problems at international venues as well.”

The Russian side also praised the new level of cooperation reached between Beijing and Moscow.

“The efforts of the leadership of the both countries, Russian-Chinese relations today has reached principally new unprecedented level, and have become a

critical factor in keeping peace and international security” Russian defense minister Gen. Sergei Shoigu said.

As Carnegie Moscow scholar Dmitri Trenin wrote in his book *Should We Fear Russia?*, Russia and China are wary of each other, but abhor American dominance of the international order.

“Each country is wary of coming too close to the other. China and Russia, however, can continue to consolidate and upgrade their relationship short of an alliance,” Trenin wrote. “In this case, more of Russia’s natural and military-technological resources would be made available to China. Strategic coordination between Moscow and Beijing would remain loose, but, in the larger scheme of things concerning the world order, Beijing and Moscow will be on the same side.”

The goal of the Russian-Chinese entente would be to limit American dominance across the globe.

“The Greater Eurasia that they are constructing will not be run from a single center, but their continental entente will essentially be aimed at limiting US dominance on the edges of the continent and in the world at large,” Trenin wrote.

Thus far, Washington’s own actions have fueled closer cooperation between the two Eurasian titans. As Russia grows more isolated from the West, the Sino-Russian alliance will only grow closer.

Source: <http://nationalinterest.org/blog/the-buzz/americas-greatest-fear-coming-true-russia-china-alliance-25222>

Militarization of Indian Ocean: Implications for regional security By Hussain Tasir

Indian Ocean is the world’s third largest body of water and renders substantial contribution in feeding one-third of the world’s population. Its idiosyncratic location, maritime trade routes; especially oil, its strategic choke points, and abundant natural resources have made the region of unparalleled significance. As per the *Journal of Indian Ocean Region*, over 80% of world’s maritime transit



trade in oil is carried out through this ocean. The Indian Ocean through its sea routes, to the east, connects Middle East, Africa, South Asia and other Asian regions and towards the west, with the Europe. The Indian Ocean Region (IOR) has gained incredible importance recently due to the dividends offered by the ocean. The Indian Ocean Region is rapidly improving in agricultural production and has become a hub of remarkable industrial activities leading to significant economic growth.

It was probably due to these unique factors that the renowned American naval strategist Alfred Thayer Mahan had once declared: "Whoever controls the Indian Ocean will dominate Asia. This ocean is the key to the seven seas in the twenty-first century, the destiny of the world will be decided in these waters." Mahan's assessment in this regard has virtually proved its veracity as today the geopolitics of the IOR as well as the regional and extra regional powers' entanglements have become among the most serious concerns for regional peace and stability. As the IOR is already home for more than half of the world's armed conflicts, the ever increasing trends of massive militarization and nuclearization of the ocean is alarming for the long-term security and economic activity of the IOR.

### US military in IOR

Now-a-days, the naval presence of all major seafaring powers can be seen in Indian Ocean waters; however, the US was the first to established its military base in the island Diego Garcia after the British withdrew its forces in early 60s. The unfortunate inhabitants of Diego Garcia were thrown off their island to make the way for the US military base pushing the natives into what they had felt as the 'unbearable sadness'. The American initiative was initially to counter the growing USSR influence in the IOR. Currently the US has heavy military presence in the area. It is maintaining 5th fleet, task force-50 and the Diego Garcia in now America's principal military base and the most powerful satellite surveillance centre, to keep an eye on its operations around the globe.

### Indian Ocean Zone of Peace

The littoral states, however, viewed these developments in the ocean with deep suspicions. Led by Sri Lanka, all the regional stake holders forwarded the Indian Ocean 'Zone of Peace' initiative. In this regard, the case was taken up with the United Nations and on 16 December 1971, its General Assembly voted for the

'peace' with 61-0 while having 55 abstentions. The move is considered paramount to declare the Indian Ocean Zone of Peace. Afterwards, to reaffirm the idea the General Assembly on December 15, 1972, passed a resolution by even a stronger majority of 95-0 with only 33 abstentions.

An Ad Hoc Committee of fifteen nations was also constituted to analyze its impact and outcome. The main objective was to eliminate the chances of war to the maximum by taking measures to protect the area from any military adventures from the extra-regional powers and secondly to establish peaceful ties among the regional states to completely avoid any military confrontation in the waters. China's proactive role in this regard is commendable. There is no second opinion that to fulfill the dream of peace zone, the promotion of regional economic integration and strategic balance is more than imperative.

#### Indian Militarization in IOR

In contrast to the spirit of ocean of peace, India, one of the major littoral states, initiated an unprecedented naval buildup with a vision to turn Indian Ocean into India's Ocean. It does so mainly by allocating more and more budget to its war fighting capabilities; conventional as well as strategic. The whole idea of Indian Ocean Zone of Peace has been flunked by the self obsessed regional and global hegemony of India and the United States. Ironically, one is world's largest arms exporter and the second is the largest importer. India and US have transformed this buyer-seller defense relationship into a strategic alliance in the Asia-Pacific and Indian Ocean Region through numerous maritime agreements.

Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace was indeed a great concept and must now be given a chance. It is very crucial not only because the ocean is lifeline for world's highest populous countries, but also because the regional two arch-rivals possess strategic weapons.

Under these various agreements, Indian military has been authorized to use all the American bases and facilities in the region including in the Persian Gulf. Moreover, India's logistics exchange agreement with France will also give India with the leverage to use all French maritime infrastructure and facilities including the bases at Djibouti on the Red Sea and at Réunion in the southern Indian Ocean. So India, other than its own naval modernization, has achieved access

and permission to already present maritime facilities of the major maritime powers in the Indian Ocean.

### Indian Naval Modernization

India's massive naval modernization and its approval of \$16 billion for nuclear powered submarines and naval warships have rung alarm bells in the region. Then its unabated aspiration for Blue Water Navy and plans for development of more than 160 ship navy, 3 aircraft carriers and more than 40 warships and submarines including anti-submarines corvettes and stealth destroyers should not be a matter of no less serious concern for Pakistan and the Asia's relatively smaller states.

The regional players must amass the massive anticipated benefits offered by the China's economic vision. Adventurous gambling of any sort in the ocean must be discouraged by world's great powers because only a delicate regional balance might ensure peace and prosperity of the whole Indian Ocean Region.

India also took the first step of nuclearization of the ocean on March 2016, by conducting a test of its indigenous intermediate range Submarine Launched Ballistic Missile (SLBM) K-4 without prior information to Pakistan as both the South Asia nuclear states are in an agreement on 'Agreement on Pre-Notification of Flight Testing of Ballistic Missiles' from 2005. The strategic balance was abruptly disturbed by the development besides inflicting a severe blow to the 'Zone of Peace' initiative.

The naval modernization of Indian navy is in line with Delhi's ambitions to exert more control over some maritime chokepoints including the most important the Strait of Hormuz, Malacca Strait and the Mozambique Channel. India is building up its naval and air bases in 300 islands of Andaman and Nicobar, to occupy one end of the Malacca Strait.

### Containment of China in IOR

India is making exhaustive efforts to get hold over Iranian Chabahar port with the intent to accrue some lucre from the anticipated dividends of the Gwadar port. In this regard, India trying its maneuverability to outplay Sino-Pak collaboration and seems eager to play a decisive role in completing America's 'containment of China' diagram. So much so that to vanquish Chinese Belt and Road initiative,

US has accelerated its work on the 'New Silk Road' in which India's pivotal role has been expected. India is happened to have fully trusted in the theory of 'relative gains' of Intentional Politics as far as its matters with Pakistan and China are concerned.

Therefore, the militarization of the Indian Ocean and the impending scrimmage between India and China has become a matter of vexation for all the ocean's littoral nations. China is engaging with smaller states with its soft power military diplomacy to counterbalance the Indo-US cahoots and to maintain a balance for peace and stability. It is because only peace is in China's best interests for long term economic integration and growth. So, Chinese military presence in the region is not for hegemony or influence but to secure its trade routes and infrastructure. For the construction of various projects such as roads, dams, railways, power plants, China is offering loans to the littoral states on easy repayments.

#### Pakistan's Counterbalancing Moves

Pakistan's stakes, on the other hand, for the ocean's peace are the highest as its 95% of trade is done through the ocean (Arabian Sea) and 100% its Oil, lubricants is traded through these troubled waters. Pakistanis, therefore, a staunch resistant to the current trends of militarization and nuclearisation of the ocean as "the militarization of the Indian Ocean region, proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, increased missile capabilities and power projections by foreign militaries are a threat to peace in the Indian Ocean region. And this trend is likely to intensify in the coming years."

However, keeping a closer eye on the India's military developments, Pakistan's military leadership is left with no other option but to remain vigilant and to channelize all possible resources to neutralize the Indian maritime moves whatsoever. For instance, to reassure the credible deterrence in the wake of India's test of SLBM K-4, recently Pakistan tested the nuclear-capable 'Babur', a submarine-launched cruise missile (SLCM), with the range of 450 km. The vitality of the test to further whet the credibility of country's "second strike capability" can never be overestimated. Pakistan with its limited resources is trying hard to maintain strategic parity with Indian in the Indian Ocean.

#### Conclusion

Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace was indeed a great concept and must now be given a chance. It is very crucial not only because the ocean is lifeline for world's highest populous countries, but also because the regional two arch-rivals possess strategic weapons. Chinese initiatives are open for all and they must not be politicized. The regional players must amass the massive anticipated benefits offered by the China's economic vision. Adventurous gambling of any sort in the ocean must be discouraged by world's great powers because only a delicate regional balance might ensure peace and prosperity of the whole Indian Ocean Region.

Source : <https://www.globalvillagespace.com/militarization-of-indian-ocean-implications-for-regional-security/>

# United States Use Of Chemical Weapons: Myth Or Reality? By Bogdan Gavrilyuk

On March 7, the European Parliament held a conference devoted to biosecurity as well as Europe's readiness to counter biological weapon attacks. At the event there was a Bulgarian investigative journalist and Middle East correspondent Dilyana Gaytandzhieva, who conducted an investigation into the activity of America's secret biological laboratories. According to Dilyana, under the guise of medical centers, these labs develop biological weapon in 25 countries all over the world.

During the conference, D. Gaytandzhieva tried to find out why in the countries where American laboratories are located, infection outbreaks have increased dramatically, and why the researches inside these laboratories are classified. First, Dilyana turned to U.S. Assistant Secretary of Health and Human Services Robert Kadlec.

One would think that such important issues fit to stated topic and are even supported by evidence that Gaytandzhieva presented to participants of the conference in the form of a weighty brochure. However, Mr. Kadlec literally squeezed out a few words and couldn't give a clear answer. This is very strange for a person who has dedicated his whole life to biological threats' counteracting. The contributor was rescued by Hilde Vautsman, a member of the European Parliament and the organizer of the event, saying that "This is not the place for discussion of such topics." So if not in the European Parliament, then where is the place for such discussions?

Moreover, after the event the U.S. delegation did not let Dilyana into the elevator when she tried to get answers to her "inconvenient" questions.

If you read the Gaytandzhieva's report you can understand why Mr. Kadlec was so confused. The report provides evidence that the employees of American biological laboratories develop weapon and conduct tests on humans, deliberately infecting local population.

These institutions are funded by the U.S. Defense Threat Reduction Agency (DTRA), worth \$2.1 billion. Official goals are the development of viruses' detection capabilities as well as their rapid neutralization.

In Ukraine, the DTRA has 11 biological laboratories. However, the Ukrainian officials have no control over these institutions, so they close their eyes to any actions of the United States and help it to hide any information and suppress people's indignation. According to the bilateral agreement, local authorities are not allowed to disclose "confidential information" on the American program, while the Pentagon has full access to Ukraine's state secrets.

D. Gaytandzhieva showed a number of documents in evidence.

Document on funding and construction of one of the biological laboratories for the U.S. Department of Defense in Dnepropetrovsk (Ukraine)

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Ukraine's Ministry of Healthcare shall transfer requested copies of dangerous pathogen strains collected in Ukraine to the U.S. Department of Defense

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It is noteworthy that the emergence of these laboratories coincide with several outbreaks of serious infection diseases in the country, such as Hepatitis A, Cholera, Botulism and Swine Influenza. This led to a large number of deaths among the local population in the areas where American laboratories were located. Only in 2016, 364 people died in Ukraine from an unknown modification of the influenza virus.

Pentagon also opened its laboratories in Georgia (country). There is the Richard Lugar Public Health Research Center on the territory of Georgia that allegedly studies biological agents (Anthrax and Tularemia), viral diseases, and also collects biological samples for its future experiments. In 2014, the Center was equipped with special equipment for breeding and studying insects that may become disease carriers. By a strange coincidence, after a while there were cases of the appearance of rash after a mosquito bite. The thing is, such diseases are not typical for Georgia.

The report also provides evidence that the Pentagon develops various technologies for dissemination biological weapons by explosives and aerosol dispensers. In 2017, Chechnya residents reported on a drone spreading white powder along the Georgian border. Neither the Georgian border service, nor the American staff commented on what had happened.

Dissemination by explosives Source: Capabilities report 2012, West Desert Test Center

Dissemination by explosives

Source: Capabilities report 2012, West Desert Test Center

Unfortunately, the report made by Bulgarian journalist didn't attract much attention. In case of a massive use of combat viruses, developed and tested in the U.S. laboratories, the population of some regions may face a great danger, the consequences of which are hard to imagine.

Source : <http://www.eurasiareview.com/13042018-united-states-use-of-chemical-weapons-myth-or-reality-oped/>

Trump Can Only Make the Syrian Disaster Worse By Doug Bandow

Syria awaits President Donald Trump's decision whether to retaliate against the Assad government for its apparent use of chemical weapons. Doing so would result in little gain while risking a wider war. Instead, the president should follow his initial instinct to withdraw U.S. forces from the war-ravaged nation.

Just days ago, President Trump displayed a common sense that is often lacking in Washington, recognizing that the United States should come home rather than illegally occupying nearly a third of Syria and confronting the Syrian, Iranian and Russian governments. Then his instincts deserted him when he threatened war against the Damascus government.

His professed humanitarian concern may be genuine, but his administration has spent a year supporting Saudi airstrikes that have killed thousands of Yemeni civilians. Moreover, chemical weapons are not really mass destroyers. Bombs and bullets have the same ultimate result, having killed most of the half million Syrians who have died over the last seven years.



The president's delay in acting likely reflects Washington's lack of an effective response. Yet his hesitation allowed the sense of international outrage to diminish while giving Damascus time to prepare for U.S. strikes—hiding some military assets and moving others closer to Russian forces. Moscow, too, has had ample time to decide on its strategy.

Most everyone acknowledges that a one-off attack would have limited if any deterrent effect. But massive retaliation would be even worse. For instance, Firas Maksad of the Arabia Foundation has advocated “a comprehensive bombing campaign, perhaps sustained over a number of days, targeting command and control centers and elite military units to knock out Assad's entire air force.” Yet strikes significant enough to do serious damage would force Damascus to rely more heavily on Iran and Russia. Reinvigorating the civil war would not likely change the ultimate result, while guaranteeing more casualties, suffering, refugees and chaos.

More important for America, any military attack risks triggering a more general war. If the Trump administration followed Maksad's advice, Moscow could not easily remain supine. Indeed, even the president's ill-considered taunts make it difficult for the Putin government to stand aside. Russia can ill afford to play the patsy, bullied by Washington.

The more widespread any U.S. attacks, the more likely “collateral damage” involving Russian and Iranian military personnel. Scores of Russian mercenaries reportedly were killed by American forces when attacking Kurdish fighters in February. Last year the United States downed a Syrian plane attacking U.S.-backed forces. In these cases Moscow was not directly involved and did not retaliate, but this time it might exercise less forbearance.

Russia's foreign ministry threatened “very grave consequences” in response to “military interference in Syria.” The chief of the general staff warned, “if lives of the Russian officers are threatened, the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation will retaliate against missile and launch systems.” Moscow's ambassador to Lebanon left out the condition and said simply: “the Russian forces will confront any U.S. aggression on Syria, by intercepting the missiles and striking their launch pads.”

The latter could include U.S. ships, submarines and aircraft, as well as foreign nations. Attacking them would guarantee U.S. retaliation and risk much broader conflict. Militarily Moscow lags behind the United States, but it has much greater interests at stake in Syria. Indeed, far more than Washington, the Putin government needs to demonstrate credibility to prevent further U.S. attempts at coercion. Because of its relative conventional weakness, Moscow may have a lower threshold for using nuclear weapons. The likelihood of general war is small, but the consequences would be catastrophic.

Russia could take actions that are more limited but still dangerous. For instance, Moscow could intensify its support for the Assad government's efforts to reclaim the remaining areas of Syria under insurgent control. That could include hitting the Kurdish-dominated Syrian Democratic Forces, which Washington imagines will create a de facto state, force Assad from office, expel Iranian influence and limit Moscow's role. Russia might exercise less care in avoiding risk to Americans stationed in the region, which could result in U.S. casualties and set up a direct confrontation between two capable militaries.

Moreover, Moscow could become more truculent dealing with the United States elsewhere. Additional succor for North Korea would reduce Kim Jong-un's economic incentive to make a nuclear deal. If Washington repudiates the JCPOA, Moscow could provide additional arms to Tehran to make a future American attack more costly. The Putin government also could become more active in Egypt and elsewhere in the Middle East, attempting to reduce their reliance on Washington.

Tehran, too, might look for opportunities to hit American interests, if not personnel. After Syria's alleged chemical-weapons attack, an Israeli air strike on a Syrian base killed four Iranians, among others. If the U.S. response adds to that toll, Tehran would face pressure to act. With the common expectation that the Trump administration will abandon the nuclear deal, Iranian authorities might decide that they have little reason to avoid confrontation with Washington. Tehran also might look for opportunities to use proxies, such as Hezbollah in Lebanon, to covertly hit U.S. interests.

Source : <http://nationalinterest.org/blog/the-skeptics/trump-can-only-make-the-syrian-disaster-worse-25364>

## Syria: from 'chemical attack' to military strikes

An alleged Syrian chemical attack on one-time rebel-held Douma has prompted outraged Western powers to order retaliatory strikes and Russia to warn against a dangerous escalation of tensions.

Here is a recap of events:

### 'Toxic gas'

On April 7, the Syrian American Medical Society (SAMS) and Syria's White Helmets jointly say more than 40 people have died in a "poisonous chlorine gas" in Douma, the last opposition-held town in Eastern Ghouta near the capital.

Blaming the government, they say there are "more than 500 cases" of people with "symptoms indicative of exposure to a chemical agent".

The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, a Britain-based monitor, does not confirm a chemical attack.

However, it reports at least 70 cases of respiratory difficulties among civilians after regime air strikes, saying 11 people had died.

The regime and its key ally Russia deny any chemical attack.

### 'Big price to pay'

The following day, US President Donald Trump tweets a warning aimed at Syrian President Bashar al-Assad and his allies that there will be a "big price to pay" after a "mindless CHEMICAL attack".

He hits out at Russia and Iran for backing "Animal Assad".

Moscow warns Washington against carrying out a "military intervention on fabricated pretexts" which "could have the most dire consequences".

Military alert

On April 9, US ambassador at the UN, Nikki Haley, says Washington is determined to “see the monster who dropped chemical weapons on the Syrian people is held to account”.

The USS Donald Cook — a guided-missile destroyer — leaves Cyprus, moving within easy striking range of Syria.

On April 10, the Syrian army puts its airports and military bases on alert, the Observatory reports.

The global chemical weapons watchdog, the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, announces a fact-finding mission to Douma.

At the UN, Russia vetoes a US-drafted Security Council resolution that would have set up an investigation into chemical weapons use in Syria.

Missiles ‘coming’

On April 11, Trump tells Moscow to be prepared for a retaliatory missile strike. “Get ready Russia, because they will be coming, nice and new and smart!” he says on Twitter.

But White House says later that no final decisions on a response have been made although “all options are on the table”.

The Russian defence ministry dismisses footage of attack victims as “yet another fake”, and a staged “provocation” to justify Western intervention.

Ghouta retaken

On April 12, Russia announces that remaining fighters in Douma had given up their heavy weapons, meaning the whole of Ghouta was all-but under pro-regime control.

“Of course, the chemical attack is what pushed us to agree” to a withdrawal from Douma, a top rebel official tells AFP.

President Emmanuel Macron says France has “proof” that the Syrian regime had used chemical weapons and would respond “at a time of our choosing”.

Russia's UN ambassador says US-led strikes could lead to a confrontation between the world's two preeminent nuclear powers.

"The immediate priority is to avert the danger of war," says Vassily Nebenzia.

Russian President Vladimir Putin calls Macron on April 13 to warn against any "dangerous actions" with "unpredictable consequences", the Kremlin says.

'Staged by London'

Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov says Moscow has "irrefutable" evidence the alleged chemical attack was staged as part of a "Russophobic campaign" led by the secret services of a foreign power.

The Russian military points the finger at London.

At a meeting of the Security Council, UN chief Antonio Guterres says the spiralling tensions could lead to a "full-blown military escalation" and urges the body to "act responsibly".

Fact-finding experts from the global chemical weapons watchdog say they will start work on the ground in Douma on April 14.

US, France and UK strike bases, chemical research centres in Syria

President Donald Trump announces on April 13 that the United States, France and Britain have launched military strikes in Syria to punish President Bashar Assad for a suspected chemical attack against civilians and to deter him from doing it again. Trump says the US is prepared to exert sustained pressure on Assad.

Source : <https://www.dawn.com/news/1401580/syria-from-chemical-attack-to-military-strikes>

## The South Asian identity crisis By Farrukh Khan Pitafi

Last November, Britain's pro-Brexit Secretary of State for International Development Priti Patel was forced to resign after being accused of violating the ministerial code of conduct. As far as media reports go, the British politician of Indian descent had met Israeli officials, including Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, several times (13 in total) in the presence of lobbyist Lord Polak without disclosing them to the British authorities. Following those meetings she had recommended that the Department of International Development give international aid to Israeli Army-run hospitals in Golan Heights. This ostensibly was a conflict of interest and a breach of the aforementioned ministerial code. Patel was also critical of Britain's aid to the Palestinian authorities. Doesn't it remind you of any American politician?

On March 27, 2017, thirty-one-year-old Pakistani Mustufa Haidar Syed-Naqfi was sentenced to four years and three months in prison "for working for a foreign intelligence service" by Berlin's superior court. This foreign intelligence was reported to be the Quds Force of Iran, the foreign operations wing of the elite Revolutionary Guards and had nothing to do with Pakistan. Syed-Naqfi compiled dossiers on a former president of German-Israeli society and a French Israeli professor at a university in Paris. These two individuals were potential targets for Iranian attacks.

Do these examples confuse you? Immigrant communities usually have hybrid identities. But their loyalties are usually limited to the countries of their residence and of origin. Here you see a British politician of Indian origin landing in hot soup for a third country. Similarly, a Pakistani spying in Germany for a third nation. Amazingly, these two countries are known for their confrontation. But that is not all. US Ambassador to the UN Nikki Haley, also of Indian origin, recently threatened 128 members of the UN General Assembly (which included India) and the UN itself for passing a resolution condemning the US decision to move its embassy to Jerusalem. In a separate talk at AIPAC, Haley told the audience that her high heels were meant to kick Israel bashers, how she had successfully opposed the nomination of a Palestinian to a high position at the UN and how she forced the UN chief to pull the Falk Report that compared Israel to an

apartheid state. At least in consistent reports we find Pakistan in a dire condition. On a number of occasions, reports have surfaced stating that in the Syrian civil war people of Pakistani origin might be fighting on both/all sides of the divide.

Why do these people take pride in supporting a country which is neither of their origin nor their residence? Is it only about their desire to attach themselves to the visible movers and shakers in the world and if so why not the countries of their origin which are not insignificant by any means? Is it by anyway linked to the perception or misperception that the countries they are aligning with are closest allies of their countries of origin? Or it is simply because India and Pakistan do not have significant appeal for them as these countries do? Finally, does this have anything to do with the toxic environment of communal hostility in South Asia? Well, the answers to all these questions are pretty complicated.

Does this have to do with India-Pakistan hostility? I can understand why a person of Indian origin would want to align with Israel but why would a Pakistani spy for Iran, a state often found closer to India than Pakistan, or join fanatic groups fighting in Syria? Perhaps it has something to do with how the religious identities in South Asia have emerged. Muslims of South Asia were keen to associate themselves with the Arab invaders. As Ayesha Jalal points out in her book *The Struggle for Pakistan* so powerful was this pull that one of the nation's earliest cabinet ministers suggested that Arabic be adopted as the national language of the nascent country and that the language would become prevalent within 50 years. Such an attempt could not obscure the fact that Pakistanis are not Arabs and that the language is not germane to the local culture. Similarly, the rapid Sanskritisation of Hindi, a language originally virtually identical to Urdu except in script, manifests the Indian desire to distance itself from its Muslim heritage. But in her article titled *Identity Crisis: Rethinking the Politics of Community and Region in South Asia* published in the *Harvard International Review* on May 6, 2006, Jalal also warns us of the troubles with the labels. "The image of essentialised religious communities locked in grim battle gives a very distorted perspective on the subcontinent's conflicting politics of identity and discourses of contested sovereignty," she observed.

Amin Maalouf, the French-Lebanese novelist, has written a beautiful book titled *In the Name of Identity* in which he stresses the importance of understanding that people can live with multiple identities in peace and that no religion by nature is violent. Yet the BJP in India strongly objected to neologism 'saffron terrorism'

when it was used during the previous government's tenure. Apparently, Hindus were not capable of terrorism which was specific to one religion alone. Mind you, India is among a few countries which were very vocal against terrorism much before 9/11. Maalouf also shows how any man can be radicalised irrespective of his faith or geography.

In South Asia's case it seems that the multiple identities got weaponised. Muslims who viewed themselves as out of power rulers of India felt marginalised and doubled down on their identity. Indian Hindus who constantly felt subjugated by foreign rulers for centuries worked to harden their identity. When did this happen? We can only guess. In Gita Press and the Making of Hindu India Akshaya Mukul has given a detailed account of how saffron India was born and evolved into the current shape. If Shashi Tharoor's An Era of Darkness: The British Empire in India is any guide the seeds of discord were sown by the British Raj. But things can't be as simple. This toxic environment must have taken a millennium to grow. But as things stand today India vs Pakistan, Hindu vs Muslims or Muslims vs the rest are demarcators that have defined religious identities in South Asia at loggerheads with each other. So, is it unthinkable that a Pakistani abroad would want to align with the visible influencers of political Islam like, say, Iran or the Arab world? Or that an Indian there may want to be associated with the country that is visibly at odds with the Muslim world? I think not.

As we progress in the 21st century this clash/crisis of identities doesn't do justice to the history or cultural richness of South Asia. It ensures further radicalisation. And since South Asians are people of incredible talent it adds to the global political warming. South Asians both at home and abroad will have to relent some day and reflect on the futility of this escalation. Until then, both the region and the world are not safe.

Source: <https://tribune.com.pk/story/1683241/6-south-asian-identity-crisis/>



# From 2011 to 2018: Seven years of the Syrian war

From the bloody repression of peaceful protests against President Bashar al-Assad's regime to several foreign interventions, below are key dates in Syria's civil war.

The conflict has left more than 350,000 people dead, according to the Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights. Millions more have been displaced and the country lies in ruins. In March 2011, unprecedented protests break out to demand civil liberties and the release of political prisoners after four decades of repressive rule by the Assad dynasty.

The regime represses demonstrations but rallies continue. In July, a defecting army colonel sets up the Turkey-based rebel Free Syrian Army (FSA). In March 2012 regime forces retake control of the third city Homs, which had fallen into the hands of the rebels. It carries out other bloody operations, notably in the central city of Hama, after massive anti-regime protests.

UN chief warns of war as US readies to avenge Syria gas attack

In July, FSA fighters launch a battle for Damascus but the government holds firm. From 2013 regime helicopters and planes unleash crude barrel bombs on rebel zones. The same year Iran-backed Lebanese Shiite militant group Hezbollah says it is fighting alongside Syrian government forces. Iran also boosts its military support for longtime ally Assad.

In August 2013, Washington accuses the regime of killing more than 1,400 people with chemical weapons in militant-held districts near Damascus. In September the United States and Assad ally Russia agree on a plan to eliminate Syria's chemical weapons, averting punitive US strikes against the regime for crossing a "red line".

But since then forces on the ground, in particular from the regime, have regularly been accused of using chemical weapons. In January 2014 hostilities between militants of the Islamic State (IS) of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) and rebel groups turn into an open war in the north.

ISIL, the future IS group, takes Raqa – the first provincial capital to fall out of regime control – from rebel forces. The militant offensive allows Damascus to justify its fight as a battle against ‘terrorism’. In September 2014 a US-led coalition launches air strikes against IS in Syria.

The strikes benefit Kurdish groups, which since 2013 have run autonomous administrations in Kurdish-majority areas and go on to oust IS from key areas. In September 2015 Russia launches air strikes in support of Assad’s troops, who are on the back foot.

Russian firepower helps turn the tables for the regime, which begins to retake rebel-held territory, including second city Aleppo in December 2016. In January 2017 Syrian regime backers Russia and Iran, and rebel supporter Turkey organise peace talks in Kazakhstan. The peace efforts run parallel those led by the United Nations.

In April 2017, a sarin gas attack on the rebel-held town of Khan Sheikhun kills more than 80 people, prompting Washington to bomb a regime air base. In retaliation US President Donald Trump unleashes strikes by Tomahawk missiles against the regime’s Shayrat airbase.

Turkey launches an operation in January 2018 against the Kurdish People’s Protection Units (YPG) which played a key role in beating back IS with US support. Ankara is wary of Kurdish aspirations for autonomy. In March it captures the Afrin region, chasing out YPG which it labels a “terrorist group”.

US, France, Britain launch strikes on Syria

On February 18 the Syrian regime launches a ferocious assault on Eastern Ghouta, the final rebel-held enclave near Damascus. In seven weeks the Russian-backed onslaught kills more than 1,700 civilians. The regime captures more than 90 percent of the area, securing negotiated withdrawals of hold-out rebels.

There are claims of a new chemical attack on April 7 in Eastern Ghouta’s main town of Douma, still held by rebels, with first responders saying more than 40

people died. The Syrian government and Russia reject the claims as the US, France, and Britain pledge a forceful response.

On Saturday the United States, Britain and France carry out a wave of punitive strikes in response to alleged chemical weapons attacks.

Source : <https://tribune.com.pk/story/1685298/1-2011-2018-seven-years-syrian-civil-war/>

## Is Afghanistan the next caliphate By Syed Sadam Hussain Shah

Terror outfits often expand their influence by merging into other groups or by cobbling together alliances. They essentially do it when their existence is threatened or for consolidation of power in an alien territory. It helps them to expand their scope, scale of operations, and influence. Moreover, it also helps them to foster human resource, wealth, technology and ideas. This is quite true for the Islamic State. Despite its so-called defeat in Iraq, the militant group has survived on the scores of loyalists left behind in Syria and parts of Iraq. It is now looking to expand its influence by shifting its headquarters and franchises elsewhere. Moreover, it is also seeking to regroup all their leftover fighters in the region.

Many experts and officials believe that the group still poses a potent threat to regional security. As Iranian intelligence minister stated that “ISIS has lost land, but has not surrendered its arms, and is looking for land in Afghanistan, Pakistan and Central Asia in order to revive the idea of an Islamic caliphate.” Likewise, General John Nicholson said that “right now we see them very focused on trying to establish their Khorasan caliphate inside Afghanistan.”

Furthermore, the statistics show that the estimated structure of IS in Afghanistan varies. According to an Afghan security official, there were estimated 4,000 IS fighters spread over Nangarhar province. Although the size of the group has fallen over a period of time, the support by the Afghan government and the US provides them the opportunity to expand their scope, scale and operations.

Border clashes threaten Pak-Afghan thaw

Yet, it is true that in the land of warlords, a foreign entity has never survived. ‘Alexander the Great,’ stuck by Afghan archers’ arrows, barely managed an escape through the Indus River. Later on, the Moguls, the British and the Soviets, were vanquished and humiliated. This is one of the main reasons why the IS may not get its way with the Afghan populace.

In addition, the IS’s momentum is constrained by the fierce competition provided by the local insurgent groups. The group has a weak and unacceptable radical

ideology. According to a report by the Middle East Institute, its two former commanders said that they joined the IS for a steady monthly income rather than its ideological appeal. Unlike the IS, the Taliban enjoy massive support within the Afghan population, driven as it is by religious ideology. No other group had ever enjoyed such acceptability and support. Therefore, the IS has to compete with other local groups which will further make things difficult for it.

Even so, Afghanistan, a country with weak administrative set-up is quite vulnerable to terrorism. Sardar, a young barber living in Kunduz, said that Afghan government officials had asked him for hefty bribes to resolve a long-running family dispute over land. When this happened, he turned to the Taliban who in his home in Chahar Darah resolved the issue in 48 hours.

However, the weak physical, economic, social and political deprivations as well as a lack of assets and income, reflect the vulnerability that captures the uninsured risks. These factors offer incentives for insurgent and terrorist groups that exploit the grievances and vulnerabilities of the local populace to engineer and keep the strategic cause alive. This helps them in recruitment and funding and garners moral and political support. Such state of affairs provides them the variety to stick to the same cause, until another one looks more profitable.

Top Islamic State commander in Afghanistan killed in airstrike: officials

On the other hand, the US and Afghan governments may like to support the IS, in response to Pakistan's alleged support for the Afghan Taliban. Furthermore, it is very likely that the US will support the outfit to sabotage the CPEC, which is seen as the primary threat to US hegemony. It is too early however to predict the rise of IS in Afghanistan. But if that does happen it will surely complicate the regional security equation.

Source : <https://tribune.com.pk/story/1686605/6-afghanistan-next-caliphate/>

## Arab League in need of bite | Editorial

The Arab League is threatening to give the United Nations a run for its money to be crowned the most toothless of organisations. The former is charged with ensuring the closest possible ties among member states as well as safeguarding each one's individual sovereignty. Yet as the 29th summit convened at the weekend, several dark shadows loomed large.

That the powwow was not held in Riyadh but in Dammam, in the east, was significant. After all, this is the part of the Saudi Kingdom that lies furthest from member state Yemen; in other words, out of the range of the Houthis and the missiles that the Saudis claim come from Iran.

On top of the agenda was Trump Town's Jerusalem Shuffle. King Salman bin Abdul-Aziz Al Saud reiterated the Arab position that found disfavour with the American move to relocate its embassy to the disputed city. Indeed, he pledged to splash some much-needed cash towards the Palestinians: \$200 million in aid; \$150 million to preserve Islamic sites in the city; and \$50 million for the UN agency for Palestinian refugees in Gaza. Though it is hard to see this as anything more than a payoff of sorts following his son's controversial comments just days earlier in which he said that Israel had the right to its own state.

But two issues were conspicuous by their absence. The first was the Saudi-led blockade against Qatar, which is about to pass the one-year mark. Considering that the premise of the boycott were allegations that Doha supported terrorism in the region — it more than surprising that this was not raised at the Arab League. Yet even more absurd is Syria and the question of chemical weapons were off the table. Particularly given that the meeting took place just a day after coordinated air strikes by France, Britain and the US.

This might be explained by the highly transactional nature of the Saudi-US relationship. After all, when Riyadh expressed concern over Washington's decision to pull its troops out of Syria sooner rather than later, President Trump issued an ultimatum: if the Saudis wanted a prolonged American troop presence they would have to cough up. In other words, behind-the-scenes wheeling and dealing may or may not be taking place towards this end.

Be that as it may, the future of the Arab world does not look entirely positive. Not when regional and world leaders seem to think that peace can be bought. Or that legitimate resistance has a price. The only way forward for the Middle East has to be holding all those to account whom have broken international law in the name of vested interests.

Source : <https://dailytimes.com.pk/229504/arab-league-in-need-of-bite/>

## Lost pluralism in India By Kuldip Nayar

CHIEF Minister Mehbooba Mufti has said that the Kashmiri pundits should visit their place of origin, meaning thereby the valley. Her remark is like splashing salt on the wound. The pundits were forcibly ousted from Kashmir in 1993. Their fault was that they were Hindus in the 90-per cent Muslim Valley. Former State Chief Minister Farooq Abdullah has admitted in a public statement that no Muslim from the Valley objected to their ouster. It is, indeed, true. He resigned from the position of Chief Minister which led to presidential rule in J&K. It was alleged that then governor Jagmohan was primarily responsible for facilitating the exodus of Kashmiri pundits. The day he was appointed as Governor, a large number of Kashmiri pundits were forced to leave the valley because of his pro-Hindu stance.

It was being alleged that security forces searched each and every house in Srinagar when hundreds of militants were found to be in possession of weapons. Most of them were arrested but during the operation, which led to Gawkadal massacre, questions came to be raised on the role of the governor. Jagmohan, who was very close to Sanjay Gandhi, was also instrumental in forcefully destroying many slums in Delhi in the name of beautification. The Kashmiri pundits began to leave the Valley in greater numbers in the 1990s during the eruption of militancy, following persecution and threats by radical Islamists and militants. In 2010, the Government of Jammu and Kashmir noted that 808 pundit families were still living in the Valley and that the financial and other incentives put in place to encourage others to return there had been unsuccessful.

According to a Jammu and Kashmir Government report, 219 members of the community had been killed in the region between 1989 and 2004 but none thereafter. However, in July 2017, the Supreme Court refused to reopen 215 cases in which over 700 members of the Kashmiri pundit community were killed in Jammu and Kashmir in 1989, citing the passage of time. The appeal now by Chief Minister Mehbooba Mufti is a step in the right direction. During her appeal, following an interaction with Kashmiri pundits in Delhi, she said that “Kashmiri Pundits should visit Kashmir (and) their younger generations should see where their roots really lie. We will make all arrangements. Whatever has happened in the past is unfortunate but now we will have to move forward,” she said.



In fact, Mehbooba Mufti also urged Prime Minister Narendra Modi to take a leaf out of former Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee's book and initiate a dialogue with Pakistan. "I urge Prime Minister Modi to talk to Pakistan just like Vajpayee ji did. Neither are we nor is Pakistan in a condition to fight a war, both countries know now that if there will be a war, nothing will be spared. Both the nations will just lose everything," she added. I do agree with her because this is not a Hindu-Muslim question and should not be made into one. All political parties need to initiate steps which will enable the pundits to return to the valley. Most of their property is intact. The rest must be taken back from the people who have occupied it forcibly or otherwise.

I recall the Hurriyat leader, Syed Shah Gillani, vehemently denying that it was Hindu-Muslim question. At that time, the bug of fundamentalism had not bitten Gillani. He may not have changed his views. But he is conspicuous by his silence. He should have re-enunciated his earlier stance: the Kashmiri pundits are part of our culture and should not be mixed with the general Hindu-Muslims question. Gillani, in fact, told me that he had wrongly stated earlier that the Kashmiri Pundits' question would be settled with the overall Kashmir dispute. But Home Minister Rajnath Singh has unnecessarily given an opening to those who argue that Kashmir is an unfinished task of partition. They want the state to be divided on religious grounds. Somewhere they will also try in Pakistan to reemphasise their contention that the criterion of religion—on the basis of which India was divided—should be extended to Jammu and Kashmir.

Then chief minister Mufti Mohammad Sayyed had mooted an idea of having a separate a separate area where the Kashmiri pundits can safely reside. At present, 30,000 of them are reportedly in Kashmir while their total number is around four lakh. As long as Sheikh Abdullah was dominant in the affairs of Kashmir, he did not allow religion to play any role in politics. He would say that he opposed to the state's integration with Pakistan because Jammu and Kashmir was a secular state. He did not want to join an Islamic country because he preferred pluralism to communalism. Even during the independence struggle, the Sheikh sided with the Congress instead of the Muslim League which demanded a separate homeland for the Muslims. He paid the price for being critical of New Delhi's policy of wanting a strong centre. After being detained for 12 years at Kodaikanal in the South, he stayed with the then Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru to register that Nehru had realized his mistake of misjudging the Sheikh

when he demanded that the centre should only administer three subjects— Foreign Affairs, Defence and Communications—as was offered at the time of partition.

The Shiekh's famous statement was that the Kashmiris would not eat the Indian wheat if it meant compromising their autonomous status. The Sheikh's faith in secularism was deep although he wondered whether India would stay pluralist in the long run. Whether the Kashmiris realize it or not, they have highly lost the services of trained people. The Pundits have gone to other parts of India and have found jobs because of their high qualifications. They are not likely to go back even if the state offers them equivalent jobs. In fact, Kashmir has lost the cream of youth which is technically well equipped to help the state develop economically. Yet Srinagar should make efforts to get the pundits back because that will give them the secular image which they had enjoyed for decades. Lack of efforts on this front would only alienate the rest of the country where the Kashmiris are gainfully employed.

Source : <https://pakobserver.net/lost-pluralism-in-india/>

## China factor in Afghan peace By Samran Ali

The Chinese Vice Foreign Minister, Li Baodong, speaking at Tashkent Peace Conference on Afghanistan, extended China's support to the inclusive political reconciliation process in Afghanistan. He said China saw Afghanistan as an important partner under its Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) project.

Although limited in the past, the Chinese interest in Afghanistan is now growing. Security and economics are major drivers for the increasing Chinese involvement in Afghanistan. China wants a stable Afghanistan with no potential threat to Chinese internal security and investments in the region. It wants to eradicate the basic support and infrastructure for carrying out militancy and extremism through development projects in the war-torn country. Unlike the United States, China does not support a military solution for the Afghan problem. Due to this approach, it has earned the trust of the Afghan government as well as the Afghan Taliban. It is therefore, in an ideal position to play a role in bringing peace in Afghanistan.

Afghanistan has also approached China in the recent past as it hopes to get development funds from China. Afghanistan also believes that China can help in convincing Pakistan to influence and pressurise the Taliban to negotiate with the Afghan government.

For stabilising Afghanistan, closer cooperation between Pakistan and Afghanistan is necessary. China wants Pakistan and Afghanistan to cooperate to bring stability in Afghanistan. Chinese diplomatic efforts in this regard may be one of the factors behind the recent bilateral efforts for improvement in Pak-Afghan bilateral relations. China hosted the 1st China-Afghanistan-Pakistan Foreign Ministers' Dialogue in December 2017 to help Pakistan and Afghanistan remove mistrust between them. The two neighboring countries agreed to operationalise Afghanistan Pakistan Action Plan for Peace and Solidarity (APAPPS) after Pakistani Prime Minister's recent one-day visit to Afghanistan. The APAPPS is a joint action plan for working in areas of counter-terrorism and reduction of violence, peace and reconciliation, refugees' repatriation and joint economic development. It was first discussed during Foreign Secretary Tehmina Janjua's talks on her visit to Afghanistan in February this year.

The idea of a political settlement between the Taliban and the Afghan government is gaining further support from several quarters. China is on the forefront in voicing this idea. Both China and Pakistan have conveyed to the Afghan government and other stakeholders that a military solution is not a viable option after a stalemate in 17 years long war. The Afghan President Ghani has taken the right step forward and offered Taliban legitimacy and invited them to participate in negotiations with the government. The recent Tashkent Peace Conference on Afghanistan in which representatives from 25 countries, the European Union and the UN and NATO participated, also termed political settlement a key to the peace and prosperity of Afghanistan in its declaration.

Taliban have refused to talk to the Afghan government in past. They have not yet responded to President Ghani's offer of talks. Taliban term the Afghan government illegitimate. Talking to the government would be equal to legitimizing its rule. Instead, they want direct talks with the US.

Some tangible actions and assurances from the US may boost the peace efforts. The US, however, has not shown any indication to reduce its military presence in Afghanistan, nor an interest in talking to the Taliban directly. One reason for its preference for the military approach is its desire not to leave Afghanistan as a defeated power. Such a perception would be disastrous for America's prestige internationally and negatively affect its ability to influence events in future.

Source : <https://nation.com.pk/16-Apr-2018/china-factor-in-afghan-peace>

## Nuclear waste | Editorial

Last month, the La Crosse Boiling Water Reactor, on the banks of the Mississippi River in Wisconsin, was found to be leaking radioactive tritium (the radioactive form of hydrogen) into the groundwater.

Again, clean, safe, cheap nuclear power comes to the aid of a hungry nation. The La Crosse Tribune reported on March 14 that the company LaCrosseSolutions (a subsidiary of Utah-based EnergySolutions) reported a reading of 24,200 "picocurie"-per-liter in water taken from a monitoring well on Feb. 1. The US

Environmental Protection Agency allows up to 20,000 picocuries-per-liter tritium in drinking water.

The EPA estimates that seven of 200,000 people who drink such water would develop cancer. So the nuclear industry has somehow earned a government license to kill, if you will. But, hey, 24,200 picocuries per-liter isn't that much over the allowable cancer rate.

LaCrosseSolutions is working an \$85 million contract to "decommission" the La Crosse reactor. The small water boiler was shut down in 1987, 31 years ago, but damn if it isn't still trashing the environment. You gotta hand it to the long reach of the nuclear industry: It keeps on poisoning even three decades after going of business.

The Dairyland Power Co-op isn't alone in its despoiling of the Earth. (The Co-op ran the reactor from 1967 to '87, transferring its license to LaCrosseSolutions in 2016.) In June 2011, Jeff Donn's four-part, year-long investigation for the Associated Press reported that tritium leaks were found at 48 of 75 US reactor sites, three-quarters of the country's commercial reactor operations, "often from corroded, buried piping."

La Crosse's reactor-borne tritium in the groundwater is a danger to everyone drinking it, but the Tribune news report noted, "[T]he monitoring well was just 25 feet below the surface and not used for human consumption." This should come as a great relief to anyone in the area using well water that's not been tested.

Operating reactors also spew tritium from stacks in the form of tritiated water vapor. This can produce radioactive rainfall "which can contaminate surface water bodies as well as groundwater," according to Annie and Arjun Makhijani of the Institute for Energy and Environmental Research. But since the La Crosse reactor has ceased operations, its legacy is poisoned ground, contaminated and corroded pipes, and leaked tritium in the ground.

The US Nuclear Regulatory Commission announced on March 26, 2018 that in February 2017 LaCrosseSolutions had spilled 400 gallons of radioactively contaminated water directly into the Mississippi River. The NRC announcement also noted that there was a risk to public health from the spill, although the way

the La Crosse Tribune reported it was: “The Nuclear Regulatory Commission says there was little risk to public health.”

The NRC determined that the spill of waste water containing the deadly isotope cesium-137 was a violation of federal regulations, one of three low-level violations identified in its annual inspection of decommissioning being done by LaCrosseSolutions.

An analysis found cesium-137 in water samples at concentrations that exceed the federal limits, the La Crosse Tribune reported. The NRC did not issue a citation but found LaCrosseSolutions had violated NRC policy.

The Tribune’s reporter Chris Hubbuch called up Professor Jeff Bryan who teaches chemistry at the University of Wisconsin-LaCrosse. Prof. Bryan said, “Potential exposure to ionizing radiation [from drinking contaminated water] was very low, about 1/100th the exposure for an hour on a commercial flight.”

This “apples and tires” comparison is not just useless; it deliberately misinforms readers who might think voluntary external exposure to cosmic radiation inside planes is no different from internal, involuntary radiation exposure from drinking water contaminated with cesium-137.

I wrote to the good professor and asked him if people on commercial flights are exposed to cesium-137. He didn’t reply. (They are not.) I asked if there is any internal cesium exposure on a commercial flight. Again, no answer. (There is none.)

Prof. Bryan told the newspaper what he thought about LaCrosseSolutions’ cesium spill into the Mississippi: “This was a really dump accident. Stupid, but not hazardous.”

The National Academy of Sciences does not agree. The NAS’s most recent report on the subject (known as BEIR VII) concluded that every exposure to radiation produces a corresponding cancer risk. There is no such thing, Dr. Bryan, as radioactive pollution that is not hazardous.

Source : <https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/305371-nuclear-waste>

# When Trump Meets Kim Jong Un By Toby Dalton and Ariel Levite

After U.S. President Donald Trump announced earlier this month that he would consider holding a spring summit with North Korean leader Kim Jong Un, there has been a flurry of debate over what the president should seek from the potential meeting. On one end of the spectrum is the popular notion of denuclearizing North Korea, which usually means complete, verifiable, and irreversible dismantlement of North Korea's nuclear capabilities, or CVID. Although professing nominal commitment to this goal, Kim appears to be conditioning it on such formidable requirements that it is extremely unlikely his regime will actually pursue this in any meaningful time frame, no matter how hard the United States sanctions, threatens, or incentivizes it. Kim believes it would be suicidal to give up his "existential" deterrent, so complete denuclearization is simply not on the table today.

Even if it were negotiable in the near term, CVID is based on an outdated understanding of North Korea's nuclear enterprise. When the U.S. government developed the CVID concept in the mid-2000s, North Korea had conducted just one nuclear explosion test and its long-range ballistic missile program was still in its infancy. North Korea's technical progress over the intervening decade—five additional nuclear tests and dozens of missile flights—means that a more sophisticated and intrusive approach to rolling back its dangerous capabilities is needed.

On the other end of the spectrum, and what North Korea might accept following a summit, is a simple temporary suspension of nuclear and missile flight testing, as Russia has suggested, for which Kim would still demand some sanctions relief or other incentive. But the Trump administration would immediately reject such a minimalist concession. After all, Pyongyang's unchecked arsenal is already worrisome, and it can continue to grow and improve without full-scale tests.

So if CVID is non-negotiable and a suspension is not in itself a satisfactory waypoint, what would be an approach that would allow Washington to pursue a highly ambitious but feasible strategic objective, should the Trump-Kim summit produce momentum for serious negotiations?

At this moment, the Trump administration must face the reality that no past administration has been able to prevent North Korea from becoming the nuclear state that it is now.

China's more ambitious concept of a nuclear freeze could be a starting point. Such a freeze may help build confidence during negotiations that North Korea is indeed willing to contemplate deeper limitations on its nuclear arsenal and infrastructure to stabilize the situation, pending full denuclearization.

But what the Trump administration should set as a strategic objective for negotiations is a comprehensive and verified capping of North Korea's threatening strategic capabilities and activities. A broad cap could serve the medium-term interests of the United States and its two allies, Japan and South Korea, while also finding acceptance in China and North Korea.

Capping means imposing significant, verifiable qualitative and quantitative limits on further development of North Korea's nuclear weapons and their delivery vehicles. This would include curtailing production of the key bomb fuels, plutonium and enriched uranium. And it would cover development and construction of additional critical capabilities and activities, such as delivery vehicles; long-range ballistic missiles and related components; and weapons research, development, and engineering.

Additionally, to minimize North Korea's capacity to use nuclear or conventional force offensively, militarization of nuclear forces must be very tightly constrained. Under a capping agreement, this means ceasing activities to upgrade, deploy, increase readiness, and improve survivability of nuclear forces.

The price of such capping is implicit acknowledgment of the reality that Pyongyang will retain nuclear weapons while the agreement is being implemented. But this price is worth paying in order to inhibit North Korea from further militarizing into a fully fledged, combat-ready arsenal that can target the United States, especially considering that such capability is very close at hand.

A successful capping deal must also occur alongside stricter implementation of existing broad-based UN Security Council sanctions. This means more



effectively monitoring for the import of banned equipment and material of proliferation concern. One means of achieving this would be to channel North Korean trade through a limited number of agreed ports in the region. The same arrangement could also serve to verify that North Korea is not conducting covert nuclear or missile testing offshore, exporting those items to other countries, or generating illicit hard currency to sustain the program.

Because full denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula is not possible in the near term, this cap should be open ended, designed to last from now until such a future is possible. It would serve the ultimate purpose of denuclearization by limiting the size and sophistication of North Korea's nuclear arsenal through increasingly irreversible steps and by providing transparency over a greater range of North Korean nuclear and missile infrastructure that would facilitate their eventual elimination. And over time it would create opportunities to redirect North Korean scientists and technicians away from weapons to peaceful work.

There are, of course, several ways in which Pyongyang could game a cap. It could claim to have more capabilities than it in fact does, in order to have them grandfathered under a cap. Or, as in line with its past behavior, it could try to conceal elements of its programs in order to keep options open in case the United States threatens to renege on the deal or to attack. In anticipation of such actions, at the very outset of such a deal Pyongyang would have to clarify and allow for verification of the capabilities it has achieved in the categories of activities mentioned earlier. This would provide a base line for future monitoring and define additional capabilities that North Korea would have to agree not to pursue, while offering useful indicators of cheating if it occurs. This is why verification must be thorough and comprehensive. Capabilities that North Korea will neither admit to having nor subject to transparency and verification should not be accepted. Any undeclared activity would constitute a violation of the deal. Together, these diverse transparency requirements and the restrictions under a capping deal would increase the likelihood of detecting violations.

At this moment, the Trump administration must face the reality that no past administration has been able to prevent North Korea from becoming the nuclear state that it is now. Complete denuclearization is not possible in the meaningful future, and therefore, an immediate suspension of the most worrisome developments followed by a comprehensive verifiable cap is the best and most

realistic option for negotiating a deal with North Korea. It would improve the security of the United States and its allies, de-escalate tensions, and provide a tolerable arrangement with North Korea regardless of whether full denuclearization is feasible in our lifetime. Ideally, both Democrats and Republicans in Washington would embrace this serious, ambitious, and more realistic objective of halting escalation toward confrontation. Such an approach would not only reassure South Korea and Japan of the United States' prudence and steadfastness but also deprive Kim Jong Un of the opportunity to split the United States from its allies and weaken international enforcement of the sanctions that have brought him to the table.

Securing such an agreement is not going to be easy and will obviously require not just considerable sustained pressure on Pyongyang but also some concessions from Washington. But with North Korea rushing headlong into acquiring the capability to mount a hydrogen bomb atop a long-range missile that can reach the United States, it is better to try to seek a realistic capping agreement now at a reasonable cost than to hold out for a denuclearization agreement that can't be bought at any price short of a bloody war, if that.

Source : <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/north-korea/2018-03-26/when-trump-meets-kim-jong-un>

## Nuclear rivalry By Moeed Yusuf

THIS week, the nuclear nonproliferation world is gathered in Geneva for the second preparatory meeting (prepcomm) of the 2020 Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty Conference. The NPT is the cornerstone of the global nonproliferation regime that aims to eliminate nuclear weapons and regulate the use of nuclear technologies and materials.

For NPT member states, the prepcomm is business as usual. There will be grandstanding, hollow promises and commitments made to the disarmament agenda. But things aren't as mundane for the independent non-proliferation lobbies and experts in Geneva to push these states to recognise the serious problems coming their way.

First, the revival of great power competition is bad news for this crowd. The salience of nuclear weapons decreased after the Cold War, given that the centrality of the atomic bomb in the bipolar era had been a function of superpower nuclear competition. The US and Russia began cutting back on their arsenals and talk of nuclear war-fighting all but disappeared from great power lingo.

Will this hold? President Trump clearly prefers to elevate the role of nuclear arms in US defence strategising. The new US nuclear posture review has codified his intent. This goes against the conventional wisdom that the world's strongest conventional military power would benefit most by marginalising the global role of nuclear weapons and, instead, focus on conventional superiority. Even before this, Russia had begun to revive conversations on its own nuclear capability. Its military continues to think of and integrate nuclear weapons planning and posturing in its military exercises. China is modernising its capability at an unprecedented pace.

The revival of nuclear competition is disquieting.

Great power capabilities are tied in with those of regional nuclear states. The US nuclear postures impact Russian and Chinese decisions; the latter influence India; and India drives Pakistan's behaviour. Intensified US-China competition can generate a race to the top that would suck India and Pakistan into an active

nuclear arms race. Given its limited resources, Pakistan is the most vulnerable actor in this chain.

Second, a demand-side problem in terms of nuclear proliferation has been brewing. Several critical post-9/11 developments in global politics are to blame.

Take Iraq and Libya. Saddam Hussein didn't have WMD, but his demise was triggered by this allegation; Muammar Qadhafi gave up his nuclear ambitions hoping to bring Libya back into the international mainstream. He was gone shortly thereafter. Compare this to North Korea, the only country to develop nuclear weapons while being an NPT member. It has repeatedly defied the UN and threatened its neighbours and the US. Yet, it has escaped Iraq and Libya's fate.

The suggestion is not that the absence of nuclear weapons was the reason for the conflicts in Iraq and Libya. It wasn't. Still, this interpretation won't be all that unnatural for a recalcitrant state that perceives a threat from any of the strong powers. Indeed, North Korean leaders have often been reported to claim that their biggest lesson from Iraq and Libya is that nuclear capability is the only way for their regime to ensure survival.

The problem is that global non-proliferation efforts continue to persist with their historical bias towards supply-side issues. Conversations focus on controlling countries' access to nuclear materials and technology and boosting global vigilance mechanisms to catch culprits. These measures are going to come under increasing pressure, perhaps even reach their maximum limits, unless action is taken to address demand-side problems.

Third, the world's inability to figure out how to deal with the three non-NPT nuclear weapons states, India, Pakistan and Israel, adds to the conundrum. A large segment of the non-proliferation lobby has re--mained opposed to offering any concessions to these states. Yet, the limbo hasn't helped. For instance, attempts to mainstream India through country-specific concessions have imposed only modest accountability but conferred great legitimacy on the Indian nuclear programme. For many champions of disarmament, this represents the worst of both worlds: the troubling signal they wished to avoid has been

transmitted but without any permanent solution to the grey legal status of these countries.

Finally, the present aura of unpredictability around US foreign policy risks strengthening conservative lobbies in countries under US security umbrellas. The impression that the unipolar moment is waning is forcing some US allies to seek reassurances that Washington will be there to protect them in crises. Every time the reassurance isn't categorical and public, those arguing for self-help in these countries grab attention.

The non-proliferation regime is under far greater stress than the business as usual attitude of states at the prepcomm suggests. The stakes are too high to ignore this reality.

Source :<https://www.dawn.com/news/1403553/nuclear-rivalry>

Atomic Weapons and American Policy By J. Robert Oppenheimer

IT IS possible that in the large light of history, if indeed there is to be history, the atomic bomb will appear not very different than in the bright light of the first atomic explosion. Partly because of the mood of the time, partly because of a very clear prevision of what the technical developments would be, we had the impression that this might mark, not merely the end of a great and terrible war, but the end of such wars for mankind.

Two years later Colonel Stimson was to write in Foreign Affairs, "The riven atom, uncontrolled, can be only a growing menace to us all. . . ." In the same paragraph he wrote, "Lasting peace and freedom cannot be achieved until the world finds a way toward the necessary government of the whole." [i] Earlier, shortly after the war's end, the Government of the United States had put forward some modest suggestions, responsive to these views, for dealing with the atom in a friendly, open, coöperative way. We need not argue as to whether these proposals were stillborn. They have been very dead a long, long time, to the surprise of only a few. Openness, friendliness and coöperation did not seem to be what the Soviet Government most prized on this earth.

It should not be beyond human ingenuity for us to devise less friendly proposals. We need not here detail the many reasons why they have not been put forward, why it has appeared irrelevant and grotesque to do so. These reasons range from the special difficulties of all negotiation with the Soviet Union, through the peculiar obstacles presented by the programmatic hostility and the institutionalized secretiveness of Communist countries, to what may be regarded as the more normal and familiar difficulties of devising instruments for the regulation of armaments in a world without prospect of political settlement.

Instead we came to grips, or began to come to grips, with the massive evidences of Soviet hostility and the growing evidences of Soviet power, and with the many almost inevitable, yet often tragic, elements of weakness, disharmony and disunity in what we have learned to call the Free World. In these preoccupations—one wholly negative, and one largely positive though very difficult—the atom, too, was given a simple rôle, and the policy followed was a fairly simple one. The rôle was to be one ingredient of a shield: a shield composed also in part of the great industrial power of America, and in part of the military and, even more, the political weaknesses of the Soviet Union. The rule for the atom was: “Let us keep ahead. Let us be sure that we are ahead of the enemy.”

Today it would seem that, however necessary these considerations and these policies may be, they are no longer nearly sufficient. The reason for that one can see when one looks at the character of the arms race. The reason for that one can see when one compares the time-scale of atomic developments here and abroad with the probable time-scale of deep political changes in the world.

It is easy to say “let us look at the arms race.” I must tell about it without communicating anything. I must reveal its nature without revealing anything; and this I propose to do.

There are three countries embarked on this race: The United Kingdom—and of that we need to note only that it is unfortunate that so talented and hard-pressed a country, so close to us in history and tradition, should be doing all this separately from us—ourselves, and the U.S.S.R.

As for the U.S.S.R., it has recently been said officially, and thus may be repeated with official sanction, that it has produced three atomic explosions, and is

producing fissionable material in substantial quantities. I should like to present the evidence for this; I cannot. We do need one word of warning: this is evidence which could well be evidence of what the Government of the U.S.S.R. wants us to think rather than evidence of what is true. I may, however, record my own casual, perhaps too rough guess as to how the U.S.S.R. stands in relation to us in the field of atomic munitions. This does not refer at all to other elements of armament. I think that the U.S.S.R. is about four years behind us. And I think that the scale of its operations is not as big as ours was four years ago. It may be something like half as big as ours then was. This is consistent with the facts known to us. It has not been proven by them, by any means.

This sounds comfortably reassuring. It sounds as though the job of keeping ahead were being satisfactorily accomplished. But in order to assay what it means, we have to know something of what it is that they are four years behind, how fast the situation is likely to change, and what it means to be half as big as we are.

When Hiroshima was bombed there was a single plane. There was no air opposition. We flew straight in at medium height, at rather low speed, over the city of Hiroshima; we dropped one bomb with an energy release the equivalent of about fifteen thousand tons of TNT. It killed more than seventy thousand people and produced a comparable number of casualties; it largely destroyed a medium-sized city. That we had in mind. But we also had in mind, and we said, that it was not a question of one bomb. It would become a question of ten, and then one hundred, and then a thousand, and then ten thousand, and then maybe one hundred thousand. We knew—or, rather, we did not know, but we had very good reason to think—that it was not a question of ten thousand tons but of one hundred thousand and then a million tons, and then ten million tons and then maybe one hundred million tons.

We knew that these munitions could be adapted, not merely to a slow medium bomber operating where we had almost complete air supremacy, but to methods of delivery more modern, more flexible, harder to intercept, and more suitable for combat as it might be encountered today.

Today all of this is in train. It is my opinion that we should all know—not precisely, but quantitatively and, above all, authoritatively—where we stand in these matters;

that we should all have a good idea of how rapidly the situation has changed, and of where we may stand, let us say, three, four, or five years ahead, which is about as far as one can see. I shall revert to the reasons why I think it important that we all know of these matters. I cannot write of them.

What I can say is this: I have never discussed these prospects candidly with any responsible group, whether scientists or statesmen, whether citizens or officers of the Government, with any group that could steadily look at the facts, that did not come away with a great sense of anxiety and somberness at what they saw. The very least we can say is that, looking ten years ahead, it is likely to be small comfort that the Soviet Union is four years behind us, and small comfort that they are only about half as big as we are. The very least we can conclude is that our twenty-thousandth bomb, useful as it may be in filling the vast munitions pipelines of a great war, will not in any deep strategic sense offset their two-thousandth. The very least we can say is that, as Mr. Gordon Dean has emphasized, there will come a time when, even from the narrowest technical point of view, the art of delivery and the art of defense will have a much higher military relevance than supremacy in the atomic munitions field itself.

There are other aspects of the arms race; though they may be well-known, they are worth mentioning. We developed the atomic bomb under the stimulus of the fear that the Germans might be at it. We deliberated at length on the use of the bomb against Japan; indeed it was Colonel Stimson who initiated and presided over these thorough deliberations. We decided that it should be used. We have greatly developed and greatly increased our atomic activities. This growth, though natural technically, is not inevitable. If the Congress had appropriated no money, it would not have occurred. We have made our decision to push our stockpiles and the power of our weapons. We have from the first maintained that we should be free to use these weapons; and it is generally known we plan to use them. It is also generally known that one ingredient of this plan is a rather rigid commitment to their use in a very massive, initial, unremitting strategic assault on the enemy.

This arms race has other characteristics. There has been relatively little done to secure our defense against the atom; and in the far more tragic and difficult problem of defending our Allies in Europe still less has been done. This does not promise to be an easy problem.



Atomic weapons are not just one element of an arsenal that we hope may deter the Soviet Government, or just one of the means we think of for putting an end to a war, once started. It is, perhaps, almost the only military measure that anyone has in mind to prevent, let us say, a great battle in Europe from being a continuing, agonizing, large-scale Korea. It is the only military instrument which brings the Soviet Union and the United States into contact—a most uncomfortable and dangerous contact— with one another.

Atomic weapons, as everyone knows, have been incorporated in the plans for the defense of Europe. They have been developed for many tactical military uses, as in the anti-submarine campaign, the air campaign, and the ground campaign in the European theater; and these potential applications continue to ramify and multiply. Yet the Europeans are rather in ignorance what these weapons are, how many there may be, how they will be used and what they will do. It thus needs to be remarked, as we shall need to remark again, that for Europe the atomic weapon is both a much needed hope of effective defense and a terrible immediate peril, greater even than for this country.

These are some of the peculiarities of this arms race, marked for us by a very great rigidity of policy, and a terrifyingly rapid accumulation, probably on both sides, of a deadly munition. When we think of the terms in which we in this country tend to talk of the future, the somberness with which thoughtful men leave a discussion of the subject is not wholly understandable. There are two things that everyone would like to see happen; but few people, if any, confidently believe that they will happen soon. One is a prompt, a happily prompt reform or collapse of the enemy. One is a regulation of armaments as part of a general political settlement—an acceptable, hopeful, honorable and humane settlement to which we could be a party.

There is nothing repugnant in these prospects; but they may not appear to be very likely in the near future. Most of us, and almost all Europeans, appear to regard the outbreak of war in this near future as a disaster. Thus the prevailing view is that we are probably faced with a long period of cold war in which conflict, tension and armaments are to be with us. The trouble then is just this: during this period the atomic clock ticks faster and faster. We may anticipate a state of affairs in which two Great Powers will each be in a position to put an end to the

civilization and life of the other, though not without risking its own. We may be likened to two scorpions in a bottle, each capable of killing the other, but only at the risk of his own life.

This prospect does not tend to make for serenity; and the basic fact that needs to be communicated is that the time in which this will happen is short, compared to the time in which reasonable men may have some confidence in a reasonable amelioration or even alteration of the great political troubles of our time.

In this prospect, surely, we shall need all the help and wisdom and resourcefulness we can muster. This, in all probability, is a very tough fix. There are three things we need to remember, three things that are very sharp. It is perilous to forget any one of them. One is the hostility and the power of the Soviet. Another is the touch of weakness—the need for unity, the need for some stability, the need for armed strength on the part of our friends in the Free World. And the third is the increasing peril of the atom. The problem is straightforward, if not easy, if we forget the last. It is easy if we forget the first. It is hard if we remember all three. But they are all there.

We need the greatest attainable freedom of action. We need strength to be able to ask whether our plans for the use of the atom are, all things considered, right or wrong. We need the freedom of action necessary—and we do not have it today—to be able to negotiate, should an opportunity for that at some future time appear.

Much will be needed to bring us this freedom of action. Some of it we cannot write about, because it has not occurred to us. Some we cannot write about because it would not be proper for anything but official discussion. An example may be the question of whether, under what circumstances, in what manner, and with what purpose to communicate with the Soviet Government on this and related problems.

But there are three reforms which seem so obvious, so important, so sure to be salutary that I should like to discuss them briefly. One has to do with making available to ourselves, in this tough time, the inherent resources of a country like ours and a government like ours. These resources are not available today. The second has to do with making available the resources of a coalition of

governments, bound together in an alliance, yet at the moment foreclosed from discussing one of the principal factors that affects the destiny of the alliance and of all its members. The third has to do with taking measures to put off, to moderate, to reduce the dangers of which we have spoken. I shall deal with each of these.

The first is candor—candor on the part of the officials of the United States Government to the officials, the representatives, the people of their country. We do not operate well when the important facts, the essential conditions, which limit and determine our choices are unknown. We do not operate well when they are known, in secrecy and in fear, only to a few men.

The general account of the atomic arms race that has been outlined here can, of course, be found in the public press, together with a great deal of detailed information, some true, and much largely false. This mass of published rumor, fact, press release and speculation could yield, upon analysis, a fairly solid core of truth; but as it stands, it is not the truth. The consequences of such ignorance may seem obvious; but we may recall two examples that illustrate well what they are.

It must be disturbing that an ex-President of the United States, who has been briefed on what we know about the Soviet atomic capability, can publicly call in doubt all the conclusions from the evidence. Perhaps this was primarily because it was all so secret that it could not be talked about, or thought about, or understood. It must be shocking when this doubt, so recently expressed, is compounded by two men, one of them a most distinguished scientist, who headed one of the great projects of the Manhattan District during the war, and one of them a brilliant officer, who was in over-all charge of the Manhattan District. These two men are not now employed by any agency of the Government concerned with these questions; therefore they did not have access to the evidence. Thus their advice is unavailing, their public counsel wrong.

A second example may illustrate further. A high officer of the Air Defense Command said—and this only a few months ago, in a most serious discussion of measures for the continental defense of the United States—that it was our policy to attempt to protect our striking force, but that it was not really our policy to attempt to protect this country, for that is so big a job that it would interfere with

our retaliatory capabilities. Such follies can occur only when even the men who know the facts can find no one to talk to about them, when the facts are too secret for discussion, and thus for thought.

The political vitality of our country largely derives from two sources. One is the interplay, the conflict of opinion and debate, in many diverse and complex agencies, legislative and executive, which contribute to the making of policy. The other is a public opinion which is based on confidence that it knows the truth.

Today public opinion cannot exist in this field. No responsible person will hazard an opinion in a field where he believes that there is somebody else who knows the truth, and where he believes that he does not know it. It is true that there are and always will be, as long as we live in danger of war, secrets that it is important to keep secret, at least for an appropriate period, if not for all time; some of these, and important ones, are in the field of atomic energy. But knowledge of the characteristics and probable effects of our atomic weapons, of—in rough terms—the numbers available, and of the changes that are likely to occur within the next years, this is not among the things to be kept secret. Nor is our general estimate of where the enemy stands.

Many arguments have been advanced against making public this basic information. Some of these arguments had merit in times past. One is that we might be giving vital information to the enemy. My own view is that the enemy has this information. It is available to anyone who will trouble to make an intelligence analysis of what has been published. Private citizens do not do this; but we must expect that the enemy does. It is largely available by other means as well. It is also my view that it is good for the peace of the world if the enemy knows these basic facts—very good indeed, and very dangerous if he does not.

There is another source of worry—that public knowledge of the situation might induce in this country a mood of despair, or a too ready acceptance of what is lightheartedly called preventive war. I believe that until we have looked this tiger in the eye, we shall be in the worst of all possible dangers, which is that we may back into him. More generally, I do not think a country like ours can in any real sense survive if we are afraid of our people.

As a first step, but a great one, we need the courage and the wisdom to make public at least what, in all reason, the enemy must now know: to describe in rough but authoritative and quantitative terms what the atomic armaments race is. It is not enough to say, as our government so often has, that we have made “substantial progress.” When the American people are responsibly informed, we may not have solved, but we shall have a new freedom to face, some of the tough problems that are before us.

There is also need for candor in our dealings with at least our major allies. The Japanese are exposed to atomic bombardment; and it may be very hard to develop adequate counter-measures. Space, that happy asset of the United States, is not an asset for Japan. It is not an asset for France. It is not an asset for England. There are in existence methods of delivery of atomic weapons which present an intractable problem of interception, and which are relevant for the small distances that characterize Europe. It will be some time at least before they are relevant for intercontinental delivery. These countries will one day feel a terrible pinch, when the U.S.S.R. chooses to remind them of what it can do, and do very easily—not without suffering, but in a way that the Europeans themselves can little deter or deflect.

There have been arguments for technical collaboration with the United Kingdom and Canada; these have often appeared persuasive. There have been arguments for military collaboration with the NATO governments, and with the responsible commanders involved. General Bradley and General Collins both have spoken of this need, partly in order to explain to our allies that an atomic bomb will not do all things—that it has certain capabilities but it is not the whole answer. This is surely a precondition for effective planning, and for the successful defense of Europe.

Yet there are much more general reasons. We and our allies are in this long struggle together. What we do will affect the destiny of Europe; what is done there will affect ours; and we cannot operate wisely if a large half of the problem we have in common is not discussed in common. This does not mean that we should tie our hands. It means that we should inform and consult. This could make a healthy and perhaps very great change in our relations with Europe.

It is not clear that the situation even in the Far East would be wholly unaffected. It is troublesome to read that a principal reason that we should not use atomic weapons in Korea is that our allies would not like it. We need not argue here either that it is right or that it is wrong to use them there. In either case, our decisions should rest on far firmer ground than that other governments, who know less than we about the matter, should hold a different view than ours. It would be proper that the Japanese and the British and the many other governments immediately involved have a notion of what the issues really are.

Once, clearly, the problem of proper candor at home is faced— the problem of a more reasonable behavior toward our own people and our representatives and officials with regard to the atom—then the problem of dealing with our allies will be less troublesome. For it is pretty much the same information, the same rough set of facts, that both our people and our allies need to have and to understand.

The third point may seem even more obvious. I do not believe —though of course we cannot today be certain—that we can take measures for the defense of our people, our lives, our institutions, our cities, which will in any real sense be a permanent solution to the problem of the atom. But that is no reason for not doing a little better than we are now doing.

The current view, as is well known, is not very optimistic. Not long ago General Vandenberg estimated that we might, with luck, intercept 20 or 30 percent of an enemy attack. That is not very reassuring, when one looks at numbers and casualties and at what it takes to destroy the heart and life of our country. For some months now, a highly-qualified panel, under the chairmanship of Dr. Mervin Kelly, appointed by Secretary Lovett and reporting now to Secretary Wilson, has studied the complex technical problems of continental defense. There are many technical developments that have not yet been applied in this field, and that could well be helpful. They are natural but substantial developments in munitions, in aircraft and in missiles, and in procedures for obtaining and analyzing information. Above all, there is the challenging problem of the effective use of space; there is space between the Soviet Union and the United States. This panel, it would appear, has been oppressed and troubled by the same over-all oppression which any group always finds when it touches seriously any part of the problem of the atom. Yet there is no doubt that it will recommend sensible ways in which we can proceed to try to defend our lives and our country.

Such measures will inevitably have many diverse meanings. They will mean, first of all, some delay in the imminence of the threat. They will mean a disincentive—a defensive deterrent—to the Soviet Union. They will mean that the time when the Soviet Union can be confident of destroying the productive power of America will be somewhat further off—very much further off than if we did nothing. They will mean, even to our allies, who are much more exposed and probably cannot be well defended, that the continued existence of a real and strong America will be a solid certainty which should discourage the outbreak of war.

A more effective defense could even be of great relevance should the time come for serious discussion of the regulation of armaments. There will have been by then a vast accumulation of materials for atomic weapons, and a troublesome margin of uncertainty with regard to its accounting—very troublesome indeed if we still live with vestiges of the suspicion, hostility and secretiveness of the world of today. This will call for a very broad and robust regulation of armaments, in which existing forces and weapons are of a wholly different order than those required for the destruction of one great nation by another, in which steps of evasion will be either far too vast to conceal or far too small to have, in view of then existing measures of defense, a decisive strategic effect. Defense and regulation may thus be necessary complements. And here, too, all that we do effectively to contribute to our own immunity will be helpful in giving us some measure of an increased freedom of action.

These are three paths that we may take. None of them is a wholly new suggestion. They have, over the long years, been discussed; but they have not been acted on. In my opinion they have not, in any deep sense, been generally understood. We need to be clear that there will not be many great atomic wars for us, nor for our institutions. It is important that there not be one. We need to liberate our own great resources, to shape our destiny.

[i] “The Challenge to Americans,” by Henry L. Stimson. Foreign Affairs, October 1947.

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