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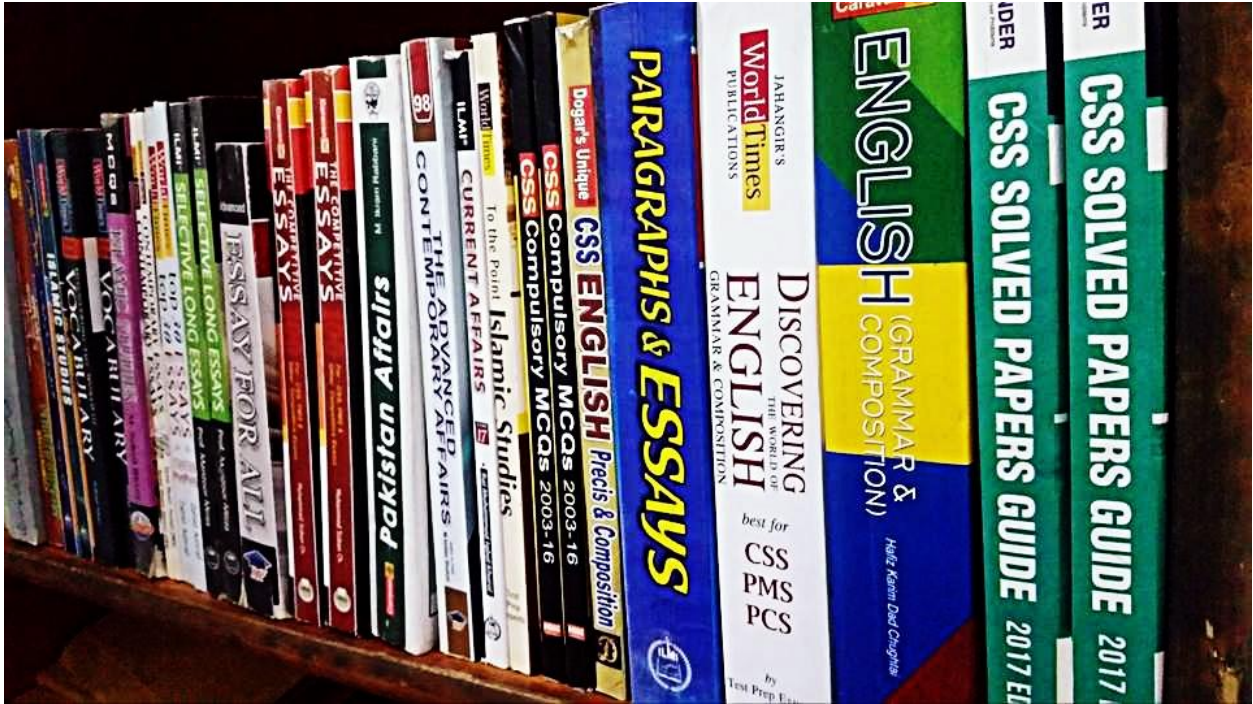
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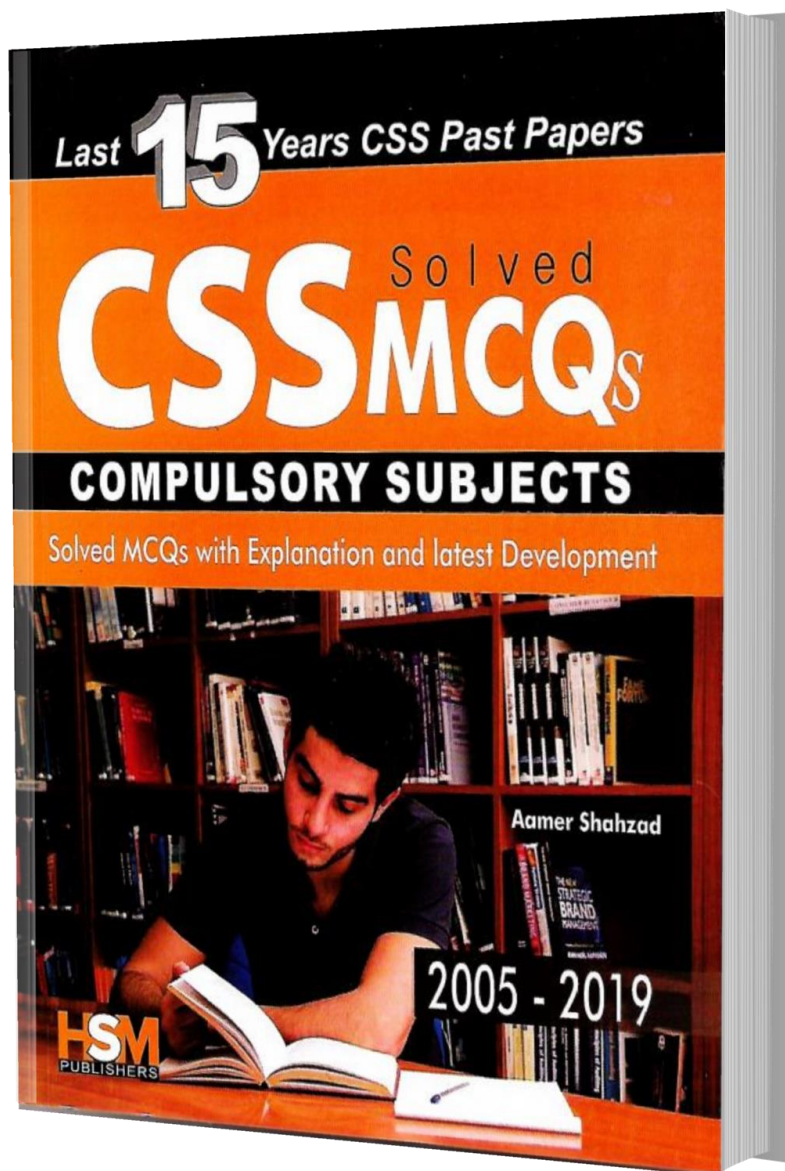
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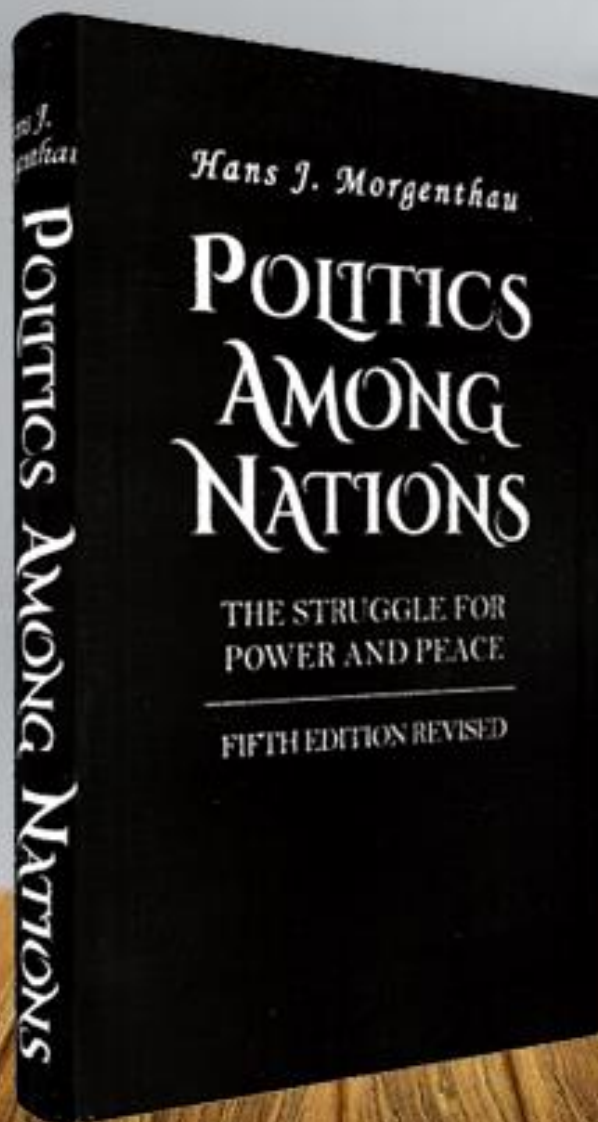
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# **PAKISTAN**

## **IK's Iran visit: a precursor to stable regional policy By Asif Durrani**

Prime Minister Imran Khan meets Supreme Leader of Iran Seyyed Ali Khamenei in Tehran. PHOTO: EXPRESSThe writer is a former ambassador Prime Minister Imran Khan's visit to Iran from April 21 to 22 reinforced the durability of Pakistan-Iran relations despite the recent terrorist attacks in the Iranian Baluchestan and Ormara of the Pakistani Balochistan. The Iranian government went out of its way to accord a rousing welcome to PM Khan which was manifested through unfurling of Pakistani flags and welcoming banners on major streets of Tehran.

That the visit took place was itself a big event in view of the Ormara terrorist incident in which 14 security personnel were killed by terrorists ostensibly coming from the Iranian Baluchestan. The PM's visit also reinforces the argument that a strong regional policy — hinged on stable relationship with neighbours — is the best guarantee for peace and security in the region. It also belied the impression that Pakistan was following the Saudi camp in the region. Significantly, the post-Pulwama developments have established Pakistan's credentials as a formidable power which not only can ensure its defence but can also play a positive role for regional peace which includes mediation between Iran and Saudi Arabia provided the two parties desire so. This augurs well for Pakistan for a stable partnership with Iran and the Saudi-led GCC countries.

The visit was meant to assuage certain misunderstandings that the Iranian leadership might be entertaining due to recent developments involving Pakistan and the Gulf countries. On security issues, the two sides agreed to establish a Rapid Response Force to monitor and interdict terrorists and organised crimes; and, exchange intelligence in real time. Concurrently, while the Iranian president categorically said that no third country could harm the Pakistan-Iran relations, our PM assured that Pakistan would not allow

anyone to use its soil against another country. PM Khan's message was not an assurance to Iran alone but to the entire neighbourhood, including India. He also made it clear that Pakistan would not succumb to pressure from any corners as was earlier speculated after the visits of the Saudi and Emirati dignitaries a few months ago.

Afghanistan was another major issue that has had direct impact on the security and socio-economic conditions of both the countries. Still 1.7 million and 1.4 million Afghan refugees live in Pakistan and Iran, respectively, whose repatriation to Afghanistan as a result of the ongoing peace talks has yet to be sorted out. Overall, there has been convergence on both sides for a smooth withdrawal of American troops and establishment of a durable dispensation in Afghanistan which can provide stability to the country and also take into account the wishes of its people. Since Iran has been preoccupied in Iraq and Syria during the past one decade, Afghanistan has been relegated to the secondary position in the Iranian calculus although Iranian officials remain vigilant over the unfolding situation in Afghanistan.

Related to this important development is the evolving consensus amongst the neighbours of Afghanistan that an orderly US withdrawal is needed and that all neighbours of Afghanistan should ensure that Afghanistan does not become a pawn in the regional rivalry. In a way Afghanistan's traditional "neutral or buffer status" which kept peace during the Great Game between the British and Russian empires would be repeated although with a difference that this time neighbours of Afghanistan would not play favourite with Afghan factions.

The joint statement from Pakistan and Iran touched upon issues concerning Palestine and the American declaration of Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) as Foreign Terrorist Organisation (FTO) and expressed concern over "unilateral application of measures by any country that are inconsistent with the provision of international law and the principles of UN Charter". It also called for resolution of the Kashmir dispute in accordance with the UN Security Council resolutions.



On trade and economic cooperation, the two countries agreed to continue discussions on enhancing bilateral trade, including opening of two additional border posts and markets. President Rouhani also offered to enhance the current export of electricity to Pakistan by ten times in order to address Pakistan's growing energy demands. Similarly, he reiterated his offer of selling oil and gas to Pakistan. However, he did not tell the audience as to what Iran can import from Pakistan to enhance the existing trade volume from \$1.3 billion to \$5 billion which has been agreed to by the two sides in the past five years. A reality check on the bilateral trade during the past two decades shows that the balance of trade has always been in Iran's favour. Hence, it is Iran which has to be forthcoming in enhancing the trade volume by importing more from Pakistan. Certainly, banking channels are a problem but currency swap arrangements with Iran, as being practised by China, India, Russia and 20 other countries, can bypass the American sanctions. In a strategic move which may have far-reaching impact, Prime Minister Khan offered Iran transit facilities from Pakistani territory to India and China. While transit for China is understandable, it is transit between Iran and India which is significant and could be an olive branch from Imran Khan to India. Certainly, this offer would not be restricted to Iran; and if things move in the right direction, including resumption of dialogue, India can be offered access to Afghanistan. This should serve as a major shift in Pakistan's policy for the region which may turn out to be a game changer. However, the distance between the cup and the lip is still long. Indian election results and the subsequent dispensation would determine whether they are ready to play tango. PM Khan's visit may not have achieved much in terms of the bilateral trade for a variety of reasons, including the US sanctions on Iran, but it has set the tone for a stable regional policy which is more focused within the region than looking for allies far afield. It's a promising beginning but with many pitfalls. The PM and his team will have to tread the path very carefully.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1958500/6-iks-iran-visit-precursor-stable-regional-policy/?fbclid=IwAR1YRS2d5ui0RSaWe2TCgx072ZoaSk2CbBWRsOGcwqp9jG8p40zCF09eWk>

## [A move to reduce poverty By I.A. Rehman](#)

THE launch of a poverty-alleviation programme under the (compassion) has caused a flutter in millions of hearts in the country because poverty deprives a very large segment of the population of Pakistan the joys of living.

Incidentally, the people's deliverance from poverty has always been accepted as one of their basic rights, a right that cannot be defined in terms of a voluntary gesture, even if that gesture enjoys as high a value as compassion does. The discourse on poverty eradication, and not merely poverty alleviation, must be conducted in the idiom of rights.

A certain lack of clarity about Ehsas makes it necessary to ensure that what sparkles in the hands of the prime minister is gold and not tinsel.

It is necessary to ensure that what sparkles in the hands of the prime minister is gold and not tinsel.

The government intends to shift the pledges made in Article 38 (d) from the 'Principles of Policy' to the 'Fundamental Rights' chapter. That should enable the citizens to secure through courts four basic necessities of life: food, clothing, housing and medical relief. (Education is also mentioned in this clause, but the right to education has already been recognised under the 18th Amendment.)

However, 38 (d) is one of the seven clauses of Article 38 that carries the caption 'Promotion of social and economic well-being of the people'. There is no bar to the transfer of a single clause of Article 38 to the fundamental rights chapter but it is necessary to understand the priorities fixed in the relevant article.

The first clause 38 (a) covers a broad area. It calls for "preventing the concentration of wealth and means of production and distribution in the hands of a few" and for ensuring "equitable adjustment of rights between employers and employees and landlords and tenants".

Under the second clause, 38(b), the state is obliged to "provide for all citizens, within the available resources of the country, facilities for work and adequate livelihood with reasonable rest and leisure."

Clause 38 (c) obliges the state to guarantee social security for all employees in both public and private sectors. Clause 38 (e) calls for "reduction in disparity in the income and earnings of individuals," while 38 (f) seeks elimination of "riba as early as possible".

Finally, 38 (g), inserted by the 18th Amendment, says that "the shares of the provinces in all federal services, including autonomous bodies and corporations... shall be secured and any omission... in the past shall be rectified".



A plain reading of Article 38 shows that the state shall establish an order in which the right to work will be available to the largest possible number of citizens. The state shall protect the rights of employees and tenants and all employees shall enjoy social security. The number of people in need of a safety net under Article 38 (d) will be greatly reduced.

If the socioeconomic order envisaged by Articles 37 and 38 of the Constitution is not created, the number of citizens seeking relief under Article 38 (d) will be too huge and the cost too high to be met by any government. This clause offers relief only to those who cannot earn their livelihood on account of “infirmity, sickness or unemployment.” This is in accord with the general theory of creating a safety net for those who are unable to benefit from the opportunities a welfare state offers.

The mere transfer of a provision from the ‘Principles of Policy’ to ‘Fundamental Rights’ is no guarantee of that right becoming available in practice. Nine years have passed since the state assumed the responsibility to provide free and compulsory education to all children from ages five to 16 years. It cannot escape censure for failing to fully implement Article 25-A.

The government plans to complete by December a survey to identify the poor and poverty-stricken areas. A proper comment on this proposal must wait till its details become clearer. But poverty is not a new subject in public debate. The government should be aware of the studies on poverty alleviation done by national and international institutions and Pakistan’s leading economists. That eradication of poverty means removal of inequalities caused by domicile, belief and gender distinctions is now accepted as a fundamental reality. The country needs to reduce inequalities to an extent that even the hindmost are able to enjoy an adequate livelihood.

The prime minister’s offer of relief to transgender citizens, street children, bonded and daily wage labourers, along with allotment of land for opening shops and cafés, etc, can only be welcomed. This could lead to a shift from dependence on dole to earned livelihoods.

Also welcome are plans to provide mobile phones to 5.7 million women and help them maintain accounts in banks. One hopes the essential factor in the Bangladesh schemes of women’s empowerment — namely, the provision of work for girls — will not be ignored.

One should also like to withhold judgement on the flashes of rhetoric until one hears more from Dr Sania Nishtar, the chairperson of the Poverty Alleviation Coordination Council, who has the reputation of carrying a sound head on her shoulders. She should be able to convince the powers that be that no government can create a greater hazard for itself than leaving unrealised the people’s expectations it has aroused.

During the launch of Ehsas programme, some PTI circles called for changing the name of the Benazir Income Support Programme, which smacked of petty-minded partisanship. The government has done well by deciding not to change the BISP name. Changing

names of cities, institutions and projects is contrary to the liberal traditions of the subcontinent's Muslims.

The new Dow Medical University is being built on a plot donated for a health facility by a non-Muslim landlord, Deepchand Ojha, before Independence. If the authorities fail to honour the memory of the benefactor they will only confirm themselves as small, ungrateful men.

Source: <https://www.dawn.com/news/1473807/a-move-to-reduce-poverty>



## Focus on NAP/ Editorial

IN the aftermath of the horrific 2014 APS, Peshawar, tragedy, political forces in the country, along with the security establishment, pledged to take firm action against militancy of all sorts, as well as those providing the support structure for hatred and violence. While there has been progress on many points of the NAP agenda, it is key that there is no let up in momentum and that the state maintains surveillance of the elements out to foment violence in the country.

In this regard, Minister of State for Interior Shehryar Khan Afridi, while speaking at an event in Islamabad on Thursday, said that actions against proscribed organisations were being taken not under pressure of the Financial Action Task Force, but as envisioned under NAP.

“No one will be allowed to use our land against any country,” he said, while briefing diplomats in the federal capital.

In a similar vein, the army’s top brass announced at the last corps commanders’ conference that the military would support all stakeholders in implementing NAP.

It is a positive sign that all institutions of the state are on the same page regarding NAP.

Indeed, recent actions against militant outfits such as JeM and LeT, taken in the aftermath of the Pulwama event, indicate that the PTI-led government realises it must crack down on violent actors.

However, it is important that the state does not rest on its laurels.

Considering the strength of the jihadi infrastructure nurtured since the Zia era, it will take some time and considerable effort before it is dismantled.

The nation has paid with thousands of lives in the battle against militancy, so it is important that all violent actors are put out of business, to ensure these lives have not been lost in vain.

Moreover, equal attention must be paid to all 20 points outlined under NAP.

For instance, many sectarian outfits and those responsible for promoting hate speech are still active, though keeping a low profile.

As was reported, Maulvi Abdul Aziz of the Lal Masjid infamy recently led Friday prayers at the same mosque in Islamabad.

The fact that such a controversial cleric was able to pull this off indicates that loopholes exist.

In order to root out militancy and push the country in a more tolerant direction, the process of identifying and prosecuting hatemongers must be ongoing.

There must be zero tolerance for those promoting hatred of religions, sects, ethnicities and nationalities.

While freedom of speech is inviolable and needs to be protected by the state, those promoting violence against individuals or communities cannot be tolerated.

Moreover, choking the funds of hatemongers and violent entities is essential for Pakistan's own security.

Madressahs and religious institutions that are dedicated to religious studies are fine; but institutions that promote jihadi thought and sectarianism cannot be allowed to function as usual.

Source: [https://www.dawn.com/news/1474241/focus-on-nap?fbclid=IwAR1z\\_qO8D0SYFR5dKHWr29jrGmxkK8ufUW3rYRLX1Uvm\\_oxW6uTaTmYsEPo](https://www.dawn.com/news/1474241/focus-on-nap?fbclid=IwAR1z_qO8D0SYFR5dKHWr29jrGmxkK8ufUW3rYRLX1Uvm_oxW6uTaTmYsEPo)

## [New govt policies could finally see Pakistan as new global tourism player: Telegraph | Editorial](#)

“If dope is what you want then you are going to the right place – hash and grass can be found just about everywhere.”

According to a report by English newspaper Telegraph, so said Lonely Planet of Pakistan in its first ever travel guide, *Across Asia on the Cheap*, published in 1973. Indeed, the country was once one of the highlights of the classic “hippie trail” or “overland” route from Europe to the Far East, a rite of passage for disillusioned Western youth. Peshawar and Lahore were considered not only safe – but also fine places to kick back for a few days in a budget hostel, drink Murree beer and sample the local pot. The book offered a tip on leaving the latter city: “You can get a magic bus from Lahore direct to Kabul – look for notices in the freak hangouts.”

Much has happened in the intervening half-century. A military coup in 1977 established a policy of Islamisation (get caught with drugs now and you’ll face a long stint in prison – or worse), before decades of political turmoil and terrorism removed Pakistan from the radars of all but the most intrepid travellers. Ian Botham, the former England cricketer, once quipped that it was the sort of place you’d send your mother-in-law.

Now, however, it could be on the brink of something special.

Imran Khan, Pakistan’s prime minister (and another former international cricketer), is committed to kickstarting tourism to help raise money for a welfare state.

His policy has so far extended to tweeting pictures of the country’s beaches and snow-capped mountains, hosting a two-day tourism summit last week, and, most significantly, cutting the red tape and entry requirements that have the potential to put off visitors.

As of this month, residents of five countries – the UK, China, Turkey, Malaysia and the UAE – can take advantage of a new online e-visa system, while most restrictions on movement within the country have been abolished.

Jane Westwood of Wild Frontiers, one of the few UK operators to offer tours of Pakistan (others include Hinterland and Exodus), welcomed the changes.

“The old visa system was very convoluted,” she said. “Both travellers and tour operators needed to file numerous supporting documents and the whole process took two weeks or more – now it can be wrapped up in a matter of hours. It is also significantly cheaper, from £134 down to the equivalent of \$60 [£46].”

She also praised the loosening of the No Objection Certificate (NOC) system, under which travellers needed special permission to visit certain parts of Pakistan. These have been scrapped for all but a few border regions, opening up parts of Kashmir, Chitral and Gilgit-Baltistan.

“It’s a beautiful country, and one of the most welcoming,” said Westwood, who has visited twice. “The mountain scenery is staggering, and it’s perfect for trekking, but there are fascinating cities too. Islamabad is leafy and green, with wide boulevards; Lahore has a remarkable Old City, gardens, museums and forts – a real combination of old and new. Then there’s the Kalasha Valleys, which have a unique pagan culture, with traditional lifestyles, dress and festivals.”

Westwood says that bookings for Pakistan tours have increased significantly during the past two or three years, an assertion that’s backed up by official tourism statistics. In 2015, Pakistan welcomed 563,000 overseas arrivals. That figure grew to 965,000 in 2016, 1.6m in 2017 and 1.9m last year. Some of those will be expats of Pakistani heritage visiting friends and family, but it is suggestive of a destination finally about to live up to the oft-applied billing of “tourism’s next big thing”.

Pakistan’s draws – spectacular mountains, ancient civilisations and warm hospitality – aren’t in doubt, but there is the issue of safety.



A glance at the Foreign Office's travel advice is hardly reassuring. It puts more than a dozen districts, including Peshawar and the aforementioned Kalasha Valleys, off-limits, while travellers are warned of the "high threat of terrorism, kidnap and sectarian violence throughout the country". It adds: "Foreigners, in particular westerners, may be directly targeted. You should be vigilant, avoid all crowds, public events, political gatherings, religious processions and sporting events."

Three of Wild Frontiers' four Pakistan tours contravene Foreign Office advice but Westwood believes the official guidance "does not reflect the reality on the ground". The company says it conducts regular risk assessments with independent security companies and local contacts and will exercise caution when necessary. Several tours were cancelled in 2013, for example, when a group of foreign climbers were attacked by militants at a mountain camp near Nanga Parbat in Gilgit-Baltistan.

Occasional incidents aside – a terror attack in Pulwama on February 14 increased tensions between India and Pakistan and saw the latter's airspace briefly closed – there is no doubt the security situation has improved dramatically.

Last year both France and Portugal relaxed their advice on travel to Pakistan; the US suggests its citizens "reconsider travel" to the country, putting it on a par with the likes of Honduras, Sudan and Turkey, but one step below the "do not travel" advice for Iraq, Yemen, Iran and others. Perhaps the best bellwether is the arrival of a British Airways plane. On June 2 the airline will restart flights from Heathrow to Islamabad, marking its first service to the country for a decade.

"The links between Britain and Pakistan are already extraordinary – from culture and cricket, to people, politics and education," said Thomas Drew, the British High Commissioner to Pakistan, when the route was announced last December. "I see this launch as a vote of confidence in the future of those links – and, of course, a reflection of the great improvements in the security situation in Pakistan in recent years."

The Lonely Planet's dope smoking tips for Pakistan certainly recall a very different era, but much of the advice from its 1973 guide rings true today. It talks of spectacular Himalayan peaks, remarkable Mughal architecture – and friendly locals. Its section on the

country concludes thus: “Wandering through the Badshahi mosque in Lahore one evening we came upon a studious group of young Pakistanis. The Koran? No, Pitman’s shorthand. For the next half hour we slowly intoned ‘further to your letter of the 7th inst’ as practise for their imminent exams!”

Pakistan’s potential for growth in tourism is almost limitless. A vast nation of almost 200 million people, it attracted just 1.9m travellers last year. More people visited Chester Zoo. But votes of confidence from the likes of BA, along with Imran Khan’s efforts to promote tourism, could finally see it emerge as a global player

Source : [https://www.pakistantoday.com.pk/2019/04/10/new-govt-policies-could-finally-see-pakistan-as-new-global-tourism-player-telegraph/?fbclid=IwAR1IU\\_N4xPpUSKRkEuVx9HEVhzwou2P0wbl8sOxHAXjXQdGI37nYoia3EnQ](https://www.pakistantoday.com.pk/2019/04/10/new-govt-policies-could-finally-see-pakistan-as-new-global-tourism-player-telegraph/?fbclid=IwAR1IU_N4xPpUSKRkEuVx9HEVhzwou2P0wbl8sOxHAXjXQdGI37nYoia3EnQ)

## Pakistan's pragmatic foreign policy By Adeel Abbas Mangi

Pakistan has negotiated very difficult geo-strategic challenges for the last four decades. In the past, Pakistan had been the darling of the West, but when Islamabad needed its allies to help, it was greeted with policies of deception. Now, it has rebalanced its foreign affairs to an extent that allows Islamabad to look eastward. The idiosyncratic belief system and charismatic international standing of Prime Minister Imran Khan have paved the way to opening up new boundaries that allow Islamabad to further its national interests.

Pakistan has for the first time rebalanced its foreign affairs with neighbouring states for the purpose of deriving long-term economic benefits for its people. The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) is the flagship project of Beijing's world-changing Belt and Road Initiative. The BRI is part of China's ambition to compete in the rising multipolar world order. Beijing has proved its iron brotherhood with Islamabad on both economic and diplomatic fronts.

Pakistan has for the first time rebalanced its foreign affairs with neighbouring states for the purpose of deriving long-term economic benefits for its people.

China has initiated economic prospects in order to establish an environment of long-term competition to impact world powers in the economic race and create avenues for other states to participate. For example, recently the first European state to take an interest in the BRI, Italy, announced the signing of a memorandum of understanding with China to make Palermo a Belt and Road port.

To date, Chinese companies have cooperated in the construction and operation of almost 42 ports in 34 countries under the BRI. China has also signed 38 bilateral and regional maritime agreements covering 47 countries in connection with its Belt and Road trade routes. The key strategy of Chinese shipping company COSCO and other Chinese companies is to invest in smaller European seaports and then try to develop them.

Read more: Pakistan's foreign policy during the PTI-led government will be more of...

Andrew Korybko, a Moscow-based American political analyst, believes that “Pakistan under BRI can transform itself from being a passive object of international relations to a leading subject of the rapidly changing global order if it creatively expands this central corridor throughout the rest of the supercontinent in order to become the Zipper of Eurasia.” According to The Atlantic magazine, US President Barack Obama’s East Asia strategy or “pivot to Asia” was adopted in order to contain the Chinese sphere of influence, while his secretary of state, Hillary Clinton, coined the term America’s Pacific Century.

This significant shift in US foreign policy might have been a response to the String of Pearls narrative, a term coined by Booz Allen, head of an American management information and technology firm, in his report titled “Energy Futures in Asia.” Apart from all these strategic fears, in my view, Beijing’s current foreign-policy narrative is to abandon the zero-sum game in favour of a win-win situation for all.

The CPEC is the flagship project of Beijing’s world-changing Belt and Road Initiative.

In parallel with this, Pakistan has endorsed the policy of regional connectivity by applying economics to boost regional economic integration, to create dependency in trade to avoid any foreseeable conflict, to which end it has offered to neighbours such as India, Afghanistan, Iran and Central Asian states to become part of CPEC and make their economies prosper.

According to Ishrat Husain, former governor of the State Bank of Pakistan, “Our relationships with our neighbours should be determined by economic interests rather than politics.” Geopolitically, Afghanistan is vitally close to Central Asia and potentially connects Eurasia with an alternative route to CPEC with the upcoming Lapis Lazuli corridor. Similarly, the Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India (TAPI) project is a substitute option for the Iranian route, and has been called the “peace pipeline.”

Read more: Who is making Pakistan’s foreign policy?

New Delhi and Islamabad can overcome the stalemate of their prolonged Kashmir dispute through compliance with UN Security Council Resolution 49, which suggests a way out through the democratic means of a free and impartial plebiscite, and also by giving space to economic dependency to avoid any strategic miscalculation in future.



Islamabad's policy gestures suggest that it has adopted an "intermestic policy," which can be defined as a congealing of strategic and economic policies. On the strategic front, Pakistan is in the process of converting to an Act East Policy, by using its geo-strategic location to diversify its friends club. In relation to this, the growing geo-strategic ties with the former Cold War rival Russia suggest Islamabad's balancing strategy to cope with the rising Indo-US romance.

The key strategy of Chinese shipping company COSCO and other Chinese companies is to invest in smaller European seaports and then try to develop them.

The emerging triangular nexus among China, Russia and Pakistan is a pre-emptive measure to sustain the balance of power in the Asia-Pacific region. Moscow's decision to lift an arms embargo against Islamabad has opened up new avenues to increase its arsenal through the acquisition of Russian equipment. On the Middle Eastern front, Islamabad has succeeded in partnering with Riyadh for a huge US\$20 billion investment in CPEC, which according to Crown Prince Muhammad bin Salman is just the first phase.

Pakistani newspaper The Express Tribune has also reported that Iran has hinted at joining the Pakistan-Russia-China trilateral alliance for regional peace and stability. Turkey, a North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) ally gone rogue, is also forging closer ties with Islamabad, as is Qatar, a country recently demonized by the US-backed Saudi coalition of bullies.

Read more: Three foreign policy opportunities for Pakistan: PTI Government needs to cash?

To put it in a nutshell, it should be a priority by the decision-makers in Pakistan to further its national interest through means of regional connectivity to sustain an environment of security, peace and prosperity. According to Anatol Lieven, the author of the book Pakistan: A Hard Country, "Pakistan is not a failed state but a struggling one. It will continue to exist unless there is outside intervention by the USA and India." Furthermore, he acknowledged the Pakistan armed forces' role as the "savior to its long-standing stability."

Korybko states, “Pakistan’s promising economic potential, international connectivity capabilities, and unparalleled geo-strategic location combine with its world-class military and proven diplomatic finesse over the decades to turn the South Asian country into the global pivot state of the 21st century.”

Source : <https://www.globalvillagespace.com/pakistans-pragmatic-foreign-policy/?fbclid=IwAR3QwDUpcvmx7zgkRXWfoCDpTuvKykT17BHXIUfxB-kDSk-LnDTY5BbE4CQ>

## Two faces of democracy By Ahmed Bilal Mehboob

It seems that a section of population in Pakistan is perpetually infatuated by the presidential form of government. Although a unanimously passed Constitution of 1973 had settled the question in favour of a parliamentary system 46 years ago, the question keeps coming back periodically. At times, it seems as if some interested quarters are test-ballooning to see if a critical mass of public opinion is supportive of the presidential system. The question is once again doing the rounds these days, especially on social media and some electronic media outlets.

Despite the passionate pleading by some media persons, there doesn't seem to be any real support on the ground for a shift to the presidential form. None of the federal or provincial legislatures have ever debated the question, what to talk of passing any resolution in support of the presidential system.

Even if there is little support for the presidential system, there is nothing wrong in expressing opinions in its favour or advancing arguments in its support. It is equally acceptable that advocates of the presidential system try to convince public opinion in favour of their point of view using the democratic means available to everyone.

A healthy debate based on logic, facts and figures is a part of the democratic culture and if at any point in time the majority of public opinion turns in favour of the presidential system manifesting in a referendum, and both houses of the parliament amend the constitution accordingly, there will be nothing wrong in making the switch. After all, Sri Lanka made that switch following democratic norms some years back and Turkey has done the same only a year ago.

Neither the presidential nor the parliamentary form of government is a guarantee against instability.

It is, however, surprising that when there are more pressing issues facing democracy in Pakistan, a segment of public opinion considers it important to debate the pros and cons of the presidential system. The subject of an effective local government system, for example, is far more central to the cause of deepening democracy and bringing the fruits

of democracy to the grass-roots level. The question about the type of local government system is urgent too as the provincial governments are busy shaping the future local government system in each province ahead of the next local government elections.

There seems to be a consistent support for a parliamentary form of government in Pakistan over the past many years. The first constitution of Pakistan was passed by the Constituent Assembly in 1956 which provided for a parliamentary form of government. Earlier, Pakistan had inherited a parliamentary form of government from Britain after independence and continued practising it for 11 years when a military coup toppled the government of prime minister Sir Feroze Khan Noon in 1958. The 1956 constitution was abrogated following the declaration of martial law and the military leader General Ayub Khan experimented with a unique form of presidential system which had to be abandoned under widespread public agitation leading to another martial law in 1969. When the country returned to democracy after the traumatic period of martial law, a civil war and dismemberment of the country, a new constitution was unanimously passed in 1973 which again provided for a parliamentary form of government. Despite the military interventions and extended military rules, the 1973 Constitution and the parliamentary form of government returned whenever democracy was restored. It is because of consistent public sanction that the Constitution and the parliamentary system of government continue in Pakistan to date.

Ten general elections have been conducted in Pakistan under the 1973 Constitution so far but the change in the system of government never figured as an issue in any of these elections. A review of the election manifestos of major political parties further testifies that none of the mainstream political parties has ever proposed the presidential form of government. All these facts indicate that changing the parliamentary form of government to a presidential system has never been a public issue or an issue among the political parties and legislatures.

The presidential system is usually preferred because it is considered relatively stable whereas prime ministers can be removed with relative ease through a no-confidence motion passed with a simple majority. Over a period of time, the Constitution has evolved and so has the parliamentary form of government in such a way that most of the



shortcomings associated with it have been overcome. Because of the frequent changes in governments during the initial 11 years of parliamentary democracy in Pakistan, several provisions were built into the 1973 Constitution to guard against political instability.

The Constitution has further evolved since and the prime minister's position has proven to be quite stable, at least politically. Judicial, military and presidential interventions aside, no prime minister has been removed through a no-trust motion in the National Assembly since the passage of the 1973 Constitution. The presidential power to dissolve the National Assembly and send the prime minister home which was introduced and reintroduced into the Constitution by the military rulers has also been done away with. Floor-crossing by members of the National Assembly to destabilise the government has also been made extremely difficult through constitutional provisions. With these innovative provisions, the parliamentary system in Pakistan has become almost as stable as a presidential system.

Even in a presidential system like that in the US, the stalemate between the legislature and the president can't be ruled out. There have been several breakdowns in the past years including a recent one in the US federal government because of differences between the Congress and the president on the budget. The argument of instability is therefore equally applicable to a presidential form of government.

Pakistan has been successfully practising the parliamentary system for the last many decades and there is apparently no justification to artificially replace it with a presidential system under the pretext of a mythical instability.

Source : [https://www.dawn.com/news/1475596/two-faces-of-democracy?fbclid=IwAR0veOQNwQFokslZBXByu3-6qfqf63evHJ1yEYkPRyi\\_f0cedkemRoJMERw](https://www.dawn.com/news/1475596/two-faces-of-democracy?fbclid=IwAR0veOQNwQFokslZBXByu3-6qfqf63evHJ1yEYkPRyi_f0cedkemRoJMERw)

## Pakistan's Population Threat By Ashar Jawad

Though China's one-child and two-child policies that prevented 400 million births might be deemed as harsh, Pakistan can take a leaf out of its Muslim neighbor Iran's book on population control measures.

A finite world with finite resources can only support a finite population. Amidst intense political wrangling and a plethora of national issues, a more important concern affecting the future of this country has almost gone unheeded. The population time bomb that had long been ticking is now exploding.

Pakistan being one of the high fertility countries with a large proportion of young adults and children had a population of 33 million in 1951. Today, the population has risen to nearly 210 million making Pakistan the 6th most populous country in the world after China, India, United States, Indonesia and Brazil.

In terms of land, Pakistan is 0.6% of the world area and home to 2.65% of the global population. Every 40th person on the planet is a Pakistani. Population has soared across the globe since the start of the 19th century from 1 billion in 1800 to 7.5 billion in 2018. But while the growth rate globally is 1.2%, it is 1.90% in Pakistan where on average each family has 3 children. The South Asian country is tipped to become the 4th largest country in terms of population by 2050.

With abysmal human development indicators – ranked 150 out of 189 countries by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), 60% of the population under the age of 30 and a national median age of 22 coupled with fewer employment opportunities, population explosion presents the most serious challenge to the stability and security of the country. Despite the gravity of the situation, this issue has hardly figured in the national discourse.

Major factors responsible for high population growth in Pakistan are high fertility, low contraceptive prevalence rate, high unmet need of family planning, declining mortality due to improved healthcare, custom of early marriages, male child preference, poverty, illiteracy, patriarchy, religious constraints, beliefs, customs, traditions and lack of

recreational activities. Add to that the failure of government to plan and implement population control measures. Pakistan had its first population census after 1998 in 2017 – a gap of 19 years.

Pakistan's bulging population and its unrestricted rise presents real dangers to political stability, economy, national security and the state's plans to achieve self-sufficiency is various human development indicators.

Agriculture is a key contributor to Pakistan's national GDP. With rising population, lands that were used for agrarian purposes are now being turned into villages, towns, suburbs and housing societies. If this trend continues unhindered for long, the country might face severe food shortage in the years to come. There has been a rapid rise in urbanization over the past few decades. People have moved in millions from rural areas in search of employment which has put further strain on the existing infrastructure of urban centers. More than 20% of Pakistan's population lives in 10 major cities.

Shrinking forest and farm space to make way for infrastructure development to facilitate growing population needs will cause environmental degradation through anthropogenic activity, contributing to global warming. Pakistan is the 7th most vulnerable country to climate change according to the UN.

Resources are scarce, and Pakistan has suffered from acute water and energy crisis since the dawn of the 21st century, which has had an adverse effect on the business industry. Shortage of electricity and gas has forced many to shut down and go out of business. With limited job opportunities in the market and academic institutions churning out degrees, a major chunk of the youth may grow restless and turn to crime, including militancy. Population threat will also affect Pakistan's ability to meet United Nation's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Right since independence in 1947, Pakistan's provinces have wrangled over resources. Water being one, that has often strained relations between Punjab and Sindh. On the other hand, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa complains about not receiving its share in electricity as much as it should since the province is the major producer of hydel power. Balochistan has had its own share of grievances, mixed with on-off insurgencies since the 1950s.

Limited resources and ever growing demand to meet the needs of a bulging population could trigger further inter-provincial competition and rivalry. Recent trends show that those countries facing internal security problems currently, including Afghanistan, Libya and Syria, also experienced high increase in population leading up to the turmoil.

Family planning programs were initiated in Pakistan in the 1950s, and have greatly helped reduce the birth rate from 4.5% in 1947 at the time of independence to 2.9% in the 1990. The figure has further come down to 1.90% now, but still a lot remains to be done as it is much higher than the global rate of population growth which stands at 1.2%.

The government requires to develop a comprehensive and cohesive strategy to deal with the population dilemma involving all federating units, as well as have a mechanism to review progress. Awareness about the ills associated with population explosion should be promoted through educational programs, awareness seminars, celebrity endorsements, and media campaigns.

Though China's one-child and two-child policies that prevented 400 million births might be deemed as harsh, Pakistan can take a leaf out of its Muslim neighbor Iran's book on population control measures. The southwest Asian country's population grew at over 3% between 1950 and 1980. The government in Tehran in the 1990s introduced a comprehensive population control strategy, where the clergy declared that Islam favors families with two children only. Government launched a nationwide campaign and promoted contraceptives, vasectomies and sterilization. Men and women were required to take birth control courses before getting married. Food coupons, paid maternity leaves and other social welfare subsidies were abolished for the third child. As a result, Iran's population growth rate shrank to 0.7% in 2007. It stands at 1.1% now after the government led by former president Ahmadinejad decided to curb control measures.

The problem of overpopulation is very serious, and has the potential to cause chaos and anarchy in the coming years as Pakistan faces depleting national resources, including water. If not curtailed now, it may go on to haunt the country in the future. To become a progressive, prosperous and stable state, it is the need of the hour for Pakistan's leadership to devise a sound and dynamic strategy to deal with this peril before it is late.

## Peace is difficult By Munir Akram

THE recent military crisis with India was a baptism of fire for Prime Minister Imran Khan and the PTI government. In the event, the Pakistani leader emerged as a responsible statesman while Modi exposed himself as a rash warmonger.

The Pakistani prime minister has expressed the hope that after his anticipated re-election, Prime Minister Modi will be strong enough to politically to engage in a dialogue for peace with Pakistan. He has similarly expressed hope for peace in Afghanistan through the US-Afghan Taliban talks which Pakistan has facilitated.

Unfortunately, peace is difficult to achieve in the present global environment. A new Cold War is under way between the US and China. The Washington 'establishment' views India as an essential ally in its global competition with China. After the Pulwama suicide attack, US National Security Adviser John Bolton immediately proclaimed India's "right to self-defence", providing New Delhi a virtual "carte blanche" to proceed with its threatened military action, irrespective of the inherent risk of a wider Pakistan-India war. Responsibility to avoid a conflict — by acting against Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM) — was placed on Pakistan.

US mediation to prevent a wider war was activated only after Pakistan retaliated against India's incursion, downed two Indian aircraft, captured an Indian pilot and, reportedly, 'locked' its missiles on to several Indian targets in response to similar Indian action. Pakistan's foreign minister was gracious in acknowledging US mediation. Yet, the lesson from the episode is clear: strength is the only sure way to deter an aggressive adversary and secure even-handed outcomes.

India is unlikely to offer any meaningful compromises to resolve the Kashmir dispute.

It remains to be seen if after their anticipated re-election, Modi and the BJP agree to resume a dialogue with Pakistan. But, even if talks resume, India is unlikely to offer any



meaningful compromises to resolve the Kashmir dispute or move away from the aim of imposing an India-dominated 'order' in South Asia and beyond.

This presumption is reinforced by the BJP's electoral manifesto, which promises to transform India into a 'Hindu rashtra' (state), build a Hindu temple on the site of the destroyed Babri Masjid and strip Kashmir's special and autonomous status under the Indian constitution.

What India desires is that Pakistan accept India's rule in India-occupied Kashmir, much as Israel's Arab neighbours are being asked to accept the 'reality' of Israel's occupation of Jerusalem, the Golan and most of the West Bank. But, unlike Israel's neighbours, Pakistan has not been militarily defeated by India. Even if Pakistan were to set aside its strategic stakes in Kashmir (territory, affiliated people, water, China access), it will continue to be drawn into supporting the resilient 70-year struggle of the Kashmiri people for self-determination and freedom (azadi) from India.

Peace with India will have to be promoted the hard way, through possession of the capability to deter and defeat Indian aggression or 'diktat' and insistence on equitable negotiated solutions to outstanding disputes.

Likewise, building peace in Afghanistan remains an imposing challenge.

Pakistan's facilitation of the US-Taliban talks appears to have been quietly 'pocketed' by Washington without offering anything tangible in return. The IMF has insisted on onerous conditions for financial support. The threat of the FATF 'black list' has not been lifted. Pakistan's blocked CSF funds have not been released. No concern has been voiced by the US regarding India's UN-documented human rights violations in occupied Kashmir. Far from censuring India's military aggression of Feb 26, the US, together with the UK and France, has moved a resolution in the Security Council to place JeM's Maulana Azhar on the terrorism 'list'.

The unfortunate reality is that Pakistan has been categorised as an adversary by the US 'establishment', due to: America's 'strategic partnership' with India against China and 'radical Islamic terrorism'; the blame assigned to Pakistan for the US military failure in Afghanistan; Pakistan's nuclear weapons capability, and the considerable influence in Washington of the Indian-American expatriate community, the Israeli lobby and Christian 'fundamentalists'.

At present, this hostility towards Pakistan is tempered by Washington's need for Pakistan's support to US-Taliban dialogue. Yet, here too, Islamabad's help is perhaps being taken for granted. Not only have no concessions been extended to Pakistan, but US special representative Zalmay Khalilzad and the US ambassador in Kabul have felt free to publicly criticise the Pakistani prime minister's reference to the anticipated future interim government in Afghanistan. Pakistan needs to retain continuing leverage in the Afghan peace process and secure concrete US concessions to reciprocate its help in this process.

Khalilzad has played his cards well so far, outlining the US withdrawal structure and the Taliban's anti-terrorism commitments before turning to an intra-Afghan dialogue in which representatives of the Ashraf Ghani government can be incorporated.

Yet, despite his diplomatic skills, there is no assurance that Khalilzad's process will yield peace in Afghanistan. Afghan warlords, such as Dostum, are unlikely to reconcile with the Taliban. Sooner or later, Iran is likely to retaliate in Afghanistan and elsewhere against US sanctions, especially after the designation of the Islamic Revolutionary Guards as a "terrorist" organisation. This could disrupt the Afghan peace process. Moreover, time may run out on Khalilzad. The Taliban's gains in the coming 'fighting season' may settle Afghanistan's future on the battlefield.

Khalilzad recently briefed the envoys of China, Russia and the EU to build wider support for his process. China can help by investing generously in Afghanistan and building its regional connectivity. Russia's role may be critical in defeating the Islamic State-

Khorasan. Both powers can help to build a consensus for peace within Afghanistan and among its neighbours.

China and Russia may also hold the key to peace in South Asia. Presidents Vladimir Putin and Xi Jinping have sought to halt India's rush into America's strategic embrace, emphasising the enormous benefits of trans-Asian cooperation and the high costs of confrontation.

Peace could come to the entire region if India decides to become a part of the Asian 'order' being created under the Belt and Road Initiative and the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation. Unfortunately, Modi and the BJP's obsessive ambition to emerge as China's 'equal' has propelled them towards an alliance with America and may consign South Asia to remain a 'zone of crisis' in the New Cold War.

Source: <https://www.dawn.com/news/1476028/peace-is-difficult?fbclid=IwAR1LQYk-QKQ309GotxsPJ3J-a1IzkhF8jZfIBel0ha1dIUZJmsljqA0GbE>

## Parliamentary versus presidential democracy By Hasan Aftab saeed

There's no dearth of vociferous advocates of either system. One side insists that we can take a giant leap forward by adopting the presidential system, minimising the leverage of self-serving politicians. The other side is equally emphatic that success lies in sticking to the system in place, because it provides the necessary checks and balances on power. The author finds himself unable to share either group's enthusiasm for he believes that either view is mistaken.

The presidential system prides itself on its inherent separation of powers: the legislative body is distinct from the executive branch. This sounds great until one recalls that the separation of powers was hardly a hallmark of the Ayub, Zia and Musharraf regimes. No doubt, there's more inertia in the parliamentary system. This can often be a nuisance for a country that needs to be rebuilt almost afresh, albeit with a risk of its plunging to whole new lows in case an especially unhinged man manages to win power. In developed nations, with reasonably working systems in place, probably the parliamentary system is a better bet, since inertia is a much better quality to have than risky enterprise. Now, we certainly belong in the former category, and therefore in theory at least, the presidential system may be better-suited to us. However, again the Zia and Musharraf eras suffice to show the wide gulf between theory and practice. Some presidential democracy advocate may point out that those were not democratic regimes. That's probably true, but neither were the so-called 'democratic' dispensations that we've had which were little more than crude forms of majoritarianism.

The great Shafiq-ur-Rahman remarked that we, the people of the Subcontinent, have not only not invented anything of value ourselves, but have made an absolute mess of foreign inventions as well. The parliamentary and the presidential systems, both imports, are no exception

When it comes to the presidential system, some relevant questions are: What is needed to make the switch should it be decided that that's the way forward? Will an amendment in the Constitution suffice? Or is the basic frame-work of the Constitution unalterable by a constitutional amendment? And what exactly constitutes that basic framework anyway? Do we need a referendum or a fresh general election to elect a constituent assembly?

So much for the modalities, which (if history is any judge) can be taken care of in any number of ways. However, the fundamental question that should precede the above questions is this: what kind of a system do we currently have in place? Because the label aside, it's not at all easy to claim that we are following parliamentary democracy.

Before going into that, and in the spirit of giving credit where due, there's one aspect in which the system in place deserves kudos. To its infinite credit, the head of the state and the head of the government are separate in this system. The former (the president) is the symbol of the federation, and one shudders to think of what the federation would do without him. While the president is often decided by the whim of the head of the government (the prime minister) and can't sneeze without the latter's approval, the tradition has yielded gems who would have remained obscure otherwise: Presidents Fazal Ilahi Chaudhry, Rafiq Tarar and Mamnoon Hussain, to name three. On this count the nation owes a debt of gratitude to parliamentary democracy.

In a parliamentary democracy, the parliament is supposed to be the great check on the prime minister. In Pakistan, this was undermined after legislation barring members from voting against the party in important matters, making the head of the winning party (who is almost always the prime minister) immune to any challenge from within his own ranks. (This legislation was necessitated by widespread and blatant horse-trading.) Parliament thus being rendered irrelevant, all decisions are taken by the prime minister alone. Again, it looks more and more like the presidential system, despite the customary lip-service paid to Parliament.



It is often assumed that for a federation like ours, with units of widely differing sizes and populations, only the parliamentary system can work because it gives more autonomy to the federating units. This too is an imaginary distinction, because things such as fiscal autonomy and bicameral legislatures can equally be features of a presidential democracy.

In the presidential democracy, the president can appoint anybody he chooses a minister (or secretary of state) to head any department. In the parliamentary democracy on the other hand, there's supposed to be this tradition of having elected people to head these jobs, even if the technical support comes from specialist bureaucrats. This too is no differentiator in the Islamic Republic, where key portfolios are given to technocrats with impunity, and if needed they are given a Senate seat or made to win from a 'safe' constituency (again at the whim of the prime minister). It can be argued that Pakistan has in place an exquisite blend of the worst qualities of both systems. The question to ask is this: can we run any system as it should be run? The author is not very optimistic.

The fault then, instead of lying in this or that system, probably is in our stars. The great Shafiq-ur-Rahman remarked that we, the people of the Subcontinent, have not only not invented anything of value ourselves, but have made an absolute mess of foreign inventions as well. The parliamentary and the presidential systems, both imports, are no exception. After reading a term paper by the student, a professor concluded that it couldn't have been written by the student alone. His logic was impeccable: it contained far too many mistakes for one man to make. Regardless of the relative merits and demerits of the two systems then, it would be safe to conclude that neither the parliamentary nor the presidential system has a prayer so long as we are the way we are. In that regard, the author will not be crossing his fingers any time soon.

Source : <https://www.pakistantoday.com.pk/2019/04/21/parliamentary-versus-presidential-democracy/?fbclid=IwAR27VlcAWRHID0pChI3rr-FGbIFEHhcMAsF5f8roj-4r0GLS935Uw4ZJLw4>

## Managing security & economy By Muhammad Amir Rana

MANY interpret the government's recent reshuffle of the federal cabinet as a way of venting its frustration over a seemingly intractable economic challenge. The reshuffle came days before Prime Minister Imran Khan's scheduled visits to Iran and China, where economic and security cooperation will be among the major points of discussion. In particular, Pakistan anticipates more relief from Beijing, mainly in terms of an early launch of the Special Economic Zones under the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC).

China is considerate of Pakistan's economic woes. However, Chinese investors demand the award of projects on softer terms and on a fast track. They also consider investment in the country risky. Their main concern is the prevailing insecurity in Balochistan where a multitude of separatist and religiously inspired militant groups are creating an environment detrimental to the implementation of CPEC projects and the functioning of the Gwadar port.

The recent attack on security officials travelling on the Makran coastal highway, which is considered a safe highway in the province, will certainly add to Chinese concerns. The Baloch insurgents have perpetrated some high-impact attacks in recent times, including a few suicide blasts, which have started to defy the oft-told tale that the Baloch insurgency is a low-scale conflict. Secondly, Baloch separatist groups have started to launch joint attacks; the latest one, hitting security personnel on the coastal highway, was also claimed by an alliance of three separatist groups.

The timing of the attack will not help Prime Minister Khan convince the Chinese and Iranian leaders of an improving security situation in Balochistan. His visit to Tehran was long due and overshadowed by the Saudi Crown Prince Mohammad bin Salman's visit to Pakistan. Border security will be the high point of the Iranian diplomatic call during the prime minister's visit to Tehran. China, too, is concerned about insecurity at the Pakistani-Iranian border, which has become a hub of separatist and religiously motivated as well

as criminal groups. This is not only causing geostrategic complications, it is also impeding progress on CPEC-related projects in coastal areas of the province.

Chinese investors demand the award of projects on softer terms and on a fast track.

Iran alleges that a Saudi-backed separatist group, Jaishul Adl, is operating from Pakistan and attacking Iranian security forces. The group launched an attack in February, killing 27 members of the elite Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps and provoked tensions between the two countries. Iran's intelligence minister, Mahmoud Alavi, spoke of taking revenge on those responsible for the crime. This country sent a high-level delegation to Tehran to give assurances of a thorough investigation and cooperation in finding the culprits. As with Afghanistan, the Pakistan government has decided to fence its border with Iran too, but that is a comparatively more complex task.

Pakistan also has concerns about recurrent border violations by Iranian border security forces. In 2018, Iranian border security forces carried out six cross-border attacks in Balochistan's Chagai, Gwadar and Panjgur districts, compared to 12 such attacks in 2017. Shelling by the Iranian security guards causes much physical damage, affecting residents living along the border; sometimes it leads to the complete suspension of daily activities.

Local residents suspect that Iran has gone soft on anti-Pakistan separatist groups, especially the Balochistan Liberation Front (BLF) and the Baloch Liberation Army (BLA), whose militants are evidently sheltering on Iranian soil. This is conceived as a counter-move by Iran though the BLF and the BLA are left-leaning secular separatist groups that also advocate the liberation of Sistan-Baluchestan in Iran.

In December 2018, an attack was claimed by the BLA that killed six Pakistani soldiers in Kech near the Pakistan-Iran border, implying BLA militants' cross-border movement for shelter. The attack occurred a day after the two countries signed a memorandum of

understanding for “improving border security and stopping the smuggling of petroleum products, drugs and arms, and human trafficking”.

Despite complicated border security issues, both sides can still develop an effective bilateral mechanism to check cross-border incursions by all shades of separatist and Islamist militants. The agendas and objectives of different brands of militants operating along the Pakistan-Iran border are known to both countries, which they can counter by working jointly. In retrospect, Iran and Pakistan have done that in past, during the regimes of Raza Shah and Zulfikar Ali Bhutto in the mid-1970s, by launching an extensive security operation against the militants.

However, one cannot ignore the Saudi factor. Though Pakistan is in dire need of economic assistance, it should not close its eyes to militant proxies that can complicate Pakistan’s core economic interest linked with CPEC, and a conducive security environment in Pakistan, particularly in Balochistan.

Prime Minister Khan can get a positive response on security cooperation from Tehran before his visit to Beijing where such a commitment will have a positive impact on bilateral deliberations. The removal of federal finance minister Asad Umar will also be read positively by Beijing; not only did he fail to run the economy of the country but was also responsible for the slowing down of the execution of CPEC projects.

Pakistan needs CPEC to sustain its economy; unfortunately, the vague and sluggish policy responses of the current government, as well as its overconfidence in attracting foreign investment by mobilising the Pakistani diaspora, has damaged not only CPEC but also the overall economy of the country. The worsening economic condition is forcing the country to put the economic focus back on CPEC. However, the direction will become clearer only after the new adviser on finance and his team lay out the government’s revised economic roadmap — if there is any.

China wants to make the Belt and Road Initiative a success story, and CPEC is an integral part of that. China realises that Pakistan has the potential to put CPEC back on the fast track. It will boost the confidence of the BRI's potential stakeholders who are reluctant at the moment to become partners in the initiative.

Still, security will remain at the heart of any potential outcome of renewed economic cooperation between Pakistan and China.

Source : <https://www.dawn.com/news/1477498/managing-security-economy?fbclid=IwAR2j3yN8V5y2iVe3xiz4q24SE5OJiMVbTrV9X0Y0cz4meeQHwpWRWKLnD90>



# **PAKISTAN & WORLD**

## Peace with Afghanistan/ Editorial

Pakistan is considered a key factor in establishing peace in Afghanistan, which has been the setting of the War on Terror for nearly two decades. Zalmay Khalilzad, the US Special Representative for Afghanistan Reconciliation, reiterated this point on his arrival in Islamabad on April 5 to Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi. The US has been in the process of peace talks with the Afghanistan leadership and the Afghan Taliban in efforts to stabilise the country. The latest development which exudes greater hope than before is that the US, which is mainly spearheading the peace dialogue in Afghanistan, appears to be expressing a desire to strategise and take all stakeholders on board.

The stakeholders most affected by Afghanistan turmoil have been its people. FM Qureshi supports that people's sentiments need to be considered and this is a welcome recognition. Simultaneously, Khalilzad has sought to take the Afghan youth into confidence as a strategy to rehabilitate the country, which suggests that the new policy takes on a more cohesive form. Afghan youth will play a crucial role in the future stability and development of the country and it is reasonable to foster trust between them and the major countries partly responsible for the turmoil and involved in the process.

One aspect that should have been obvious was Pakistan's position in helping with Afghan peace. Despite policies and sometimes sour relations, Pakistan has been willing for peace in Afghanistan, especially due to its significance in establishing regional peace, which has positive implications for the economy and other sectors. The US reinforced that Pakistan needs to be more involved in Kabul in order for relations between the US and Pakistan to improve. It was expected the US would make this point, particularly against the backdrop of generally sour relations between PM Khan and President Trump. However, the US should consider that Pakistan has suffered loss, insurgency and stability problems on its own soil throughout the war.

## Pak-India stand-off By Najmuddin A. Shaikh

THE revelation by Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi in a press conference in Multan that Pakistan had credible intelligence about Indian plans to attack Pakistan between April 16 and 20 was followed, within hours, by an Indian Foreign Office spokesperson's shrill dismissal of the claim as "preposterous" and "clearly aimed at whipping up war hysteria in the region".

The spokesman went on to add: "This public gimmick appears to be a call to Pakistan-based terrorists to undertake a terror attack in India."

One can be certain that the foreign minister's assertion was based on what he had been told by military intelligence. What is less certain is whether this intelligence was based entirely on solid information. It is far more likely that their claim was based on their assessment of Ajit Doval — recognised as Prime Minister Narendra Modi's point man for handling relations with Pakistan — and his proclaimed doctrine of offensive defence. This, in their assessment, would include Doval planning attacks that would keep Pakistan off balance.

In both countries, these public statements suggest that the ground realities do not figure in the calculations of the two sides in this period of heightened tensions. On the Pakistan side, the Indian capacity rather than what the Modi government would find most beneficial would have determined the military assessment. On the Indian side, the fear that this was a call for a terrorist attack on India ignored the ground reality that Pakistan's new government is intent on curbing and eliminating such groups.

We can retaliate in kind but keep it confined to a verbal battle.

The truth of the matter is that for Prime Minister Modi the 'decisive' action he took after Pulwama has given him all the political benefits he could garner, despite the clear evidence that the so-called pre-emptive strike was an utter failure. A civilian evaluation, therefore, would have been that Modi is too careful a politician to risk damaging the image now created of 'a 56-inch- chested daring leader' by another strike that would invite retaliation and possibly the loss of some further military assets.

On Pakistan's side, the Indians know that, beset by economic problems and working frantically on resolving issues with the Financial Action Task Force and the IMF, the last thing Pakistan needs is another episode of physical confrontation with India. This is the reality the Indians recognise even while continuing to denounce Pakistan as the country from which terrorists are fomenting trouble in India-occupied Kashmir.

No Indian policymaker can argue after Prime Minister Imran Khan's statesmanlike gesture of releasing the captured Indian pilot that Pakistan wants to maintain a hostile posture or that it will not take two steps for each step that moves India forward towards resuming a dialogue.

It is, of course, important for Pakistan to ensure that its armed forces maintain vigilance, but should that mean the costly deployment of forces on the border and the closure of 11 of the 12 air routes through Pakistani airspace, which presumably are regarded as necessary for security? The estimates of the extra cost imposed on travellers from Pakistan to such diverse places as Sri Lanka and Thailand run as high as one billion dollars — a cost that our perilously low foreign exchange reserves find difficult to meet.

Realistically, perhaps, one can accept that even when Modi sends a relatively conciliatory message on Pakistan Day, his party cohorts may find it useful to denounce Pakistan in their media and social media message linking it to the harsh message that is being delivered to Indian Muslims. We can retaliate in kind but keep it confined to a verbal battle and hope that, once the Indian elections are out of the way, the Modi government — which is likely to return to power albeit with a reduced majority — will see the need to talk to Pakistan to resolve the issues that have beset the relationship and acquired a sharp edge since Pulwama.

It is perhaps naïve to expect that Prime Minister Modi and the hardliners in his party will modify their stance towards Pakistan, but there are good reasons for such a change. While the Indian economy is still doing well, it has not delivered the 10 million jobs that Modi had promised to create, nor has it fully recovered from the adverse impact of the demonetisation that he carried out in his bid to digitise the economy.

The World Bank report titled Half a Glassful has talked of the immense potential for intra-regional trade within Saarc. Clearly, as the largest country of the region, India will be the principal beneficiary, but the others too would be much better off. It would perhaps be going a step too far to envisage India as one of the regional countries that can benefit from CPEC, but that too is a very real possibility as some Indian industrialists have recognised.

Source : <https://www.dawn.com/news/1474882/pak-india-stand-off?fbclid=IwAR0Ry-5E6k758auSWKz1uZCw9bAA4yVtUqW3al8Ook89n7uZduMUIr0UV0E>

## Understanding US interests in Pakistan By Dr Raza Khan

It is Pakistan's good fortune that the US has important interests in Pakistan as it has had kept extensive relations with it despite many ups and downs. Yet, since the dawn of the 21st century, the mutual relations have been dominated by the Afghan conflict. Moreover, as Pakistan is currently engaged with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to contract a huge bailout package to address its colossal macroeconomic woes, its policymakers must understand that most international economic decisions are determined by international political factors. Against this backdrop also, understanding the key interests of Washington in Pakistan becomes important for our policymakers as the US has a dominant voting share in all major international financial institutions, particularly the IMF. So if Pakistan would have to contract economic packages from the IMF, it would have to show flexibility on political questions with the US.

Since the turn of this century, the US has the following key objectives in Pakistan: to get all-out support from Pakistan in the War on Terror, including military, counterinsurgency operations in the tribal areas, logistical and intelligence support primarily in Afghanistan and elsewhere in the world like Iraq and Yemen; preventing Pakistan from (what Washington fears) proliferating nuclear material and technology particularly to Iran; getting Pakistan's support for reconstruction in Afghanistan and its stabilisation; courting Pakistan to support the anti-Iran stance of the US; pressuring Pakistan into giving Gwadar Port control to US companies instead of China; to reduce Pakistan-India tensions but not by playing a role in resolving the key issue of Kashmir.

Here it is important to note that these US policy objectives in Pakistan have been in conflict with Pakistan's interests, particularly regarding China and India. The Pakistan-China relations have largely been strategic and economic. The US-Pakistan relations since early 1950s have had its ups and downs. To the US, Pakistan has always been a client state anticipated to faithfully serve its purpose. Thus a patron-client relationship emerged between the two countries. Whether it was the provision of clandestine airbases to the Americans on its soil against the Soviet Union at the height of the Cold War to



encircle the latter; the need for the good offices of Pakistan to have contacts with Communist China in the late 1960s and early 1970s; the launch of the CIA-sponsored war in Afghanistan against the USSR during the 1980s; or the US-led War on Terror of today, Pakistan has played a central role in helping the US attain its foreign and security policy objectives. In fact, on most occasions, Pakistan had to seriously risk its sovereignty and interests to serve as a client state of the US.

Having said this, it must be acknowledged that Pakistan also got handsome financial and military assistance from Washington. For instance, in recent years, Pakistan made two critically strategic decisions: signing the multi-billion CPEC agreement and handing over the control of its key seaport Gwadar to China. Insofar as CPEC is concerned, the US thinks that it would strengthen the regional as well as global power position of China which would be at the altar of Washington's interest in the region and the world. Here it is important to note that CPEC is just one part of the China's Belt & Road Initiative (BRI), which aims at integrating the Eurasian landmass on the pattern of ancient Silk Route for China to reap huge benefits of the economic integration. With its strategic and economic rivalry with Beijing, Washington must understand that CPEC could be a key stabilising factor for Pakistan and this, in a way, serves the avowed interest of the US.

Using the words of great strategist Hans Morgenthau, every state must be ready to compromise interests that are not vital. So the US and Pakistani decision-makers must consider each other's vital interests and desist from asking or expecting the other to compromise on them.

Source : [https://tribune.com.pk/story/1947751/6-understanding-us-interests-pakistan/?fbclid=IwAR3a2Yiz4IxEJ0nSoXWBIMUR2BR8HiUD\\_JmoHrkrRXBm\\_rOxQy1YT5IEf2E](https://tribune.com.pk/story/1947751/6-understanding-us-interests-pakistan/?fbclid=IwAR3a2Yiz4IxEJ0nSoXWBIMUR2BR8HiUD_JmoHrkrRXBm_rOxQy1YT5IEf2E)

## [Russia, a fast- emerging friend of Pakistan By Senator Rehman Malik](#)

Following our independence, Pakistan and Russia first established bilateral and diplomatic ties on 1st May 1948. Pakistan also celebrated the 70th Anniversary of Diplomatic Relations with Russia on 1st May 2018.

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Things changed in 1959, however, when Ayub Khan gave permission to USA to use its Peshawar Air Base, for which he got deceived by the USA when it sent its spy plane from the Peshawar Base to USSR without informing PAF authorities. The plane was shot down there by Russia and unfortunately Pakistan was blamed for sending the plane since it was Pakistan's soil from where it had come. This made Russia turn against Pakistan and eventually the Soviets paid back their revenge on Pakistan in the 1971 Indo-Pak war.

India took full advantage of the clash and signed the August 1971 Indo-Soviet Treaty of Friendship for Peace and Cooperation which made Russia support India. Subsequent Soviet support to India, in terms of arms and financial aid, further deteriorated relations between Pakistan and Russia. Russia was right to turn against Pakistan and India took full advantage of the situation and we saw Pakistan disintegrated. USSR not only supported the creation of Bangladesh but also kept vetoing every resolution brought from Pakistan to the United Nations against the separation of East Pakistan.

USA, the so called best friend of Pakistan, played a diplomatic trick. While it apparently seemed to be supporting Pakistan against USSR and India, it made to spend its seventh fleet to the Bay of Bengal in order to threaten India and show off its support towards Pakistan. Yet it never sent the 8th fleet, which could have made Pakistan prevent East Pakistan from separating. As per the forever ill intentions of the USA, it wanted to create another never-ending conflict between India and Pakistan in the name of East Pakistan's separation. This can be seen as the first betrayal of the USA as we paid heavenly by allowing the USA to use the airbase against Russia.

Later in 1979, when the USSR was intending to occupy Afghanistan, Pakistan made another mistake by helping USA against USSR efforts to invade Afghanistan. The USSR got disintegrated after defeat in the Afghan – USSR War, but still the Russian leadership was very much in a position to handle the situation and Russia of today has emerged even stronger. Russia has demonstrated to the world that it is still a great nation and a superpower.

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The history of diplomatic relations of Pakistan & Russia has seen various ups and downs but most of the times, their perception about each other has been negative; Pakistan's through the prism of western intentions and Russia's through the Indian eyes. The last few years, however, have opened a new corridor for both countries to forget past deeds. In the recent decade, Russia has also started to take an interest in good bilateral relations with Pakistan. Both countries know that the potential threats emanating from South Asia will directly challenge the security of both countries. The cross- border issues of terrorism and the ongoing Afghan conflict guarantee a long-term engagement between Russia and Pakistan.

The signs of an improved relationship between Pakistan and Russia was seen in September 2016, when 70 Russian and 130 Pakistani Special Forces held their first joint military exercises in Cherat, Northern Pakistan. India opposed the meeting and tried its best to convince Russia to call off the exercise following the 18 September militant attack on an Indian army base which New Delhi blamed as usual on Pakistan, but the Russians declined.

We Pakistanis are happy to see that our diplomatic and the military relationships with Russia have improved. I hope Russia will take advantage of the offer now given by Pakistan for the use of Gwadar port. It is also great development that Russia has lifted the decade long arms embargo against Pakistan by agreeing to sell its helicopters to Pakistan despite the opposition of India.

It is only because of the exceptional leadership of Mr. Vladimir Putin that Moscow is now moving away from its years of hostility against Pakistan for which the Pakistan People's Party Government had played a great role. I remember the first meeting of President Asif Ali Zardari with Mr. Putin where I was also present. In fact, this meeting and discussions cleared many miscommunications. This was the turning point and gave a window of opportunity to reconnect both diplomatically and to share intelligence on security matters.

READ MORE: PM Khan to meet tribal elders in South Waziristan today

I had the honour of meeting Mr Putin twice and I found him very positive about Pakistan. I would like to say that he has proven to be a great leader and a reformer who has outsmarted the western leadership. He has led Russians into a great nation with all the indicators of a successful nation.

It is unfortunate to note that no Russian President has ever visited Pakistan, but as long as the Taliban threat is there in the region, it is unlikely that a Russian leader will do so in future as well. The key to further enhancement of relations between both countries is an end to the continuing civil war in Afghanistan. China and Russia both feel threatened by this war, as well as by the increasing number of young men from their Muslim populations who are joining militant groups. Both Pakistan and Russia have a common threat in the form of ISIS now, which is recruiting youngsters from Afghanistan, Pakistan and Russia make it a long way for the two nations to go before the relations actually gets warmed up. Russia has emerged as an important player and he is playing a vital role in the international community.

Russia and Pakistan have passed through various ups and down and now they have decided to march towards better relationships and more cooperation in the interest of both countries. Russia and Pakistan are two very important countries of this region and I foresee a great role of Pakistan, China and Russia as a nuclear block to work for international peace and common growth of the economy.

My discussion at a recent meeting with H.E Alexey Y. Dedov Russian Ambassador to the Islamic Republic of Pakistan based in Islamabad was very encouraging as the Russian changed policy towards Pakistan will benefit both the countries.

Source : [https://nation.com.pk/22-Apr-2019/russia-a-fast-emerging-friend-of-pakistan?fbclid=IwAR1wsr8SiobMS-tULgGfjkgNgQsEJL5tHjMrSwGLGNQ059ZaGNUdg\\_46jM](https://nation.com.pk/22-Apr-2019/russia-a-fast-emerging-friend-of-pakistan?fbclid=IwAR1wsr8SiobMS-tULgGfjkgNgQsEJL5tHjMrSwGLGNQ059ZaGNUdg_46jM)

# **ECONOMY**

## **Monetary Policy | Editorial**

THE State Bank of Pakistan raised the key policy discount rate by 50 basis points on Friday, citing persistent inflationary pressures on the back of a high fiscal deficit, as well as continuing weaknesses on the external front despite a narrowing of the current account deficit and billions of dollars of bilateral inflows to shore up the reserves.

The rate hike is a continuation of a pattern that began in late 2017 when these pressures were building up, and is an unambiguous signal that despite the government's triumphalist rhetoric of having plugged the external financing gap and stabilised the economy, much work remains to be done.

The rate hike will undoubtedly serve as a drag on the economy, which is already reeling under the weight of a severe contraction in the GDP growth rate, as well as adversely hit the fiscal framework by raising the cost of debt servicing for the government.

Since growth and fiscal deficit are at the heart of the government's difficulties at the moment, it is worth thinking about why the State Bank would take a step that would negatively impact both priorities at the same time.

The answer is quite simple: the pressures weighing on the economy, far from abating, are only growing. With the current account deficit coming in at \$8.8bn in the eight-month period from July to February, it means foreign exchange reserves are eroding at a rate of just above \$1bn per month on average.

So with the \$4bn in assistance from Saudi Arabia and the UAE, the government bought itself four months of time, which is now squandered. With the \$2.2bn in Chinese assistance, the government has borrowed another two months, just enough time to get to an IMF programme.



Meanwhile, the fiscal deficit has grown faster as revenue shortfalls multiply each month and expenditures — particularly those that are security related — grow at the fastest pace in many years. And the current account deficit has narrowed, while exports have “remained flat” in dollar terms, as per the central bank.

Businesses are now choking on the fumes of the aggravated slowdown in the economy that these vulnerabilities have brought about. They are borrowing more but investing less.

As the slowdown ripples through the economy, nobody is left untouched by the spectre of inflation and unemployment. If the economy had made some sort of a turnaround, such a rate hike would not have been necessary, nor would the tone of the State Bank’s monetary policy statement been as gloomy as it is.

Serious maturity is needed at this time, and a completely unsentimental view of the economy must be taken. Slogans and rhetoric will not carry the country through; the tough choices that are looming ahead will require deft politics to manage. It is time to buck up.

Published in Dawn, April 1st, 2019

Source: <https://www.dawn.com/news/1473196/monetary-policy>

## Emotion and Economic Policy By Khurram Hussain

It is never a good thing when the economic management of the country comes to be engulfed in turbocharged emotion. Policymakers become distracted and their political opponents magnify the challenges and cast them in a way to assign blame rather than seek a path forward.

Having seen Pakistan go through two different periods of economic adjustment in the past 10 years (this being the third), I can say that these episodes always unleash angry energies in a way nothing else can (except perhaps the approach of war).

To some extent, this stands to reason. It is during these periods of adjustment that the populace is called upon to make large sacrifices because of higher inflation and falling opportunities. The middle classes have to curb consumption and businesses find their balance sheets contracting rapidly. Those unfortunate enough to have new investment coming online precisely at the time when the adjustment begins find themselves faced with collapsing sales and rising debt-service costs, as disposable incomes dry up and interest rates rise.

It is during periods of adjustment that the populace is called upon to make large sacrifices because of higher inflation and falling opportunities.

Consumption, investment, employment, purchasing power all collapse during these times. And all governments face this quagmire in their opening months, sometimes dragging on for years. Remember the first speech of Pervez Musharraf? “We have hit rock bottom,” he declared at the time.

For three years, his government struggled with some of the toughest conditions ever attached to an IMF programme, a short six-month standby that they had to implement before qualifying for the coveted Poverty Reduction and Growth Facility in 2002.

Things picked up rapidly after that for his government, helping him get past the 2004 deadline he had set for himself to shed the uniform, without honouring that promise. The inflows that kicked in after 9/11 and Pakistan acquiescing in being part of America’s war

on terror played a critical role in jumpstarting growth, otherwise Musharraf may well have had to honour his promise to shed the uniform by 2004.

But even those circumstances back in 1999 were nothing compared to what he left behind once he relinquished power and fled the country 10 years later. The year 2008 saw one of the biggest financial crises of Pakistan's history. Consider for example, that this was the first time that the stock market had to be frozen altogether since the magnitude of the plunge it was seeing day after day was so large it could have wiped out the diminishing foreign exchange reserves of the country. Asset management funds were frozen and a run on the banks had actually begun, one of our economy's big untold stories.

On top of that, the newly elected government had to eliminate fuel subsidies in one go, causing a massive spike in the price of fuel, and to jack-up power tariffs steeply. It had to undertake a sharp devaluation of the rupee, and watch GDP growth rate crash to 1.7 per cent as public spending all but dried up. A massive circular debt overhang, coupled with almost Rs700bn of borrowing from the State Bank that had to be retired (remember, the economy was less than half the size back then compared to today, so Rs700bn was a lot more money than it is today), and oil prices shot up to \$147 per barrel at the peak of history's biggest oil price bubble.

The PPP paid a very heavy price for owning that stabilisation effort, and the scale of the hate and invective levelled against that government was like nothing I have seen before. Anchors would launch into an hour-long tirade against them on prime time, and it was considered perfectly normal. Granted there was misgovernance, but much of the raw emotion also owed itself to the scale of the adjustment they had to undertake.

The net result was paralysis, coupled with high-handed interventions from then chief justice Iftikhar Chaudhry, who worked overtime to nullify almost every decision the government made regarding the economy (at one point, he actually summoned them to court to demand why gas was not being subsidised).

The PML-N government faced a comparatively better situation, but nevertheless, it was rough riding in the initial year and a half. At the outset, they had to deal with a power

system crippled by debt and largely lying idle. Then came the erosion of the reserves and the approach to the IMF.

Growth dropped to 4.7pc in their first fiscal year on the back of sharp drops in public spending, but some cushion was provided with help from the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia that granted the country a \$1.5bn deposit to tide things over. They got some help from sharply falling oil prices, and then came CPEC, so the scale of the adjustment they had to undertake did not have to get as large as it was back in 2008.

The present government is walking in the same footsteps. A large adjustment — that the government says has largely been made, but some reasons exist to suggest that far more is to come — has been undertaken as reserves hit around two months of import cover by the time the government decided to go to the IMF back in October last year. Since then, something like \$6bn has poured in from Saudi Arabia, the UAE and China, and the current account deficit has dropped from \$2bn per month to \$1bn.

All this is fine, and containing the external sector deficits had to be undertaken, there is no doubt about that. But now, the government appears to have embarked upon a new reform measure about which we know very little except for the fact that it is being taken seriously. This reform measure involves unhinging the exchange rate from state control significantly, which will be the most important step taken thus far by the new government — it can be brought about.

Other than that, the reform path forward is a well-trodden one, and experience tells us it is rarely an easy one to walk.

Source: <https://www.dawn.com/news/1473806/emotion-and-economic-policy>

## Economic slowdown/ Editorial

The annual Economic and Social Survey of Asia and Pacific 2019 must be a cause for concern for our policymakers. The survey conducted by the UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and Pacific (ESCAP) suggests that Pakistan's economy will grow far slower than its regional neighbours amid a slight regional economic slowdown over the next year and a half. Among the Saarc member states – only barring war-torn Afghanistan – Pakistan will have the lowest expected gross domestic growth of 4% in 2020. Even Nepal and the Maldives – once dubbed Saarc minnows – are far ahead of Pakistan with their GDP growth rates expected to soar above 6% in 2020. Sri Lanka, which currently ranks below Pakistan, is also forecast to pull ahead next year.

With medium-to-long term prospects depending on structural transformation and broad-based productivity, the ESCAP report cautions countries against shifting from their traditional agriculture-base to one in which services play a dominant role, while bypassing the manufacturing sector. Once tipped as a potential Tiger Club member, Pakistan has faltered to deceive every time the label was used for it. Most recently, the label was used just two years ago when it went through a period of lowest inflation and highest growth in a long time.

Imran Khan too, in his election campaign, promised to turn Pakistan into an Asian Tiger. But 10 months after taking over the reins of power, all the signs point towards the country going the other way – apparently not for the lack of efforts, but perhaps for want of experience and expertise. The government has the will – and maybe the vision too – to put the economy on the right track, but what's terribly lacking is the capacity to translate this will into action and this vision into reality. With its various sectors viz, agriculture, tourism, mines, minerals, etc, offering a lot of potential, the country only needs to be guided in the right direction so as to achieve the goal of becoming an Asian Tiger.

Source : [https://tribune.com.pk/story/1944458/6-economic-slowdown/?fbclid=IwAR1q2IN5uDk-e7mrwp4C9JbfxjBEluFrumuBtn\\_ZEErMVzPJWEsXzfRTO0](https://tribune.com.pk/story/1944458/6-economic-slowdown/?fbclid=IwAR1q2IN5uDk-e7mrwp4C9JbfxjBEluFrumuBtn_ZEErMVzPJWEsXzfRTO0)

## CPEC to cure trade deficit: Khusro / Editorial

ISLAMABAD – Federal Minister for Planning, Development & Reform Makhdum Khusro Bakhtyar stated that the issues of trade deficit, poor market access to Pakistan’s agricultural products and limited business bases will be addressed via increased industrial cooperation between China and Pakistan.

The federal minister was co-chairing a meeting of CPEC Business Council along-with Advisor to PM on Commerce, Industry & Textile Abdul Razak Dawood on Friday. Secretary to the Council, Executive Director General BOI Ms Fareena Mazhar briefed the members on the progress in SEZ’s and incentive packages under the industrial cooperation.

The minister further highlighted the reason for establishing this forum: To create an interactive platform between the business community and the government as well as enhance cooperation between the two regional friends. “Through industrial cooperation, we also want to address trade imbalance, broaden market access for agricultural products and encourage B2B cooperation between the two countries,” stated the minister.

After the implementation of the early-harvest projects which centered on energy and infrastructure, the upcoming focus was on overcoming trade imbalance

Khusro argued that scope of CPEC has expanded with focus on industrial and agriculture cooperation, socio-economic development, trade and market access. He was optimistic that creation of CPEC Business Council, with input from private and non-governmental agencies in various areas, will speed up the industrialization process under the umbrella of the flagship endeavour. The minister said that focus is on boosting Pakistan’s industrial capacity through joint ventures in priority areas, relocation of labour-intensive export led industry, SMEs collaboration and enhancing vocational training capacity.

Advisor to PM Abdul Razak Dawood explained that after the implementation of the early-harvest projects which centered on energy and infrastructure, the upcoming focus was on business investment, broadening market access and overcoming trade imbalance. He added, “We are in the second phase of CPEC where industrialization and agriculture



growth would be the main goals of the current regime. Special Economic Zones (SEZs) have been the engine of growth for many developing states around the world for the last few decades and it's the high time for Pakistan to convert its SEZs into growth hubs.”

The advisor hoped that SEZs would attract investment from diversified sources because they offer a combination of tax-and-tariff incentives, streamlined customs procedures and less regulation. To overcome the countries trade deficit, the focus was on the production of finished goods.

Earlier, Board of Investment Chairman Haroon Sharif welcomed all the members to the first meeting of the council and said that BOI will serve as Secretariat for the CPEC Business Council adding that a dedicated team of professionals has been hired in this regard. He said that BOI is improving its capacity to deal with matters of industrial cooperation with China and urged the members to come up with tangible suggestions in this regard.

Secretary Planning Zafar Hasan, Project Director CPEC Hassan Daud and representatives from leading associations and companies also attended the meeting.

Source : <https://dailytimes.com.pk/374450/cpec-to-cure-trade-deficit-khusro/?fbclid=IwAR2yDQAV18clyYB6m-cB4rAjOpAZF9aNcKOo9INvm58ssqTXSeLUjMDDfE>

## Getting out of the FATF grey list would help stabilize Pakistan's economy By Col (R) Muhammad Hanif

According to the Josh, the FATF is an independent intergovernmental body that develops and promotes policies to protect the Global Financial System against terror funding and Money Laundering activities. FATF has two types of lists one is Black list and other is Grey list. Those countries which are not cooperating in taking measures against money laundering and countering terror funding are included in the Black list while countries with insufficient measures against terror funding and money laundering are included in the grey list.

The FATF develops and promotes policies to protect the global financial system against anti-money laundering standards, and counter-terror funding and monitors the countries, whether they are following its policies or not. The Grey list is a warning given to a country that it might come in the Black list if it is unable to curb terror funding and money laundering.

A country that is placed on the grey list or black list can face problems such as: it can face economic sanctions from international institutions, like the IMF, World Bank, ADB and others; there can be a problem in getting loans from these institutions; the country can face an overall reduction in its international trade; and there can be an international boycott of such a country.

In February 2018, after its plenary meeting, the FATF approved the nomination of Pakistan for monitoring under its International Cooperation Review Group (ICRG) commonly known as 'grey list', stating that Pakistan will be placed on the grey list, if it does not take enough measures to counter money laundering and terror financing. Although Pakistan was taking many measures to address the FATF concerns, but at the conclusion of its plenary held in June 2018, the FATF still placed Pakistan on the grey list.

Getting out of the grey list will also encourage foreign investors to invest in Pakistan and other countries would also like to enhance their trade with our country as their apprehensions about Pakistan being moved to the blacklist would not be there

According to the Pakistan Today, along with placing Pakistan on the grey list, the FATF gave a ten point action plan to address the issue, welcoming the high-level political commitment conveyed by Pakistan for the compliance of international standards and increasing effectiveness of regulatory and enforcement regimes to strengthen its counter measures against money laundering and terrorism financing. The main points of the action plan are: enforcing controls on illicit movement of currency; improving inter-agency coordination including between provincial and federal authorities on combating TF risks; the TF activity and that TF investigations and prosecutions target designated persons and entities; demonstrating that TF prosecutions result in effective, proportionate and dissuasive sanctions and enhancing the capacity and support for prosecutors and the judiciary; prohibiting access to funds and financial services; and demonstrating enforcement against TFS violations.

In view of the above, the Government of Pakistan is putting in place a strategy to implement the action plan suggested by the FATF. As per present status the FATF team is satisfied with Pakistan's overall efforts and action plan to combat money laundering and choke down terror-financing under international obligations. The Pakistan government is determined to address all the mentioned issues of FATF to get out of the grey list at the earliest.

Pakistan's concerns to address the issue were clear from the fact that on 28 Mar 2019, Prime Minister Imran along with, COAS, DG Inter-Services Intelligence, Finance Minister, Secretary, Foreign Affairs, Secretary Interior and other senior officials had held a meeting to address the existing issues being faced related to internal security and FATF. The country has already taken several steps including a ban on different questionable

organizations and has already taken steps to block two borders Pak-Afghan and Pak-Iran.

The government has strengthened Pak-Afghan border with improved technology and vigilance while security has also been beefed up at The Pak-Iran borders. For better internal security National Counter Terrorism Authority (NACTA) has already enhanced coordination with law enforcement agencies and the Counter Terrorism Department to address the issues.

In view of Pakistan's above stated commitment to take all necessary measures to satisfy the FATF, and based on the measures that were in progress, the Khaleej Times has carried a news item that as per the State Bank of Pakistan it was most likely that by September 2019, Pakistan will be able to get out of the grey list. The other media houses and think tanks are also predicting that Pakistan is quite near to getting out of the grey list.

After getting out of the grey list the fear of various international financial restrictions being imposed will go away and this will also give confidence to the international financial institutions to easily lend to Pakistan. Getting out of the grey list will also encourage foreign investors to invest in Pakistan and other countries would also like to enhance their trade with our country as their apprehensions about Pakistan being moved to the blacklist would not be there. As a consequence, economic activity will be generated in Pakistan, its economic growth rate will increase and its economy will stabilize and start progressing.

Source : <https://dailytimes.com.pk/379621/getting-out-of-the-fatf-grey-list-would-help-stabilize-pakistans-economy/?fbclid=IwAR0AoaQa8KPaU7za5KM0SG4n7Tk5RqPzgWTwpBEg8M0BBk9JyAQV8xYUGVQ>

# **WORLD**

## Are Russia and China Really Forming an Alliance By Leon Aron

### The Evidence Is Less Than Impressive

In March of 1969, Chinese troops ambushed and killed a Soviet border patrol on an island near the Chinese-Russian border. Fighting on and near the island lasted for months and ended with hundreds of casualties. Fifty years later, the ferocity of the skirmish between Mao Zedong's China and Leonid Brezhnev's Soviet Union seems to belong to a very distant past—so distant, indeed, that many foreign-policy experts are convinced that an anti-U.S. alliance between the two countries is emerging. Yet even half a century on, such an assessment stretches the evidence beyond what it can bear. On closer inspection, Chinese-Russian economic, foreign policy, and military cooperation is less than impressive. The history of relations between the two countries is fraught, and they play vastly different roles in the world economy, making a divergence in their objectives all but unavoidable. In short, reports of a Russian-Chinese alliance have been greatly exaggerated.

### THE ECONOMIC REALITY

Economic relations between Russia and China are rapidly expanding, and some experts have cited these ties as evidence of a growing closeness between the two countries. Indeed, just last year, bilateral trade increased by at least 15 percent compared to 2017 and reached a record \$100 billion. Yet asymmetries in the scale and structure of bilateral commerce suggest caution: although China is Russia's second-largest trading partner (after the EU) and Russia's largest individual partner in both exports and imports, for China the Russian market is at best second-rate. Russia ranks tenth in Chinese exports and does not make it into the top ten in either imports or total trade.

The structure of the trade is similarly skewed. More than three-quarters of Russia's exports to China are raw materials, specifically crude oil, wood, and coal. China's sales to Russia are 45 percent consumer goods and 38 percent electronics and machinery. The completion this year of the Power of Siberia natural gas pipeline will further widen the disparity by facilitating the export of \$400 billion worth of Russian raw materials to China over the next 30 years. The nature of this exchange corresponds quite closely to Karl Marx's and Vladimir Lenin's description of colonial trade, in which one country becomes a raw material appendage of another. It is rare for metropolises to ally themselves with their colonies.

Russia's and China's efforts at joint economic development and investment do not look much like cooperation between two eager allies. Even after Moscow's so-called pivot to the east, spurred by post-Crimea sanctions, from 2014 through 2018 China directly invested no more than \$24 billion into its northern neighbor's economy. During the same period, China invested \$148 billion in sub-Saharan Africa (including \$31 billion in Nigeria alone), and \$88 billion in South America (including \$34 billion just in Brazil). Or consider the Program of Cooperation in the regions of Far East, Russian Eastern Siberia, and Chinese North-East in 2009–2018, signed in 2009 by Chinese President Hu Jintao and Russian President Dmitry Medvedev. The initiative included 91 joint investment projects. Six years into the program, China had financed only 11 of these, while the rest were delayed, in the words of the Carnegie Moscow Center's Ivan Zuenko, by "bureaucratic hassles."

China's parsimony is evident in both the private and public sectors. A much-heralded plan for the CEFC China Energy company to purchase a 14 percent stake in Russia's largest, and majority state-owned, oil company, Rosneft, fell through. So did a Chinese government pledge to invest \$25 billion in the Power of Siberia pipeline, which cost Russia \$55 billion. Moscow has celebrated its projected annual delivery of 38 billion cubic meters of natural gas to China via Power of Siberia as a big step toward economic interdependence. But to China, the pipeline is no more than a diversification of the country's energy sources. In 2017, it imported over 90 billion cubic meters of natural gas, mostly from Australia, Qatar, and Turkmenistan.



## A FOREIGN POLICY MISMATCH

Russia and China are hardly any closer in foreign policy than they are in trade. To be sure, the two countries stand together in their declared opposition to U.S. primacy in world affairs. Both advocate a multipolar world and swear to resist the perceived threat of U.S. intrusion into their spheres of influence. Beijing and Moscow also see eye to eye with respect to the threat posed to their regimes by what they see as U.S.-inspired, if not U.S.-engineered, pro-democracy “color revolutions.” They vote almost in unison at the United Nations.

Yet away from the global limelight and closer to their shared Eurasian home, the two countries are hardly aligned. They poach in each other’s spheres of influence, contest each other’s clients, and reach for each other’s economic and geopolitical assets.

Russia and China poach in each other’s spheres of influence, contest each other’s clients, and reach for each other’s economic and geopolitical assets.

China has failed to support Russia in matters of great geopolitical importance to Moscow. Beijing refused to recognize the independence of Abkhazia and South Ossetia after the Russian-Georgian war in 2008. It abstained from, instead of voting against, the UN resolution condemning Russia’s 2014 seizure of Crimea. In another symbolic display that could not have pleased Moscow, President Xi Jinping chose to inaugurate the 2013 Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) in Astana, the capital of Kazakhstan. By choosing to flex Chinese power in the largest of the former Soviet Central Asian republics—the one that shares the world’s second-longest border with Russia, at 4,250 miles, and is home to the greatest proportion of ethnic Russians in Central Asia—Xi flagrantly intruded on Russia’s sphere of influence. (A year later, Putin mused about the fragility of Kazakhstan’s statehood during a question and answer session at Russia’s National Youth Forum.) Xi and Putin later agreed to “coordinat[e] cooperation” between the Russia-led Eurasian Economic Union and Belt and Road. But although some of the subsequent Chinese- and Kazakh-led infrastructure projects have been completed, many Russian-led projects have stalled due to financing and negotiation problems.

For its part, Russia periodically flirts with China's foe, Japan, by dangling the return of the four Kuril Islands, which the Soviet Union seized from Japan at the end of World War II and which remain the main obstacle to a peace treaty between Moscow and Tokyo. In the latest round of that game, during Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's visit this past January to Moscow, Putin, yet again, held out the possibility of normalizing relations by giving Japan back at least two of the islands, a gesture that Beijing likely resented, even though it did not lead to a breakthrough. Russia also exposed tensions with China within the Shanghai Cooperation Organization—an international body founded by Moscow and Beijing to promote economic and security cooperation among its members—when it invited another Chinese rival, India, to join the group. China tied the score by inviting India's archrival (and the largest customer for Chinese weapons), Pakistan, to join.

Chinese-Russian military cooperation in particular is often held up as evidence of a growing closeness. Much has been made of the fact that Russia has sold China the latest version of its most advanced anti-aircraft S-400 missile defense system. But India, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and Turkey are next in line for the same equipment. And although China was the first to buy Russia's most advanced Su-35 jet fighter, it will not be the last. Indonesia has contracted for 11 jets, Egypt has purchased dozens more, and India has reportedly considered buying 114 jets. Overall, from 2013 to 2017, India was a far likelier destination for Russian defense hardware than China, with 35 percent of Russian arms exports going to New Delhi, compared with 12 percent to Beijing.

Last year's first joint Russian-Chinese land exercise, Vostok-2018, pointed to an imbalance in military cooperation not unlike the one in the two countries' bilateral trade. Russia fielded between 75,000 and 100,000 soldiers and 1,000 aircraft; China contributed just 3,200 soldiers and six planes. Mathieu Boulègue of Chatham House argued that China was invited to participate not so much to bolster an alliance as to allay any Chinese concerns about the demonstration of force so close to its borders.

Indeed, the need for strengthening mutual trust between the putative allies was evident three years before Vostok-2018, during the Kremlin's search for Internet policing technology. Following a series of high-level internal consultations, the Kremlin decided to buy data storage and servers from the telecom giant Huawei. Then, suddenly, the deal

was off. The security services became so alarmed by the likelihood of Chinese espionage that they dared to challenge the Kremlin's decision—and, even more surprisingly, managed to reverse it.

## THE PUTIN-XI BROMANCE

In the end, the most promising portent of an alliance might be the personal relationship between the rulers of the two countries. The Putin-Xi bonhomie extends beyond surface pleasantries. They have met more than 25 times, far more frequently than either has with any other head of state. Xi recently called Putin his “best friend,” and his first visit as president was to Moscow. Putin has extolled his relations with Xi as the finest personal rapport he has with a foreign leader and fondly recalled celebrating his sixty-first birthday with Xi, over slices of sausage and shots of vodka, during the Asian-Pacific Economic Cooperation summit in Bali in 2013. Xi presented Putin with China's very first Order of Friendship, designed to reward foreigners who contributed “personally to the PRC's cooperation with the world community.” Putin hung a gold chain of the Order of St. Andrew, Russia's highest civilian award, on Xi's neck.

Sustained mutual affinities between the leaders of great powers almost always reflect not only overlap in geopolitical objectives but regime similarities. Both Putin and Xi preside over versions of state capitalism. Putin's attraction to Xi is not hard to fathom: the Chinese leader is a fellow authoritarian who controls an enormous economy, which even in today's downturn posts rates of growth of which Russia can only dream of. And China does this even while importing huge quantities of oil and gas.

Xi's alleged respect for Putin likely stems from the Russian president's deft defusing of several potentially explosive domestic political problems similar to ones Xi himself has faced. After taking office, Putin recentralized power within the Russian state, taming the oligarchs and wiping out the political strongholds of elected governors and presidents. Then, early in Putin's third term in 2012, as he faced bleak economic prospects and rapidly declining approval ratings, he rejected the liberalizing reforms that his minister of finance suggested. Instead, Putin began to shift the foundation of his regime's legitimacy from economic progress and income growth to the Kremlin as a defender of Russia against U.S. aggression and restorer of its past glory as a global superpower—a formula

that the leading Russian political sociologist Igor Klyamkin has labeled “militarized patriotism.”

Concomitantly, Putin cracked down on public displays of dissent, called for the “patriotic upbringing of the youth,” and further intimidated civil society by signing a law designating many NGOs as “foreign agents,” rendering them social pariahs subject to harassment by the security and tax authorities. He made the Orthodox Church the guardian of national mores, and he personally guided the politicization of history textbooks, which began to whitewash the Soviet experience and rehabilitate Stalin.

On the road to his own chairmanship—and presidency for life—Xi has reprised Putin’s choices, in spirit if not always letter. He concentrated policymaking in the office of the party chairman, broke the baronies of regional party secretaries, and instigated a widespread “anti-corruption” campaign aimed at eliminating, or intimidating, potential critics and rivals. He abolished the de facto term limits for top party and government positions and tightened controls over media and book publishing.

As Chinese growth rates began to decline, Xi, like his “best friend,” spurned pro-market reforms and instead opted for his own version of Putin’s militarized patriotism: the reassertion of the Communist Party’s supremacy, the merger of “core socialist values” with “traditions of Chinese culture,” and a war on “spiritual pollution” that has led to heightened repression in Tibet and Xinjiang.

Similarly, “national rejuvenation” and the pursuit of the “Chinese dream” became central to the regime’s foreign policy discourse. In Xi’s words, China was facing “the most complicated ... external factors in [its] history.” Admiral Sun Jianguo, a deputy chief of the General Staff of the People’s Liberation Army, described these factors as “invasion, subversion,” “undermining ... stability,” and “interrupting socialist development.” Much as Putin had done, Xi transformed his country’s foreign policy from assertive to aggressively expansionist. The Chinese leader has militarized territorial disputes in the South and East China Seas and fortified Chinese-constructed artificial island chains with missile batteries and aircraft bases.

**STILL PREMATURE**

Putin's and Xi's kinship is real and formidable, but even it may not be enough to overcome the obstacles to a genuine alliance. One such obstacle is aptly described by a Russian expression, "istoriya s geografiey." Literally "a history with geography," the collocation refers to a seemingly straightforward matter suddenly turned into something involved and complicated. History and geography militate against an entente cordiale between the two Eurasian giants. Authoritarian states sharing a 2,600-mile border, with much of that boundary first imposed by imperial Russia on a weaker neighbor, are hardly ideally set up to build mutual trust.

Reinforcing that barrier are very significant structural differences between the two countries' economies, which result in their holding divergent stakes in the present world economic order. Confined largely to exporting oil and gas, Russia's integration in the world economy is at once quite secure and quite limited. Moscow can afford to rock the boat and to seek from Beijing a pointedly anti-Western, active, and committed military-political partnership.

China's economy, on the other hand, is the world's second largest—more than seven times the size of Russia's—with exports that include advanced communication technologies, cell phones, computers, and cars. The country's trade with the United States and the European Union comes to at least five times the value of its Russian account. Because of its greater interdependence with other leading world economies, China's system is also far more vulnerable to geopolitical disruptions than Russia's. And as a greater beneficiary of the liberal international economic order than Russia, China is wari-er of antagonizing that order's ultimate guarantor, the United States. Skillfully promoted optics notwithstanding, China is not likely to follow Russia into an anti-Western geopolitical crusade, preferring to cooperate with its alleged ally on a more modest scale economically and especially militarily.

When I was living in Moscow in the fall of 1969, a rumor circulated that, returning from Vietnamese leader Ho Chi Minh's funeral, Chairman of the Council of Ministers Alexei Kosygin stopped over in the Beijing airport for talks with his Chinese counterpart, Zhou Enlai. When the Chinese premier moved to embrace him, Kosygin drew back, saying, "This is premature."

Apocryphal or not, Kosygin's injunction seems applicable today. Despite claims to the contrary, the notion of a Chinese-Russian alliance is still premature.

Source: <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/china/2019-04-04/are-russia-and-china-really-forming-alliance?fbclid=IwAR2Uf6BNQ3v0yTyokjAnp6PM0EEIpazYEswTlwpJhoxrC-oBuw0uu0JzUk>



## Nuclear prospects of South Asia By Dr Rajkumar Singh

In the last decade and thereafter Pakistan's nuclear programme has received a further boost since July 2005 when the US and Indian governments unveiled their nuclear cooperation agreement. A basic feature of this agreement is that by acquiring uranium from foreign sources and by placing a set of nuclear facilities on the military list India can increase its fissile material production for weaponisation purposes. This perspective also views that rather than increasing nuclear warhead production, New Delhi would use the expansion of its uranium supplies and enrichment capability to fuel its nuclear submarine project, a key element of India's desire to achieve a secure second strike capability under its credible minimum deterrence doctrine. In line, there are two separate perspectives of criticism; the first focusses on the non-proliferation objective, and the second on India's strategic needs. It was largely felt that the agreement will weaken the global non-proliferation regime by condoning India's nuclear weapons programme. A further objection is that even with fourteen reactors under safeguards, eight others will remain on the military list, free to manufacture plutonium for several nuclear weapons annually. India has since designated some of its reactors as civilian, and open to inspection, but others still churn out spent fuel richly laden with weapons-usable plutonium. India can potentially make even more of the stuff. Now, that it can import uranium fuel for its civilian reactors, it can devote more of its scarce domestic supplies to bomb-making. In the whole issue, the US argued simply that India had a spotless non-proliferation record and that bringing it into the non-proliferation "mainstream" could only bolster global anti-proliferation efforts. Even in Barack Obama's administration Pakistan hoped that it would eventually get a deal like India. Some in the Obama administration have also supported this on the ground that America needs Pakistan's support in the fight against al-Qaeda and the Taliban.

Some Pakistani Commentators, in fact felt, and argued that their country needs nuclear cooperation with the United States more than India because the gap between existing energy supplies and future energy requirement is far more serious for Pakistan than it is for India

Closer than earlier and having been rebuffed by the United States in its attempts to secure a nuclear energy deal for Pakistan similar to the Indo-US one. Islamabad has been actively seeking Beijing's assistance instead. The issue of nuclear energy was raised in 2006 during Pakistan President Pervez Musharraf's visit to China and Chinese President Hu Jintao's return visit to Islamabad. On both occasions, Beijing reassured its "all weather always" on all strategic matters including energy cooperation, Pakistan reportedly asked for assistance with the building of a number of reactors. Even for China the deal was not considered good and the main Chinese Communist Party newspaper, The People's Daily accused the deal of "double standards" and added that it was likely to damage the existing non-proliferation system. To China, the 123- Agreement has from its inception, represented a potent strategic alliance between the United States and India aimed at counter- balancing China's rise in the region. The daily newspaper also accused of "hegemonic ideas" and being unconcerned about "others' opinion". It went on to assert that the US clearly intended to draw "India in a tool for its global strategic pattern". Although indirectly, the paper described India as "wanting to seize the opportunity to rise as big power," out of "practical political considerations". In fact, both India and the United States are concerned about the future direction of Chinese foreign policy and security policy. For the United States, aiding India through nuclear cooperation as well as a strategic partnership, Washington would be able to balance China more effectively in the region. In the process, it would divert China from its main security issue Taiwan. For India, the agreement is a significant diplomatic and strategic addition to its capabilities vis-a-vis China, with both the possible increase in fissile material production and a strengthened strategic partnership with the United States.

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In past, China has built up Pakistan as a counter to India for several decades, a policy that involved transfers of nuclear and missile technology. Even before the announcement of Indo- US civil nuclear deal in July 2005, there were reports in March-2004 that China was planning to provide Islamabad with a nuclear reactor. The implication is that the Beijing-Islamabad nuclear partnership might have continued in any case. But the current

pattern of nuclear cooperation between China and Pakistan is used by Beijing to lay the grounds for legitimising continued nuclear collaboration with Pakistan. Further in December 2005, China began construction of the 300-MW second phase of the Chasma Nuclear Power Plant, contracted in May 2004, subsequent to the commissioning of the first phase in September 2000, parallel to the Indo-US deal, China and Pakistan also reportedly agreed to a nuclear cooperation arrangement under which as many as six nuclear reactors of at least 600 MW capacity would be provided to Islamabad. Although the Vienna-based Nuclear Supplier Group has opposed the supply of nuclear power plants to Pakistan by its member China, the latter has maintained that its agreement with Pakistan for cooperation in civil nuclear technology was signed in the 1980s before China joined the NSG. Some Pakistani Commentators, in fact felt, and argued that their country needs nuclear cooperation with the United States more than India because the gap between existing energy supplies and future energy requirement is far more serious for Pakistan than it is for India. A senior Pakistani official reminded the US its nuclear policy statement of October 2006 that Washington's nuclear policy should be guided by criteria-based "approach rather than one geared toward a single country". However, US government officials have stated that they have no intention of considering a similar agreement with Pakistan.

After signing the Indo-US civil nuclear deal finally in October 2008, once again, Pakistan's nuclear energy programme revitalised, and in quest, Pakistani President Asif Ali Zardari paid a visit to Beijing in July 2010. Among other things, Zardari urged the Chinese leadership to continue supply of civilian nuclear technology to Pakistan, despite growing international concern over China's nuclear engagement with the country. In his meeting with Chinese President Hu Jintao and Premier Wen Jaibao, Zardari said that his country needed Chinese assistance in developing "an energy mix" which included nuclear power reactors, as well as hydro-power, wind and solar energy.

Pakistan, as a further step, to have nuclear parity with India and enhance its influence in the region, in July 2013 approved funds to purchase two new nuclear power reactors from China. The 1100 MWe ACP 1000 units were together priced at 959 billion (\$9.6 billion). They will be supplied by China National Nuclear Corp and built at the coastal Karachi site

near Paradise Point in Sindh province about 25 kilometres west of the capital. At present Pakistan has a 40-year old 125 MWe pressurised heavy water reactor at Karachi and another nuclear power plant at Chasma in northern Punjab province. This has two 300 MWe Chinese-built reactor operating with two more under construction. Before supplying this in April 2013 the Chinese authorities said they had full intellectual property rights over the design. It had completed the phase of research and design review and would move their focus to construction and market development. Internally too the Pakistan Atomic Energy Commission has received the green light to start work on a second nuclear power plant in Karachi with Chinese assistance . While reports have been cropping up in the international media about KANUPP-2, which is expected to cost \$9.6 billion and produce around 1000-MW. It is the first time that government documents and officials have revealed Chinese involvement in the project. It is also to note here that the Pakistan Atomic Energy Commission has chalked out a plan to install 8,000 MW of nuclear energy by 2025 from the present capacity of approximately 700-MW supplied by the plants in Karachi and Chasma

Source : [https://dailytimes.com.pk/374254/nuclear-prospects-of-south-asia/?fbclid=IwAR2ryBQBMkBsFRbIJRv83NaCgDgnefXS5\\_-NRdf1m9qsrQpbD7zT5TfFgRM](https://dailytimes.com.pk/374254/nuclear-prospects-of-south-asia/?fbclid=IwAR2ryBQBMkBsFRbIJRv83NaCgDgnefXS5_-NRdf1m9qsrQpbD7zT5TfFgRM)

## Japan – a case study of war and peace By Iftikhar Ahmad

Returned to Tokyo (on Monday, March 25, 2019) after a five days trip to Kyoto and Nara, the ancient capital of Japan. There is a lot of sightseeing in all the places we visited, including temples and shrines, castles, museums, theatres, cultural centres, parks and gardens et cetera. Former imperial villa, NIJO castle, is a world Heritage site. discuss and has witnessed some of the most important events in Japan is history in the 400 years since it was built. The construction of the castle was completed and 1603 on the order of the Tokugawa, Iyasu, the founder and first shogun of the Tokugawa shogunate (1603-1867) . Tokugawa Iyasu unified Japan after a long period of Civil War, and ushered in a period of 260 years of peace and prosperity.

Nijo castle served as the Kyoto residence of the Shogun on the rare occasions when he visited the Imperial capital. When the Shogun was not in residence, the NIJO Ziban samurai guards, who were dispatched from the shogunate at Edo ( present day Tokyo) were garrisoned at the castle.

In 1867, the 15th Shogun, Tokugawa Yoshinobu announced the end of the Tokugawa rule, and the returning of the political control to the Emperor. This ushered in the Meiji period. Thus, feudal society gave way to a modern democratic nation that Japan is today. Bullet train makes journey fast, beautiful and comfortable. Before going to Kyoto and Nara, et cetera, we had travelled by car to view the beauty of Mount Fuji and the resorts at the base of the mountain covered by snow. The lakes were simply attractive for tourists appreciating the chance to go boating, fishing and enjoying the facilities available.

For some visitors it is often difficult to understand layers of seemingly contradictory elements that make up modern Japanese culture. Prior study and tour guides can help you have a feel of Japan's traditional culture like bushido, geishas, Shinto, Buddhism and Confucianism. Visitors may get interested in traditional arts and disciplines like Ukiyo-e, Ikebana, Zen meditation, martial arts and the tea ceremony. Tips on places of outstanding interest help tourists and first-time visitors to go to the right places to appreciate the originality and creativity of the Japanese.

Japan is a collectivist society, where individualism is frowned upon and group power is encouraged in general, because it helps create harmonious links within the family, the company, or in groups of friends. The Japanese believe your blood type determine your character to a great extent. People are very superstitious, and religions are based on superstition. 'Karakuri' are mechanised puppets or automata created by Japanese traditional artists

Ikebana is a Japanese art that seeks beauty using flowers as its main element and stems from the Buddhist practice that first appeared in Japan in the sixth century. Besides its decorative function, it is also used as a method for meditation. Simplicity, the education of the flow of life, the seasons, and even enlightenment are sought through the positioning of the flowers. Nowadays ikebana is a hobby practised by many Japanese, and it is spreading to many other countries. Ikebana is another ritual that combines many elements of the most traditional Japan.

If you happen to be in Tokyo and other parts of Japan from March to late April it would be enjoyable seeing Sakura spots for Sakura varieties. For best Hanami (Sakura viewing) there are long green ways, illuminated at night. In parks and gardens, people enjoy looking at multicoloured blossoms: they sit under trees with beautiful flowers, with religious spirit. People relax and like best of the opportunity being in the company of family and friends. Often they stay under trees and flowers for the whole day and night. In times past, the Japanese believed God lived inside Sakura trees, and just before the rice showing season, offerings were made under the trees.

Japanese people protect them selves against pollen by wearing masks. Those marketing these masks are making big money.

Japan is a collectivist society, where individualism is frowned upon and group power is encouraged in general, because it helps create harmonious links within the family, the company, or in groups of friends. The Japanese believe your blood type determine your character to a great extent. People are very superstitious, and religions are based on superstition. 'Karakuri' are mechanised puppets or automata created by Japanese traditional artists. The art of karakuri is considered one of the origins of present-day robotics and one of the reasons the Japanese perceive technology as something friendly.

Keiretsue are groups of companies that work together, trying not to compete with one another and cooperating in order to make more money together. The people give their utmost in their work in order to serve consumers in society. Thus they automatically obtain their own personal benefits and they achieve collective aims. Workplace manners are important. The Japanese are extremely cautious and respectful with their fellow men. That is why individual behaviour and personal treatment are key features in business and company life. Career women have more and more of a presence in Japan. Walking around any street in Tokyo and at any time of the day or night is completely safe. Effective legislation and severe penalties deter crime of any kind. Deep down, the lack of crime is due, a great extent, to the Japanese peoples way of thinking. It has a lot to do with your attitude that you care for the society and yourself feel accountable and responsible.

There exists an air of hate-love relationship between Japan and the United States that one can feel. It is not difficult to understand if you can recall the circumstance that prevailed after the attack on Pearl Harbor, the start of the Second World War, bombing of Hiroshima, a great devastation for Japan and the start of a new chapter a year after the end of war. Many experts, insiders as well as well-known political analysts, informed the people of what had happened, what were the motives and the sorrows that were brought to the families of the innocent people. Japanese living in the United States at the time had to undergo a period of great tensions since they were seen as the enemy of the United States and hence segregated and forced to live in concentration camps.

There was no longer a normal life for them and their families. Lt commander Alexander Leighton of the United States described in his book “governing of men” the approaches that had to be adopted to restore the confidence of the Japanese Americans and rehabilitate them using clinical, psychological and sociological approach.

Another book, “For That One Day”, that I value most in this context, was the memoirs of Mitsu Fuchida, commander of the attack on Pearl Harbor, published in 2011 after having been translated in English, years after the death of the author.



Preface of the autobiography says, this book is about a man who followed a unique destiny in life incredible but not unbelievable because he tells his factual story. In the predawn hours of December 7, 1941, Fuchida, leading 360 planes of the Imperial Japanese Navy task force, spearheaded the surprise attack operation on Hawaii. It was again this man- Fuchida- Who witnessed the surrender ceremony theatrically orchestrated by General MacArthur, supreme commander of the Allied forces, on-board the battleship USS Missouri in Tokyo bay on September 2, 1945.

There are some other significant historical events described in Fuchida's autobiography: he was in Hiroshima on the day before and the day after the atomic bomb was dropped. He describes the devastation of the explosion. He describes the day he met General MacArthur at the Atsugi airbase as a member of the Japanese delegation. He talks about his testimony at the Tokyo war crimes trial and his arguments and counter arguments with the prosecutors and judges. He explains his encounters beyond love and hate with President Dwight Eisenhower, Admiral Cester Nimitz and Admiral Raymond Spruance (the US fleet commander at Midway.) Japan is proud of this hero an outstanding person. On May 30 1976, Mitsuo Fuchida died at the age of 73 in his hometown, kashiwara, city in the Nara Prefecture.

Source : <https://dailytimes.com.pk/373851/japan-a-case-study-of-war-and-peace/?fbclid=IwAR13giyT16LOQIEYVZ6LkFRfxXNUuP54loZXyETujCsKfkCYPaonWT C0JQg>

## [Understanding Trump's Trade War By Douglas Irwin](#) [Foreign Policy](#)

This year will show what the president really wants. Here's what to watch for.

2019 could be a defining moment for U.S. trade policy. Two years into Donald Trump's presidency, it should finally become clear whether the U.S. president's brazen rhetoric on the subject is simply a negotiating ploy in the pursuit of new deals or whether a trade war—and with it the destruction of the post-World War II international order—is his real end goal.

Until now, it has been rather hard to tell. Trump withdrew from the Trans-Pacific Partnership without ever proposing a replacement, and he appeared ready to do the same with the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). He imposed stiff levies on imported steel and aluminum, leading Canada, China, Mexico, and the European Union to slap the United States with retaliatory tariffs. At the same time, however, his administration ultimately agreed to a renegotiated NAFTA without major changes to the original agreement. It did the same for the U.S. free trade agreement with South Korea. So what signs could reveal his true intentions in 2019?

The first area to watch will be cars. The Trump administration's legal justification for its 2018 steel and aluminum tariffs was a little-used U.S. statute that allows the president to raise such barriers in cases where U.S. national security is threatened. In mid-2018, the Commerce Department also started looking into whether imported automobiles might pose a similar threat—a sign that the administration was seriously considering imposing duties as high as 25 percent on foreign cars and auto parts, which would affect more than \$200 billion worth of trade.

[Human beings are rarely rational—so it's time we all stopped pretending they are, Fareed Zakaria writes.]

Trump may lack the audacity to go that far, since he would face stiff opposition. U.S. automobile producers oppose such protectionism because they often import cars and

parts from their overseas factories. Higher taxes on autos would also hit U.S. households in a more direct way than levies on steel and aluminum. And European trade partners would likely retaliate with more tariffs on U.S. farmers, manufacturers, and other exporters.

If Trump makes good on his threat anyway, the administration might argue that the goal is to get a better deal from trading partners—a reduction in European Union automobile tariffs, say. But the more likely goal of such a move would be to dismantle global automobile supply chains and fully reshore production in the name of helping blue-collar workers.

The second thing to watch will be Washington's stance toward Beijing. So far, the Trump administration's actions could be read as either an attempt to force China to change its economic practices or an effort to simply punish it by dismantling the trade partnership. So far, the Trump administration's actions could be read as either an attempt to force China to change its economic practices or an effort to simply punish it by dismantling the trade partnership. Trump has imposed about \$250 billion worth of duties on Chinese goods, on the grounds that China's own protectionism and its theft of U.S. technology pose strategic threats to the United States, but has hinted that they may be reversible if China changes its ways. At the same time, his administration has shown little interest in negotiations, which would have to be a precursor to any potential deal.

The key to figuring out Trump's true intentions will be whether his administration follows through with its plans to raise some of the new tariffs from 10 percent to 25 percent and to expand them to cover an additional \$267 billion worth of Chinese exports, including Apple products such as the iPhone, which have so far remained exempt. If the administration walks down that path, then trade punishment would be the likely end game, particularly since China will never change its economic model in response to what it sees as U.S. bullying.

Third, Trump will have to take a stand on the World Trade Organization (WTO), a body that regulates trade among its 164 members. Trump has called the organization the worst

trade deal ever reached—even worse than NAFTA—and on several occasions has expressed his desire to leave it.

As with many of his other moves, however, his goals are far from clear. On the one hand, his administration has continued to use the WTO by bringing new cases against other countries—including China, for example, which the United States claims has violated the letter or the spirit of various WTO agreements. At the same time, however, Washington has also denounced WTO decisions that have gone against the United States as examples of judicial overreach and has blocked the appointment of new jurists to the WTO's appellate body.

In the coming year, as the WTO cases move forward, the administration will have to show its cards. If its current attempts to disrupt the organization are for the purpose of bringing about procedural changes, it will have to make clear what changes it actually desires. If it doesn't, we can assume that Trump plans to abandon the institution by ignoring it.

#### Trade Outlook 2019: Mostly Cloudy – Analysis By Evan Rogerso

The final area to pay attention to will be how Trump deals with the trade deficit. The president's main obsession is with increasing U.S. exports and diminishing imports. In his mind, the trade deficit measures the extent to which other countries have been taking advantage of the United States. Economists have grown weary of pointing out his error, but I'll do it again. Trade deficits are driven by macroeconomic factors. In particular, if a country has a high savings rate relative to investment, that country will send some of its excess savings to others by exporting more goods than it imports. China, Japan, and Germany—all with high savings rates—have trade surpluses. The United States—with low savings and high consumption—has a deficit.

The deficit, in other words, is mostly homegrown, and Trump's economic policies are likely to increase it. A large tax cut and increases in government spending have temporarily boosted consumption and economic growth. To help meet the new demand, the United States has started importing more, further increasing the trade imbalance. As this trend continues in 2019, Trump will have to decide how to react—whether by lashing

out at the U.S. Federal Reserve (Trump's go-to scapegoat for all manner of economic issues), at other countries for their perfidious trade policies, or both.

The president is no different from his recent predecessors in saying he wants favorable trade deals. But if he's actually embracing protectionism for its own sake, that would make him unique. Whereas previous presidents have raised trade barriers in difficult economic times, Trump has initiated them during a period when U.S. economic performance is strong and domestic industries are not asking for such help.

In his first year in office, Trump laid the groundwork for the tariffs that came in year two. Now the second act in this drama is about to begin. The president is unlikely to let his apparent penchant for protectionism go, particularly if the U.S. economy slows and the trade deficit remains stubbornly high. The global economy, and the postwar system of world trade in particular, should be prepared for more blows to come.

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## [America's Next 5 Moves in the Indo-Pacific Region By James Jay Carafano](#)

Donald Trump has done much to alter U.S. influence in Asia.

Obama talked of pivoting to Asia. Donald Trump made Asia pivot to America.

In the last two years, Trump has done much to increase U.S. influence in the Indo-Pacific region. But much more needs doing. A fast start is well and good, the Indo-Pacific contest is a marathon, not a sprint.

Washington needs to seriously think how the United States can sustain the regional strategy over the long term—well past 2020. The goal is simple. Beijing has to respect America as a formidable Asian power—and concede that the United States is not going anywhere. And what the United States does there must be part of an overall strategy to stabilize key regions of the world and ensure the freedom of the commons (air, sea, space and cyberspace) that benefits the United States and all nations.

### Mixed Messages

For sure, the Trump team stumbled out of the blocks, making U.S. policy a question mark for most of Asia. Many read the White House rejection of the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) as a signal of disengagement. To be fair to the administration, TPP was already dead on arrival. During the presidential campaign, Hillary Clinton had announced that said she wouldn't endorse the trade agreement. And Congress had sent clear signals it wouldn't pass enabling legislation. But while Trump simply buried a corpse, he failed to promise to replace it with a better deal.

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On the other hand, the administration was crystal clear on U.S. national security strategy. Washington had no intention of ceding space in Asia. Later, the United States joined like-minded nations in endorsing the concept of a “free and open Indo-Pacific.” Any objective assessment had to conclude that America was in anything but withdrawal mode.

In the first two years, three regional issues dominated Washington's attention: Afghanistan, North Korea and China.

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In August 2017, the president announced the strategy for Afghanistan. The United States would continue to support the Afghan people as it pursued two important self-interests: ensure the country did not again become a sanctuary and platform for transnational terrorism, and make certain the conflict did not become a source of regional instability in South Asia. That was a sound course of action. While the consequences of ongoing negotiations with the Taliban and adjusting the U.S. military footprint remain to be seen, these actions are being undertaken in the context of the existing strategy. That's a wise course the United States will likely stay on.

The United States had two core interests in relation to North Korea: prevent a war in Northeast Asia, and protect the U.S. homeland against nuclear blackmail or attack by the DPRK. In pursuit of these interests, the administration put in place a pressure campaign—a mix of nuclear and conventional deterrence, missile defense and heavy sanctioning. In addition, the administration opened a diplomatic track offering to normalize relations in exchange for denuclearization.

The outcome these negotiations remains an open question. As long as the United States keeps the pressure campaign in place, however, our interests are protected. For sure, much work needs to be done on the diplomatic front. But if “full and fully verifiable denuclearization” is achieved, it will mark a significant advancement of peace and security in Northeast Asia.

Without question, however, the key focus of U.S. Indo-Pacific strategy has become China. The traditional U.S. approach was, where possible, to look for areas to accommodate and cooperate with Beijing and avoid confrontation. Trump flipped that approach on its head. The United States now consciously seeks points of contention across the military, security, diplomatic and economic spectrum. It has conducted freedom of navigation exercises in the South China Sea; confronted Beijing with tariffs, demanded serious trade negotiations and criticized China's major international undertaking, the Belt and Road



Initiative. By challenging China in these ways, the administration aims to force Beijing to recognize Washington's interests and thus achieve a more stable relationship between the two powers.

### America Strong

The next iteration of American strategy needs to pick up where the last couple of years have left off. Without undercutting the energy and emphasis current strategy places on protecting U.S. interests in Europe and the Middle East, Washington needs to ratchet-up its game in the Indo-Pacific region and send a powerful message that Beijing is in a long-term competition it simply cannot win.

Here are the key next moves to make.

### Make More Friends in the Hood

Managing China in a way that protects American interests and upholds the common values all nations should respect can't be done without the U.S. But we can't do it alone. We need strong alliances and strategic partnerships in the region. We need to do more, and our friends need to do more. We've got a couple cost-sharing arrangements coming due with our biggest allies in the region—Japan and South Korea. Washington must approach those negotiations constructively. Then there are countries (such as Bangladesh) that won't be our partners, but would like more presence of the United States and allies to balance Beijing. That's important. Some of these states—such as the Pacific Island nations—are quite small, but strategically important. We also need to engage powers from outside the region, like the Europeans, who have a fair amount of presence but little strategy to meet our obvious common objectives.

### Build the Free and Open Indo-Pacific Architecture

We will never have a Pacific NATO, and we don't need one. But what is in place now is not enough. The ASEAN-led system is fine. We should respect it—if for no other reason than that many of the countries we seek to work with value it, and when we disrespect it, others (i.e., China) step in to demonstrate the contrast. But we can't count on ASEAN. The Quad (Australia, India, Japan and the United States) provides an important

overarching informal network. That should be viewed as the capstone of a matrix of trilateral frameworks and bilateral 2+2 (defense and foreign secretary discussions). That's enough to achieve the critical synergies needed, like building common maritime situational awareness.

### Promote Economic Freedom

The United States has to be out front, encouraging economic liberalization in the region across all sectors—goods, services and investment. We can do that through bilateral arrangements, if the administration and Congress prefer to go that route. This puts an especially high priority on moving forward with a U.S.-Japan agreement and an agreement with Taiwan, as well as looking for other partners. It also makes engagement with and reform of the WTO a high priority. Issues like China's 5G push or its Belt and Road Initiative pose legitimate risks to U.S. interests and national defense. But in addressing these issues, we must be careful not to constrain economic freedom beyond what is narrowly required for our security. Looking out long term, do we want a world made up of competing mercantilist countries essentially at war with one another, or one characterized by free exchange and peace?

### Forge Very Special Relationships

In the Indo-Pacific region, there should be two—Taiwan and India. These are needed to send a very pointed message to China. Taiwan is the canary in the coal mine. The threat it faces from China across domains—security, diplomatic and economic—has intensified over the last couple of years. In this fortieth year of the Taiwan Relations Act, we need to help it defend itself and be in a position to make its own decisions about the future. That means selling Taiwan the weapons it needs for defense and supporting it diplomatically. If Taiwan cannot depend on the United States, no one can. India is the most important long-term non-ally in the region. Things move slowly with India, but taking stock of our common interests and projecting out, there is a huge upside in the relationship for both countries and for regional stability. We may never call India an official “ally,” but that is really beside the point. There won't be a free and open Indo-Pacific if India and the United States are not strategic partners.

## Make Military Presence Present

While he was secretary of defense, Jim Mattis instituted a concept he called “Dynamic Force Deployment.” The aim was to develop better means to move limited forces quickly to where they are required. That is not going to cut it in the Indo-Pacific region. U.S. forces are inadequate to cover the required global footprint, and China knows it. The only step that will impress Beijing is if the United States builds out its capacity to push more capability into the theater. What’s reasonable and achievable? The list would include: forward basing more submarines in Guam; investing in attack submarines at the maximum rate; investing in a long-range strike stealth drone that can be launched off a carrier; re-establishing a presence in Thailand as a warm base for U.S. airpower; and buying a land-based, anti-ship cruise missile and fielding ground units with the capability to use them. We should also be fielding mobile anti-submarine warfare capabilities. Having SM-6, LRASM or TACTOM deployed on mobile ground launchers would also send a strong message.

Source :[https://nationalinterest.org/feature/america%E2%80%99s-next-5-moves-indo-pacific-region-50767?fbclid=IwAR1OPMnCXY\\_ZG1JsxUzFT4IfwAhqvtl0H2aYJXdTgr7n63o2zxKyskoNcjQ](https://nationalinterest.org/feature/america%E2%80%99s-next-5-moves-indo-pacific-region-50767?fbclid=IwAR1OPMnCXY_ZG1JsxUzFT4IfwAhqvtl0H2aYJXdTgr7n63o2zxKyskoNcjQ)

## US-Iran hostility | Editorial

The growing US-Iran acrimony does not bode well for the world, particularly the Middle East. The US has already imposed sanctions on Iran after withdrawing last year from the 2015 nuclear deal that the Islamic republic reached with P5+1.

And now there are reports that the Trump administration is gearing up to declare Iran's Revolutionary Guards as a terrorist organisation. While the US has already blacklisted dozens of entities and people for their alleged affiliations with the Revolutionary Guards, the organisation has not been banned as a whole. If it happens, it will be the first time for Washington to formally label another country's military a 'terrorist group'.

While there has been no official US response to the reports of a looming designation for the Iranian Guards, Trump has been quite loud about his plans to contain Iran under a hawkish strategy — of which the nuclear deal withdrawal is a clear illustration.

Tehran too has warned of a 'crushing' response should Washington go ahead with blacklisting its elite 125,000-strong armed force — featuring army, navy and air units — set up after the Islamic Revolution in 1979 to protect the clerical ruling system.

Iran's most powerful security organisation, the Revolutionary Guards are in charge of the country's ballistic missiles and nuclear programmes, and enjoy a huge influence in the country's political system as well as control over large sectors of economy.

So the curbs on Iran's all-important force are unlikely to go without a response. Iran is on record to have warned the US that in case of a ban on its Guards, it would treat the American troops around the world just as it treats the Islamic State terrorist group.

Even among the US think-tanks, it is a general opinion that any such move by the US would increase risks for American troops without doing much more harm to the Iranian economy. It would be particularly threatening for US forces in places such as Iraq, where Iran-aligned militias are located in close proximity to US troops.

## The Hanoi Summit Was Doomed From the Start By Ankit Panda and Vipin Narang

North Korea Was Never Going to Unilaterally Disarm

The Hanoi Summit Was Doomed From the Start By Ankit Panda and Vipin Narang

It should come as no surprise that the Hanoi summit between the United States and North Korea ended in failure. The two countries' incompatible demands made reaching a new agreement—not just on North Korea's nuclear program but on anything—almost impossible. Washington called on Pyongyang to unilaterally surrender its entire nuclear weapons program before it would make any concessions. Despite initial reports that the United States was ready to move negotiations forward by first seeking a partial freeze on production of fissile material, it instead went after the whole program—everything old and new—in one swing. Pyongyang unsurprisingly refused, demanding that Washington lift almost all sanctions before it would discuss any further “denuclearization steps.” The United States considered that too high a price for anything short of Pyongyang's total unilateral disarmament, and talks collapsed. The gulf between U.S. and North Korean demands—not to mention a lack of agreement on what terms as central as “denuclearization” or “corresponding measures” actually meant—had been deftly papered over in the months since the historic first summit between U.S. President Donald Trump and North Korean leader Kim Jong Un in Singapore last June. But the bill finally came due in Hanoi.

### WHAT WENT WRONG

At an unusual press conference after the summit, North Korean Foreign Minister Ri Yong Ho explained Pyongyang's views of what went wrong. According to Ri, Kim asked for the repeal of specific clauses in five UN Security Council sanction resolutions passed in 2016 and 2017 that North Korea saw as pressuring its “civilian” economy. That was a big ask: these sanctions cover sources of revenue worth billions of dollars to the North Korean regime, including petroleum, iron, coal, and even overseas labor. Given the Trump administration's belief that it was precisely its “maximum pressure” campaign—and not Kim's attainment of a sufficiently broad and complete nuclear deterrent—that brought

North Korea to the negotiating table, sanctions relief was always going to be a major concession.

Ri's press conference marked the first time Pyongyang provided the international community with a specific definition of what it had euphemistically termed "corresponding measures" in a range of public statements—most prominently in the September 19, 2018, Pyongyang Declaration, signed on day two of the Inter-Korean Summit Meeting. That statement made clear that additional denuclearization steps, "such as the permanent dismantlement of the nuclear facilities in Yeongbyeon," would come only once those "corresponding measures" were taken. In effect, North Korea believed that because it had already dismantled its main nuclear test site, offered up a unilateral moratorium on the testing of intercontinental ballistic missiles and nuclear weapons, and dismantled a missile engine test stand associated with ICBMs, it was now Washington's turn to make concessions.

Many analysts didn't fully grasp how central comprehensive sanctions relief was to North Korea in these negotiations, focusing instead on a range of other concessions that Pyongyang might have sought in Hanoi. Yet a declaration to end the Korean War, the opening of a liaison office, and even modifications to U.S.–South Korean joint exercises—although all valuable to Pyongyang in their own way—were not at the core of the "corresponding measures" that Kim sought up front. When he made his demands clear at last week's summit, the U.S. side decided that the price was too steep. A senior State Department official said as much after the summit, noting that "to give many, many billions of dollars in sanctions relief would in effect put us in a position of subsidizing the ongoing development of weapons of mass destruction in North Korea." That view exposed a fundamental rigidity in the U.S. position. Short of a comprehensive deal that would exchange total sanctions relief for all of North Korea's weapons of mass destruction, any interim agreement could be rejected because it would subsidize the country's programs. Failure in Hanoi was thus all but assured from the start.

But what North Korea was willing to put on the table was also far short of U.S. expectations. By Ri's own telling, Pyongyang offered a formal moratorium on ICBMs and nuclear testing—effectively making more credible last year's unilateral commitment. A moratorium would not be without value: it could limit North Korea's progress in nuclear weapons and ballistic missile design while depriving the Korean People's Army of opportunities to rehearse for a nuclear war with live launches. (North Korea conducted these sorts of exercises as recently as March 2017.)

Ri also noted that following the lifting of “partial” sanctions, Pyongyang would “permanently and completely dismantle all the nuclear material production facilities in the Yongbyon area.” Ri's statement might be interpreted to cover the five-megawatt gas-graphite reactor, the spent-fuel-reprocessing facility, and the gas centrifuge uranium enrichment halls at Yongbyon. Shutting down those facilities would cut off the lone known source of plutonium production in North Korea, slow the rate of highly enriched uranium accumulation (which would, however, continue at covert sites), and terminate one of North Korea's few potential sources of tritium—a necessary ingredient for the high-yield thermonuclear weapons design Pyongyang is thought to have tested in September 2017.

Despite Pyongyang's offer, shortly after the Hanoi summit U.S. National Security Adviser John Bolton said he considered shuttering Yongbyon only a “limited concession,” consisting of an “aging nuclear reactor and some percentage” of North Korea's enrichment capacity. More concerning, Bolton doubled down on the United States' hard-line position, suggesting that nothing short of “complete denuclearization—including [North Korea's] ballistic missile program and its chemical and biological weapons programs” was sufficient to warrant sanctions relief.

Given that proposals to impose a testing moratorium and twice shutter facilities at Yongbyon had been previously litigated only to be subsequently violated, it is not surprising that this offer was insufficient for Washington. Despite U.S. Special Representative for North Korea Stephen Biegun's statement in January that Kim had committed “to the dismantlement and destruction of North Korea's plutonium and uranium



enrichment facilities,” including at a “complex of sites that extends beyond Yongbyon,” North Korea has not acknowledged the existence of any other sites, such as the suspected covert uranium enrichment facility at Kangson, let alone put them on the negotiating table. Ri hinted that the Yongbyon offer was the best that Pyongyang was willing to make “at the current stage.” He described it as the “first stage of the process”—which would continue after sanctions relief. This left the door open to talking about covert sites and other issues once a base-line level of trust had been established. North Korea has maintained this public position for months: the negotiations were a step-by-step process in which it believed that it had already taken the first steps, and now it was owed sanctions relief. The Trump administration, unsurprisingly, disagreed.

The United States was wise not to accept the basket of concessions Pyongyang requested on the sanctions front, but it should have been willing to state what sanctions it would remove in exchange for the facilities on offer at Yongbyon. North Korea’s proposal was likely divisible enough that the two sides might have reached at least the start of a phased process. The two sides could also have considered concessions other than Security Council resolutions relief, including project-specific exemptions related to inter-Korean initiatives that the South Korean government remains enthusiastic about. The result at Hanoi will leave in place limits on inter-Korean cooperation that are sure to frustrate South Korean President Moon Jae-in, who is eager to move forward on joint inter-Korean projects.

Given the obvious early signs that no agreement would be reached, why did Trump even go to Hanoi and demand that Kim surrender his nuclear weapons, knowing that he wouldn’t do so? One plausible explanation is Trump’s hubris about his own negotiating power—that only he could convince Kim to relinquish the very capability that enabled the summits in the first place. Trump may also have overestimated the leverage U.S. sanctions gave him, even after China and Russia had let out all the air from the maximum pressure campaign since early last year by easing up on sanctions implementation with North Korea.

One can hardly blame Kim for being surprised at what must have seemed like Trump's abrupt turnabout. For months, Trump had been heaping praise on him. Kim was taking steps that maintained the pretense of disarming and Trump had been playing along, pretending to believe him, even stating repeatedly that he was in "no rush" on denuclearization and seeming satisfied so long as there was no missile and nuclear testing. It seemed clear that Trump did not actually care whether Kim disarmed, which probably suited Kim just fine. So imagine Kim's likely shock when he was subjected to the Hanoi holdup: instead of being asked to ratify the fiction of disarmament, he was being asked to hand over the keys to his nuclear kingdom. In the postsummit briefing, Vice Foreign Minister Choe Son Hui said, "Chairman Kim got the feeling that he didn't understand the way Americans calculate. I have a feeling that Chairman Kim may have lost the will" to negotiate further.

Ultimately, Trump could neither charm nor bully Kim in Hanoi, and his promises of a vibrant future for North Korea as an "economic rocket" fell flat. Kim does not envision a future without his nuclear deterrent—and offers of economic liberalization may be not so much a promise of a secure future as a threat to Kim's hold on power. Last year, North Korean First Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs Kim Kye Gwan underscored that his country "never had any expectation of U.S. support in carrying out our economic construction and will not at all make such a deal in future, either." North Korea can envision a future with sanctions, but it cannot envision a future without its nuclear weapons.

#### WHAT COMES NEXT

An optimistic view after Hanoi is that Trump's willingness to walk away may give a jolt to the working-level diplomatic process that was on life support before the summit. Pyongyang had continually stalled this process in hopes of another one-on-one Trump-Kim summit, where it may have believed Trump might be willing to give major concessions directly to Kim. By walking away, Trump signaled there might be no more summits unless Pyongyang made an effort to bridge the negotiating gap. Kim's bet that getting alone in a room with Trump would be a sure-fire way to win the concessions North Korea sought backfired. If both sides are still interested in a deal, the failure in Hanoi might provide a

much-needed push to the working-level negotiators, since another leader-level summit that fails to produce a concrete agreement is probably out of the question.

A more pessimistic takeaway is that Hanoi's failure could lead hard-liners in both countries to conclude that the gap between the two sides remains unbridgeable, setting Washington and Pyongyang on a renewed collision course. In the United States, hawks such as Bolton and Republican Senator Lindsey Graham of South Carolina have long suspected the diplomatic process of being futile and have offered a lone alternative: disarming North Korea by force. And one cannot forget that Kim has domestic constituents as well and may face pressure from his own hard-liners for staking so much on his "epochal" relationship with Trump. This future would be worrying, because unlike in 2017, at this point there are few viable diplomatic off-ramps should the current process fail.

Yet for now, the process that began in Singapore last year remains in place. North Korean state media offered a positive report on Hanoi, emphasizing the continued rapport between Trump and Kim. What remains to be seen is if the United States will move toward a phased approach to denuclearization and recognize that the most urgent task for its Korean Peninsula policy is to reduce nuclear risks.

We wrote after the Singapore summit that pushing for unilateral and immediate North Korean disarmament is the wrong approach. The United States can maintain disarmament as a long-term goal, but the short-term goal must be to slow the growth of North Korea's nuclear arsenal, manage the continuing threat from that arsenal through robust allied deterrence, and limit the risks of proliferation. Insisting, as Bolton did in the lead-up to Singapore, on what is essentially the "Libya model," a rapid foreign-imposed disarmament of a state's nuclear weapons program—but which North Korea takes to be a threat of regime change—ignores that Pyongyang, unlike Tripoli, has already acquired nuclear weapons and believes that its nuclear capability is what gives it its current position of strength. It is not going to unilaterally surrender them.

Indeed, North Korea's attainment of an operational nuclear arsenal sets the current round of diplomacy apart from past talks. One hope in Pyongyang might be that Washington will come to accept North Korea's nuclear status—especially as U.S. intelligence continues to watch Kim's nuclear and ICBM arsenal grow unabated. For better or for worse, the process that began in Singapore did have the effect of conferring some legitimacy on North Korea's possession of nuclear weapons. Now it is up to both countries to continue this process and discover the terms under which the United States can coexist with a nuclear-armed North Korea.

If there is one lesson from Hanoi, it is to take North Korea's words seriously. Kim had long signaled that he expected sanctions relief up front before taking any further steps toward denuclearization. He also made known that North Korea would not react well to demands to unilaterally disarm. In his 2019 New Year's Day speech, Kim foreshadowed what might happen if Hanoi failed, stating: "If the United States does not keep the promise it made in the eyes of the world, and out of miscalculation of our people's patience, it attempts to unilaterally enforce something upon us and persists in imposing sanctions and pressure against our Republic, we may be compelled to find a new way for defending the sovereignty of the country." If the United States continues to insist on unilateral disarmament, it may find out what that "new way" is, and it is unlikely to be pleasant.

Source : <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/north-korea/2019-03-05/hanoi-summit-was-doomed->

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## [Xi Jinping Is Winning the National Security War By Gordon G. Chang](#)

America is underreacting to the challenges posed by Beijing.

America is in danger of “a McCarthyite Red Scare.” China could be the latest target of unfounded fear.

So said Susan Shirk, a Clinton-era deputy assistant secretary of state and now chair of the 21st Century China Center at the University of California San Diego. The prominent academic issued her attention-grabbing warning in Beijing on Saturday, at the Yenching Global Symposium at prestigious Peking University.

At the same time, and more importantly, she maintained that America was overreacting to challenges posed by Beijing.

Do You Know What Happened Today In History?

Shirk raises important issues, but ethnic Chinese and China-friendly figures in the United States are not now in imminent danger. And if there is any policy misjudgments at this time, it is Washington underreacting—not overreacting—to Beijing’s threats.

Chinese in America, whether citizens, permanent residents, or temporary visa holders, are always at a general risk of prejudice, discrimination, abuse, and physical injury. After all, Richard Hofstadter, the great historian, titled his 1964 Harper’s essay “The Paranoid Style in American Politics.” Yet at least at this moment, Chinese people look safe from paranoid Americans. The United States is at peace with the People’s Republic of China.

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Shirk’s McCarthyism language seems out of place, but it comes at the same time that Beijing has been pushing its own charges of McCarthyism. The Communist Party-controlled Global Times in the middle of January came out with a “McCarthyism” editorial.

Within hours of the tabloid's blast, the Chinese Foreign Ministry publicly warned of "hysteria" in the United States.

Chinese officials are building a narrative of American persecution, presumably to defend themselves. Shirk, speaking from their capital on a prominent platform, is helping them do so at a time where there is, in the United States, an absence of persecution of ethnic Chinese or China-friendly figures. Accusing one's opponents of McCarthyism where there is no whiff of it can be, well, McCarthyism.

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The overhyped charge of McCarthyism, however, is not the primary shortcoming of her Peking University address. The primary shortcoming is her lack of appreciation of Beijing's threat. "Right now," Shirk said, "there is a herding instinct in the United States that is taking us off the cliff with various forms of overreaction to China as a security threat, an intelligence threat, a spy threat, a technological threat, an influence threat."

"Off the cliff"? China poses those threats and others to America at the moment.

At the moment, Beijing has positioned about 275 vessels around Thitu Island, which is under control of the Philippines. This "cabbage" tactic was employed to seize Scarborough Shoal from the Philippines in early 2012 and has since been used in various other Philippine locations in the South China Sea. The United States has a treaty obligation to defend the Philippines. Beijing is also trying to dismember Japan, another treaty ally, and absorb traditional friend Taiwan. The attempts to grab territory from American allies and friends are part of a broad Chinese campaign threatening peace in the region.

The Chinese are interfering with American vessels and aircraft in the global commons, putting crews in danger. China has blinded American military pilots in faraway Djibouti and injured American diplomats in Guangzhou. Senior Chinese officers openly urge unprovoked attacks on the U.S. Navy and talk about killing Americans by the thousands.

Beijing is attacking both the concept of democracy and American democracy. Its agents operate on U.S. soil in violation of America's sovereignty. It is making preparations to improperly interfere in the 2020 election, Russia-style. China may have actually done so last year as well. In any event, it brazenly tried to influence electoral outcomes last year.

Beijing is giving safe haven to North Koreans who have cyberattacked the United States. The assault on Sony Pictures Entertainment in November 2014 originated from Chinese IP addresses. Many, if not most, of the North's hackers live in China, most notably the city of Shenyang.

China has imprisoned American legal residents—and possibly U.S. citizens—in concentration camps located in what Beijing calls its Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region and what traditional inhabitants of the area, the Uighurs, say is East Turkestan. The maintenance of these camps, whose purpose is to eradicate religion and ethnicity, constitutes a crime against humanity.

China for decades has been the world's master proliferator of nuclear weapons technology. In defiance of American and global norms, it armed Pakistan and through Pakistan sent nuclear tech to the Middle East and North Africa. China has delivered components, equipment, and materials to North Korea for its nuke effort. Moreover, the North's most sophisticated ballistic missiles—the solid-fuel ones—appear to be based on Chinese design. China supplied mobile launchers.

And ruler Xi Jinping has been dropping hints that China is the world's only sovereign state, thereby implying that Americans are subjects, not to mention calling into question the legitimacy of the Westphalian international system.

Challenges don't come more comprehensive and existential than China's. As Vice President Mike Pence said in his landmark October 4 Hudson Institute speech, Beijing is



implementing “a whole-of-government approach,” and this requires, I believe, America’s whole-of-society response.

Shirk’s proposed response is far less robust. She thinks the United States can still work to build warm relations with Beijing. Her primary concern is that America’s overreaction to China’s overreaching is “self-defeating,” as she said at the University of Pennsylvania’s Center for the Study of Contemporary China in January.

“I do believe that by overreacting to the perceived China threat, America may be harming itself, especially harming the openness and vibrancy of our own economy and our own society, which are the fundamental source of America’s strength as a nation and its competitiveness,” she said at the center.

Shirk has a point, but she misses larger issues. Take her reference to “openness and vibrancy.” It is precisely those attributes that have facilitated China’s annual theft of hundreds of billions of dollars of intellectual property. Defensive measures, which by now are necessary, will inevitably cost America. There is no way around it: Americans will have to suffer pain in the near term to avoid long-term decline.

China is attacking America, and, despite what Shirk says, the response so far has not been adequate.

Source: [https://nationalinterest.org/feature/xi-jinping-winning-national-security-war-50527?fbclid=IwAR21Q-C0bdLLa9eu1bRKeBQnJsZJwqB52EaEh-1CuD5cILL\\_slyf3h3vjtl](https://nationalinterest.org/feature/xi-jinping-winning-national-security-war-50527?fbclid=IwAR21Q-C0bdLLa9eu1bRKeBQnJsZJwqB52EaEh-1CuD5cILL_slyf3h3vjtl)

## [Saving Northeastern Syria -How Washington Can Help Strike a Deal Between Turkey and the Kurds](#)

Last month, fighters with the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF), a 60,000-strong Syrian militia that has been Washington's primary partner in the U.S.-led campaign against the Islamic State (ISIS), captured the Syrian town of Baghouz, ISIS' last remaining stronghold. Although ISIS has not been fully eliminated as an organization, Baghouz marked the final territorial defeat of the group, which at its peak in 2014 controlled nearly 40,000 square miles in Iraq and Syria.

Yet the territorial defeat of ISIS is not the end of the U.S. mission in Syria, where today some 2,000 American troops help the SDF administer and control the northeastern third of the country. Although U.S. President Donald Trump announced in December 2018 that he would be withdrawing all American forces from Syria, he has since partially reversed course—in March, Trump affirmed that he is “100%” in favor of leaving a residual presence of 400 U.S. troops in Syria.

The question now is how Washington can use this residual presence to secure its long-term interests in the country: countering Iranian influence, preventing a return of ISIS, isolating the regime of Syrian President Bashar al-Assad, and protecting the people of northeastern Syria from further slaughter. Achieving these goals will require the United States to use its troop presence to prevent the Syrian regime from attempting to retake the country's northeast with Iranian and Russian assistance. At the same time, the United States must reshape the SDF into a force capable of providing long-term stability on the ground.

A major obstacle to the integrity of northeastern Syria, however, is Turkey. Ankara perceives a serious threat from the People's Protection Units (YPG), the Syrian-Kurdish militia that dominates the SDF. The YPG is the Syrian wing of the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK), a designated terror group that has been waging an insurgency against Turkey for more than 30 years. Ankara seeks to create a “safe zone” stretching some 20

miles deep into SDF-held northeastern Syria, from which it would expel the YPG. Fear of a Turkish invasion is, in turn, pushing the YPG to seek an independent settlement with Assad—an outcome that would effectively return northeastern Syria to the regime and, by extension, invite in Iran and Russia.

To keep northeastern Syria in the hands of its partners, the United States must find an arrangement that placates Turkey. Reforming the SDF to be less threatening to Ankara would be a start. But given the failure of previous U.S. efforts to strike a deal between Turkey and the YPG, Washington should also try to structure the parties' economic incentives in a manner that favors cooperation. By using American aid and investment to promote the economic integration of Turkey and northeastern Syria, for example, Washington can foster improved relations between the Turks and the Syrian Kurds. And by combining these efforts with comprehensive sanctions against the Assad regime, the United States can weaken Damascus and increase its own leverage in negotiating a favorable outcome to the Syrian civil war.

#### DEMOCRATIZING THE SDF

Syria is currently in a state of de-facto partition, with the SDF controlling virtually all of the country's northeast. This area—about one-third of the country—contains more than 90 percent of Syria's remaining oil reserves and a significant portion of its viable agricultural land.

Keeping northeastern Syria in the hands of the SDF is crucial to ensuring the enduring defeat of ISIS and preventing Iranian expansion. The U.S. force in Syria, officially some 2,000 troops, currently protects the SDF-held zone. American forces train SDF fighters, coordinate coalition air strikes, and deter hostile ground operations from other regional powers. Although the U.S. troop presence is set to decrease over the coming year, the residual force of 400 troops—including the 200 set to remain in the vital town of al-Tanf in western Syria—should be enough to continue with these core missions.

The SDF has been a loyal and effective partner in the fight against ISIS. To be a viable security force in the long term, however, it needs to be reformed to better reflect the local populations it is protecting. Currently, the SDF recruits local Kurdish and Arab fighters to provide internal security, while its political arm, the Syrian Democratic Council (SDC), helps establish civil councils formed of locals representing all ethnic factions. Yet in practice, the YPG still dominates the SDF's command structure and trains all recruits in strict PKK ideology, while Kurds call the shots in the SDC-led councils. To alleviate interethnic tension and preempt violence that might flow from it, the United States should attempt to limit the YPG's ideological influence by conditioning further support for the SDF on the expansion of local Arab recruitment into the group's command structure. Such reforms would be in line with the SDF's professed political philosophy, which aspires to a decentralized, representative administration in territories it oversees.

## TAMING THE YPG

Reforming the SDF is the first step toward winning Turkey's cooperation in the maintenance of a U.S.-aligned zone in northeastern Syria. Politically, Ankara's foremost fear is the emergence of an autonomous Kurdish region bordering Turkey's own Kurdish-dominated southeast. A more decentralized SDF could allow the YPG's political wing, the Democratic Union Party (PYD), to, if elected, continue governing Kurdish-majority provinces in the SDF zone. But shifting more power to the SDF's non-Kurdish elements would dilute the influence of nationalist Kurds within the group, allowing both local Arabs and Turkey to more easily stomach the SDF's existence.

Turkey will surely continue to object to an SDF that includes the YPG. Since the YPG depends on the PKK for commanders, militants, training, and weapons, Ankara will see any YPG-controlled territory as a threat to its security. Turkey would prefer to create a safe zone in northeastern Syria, in which the Turkish military would occupy Kurdish population centers and clear them of YPG militants, as it did in the Kurdish canton of Afrin in early 2018. Because the United States is unwilling to support such an operation against its Kurdish allies, Ankara has turned to Russia for help.

Realistically, however, the United States is the best-positioned actor to ensure that northeastern Syria does not become a PKK sanctuary. Iran, Syria, and Russia have a long record of employing Kurdish groups as proxies against Turkey, and are ready to do so again. The United States, by contrast, is already working with Ankara to move certain YPG militants away from the Turkish border, and in the long term it could use its leverage over the YPG to lure the group away from the PKK.

Although YPG-aligned Syrian Kurds will not abandon their ideological sympathy for the PKK, the United States can reduce the YPG's reliance on the PKK for security. Indeed, Washington has already forced the YPG to distance itself, at least officially, from the PKK as a condition of receiving military aid. Despite the renewed Turkey-PKK conflict in 2015, the YPG has not launched offensives against Turkey and has clashed with Turkish forces only in self-defense. Washington should condition further U.S. support for the YPG on the group's continued restraint toward Turkey.

Given the United States' leverage over the Syrian Kurds, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan may well conclude that he can accept the presence of the YPG in northeastern Syria as long as the group is constrained by U.S. pressure and the formal structures of a decentralized SDF. And now that Turkey's March 31 municipal elections are over—with no new elections to be held until 2023—the Turkish president has increased latitude to adopt a more pragmatic policy toward Syrian Kurds.

## GOLDEN HANDCUFFS

In addition to pushing the YPG away from the PKK, the United States should attempt to marshal northeastern Syria's valuable natural resources to deepen Turkey's interest in the stability of the region. The SDF now controls almost all of Syria's oil fields, which, if properly leveraged, could foster peace-building efforts between the Syrian Kurds and Turkey. There is precedent for such an arrangement: at first, Ankara fiercely objected to the existence of the autonomous Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) in Iraq, which it

feared would encourage Kurdish separatism in Turkey. Yet since the beginning of the current decade, Turkey and the KRG have developed close economic relations, extending to the construction of an oil pipeline linking Iraqi Kurdistan to the Turkish port of Ceyhan. Today, Turkish businesses are all over Iraqi Kurdistan, and Erdogan facilitates a controversial oil trade between the KRG and Israel. Erdogan is an opportunist and may well accept an SDF-controlled zone in Syria as long as he is a primary outside beneficiary of its resources.

Washington can use its substantial economic leverage in Syria to bring such a deal about. The United States currently contributes large amounts of money for stabilization, recovery, and humanitarian aid in Syria—in March, it pledged almost \$400 million to a UN general aid fund for Syria. Yet money from this pool can be allocated anywhere, including outside of Syria and in regime-controlled areas. Similarly, some of the money provided through USAID and in U.S. contributions to the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs is funneled to western and northwestern Syria, where the Assad regime and terrorist organizations such as Hayat Tahrir al-Sham can manipulate its distribution.

The United States should consider redirecting all of this aid exclusively to northeastern Syria, where it would be under the control of U.S. partners. In addition, although the White House has secured more than \$325 million from its coalition partners for stabilization in northeastern Syria, it should consider releasing the \$200 million worth of recovery funds destined for “liberated areas” that it froze last May. Because this money would be under the control of the United States, rather than the UN and other international organizations, it could be used to underwrite the United States’ military and political partners in Syria and ensure their continued support for U.S. aims. (One of the biggest challenges the SDF is facing at the local level stems from its lack of capacity to provide adequate reconstruction.)

Next, the Trump administration should explore directing the Overseas Private Investment Corporation, a development finance institution that has been explicitly tasked with

“advancing [U.S.] foreign policy and enhancing American influence,” to help secure funding for American businesses to develop SDF-controlled oil fields and export infrastructure in northeastern Syria. By assisting the SDF in constructing pipelines or improving their local refining capacity, U.S. firms and their Syrian partners could bypass the country’s existing infrastructure, which is controlled by Assad, and potentially export this oil to Turkey or the Erdogan-aligned KRG in Iraq.

Admittedly, there are legal questions surrounding OPIC’s ability to invest in what is technically sovereign Syrian territory without the consent of Damascus. But even temporary financing, as long as it helped the SDF develop refineries capable of processing local crude, could greatly increase the group’s bargaining power within Syria and provide Turkey with the economic incentive to strike a deal. OPIC already has a dozen active projects in Ukraine—a country also embroiled in a civil war with foreign-backed proxy forces—amounting to a total commitment of close to \$1 billion, some of which is helping Ukraine wean itself off of Russian energy. The corporation could similarly be made into a powerful player in Syria.

#### AN AMERICAN SUCCESS?

Even as Washington promotes cooperation between Turkey and the Syrian Kurds, it should continue to ramp up the economic pressure against the Syrian regime and its backers in order to make Assad as weak as possible. The United States should tighten its sanctions regime against Damascus by focusing additional scrutiny on nongovernmental organizations operating in Syria—which the Assad regime has at times used as a tool for evasion—and the U.S. Treasury Department should continue to target Syria’s currency reserves, assets, and collaborators. Without northeastern Syria, Assad will lack access to almost all of Syria’s remaining oil reserves, in addition to much of its arable land, on the heels of Syria’s worst crop yield since 1989.



By strangling the regime's economy, the United States will hurt not only the Assad regime but its backers in Moscow and Tehran, who will be stuck propping up an expensive, economically moribund partner. Syrian oil could help alleviate Turkey's dependence on Iranian hydrocarbons, supporting broader U.S. objectives in the region. And forming Turkey and SDF-held northeastern Syria into a U.S.-aligned bloc would create a vital counterweight to the Iranian-Russian-Syrian alliance in the Middle East.

Finally, such an agreement could begin to improve U.S.-Turkish relations, which have been strained in recent years—in no small part due to disputes over Syrian Kurds. A NATO ally straddling Europe and the Middle East, Turkey is a vital player in Middle Eastern power politics. As its relations with Washington have frayed, Ankara has sought to cooperate with Moscow and Tehran to protect its regional interests. Folding Turkey back into a U.S.-led regional bloc—one that would address Turkey's security concerns about the YPG while providing it with economic incentives for cooperation—would deal a major blow to Iranian and Russian designs in Syria and the broader Middle East.

Syria is not a U.S. quagmire, as some assert. Nor does Washington's impending troop reduction render any attempt to pursue U.S. goals in the country hopeless. The United States still has cards to play in Syria. If it plays them well, the U.S. intervention in Syria may yet become an enduring American success.

## Netanyahu's victory | Editorial

WITH Benjamin Netanyahu all but assured of victory in Israel's recently held elections, the future of the Arab-Israeli peace process and the two-state solution looks doomed.

Netanyahu appears set to head a right-wing coalition — having courted some of the most fanatical Jewish outfits during the course of the campaign — and become prime minister of Israel for a record fifth time.

However, it would be naive to expect him to adopt a more measured posture and conciliatory tone towards the Palestinians.

As the polls neared, he had made it clear he would annex Israeli settlements on Arab land — settlements considered illegal by the international community.

To paraphrase the words of senior Palestinian leader Hanan Ashrawi, Netanyahu wants to build Greater Israel on the ashes of Palestine.

And perhaps what is most unfortunate is that he has the support of the Trump administration to accomplish this odious task, while the Arab and Muslim worlds remain deep in slumber.

Perhaps the Netanyahu victory can be explained in the context of the global rightist surge, with far-right parties across the world either taking power, or becoming kingmakers in respective national politics.

In the meantime, progressive political elements the world over are withering in the face of the rightist march. Some of Netanyahu's election allies are downright fascist, calling for the "transfer" of the Palestinians from their native land.

This, and the prime minister-elect's grim track record where respecting Arab rights is concerned, does not bode well for the peace process.

Perhaps the only hope for the Palestinians to secure justice is for the international community to make it clear to the Israeli leadership that it will not condone Tel Aviv's brutal treatment of the Arabs.

However, this is easier said than done, with the international community in disarray, and the US protecting Israel from all criticism.

The Palestinians have been in purgatory for over seven decades; chances are slim that they will get the respect and justice they deserve any time soon, especially after the latest Israeli elections.

Source: <https://www.dawn.com/news/1475590/netanyahus-victory?fbclid=IwAR2zKymOF00JDgLjkVc0cClqRxrTXS8yau6mHnHhLNB8dOiG16aKniZPOAc>

## Last chance to save democratic and secular India By Dr Moonis Ahmar

India is the world's biggest democracy and its secular characteristic will be tested when voters will go to the polls from April 11 to May 19 this year.

If the BJP under Narendra Modi comes to power with a two-thirds majority, the future of Indian democracy and secularism will be doomed because Hindu nationalists will proceed to implement their cherished mission to rewrite the Indian constitution and delete the 42nd Amendment which declares India a democratic and secular state.

On the one hand, there is the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) composed of the BJP, the Shiv Sena and other right-wing political parties and on the other hand there is the United Progressive Alliance (UPA) composed of so-called secular, moderate and progressive political parties and groups pitted against each other in the Indian general elections.

There are also regional parties in West Bengal, UP and some southern states having profound influence in the Indian electoral scene; have been in a bargaining position for long and also act as king-makers.

How different are the NDA and the UPA from each other and unlike 2014 Indian elections when the UPA got only 60 seats with the Indian National Congress (INC) taking 44 seats out of the 545 seats of the Lok Sabha (lower house), will the 2019 elections provide space to those who want to neutralise the deepening of Hindu extremism and militancy in case the NDA wins a two-thirds majority? The world is watching with excitement and anxiety the holding of Indian elections as more than 800 million voters will decide the future of Indian democracy and secularism.

Certainly India is at a crossroads because its image as a democratic secular state is being questioned particularly since 2014 when Narendra Modi assumed the charge of Prime

Minister and transformed the BJP from a moderate Hindu to a nationalist and extremist political party striving to declare India a Hindu state.

Senior and accomplished Indian writers like Romila Thapar and Arundhati Roy have for long warned the people of India about the rising tide of Hindu fanaticism and the rigorous campaign launched by the BJP and its sister organisations like the Shiv Sena, Bajrang Dal and Sang Pariwar of targeting minorities namely the Muslim community.

Will Indian voters, particularly those representing the silent majority, speak up and dislodge the BJP from power or will they join the right-wing bandwagon since the Pulwama episode of February 14 aimed at raising anti-Pakistan hype and charged patriotism?

It seems Indian voters will not give another chance to the BJP in April-May 2019 general elections because of three main reasons. First, if the BJP is not booted out of power, it will use all possible means at its disposal to declare India a Hindu state. Even if it fails to get a two-thirds majority and is unable to rewrite the Indian constitution, its electoral triumph with a simple majority will make life miserable for religious minorities.

Religious tolerance, which has been India's pride and a model of secularism, will diminish for good. As rightly stated by noted Indian writer Amartya Sen that, "the extreme Hindu political movement that spearheaded the present turmoil has gone into demanding an official end to Indian secularism, to be replaced by the recognition of India as a Hindu state.

This proposal, if accepted, would involve a dramatic alteration of one of the basic principles of the Indian constitution, and a radical departure from the idea of India, a pluralist, tolerant and secular India which was central to the Indian nationalist movement and which was reflected in the legal and political structure of independent India."

Despite the surge of Hindu nationalism in the recent past, majority of Indians wouldn't like to see their country further plunge into the vicious cycle of hate, intolerance and violence against religious minorities particularly the vulnerable Muslim community.

Second, winning elections, apart from its age-old communal approach, the BJP will sustain its policy of 'Pakistan-bashing' for another five years and along with that its resolve to end the special status of the state of Jammu & Kashmir will gain a new impetus.

It means in coming five years, neither will Saarc be revitalised nor regional tensions particularly hostility against Pakistan will be reduced. Is India ready to live in permanent conflict with its only western neighbor, Pakistan, and perpetuate its illegal occupation of J&K with the help of more than half a million of its military force? An Indian voter may have patriotic or nationalistic feelings but certainly will not support eternal hostility with Pakistan and controlling J&K by sheer use of force.

The manifesto issued by the Congress doesn't advocate hostility with Pakistan or to seek a military solution of J&K. While the Congress considers Jammu & Kashmir an integral part of India it favours a political solution instead of further alienating the people of J&K from India.

Unlike the BJP, the Congress is not in favour of undoing the 42nd Amendment of the Indian Constitution which declares India a democratic, socialist and secular state or deleting Article 35-A from the Indian Constitution which gives J&K a special status.

Finally, the defeat of BJP in coming elections will diminish the threat of India facing communal and political chaos because Narendra Modi and other Hindu nationalist leaders will certainly escalate their drive to transform India as a Hindu state in case of their electoral triumph.

But, it will be a big challenge for the UPA and other anti-BJP political parties if they are able to defeat the NDA because the slogan of Hindutva and India as a Hindu state has

permeated deep inside the Indian society and state of India. To reverse the tide of Hindu nationalism and restore the glory of Indian democracy and secularism will certainly be an uphill task.

There is a two-pronged qualitative difference between India and Pakistan. First, unlike Pakistan, which has been under authoritarian-military dictatorship for almost three decades, India has sustained its democratic process. Except for three years, 1974-1977 when emergency was imposed during the tenure of then prime minister Indira Gandhi, there has been no rupture in the Indian political process.

Second, unlike Pakistan which became part of the Western alliance system since the early 1950s and got the status of a frontline state, India pursued a policy of non-alignment. However, India became a beneficiary of disintegration of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War when mending fences in Indo-US relations became a reality and Washington, unlike the past, emerged as a major backer of New Delhi against challenging the Chinese power ambitions in Asia. But, the qualitative difference between India and Pakistan is now disappearing with the rise of Hindu nationalism, jingoism and intolerance vis-à-vis religious minorities. During the election campaign, Prime Minister Narendra Modi is openly praising the military so as to give the impression of developing a close nexus with those whose constitutional domain is to protect India's external frontiers.

Is India emerging as a deep state where sooner or later military will have a substantial influence on political matters? Alarmists argue that the Shiv Sena's penetration in the rank and file of India military through its own 'military academies' if allowed to continue will transform India as a deep state where democracy, secularism and religious tolerance will be things of the past. The Indian Army will be transformed as a Hindu army subservient to the BJP and its Hindu extremist allies. In that scenario, one cannot rule out the process of Indian disintegration because a major source of Indian unity has been its strong democratic institutions, its diversity and secular mode of governance.



## What Happens When China Becomes the Most Powerful Country in the World By David Batashvili

If China were to lead the world, then democracy would be hard-pressed to remain the mainstream form of political regime it has been for the last century.

What Happens When China Becomes the Most Powerful Country in the World By David Batashvili

Globally preeminent states have a tendency to shape the world in many ways. Obviously, they do it in a rather direct manner through their geostrategic activities, but the phenomenon goes much further than that. On purpose or by accident, preeminent states export their internal arrangements to the entire international system. The global political, economic, social, cultural and legal effects of this process are profound.

British and then American global preeminence accounts for the fact that it is the English language that ended up the planet's lingua franca, not French or German. Slave trade received an ultimately mortal blow in 1807, when philosophical and political developments within Britain resulted in its prohibition, and because it was Britain that had the naval strength to actually enforce the ban. The Western victory in World War One placed the democratic form of government at the forefront of the world's political fashion, where it remains to this day. The implications of the totalitarian regimes' potential success in their quests for hegemony during World War II or the Cold War are as clear as they are unpleasant.

Since the first half of the twentieth century, the US has left an enormous mark on the globalized world, which goes far beyond the obvious geopolitics. An incessant stream of political values, financial activities and sheer culture flowing from America has incalculable effects. The total sum of various manifestations of American influence has played a crucial role in shaping the modern world.

Today, America's preeminence is challenged by China. To be sure, the two nations go to some lengths not to let their competition go quite out of hand and are economically

interdependent. The essence of what is happening, however, is that China has become the second power in the world, and it wants to become the first. The United States, meanwhile, is not disposed to see itself replaced in its position of leadership.

There is nothing unusual about this situation. Struggle for preeminence has been going on, with only brief pauses, since the Early Modern age. During the later Renaissance and religious wars periods it was Spain versus France. From the late seventeenth century to the end of the Napoleonic Wars it was France against England and then Britain. For much of the nineteenth century it was Britain against Russia. In the early twentieth century—Britain against Germany. In World War Two—the United States against Germany and Japan. During the Cold War, it was the United States against the Soviet Union. Today it is the United States versus China.

This struggle is not necessarily destined to result in a direct war (although it might). After all, the Cold War didn't. But whatever the forms the Sino-American competition is going to take, the stakes are incredibly high, and not just for the two contesting powers.

If China were to replace the United States in the role of global leader, then its internal reality would shape the outside world, just like that of Britain did and that of America still does. And right now, the internal reality in question is not pretty at all. In fact, China is in the process of transfer from the relatively mild authoritarianism (well, "mild" in comparison to Mao's time) it has had since Deng Xiaoping to a new model that comes disturbingly close to the very definition of totalitarianism.

A key feature that differs a totalitarian model from an authoritarian one is that under totalitarianism it is not enough for citizens to just mind their own business and refrain from political opposition to the regime. Instead of being satisfied with their political complacency, a totalitarian regime demands strict adherence to its rules and ideas in people's everyday lives, including in the matters that have nothing to do with politics. In effect, it seeks to control everyone's every step.

This is precisely what the Chinese ruling regime is now working to achieve. Modern digital technologies offer it a possibility to build an actual dystopia in the sense until now only described in the science fiction—something totalitarian regimes of the past could not do for practical reasons. A new Chinese system relying on total surveillance and big data to notice and assess everyday actions of the citizens is set to become fully operational in 2020. It is already functioning, however. In just one of its manifestations, twenty-three million Chinese citizens have been banned from buying travel tickets for various actions in their lives that the system frowns upon.

If you are tempted to think that this new digital totalitarianism might be softer compared to the more technologically primitive regimes of the past, then take a look at Xinjiang. This large region of China has essentially been turned into one huge concentration camp in order to “transform” the culture of the local ethnic and religious minorities. In August 2018, one million of Xinjiang residents were reported to be interned in the camps. Others estimate the figure to be up to two million. And this policy of Beijing is set to continue. In fact, the number and total area of new security facilities in Xinjiang peaked in 2017 and 2018. The camps are claimed to have “re-education” purpose, but apparently torture is part of the curriculum.

Given the planned expansion of the total surveillance and behavior control system to all of China, the Beijing regime’s actions in Xinjiang might turn out to be a pilot project with potential for some degree of application beyond that unfortunate province. After all, the Chinese authorities already practice enforced disappearances, while simultaneously intensifying their crackdown on the human rights.

All these techniques of statecraft are really not something one would like to see becoming more widespread in the world. And yet, that would probably happen if China were to become the world’s preeminent great power.

In fact, this process has already started. In Cambodia, for instance, China’s influence empowers suppression of democracy by the local authoritarian regime. China’s

surveillance practices are spreading beyond its borders. Among examples of this process is Zimbabwe's decision to install Chinese-provided facial recognition and monitoring system throughout the country. Tanzania has adopted cybersecurity legislation that restricts freedom of internet content, resembling China's model and helped by its technical assistance. So has Uganda. In Pakistan, a Chinese-run surveillance system has been established along the route of China-Pakistan Economic Corridor.

As stated in the Freedom House's Freedom on the Net 2018 report, Chinese firms "provided high-tech tools of surveillance to governments that lack respect for human rights." Freedom House counted eighteen countries where Chinese firms "are combining advances in artificial intelligence and facial recognition to create systems capable of identifying threats to 'public order.'" Representatives from thirty-six nations attended seminars where Chinese officials were sharing their information management know-how. The notion of the internationally spreading Chinese "techno-dystopian" model, mentioned in the report, is now entering the wider public discourse.

If China were to lead the world, then democracy would be hard-pressed to remain the mainstream form of political regime it has been for the last century. Modern China's political and legal norms and practices would closely follow the global spread of the Chinese geopolitical and economic dominance. That is why the ongoing competition between America and China will decide much more than just the great-power careers of these two nations. This competition is, in effect, a struggle about what kind of world we are all going to live in.

Source : <https://nationalinterest.org/feature/what-happens-when-china-becomes-most-powerful-country-world-51887?fbclid=IwAR2t02hqIGdXGCkIIMgC9qZld54RvXqmitH6OFq-frKjVUcnAc4PMjMZJ4>

## The Open World – What America Can Achieve After Trump

By Mira Rapp-Hooper and Rebecca Friedman Lissner

Since the election of U.S. President Donald Trump in 2016, it has become commonplace to bemoan the fate of the U.S.-led liberal international order—the collection of institutions, rules, and norms that has governed world politics since the end of World War II. Many experts blame Trump for upending an otherwise sound U.S. grand strategy. They hope that once he is gone, the United States will resume the role it has occupied since the fall of the Soviet Union: as the uncontested hegemon ruling benevolently, albeit imperfectly, over a liberalizing world.

It won't. Washington's recent dominance was a historical anomaly that rested on a rare combination of favorable conditions that simply no longer obtain, including a relatively unified public at home and a lack of any serious rivals abroad. American leaders must recognize this truth and adjust their strategy accordingly.

Although the post-Cold War order was never a monolith, it aspired to a form of liberal universalism. U.S. leaders assumed that gradually, the rest of the world would come to accept the basic premises of the liberal order, including democracy, free trade, and the rule of law. And with a level of economic and military power unrivaled in human history, the United States could pursue a foreign policy that sought to preclude the emergence of great-power rivals. By 2008, however, the United States was stumbling. U.S. missteps in the Middle East, followed by the global financial crisis, signaled to would-be competitors that Washington was no longer invulnerable. Today, rival powers such as China and Russia actively participate in the liberal order even as they openly challenge the primacy of liberalism. Technological advances in computing and artificial intelligence (AI) are giving weaker actors the means to compete directly with the United States. And domestic divisions and global rivalries are making international cooperation harder to sustain.

Liberal universalism is no longer on the table. Instead, the United States should make the defense of openness the overarching goal of its global strategy. This will mean preventing the emergence of closed regional spheres of influence, maintaining free access to the

global commons of the sea and space, defending political independence, and abandoning democracy promotion for a more tempered strategy of democracy support. Washington should continue to pursue great-power cooperation where possible, through both global institutions such as the UN and the World Trade Organization (WTO) and regulatory regimes such as the one set out in the Paris climate accord. But in domains not already governed by international rules, such as AI, biotechnology, and cyberspace, it must prepare to compete with its rivals while working with its allies to establish new rules of the road.

An openness-based strategy would represent a clear departure from the principles of liberal universalism that have guided U.S. strategy since the end of the Cold War. Instead of presuming the eventual triumph of liberalism, it would signal U.S. willingness to live alongside illiberal states and even to accept that they may take a leading role in international institutions. Such a strategy would preserve existing structures of the liberal order while recognizing that they will often fall short; and when they do, it would call on the United States and like-minded partners to create new rules and regimes, even if these lack universal appeal. Harboring no illusions about geopolitical realities, an openness-based strategy would prepare to defend U.S. interests when cooperation proved impossible. But it would define those interests selectively, sharpening the nation's focus and eschewing the unending crusades of liberal universalism.

Rather than wasting its still considerable power on quixotic bids to restore the liberal order or remake the world in its own image, the United States should focus on what it can realistically achieve: keeping the international system open and free.

## THE RETURN OF RIVALRY

For nearly three decades after the fall of the Soviet Union, the United States had no significant geopolitical rivals. Today, it has two. The first, Russia, is a revanchist power, but its economic stagnation renders it more a spoiler than a genuine challenger. With an acute dependency on oil and a projected economic growth rate hovering around two percent, Russia is likely to see its international power decline over the next decade. Yet

Russia is far more economically and politically stable today than it was in the 1990s, allowing it to project power far beyond its borders. And Russian President Vladimir Putin has played a bad hand well: he has integrated Russia's significant hybrid warfare, cyberwar, and nuclear capabilities into an asymmetric defense strategy that lets the country punch well above its weight. Moscow will never truly challenge U.S. dominance, but it will disrupt the democratic processes of EU and NATO members and threaten former Soviet states for the foreseeable future.

The United States' second rival, China, is on track to become its only real peer competitor. During the 1990s and the first decade of this century, the United States benefited from Chinese leaders' fixation on economic growth and internal stability at the expense of geopolitical power. But since President Xi Jinping assumed office in 2012, Beijing has explicitly sought to reestablish its regional hegemony in Asia. China is now on track to be the world's largest economy by 2030 in terms of GDP, and China's technology sector already approaches that of the United States in both research-and-development spending and market size. By the early 2020s, China's military power in Asia will rival that of the United States, although the U.S. military will retain considerable global advantages.

Traditional measures of power are only part of the story, thanks to disruptive technologies such as AI. AI is likely to spread quickly but unevenly, and it may encourage escalation by lowering the costs of conflict, as militaries become less dependent on manpower and destruction becomes more precisely targeted. Countries such as China, with its government access to massive citizen databases, state control over media, and lack of privacy rights and other individual freedoms, may create new forms of "digital authoritarianism" that allow them to fully exploit AI for military and political uses. And although the U.S. technology sector is the most advanced in the world, there are signs that the U.S. government may have trouble harnessing it. Silicon Valley's supranational self-image and global business interests make it skeptical of cooperating with the government—late last year, Google withdrew its bid for a \$10 billion cloud-computing contract with the Pentagon, citing ethical concerns. Washington's lack of technical expertise, meanwhile, could lead it to regulate Silicon Valley in unproductive ways.



Tension between the U.S. government and the U.S. technology sector is one problem, but domestic polarization is a more fundamental issue. The virtual elimination of any middle ground between Democrats and Republicans means that nearly any issue—including foreign policy initiatives that used to be bipartisan—can get politicized by lawmakers, the media, and the public. This will not only foment dissension on the most consequential foreign policy choices, such as when and where to use military force; it could also generate dramatic foreign policy swings as the presidency passes from one party to the other, making the United States a persistently unpredictable global actor. And by ensuring that nearly every issue divides along partisan lines, polarization creates domestic fissures that foreign powers can exploit, as Russia did with its hacking and disinformation campaigns in the 2016 presidential election. Taken together, these domestic trends will make it harder for the United States to sustain a consistent global strategy and easier for its rivals to assert themselves.

Although war will remain a threat, renewed great-power competition is more likely to manifest itself in persistent, low-level conflict. Post–World War II international law prohibits aggressive conventional and nuclear war but says nothing about coercion below the threshold of military force. States have always tried to pursue their interests through coercive means short of war, but in recent years, interstate competition has flourished in new domains, such as cyberspace, that largely operate beyond the reach of international law. China and Russia possess devastating conventional and nuclear capabilities, but both wish to avoid a full-scale war. Instead, they will pursue disruptive strategies through subtler means, including hacking, political meddling, and disinformation. Sustained competition of this sort has not been seen since the Cold War, and U.S. strategy will need to prepare for it.

As new forms of conflict emerge, traditional forms of cooperation are unlikely to keep pace. The United States is striking ever-fewer formal international agreements. During the Obama administration, the United States ratified fewer treaties per year than at any time since 1945. In 2012, for the first time since World War II, the United States joined zero treaties, and then it did the same in 2013 and 2015. The international community has similarly stalled in its efforts to pass new multilateral accords. Issues such as digital

commerce and cyberconflict remain un- or undergoverned, and their sheer complexity makes it unlikely that new international rules on them will be passed anytime soon.

## THE OPEN ROAD

The emerging world order is one in which the United States will face major internal and external constraints. The country will remain tremendously powerful, continuing to dominate the international financial system and maintaining a level of military and economic power enjoyed by few nations in history. Yet its capabilities will be more limited, and the challenges it faces, more diffuse. A shrewd strategy must therefore be discerning in its priorities and guided by clear principles.

Washington's first priority should be to maintain global openness. Rather than attempting to spread liberal economic and political values, that is, the United States should focus on a more modest goal: ensuring that all countries are free to make independent political, economic, and military decisions. Geopolitically, a commitment to openness means that Washington will have to prevent a hegemonic adversary or bloc from controlling Asia, Europe, or both through a closed sphere of influence.

If a competitor came to dominate part or all of Eurasia in a manner that displaced the United States, it would pose a direct threat to U.S. prosperity and national security. The greatest challenge to openness can be found in the Indo-Pacific, where China will increasingly assume regional leadership. In some respects, this is only natural for a country that has grown in power so much over the last four decades. But accepting Beijing as a regional leader is not the same as accepting a closed Chinese sphere of influence. China, for instance, has already become the dominant trading and development partner for many nations in Southeast Asia; if it were to use the artificial island bases it has built to block freedom of navigation in the South China Sea or attempt to coerce its partners using the leverage it has acquired through its infrastructure investments, a closed sphere would be in the offing. To keep the Indo-Pacific region open, the United States should maintain its military presence in East Asia and credibly commit to defending its treaty allies in the region, including Japan, the Philippines, and South Korea. It must also support regional states' political autonomy by recommitting itself to regional diplomacy and

working with multilateral coalitions to ensure that any rules that Beijing seeks to set are transparent and noncoercive.

In Europe, the threat is less severe. Russia is in no position to dominate Europe, nor can it engage in sustained regional peer competition with the United States. Yet Moscow still has formidable military capabilities—particularly its nuclear arsenal—and the country's physical proximity to eastern Europe allows it to exert considerable influence there. It is deeply opposed to the U.S.-led security order in Europe and has demonstrated a high tolerance for risk in pursuit of its core interests. Ultimately, however, Russia lacks the ability to craft a closed sphere of influence. U.S. interests therefore lie in deterring Russia's attempts to play spoiler—something Washington has failed to do since 2016, thanks to the Trump administration's pathological warmth toward Moscow and tense relations with the United States' European allies.

Washington should also prioritize openness in the global commons, particularly the sea and space. Maritime openness, or the ability of ships to pass unrestricted through international waters, is essential to global trade and commerce and thus U.S. national interests. Although China has not blocked commercial shipping near its shores (and is unlikely to do so in the future), it has regularly violated international law by obstructing military freedom of navigation in the South China Sea—something that the United States should refuse to accept. In space, which has become part of the commons thanks to the profusion of satellite technology, maintaining openness requires spacecraft to be allowed to operate unhindered. In 2007, for example, China destroyed one of its own satellites as part of an antisatellite missile test, polluting space with thousands of pieces of debris that continue to threaten commercial, civilian, and military spacecraft. This is precisely the sort of activity that an openness-based strategy should seek to prevent. In newer domains, such as cyberspace, however, there are no existing legal or normative edifices comparable to those governing the sea and space, and the United States cannot expect others to forge global arrangements that reflect its unilateral preferences. Managing threats in these areas will be more a matter of deterrence than multilateral agreement.

Promoting openness will require a newfound emphasis on political independence as a foundation of U.S. strategy and as an organizing principle of international politics. Political independence is one of the foundational premises of the UN Charter, and most states, even authoritarian ones, claim to value it. Yet revisionist states, such as China and Russia, shroud their grievances in the rhetoric of sovereignty while freely violating the sovereignty of others. In order to credibly promote political independence, the United States will have to forgo efforts at regime change, such as those in 2003 in Iraq and 2011 in Libya, and stop aggressively promoting democracy overseas, as the Trump administration is currently attempting to do with its Iran policy. It should continue to support democracy, but it should do so by providing assistance to democracies when they seek it and working with partners to help them preserve their sovereignty against encroachments by rival powers. This means accepting the lamentable fact that, for now, authoritarianism will reign in Beijing, Moscow, and elsewhere.

Even as U.S. relations with China and Russia become more adversarial, however, it would be a mistake to allow them to become completely zero-sum. The world is not entering a new Cold War pitting liberal democracies against authoritarian regimes: China and Russia are revisionist participants within the existing international order, not enemies standing outside of it. They share interests with the United States on international challenges such as terrorism, disease, and climate change, and Washington must work hard to capitalize on these opportunities for great-power cooperation. The UN, and the UN Security Council in particular, has a major role to play in enabling such collaboration. Beijing and Moscow are both highly invested in the council's legitimacy, and although it will be paralyzed on the most divisive geopolitical questions, it can serve as a useful coordinating mechanism on issues where great-power interests overlap, especially if it is reformed to include states such as Germany, India, and Japan.

Trade offers another potentially promising avenue for cooperation. China, Russia, and the United States are all members of the WTO. Their membership implies at least notional agreement that principles such as reciprocity and nondiscrimination should govern the international economic order. But currently, China subsidizes domestic industries and promotes state-owned enterprises in violation of those principles. Such policies are

antithetical to the operation of an open system. Washington should not expect China to fully reform its economy, but neither should it allow the country to enjoy the benefits of trade while shielding Chinese companies from international competition. Changes to the WTO—for instance, reforming the appellate bodies that regulate disputes among member states—may help the trade regime function more efficiently in areas where significant agreement exists. But given its reliance on consensus, the WTO is unlikely to force Beijing's hand. The United States and its allies should thus be prepared to exert multilateral pressure on China and other rule breakers, including through new agreements that disincentivize unfair trade policies.

## THE FUTURE ORDER

In this new environment, it no longer makes sense for the United States to promote the liberal universalism of the post–Cold War international order.

The United States need not dominate every corner of the globe in order to pursue its interests, and its strategy should recognize that illiberal great powers will have some influence over world affairs, especially in their own backyards. Washington must avoid convincing rising powers such as China that their only chance at improving their international position is through catastrophic war. Openness, not dominance, should be the goal.

In addition to departing from liberal universalism, an openness-based strategy would differ from contemporary efforts to transform the liberal international order into a coalition of democratic states united in their opposition to rising authoritarianism. The liberal international relations scholar Michael Mandelbaum has argued that the United States and its democratic allies should adopt a “triple containment” strategy toward its three illiberal rivals, China, Iran, and Russia; the conservative analysts Derek Scissors and Daniel Blumenthal, meanwhile, have exhorted Washington to “begin cutting some of its economic ties with China” in a move toward decoupling. Ostensibly, such efforts aim to prevent the formation of authoritarian spheres of influence; in fact, they would help bring those spheres about. Instead of attempting to prevent its illiberal rivals from gaining any formalized influence whatsoever, Washington should press them to accept the principles of openness and independence as a condition of continuing to operate within the existing

institutions of the old liberal order—and of creating new ones. Preserving the older institutions, including through reforms to the Security Council and the WTO that enhance those institutions' international legitimacy, will be essential to preserving a venue for great-power cooperation.

Accepting that U.S. rivals will have some influence is not the same as ceding the field to them. To defend against traditional forms of aggression, the United States must retain the military strength to deter China from making a violent bid for dominance in Asia and Russia from forcibly upending the status quo in Europe.

Washington should prepare to deter nonmilitary aggression, too, especially in new domains where international laws are weak or nonexistent, such as AI, biotechnology, and cyberspace. It is unlikely that the UN or other global institutions will be able to achieve sufficient consensus to pass new and binding compacts to regulate these domains. In the absence of international law, the actions of the United States and its allies will define the boundaries of acceptable state behavior. Washington will have to work with like-minded states to establish norms that its rivals will not necessarily support, such as Internet governance that relies on public-private cooperation rather than granting all authority to the state. But by generating a partial international consensus, the United States can make it more difficult for antithetical norms to crystallize.

The end of its uncontested primacy will also require the United States to modernize its alliances and adopt a pluralistic approach to international partnerships. At present, U.S. alliances are primarily designed to defend against interstate military conflict. Washington should begin focusing on the full range of strategic contributions allies can make to collective defense, including in areas such as technological expertise, intelligence sharing, resilience planning, and economic statecraft. The United States can also develop transient but expedient partnerships with democratic and nondemocratic states alike, particularly those that fear dominance by assertive regional powers.

The unipolar moment that followed the collapse of the Soviet Union granted the United States tremendous freedom of action and demanded few concessions. For those who harbor nostalgia for post–Cold War U.S. dominance, it is tempting to try to regain it. Unfortunately, the world of the twenty-first century will not afford such luxuries. The United

States must accept that although its absolute power remains formidable, its relative power is reduced: it cannot unilaterally dictate outcomes to the world.

This recognition need not—and, indeed, must not—entail the acceptance of closed spheres of influence, emerging either by design or by default. Rather than seeking to transform the world along liberal lines, the United States should prioritize openness and political independence. Such a strategy will preserve essential elements of the liberal international order while preparing for the twenty-first century, in which limited cooperation will persist alongside newly intensified rivalry and conflict.

Source : <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/2019-04-16/open-world?fbclid=IwAR0TGPhkDltgTVmotY9VtYph66WWE0FdCnbmNd7Ce4vKro6G-JJ61QasfXU>



## [This Time Is Different – Why U.S. Foreign Policy Will Never Recover By Daniel W. Drezner](#)

It is a truth universally acknowledged that a foreign policy community in possession of great power must be in want of peace of mind. Climate change, the Middle East, terrorism, trade, nonproliferation—there is never a shortage of issues and areas for those who work in international relations to fret about. If you were to flip through the back issues of *Foreign Affairs*, you would find very few essays proclaiming that policymakers had permanently sorted out a problem. Even after the Cold War ended peacefully, these pages were full of heated debate about civilizations clashing.

It is therefore all too easy to dismiss the current angst over U.S. President Donald Trump as the latest hymn from the Church of Perpetual Worry. This is hardly the first time observers have questioned the viability of a U.S.-led global order. The peril to the West was never greater than when the Soviet Union launched Sputnik—until U.S. President Richard Nixon ended the Bretton Woods system. The oil shocks of the 1970s posed a grave threat to the liberal international order—but then came the explosion of the U.S. budget and trade deficits in the 1980s. The perpetrators of the 9/11 attacks seemed like an existential threat to the system—until the 2008 financial crisis. Now there is Trump. It is worth asking, then, whether the current fretting is anything new. For decades, the sky has refused to fall.

But this time really is different. Just when many of the sources of American power are ebbing, many of the guardrails that have kept U.S. foreign policy on track have been worn down. It is tempting to pin this degradation on Trump and his retrograde foreign policy views, but the erosion predated him by a good long while. Shifts in the way Americans debate and conduct foreign policy will make it much more difficult to right the ship in the near future. Foreign policy discourse was the last preserve of bipartisanship, but political polarization has irradiated that marketplace of ideas. Although future presidents will try to restore the classical version of U.S. foreign policy, in all likelihood, it cannot be revived.

This time really is different.

The American foundations undergirding the liberal international order are in grave danger, and it is no longer possible to take the pillars of that order for granted. Think of the current moment as a game of Jenga in which multiple pieces have been removed but the tower still stands. As a result, some observers have concluded that the structure remains sturdy. But in fact, it is lacking many important parts and, on closer inspection, is teetering ever so slightly. Like a Jenga tower, the order will continue to stand upright—right until the moment it collapses. Every effort should be made to preserve the liberal international order, but it is also time to start thinking about what might come after its end.

The gravity of the problem is dawning on some members of the foreign policy community. Progressives are debating among themselves whether and how they should promote liberal values abroad if they should return to power. Conservatives are agonizing over whether the populist moment represents a permanent shift in the way they should think about U.S. foreign policy. Neither camp is really grappling with the end of equilibrium, however. The question is not what U.S. foreign policy can do after Trump. The question is whether there is any viable grand strategy that can endure past an election cycle.

## THE GOOD OLD DAYS

In foreign policy, failures garner more attention than successes. During the Cold War, the “loss of China,” the rise of the Berlin Wall, the Vietnam War, the energy crisis, and the Iran hostage crisis all overshadowed the persistently effective grand strategy of containment. Only once the Soviet Union broke up peacefully was the United States’ Cold War foreign policy viewed as an overarching success. Since then, the wars in Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya, and Syria, along with the 2008 financial crisis and the rise of populism, have dominated the discussion. It is all too easy to conclude that the United States’ recent foreign policy has been an unmitigated disaster.

At the same time that all these negative developments were taking place, however, underlying trends were moving in a more U.S.-friendly direction. The number of interstate wars and civil wars was falling dramatically, as was every other metric of international violence. Democracy was spreading, liberating masses of people from tyranny. Globalization was accelerating, slashing extreme poverty. The United States could take

a great deal of credit for these gains, because the liberal order it nurtured and expanded had laid the foundations for decades of relative peace and prosperity.

Washington made mistakes, of course, such as invading Iraq and forcing countries to remove restrictions on the flow of capital across their borders. As misguided as these errors were, and as much as they alienated allies in the moment, they did not permanently weaken the United States' position in the world. U.S. soft power suffered in the short term but recovered quickly under the Obama administration. The United States still managed to attract allies, and in the case of the 2011 intervention in Libya, it was NATO allies begging Washington to use force, not vice versa. Today, the United States has more treaty allies than any other country in the world—more, in fact, than any country ever.

The United States was able to weather the occasional misstep in large part because its dominance rested on such sturdy foundations. Its geographic blessings are ample: bountiful natural resources, two large oceans to the east and the west, and two valued partners to the north and the south. The country has been so powerful for so long that many of its capabilities seem to be fundamental constants of the universe rather than happenstance. The United States has had the most powerful military in the world since 1945, and its economy, as measured by purchasing power parity, became the biggest around 1870. Few people writing today about international affairs can remember a time when the United States was not the richest and most powerful country.

Long-term hegemony only further embedded the United States' advantage. In constructing the liberal international order, Washington created an array of multilateral institutions, from the UN Security Council to the World Bank, that privileged it and key allies. Having global rules of the game benefits everyone, but the content of those rules benefited the United States in particular. The Internet began as an outgrowth of a U.S. Department of Defense initiative, providing to the United States an outside role in its governance. American higher education attracts the best of the best from across the world, as do Silicon Valley and Hollywood, adding billions of dollars to the U.S. economy. An immigrant culture has constantly replenished the country's demographic strength, helping the United States avoid the aging problems that plague parts of Europe and the Pacific Rim.

The United States has also benefited greatly from its financial dominance. The U.S. dollar replaced the British pound sterling as the world's reserve currency 75 years ago, giving the United States the deepest and most liquid capital markets on the globe and enhancing the reach and efficacy of its economic statecraft. In recent decades, Washington's financial might has only grown. Even though the 2008 financial crisis began in the American housing market, the end result was that the United States became more, rather than less, central to global capital markets. U.S. capital markets proved to be deeper, more liquid, and better regulated than anyone else's. And even though many economists once lost sleep over the country's growing budget deficits, that has turned out to be a non-crisis. Many now argue that the U.S. economy has a higher tolerance for public debt than previously thought.

Diplomatically, all these endowments ensured that regardless of the issue at hand, the United States was always viewed as a reliable leader. Its dense and enduring network of alliances and partnerships signaled that the commitments Washington made were seen as credible. American hegemony bred resentment in some parts of the globe, but even great-power rivals trusted what the United States said in international negotiations.

At the same time as the international system cemented the United States' structural power, the country's domestic politics helped preserve a stable foreign policy. A key dynamic was the push and pull between different schools of thought. An equilibrium was maintained—between those who wanted the country to adopt a more interventionist posture and those who wanted to husband national power, between those who preferred multilateral approaches and those who preferred unilateral ones. When one camp overreached, others would seize on the mistake to call for a course correction. Advocates of restraint invoked the excesses of Iraq to push for retrenchment. Supporters of intervention pointed to the implosion of Syria to argue for a more robust posture.

Thanks to the separation of powers within the U.S. government, no one foreign policy camp could accrue too much influence. When the Nixon White House pursued a strictly realpolitik approach toward the Soviet Union, Congress forced human rights concerns onto the agenda. When the Obama administration was leery of sanctioning Iran's central bank, congressional hawks forced it to take more aggressive action. Time and time again,

U.S. foreign policy reverted to the mean. Overreaching was eventually followed by restraint. Buck-passing led to leading. The results of these crosscutting pressures were far from perfect, but they ensured that U.S. foreign policy did not deviate too far from the status quo. Past commitments remained credible into the future.

For decades, these dynamics, global and domestic, kept crises from becoming cataclysmic. U.S. foreign policy kept swinging back into equilibrium. So what has changed? Today, there is no more equilibrium, and the structural pillars of American power are starting to buckle.

### THE NEW NORMAL

Despite the remarkable consistency of U.S. foreign policy, behind the scenes, some elements of American power were starting to decline. As measured by purchasing power parity, the United States stopped being the largest economy in the world a few years ago. Its command of the global commons has weakened as China's and Russia's asymmetric capabilities have improved. The accumulation of "forever wars" and low-intensity conflicts has taxed the United States' armed forces.

Outward consistency also masked the dysfunction that was afflicting the domestic checks on U.S. foreign policy. For starters, public opinion has ceased to act as a real constraint on decision-makers. Paradoxically, the very things that have ensured U.S. national security—geographic isolation and overwhelming power—have also led most Americans to not think about foreign policy, and rationally so. The trend began with the switch to an all-volunteer military, in 1973, which allowed most of the public to stop caring about vital questions of war and peace. The apathy has only grown since the end of the Cold War, and today, poll after poll reveals that Americans rarely, if ever, base their vote on foreign policy considerations.

The marketplace of ideas has broken down, too. The barriers to entry for harebrained foreign policy schemes have fallen away as Americans' trust in experts has eroded. Today, the United States is in the midst of a debate about whether a wall along its southern border should be made of concrete, have see-through slats, or be solar-powered. The ability of experts to kill bad ideas isn't what it used to be. The cognoscenti

might believe that their informed opinions can steady the hands of successive administrations, but they are operating in hostile territory.

To be fair, the hostility to foreign policy experts is not without cause. The interventions in Afghanistan, Iraq, and Libya were massive screwups. Despite what the experts predicted, globalization has not transformed China into a Jeffersonian democracy. The supposedly infallible advice enshrined in the Washington consensus ended up triggering multiple financial crises. Economists and foreign affairs advisers advocated austerity, despite the pain it caused the poor and the middle class, and consistently cried wolf about an increase in interest rates that has yet to come. No wonder both Barack Obama and Trump have taken such pleasure in bashing the Washington establishment.

Institutional checks on the president's foreign policy prerogatives have also deteriorated—primarily because the other branches of government have voluntarily surrendered them. The passage of the Smoot-Hawley Tariff Act of 1930, which exacerbated the Great Depression, showed that Congress could not responsibly execute its constitutional responsibilities on trade. With the 1934 Reciprocal Trade Agreements Act, it delegated many of those powers to the president, marking the beginning of a sustained decline in congressional oversight. More recently, political polarization has rendered Congress a dysfunctional, petulant mess, encouraging successive administrations to enhance the powers of the executive branch. Nor has the judicial branch acted as much of an impediment. The Supreme Court has persistently deferred to the president on matters of national security, as it did in 2018 when it ruled in favor of the Trump administration's travel ban.

Foreign policy analysts largely celebrated this concentration of power in the executive branch, and prior to Trump, their logic seemed solid. They pointed to the public's ignorance of and Congress' lack of interest in international relations. As political gridlock and polarization took hold, elected Democrats and Republicans viewed foreign policy as merely a plaything for the next election. And so most foreign policy elites viewed the president as the last adult in the room.

What they failed to plan for was the election of a president who displays the emotional and intellectual maturity of a toddler. As a candidate, Trump gloried in beating up on

foreign policy experts, asserting that he could get better results by relying on his gut. As president, he has governed mostly by tantrum. He has insulted and bullied U.S. allies. He has launched trade wars that have accomplished little beyond hurting the U.S. economy. He has said that he trusts Russian President Vladimir Putin more than his own intelligence briefers. His administration has withdrawn from an array of multilateral agreements and badmouthed the institutions that remain. The repeated attacks on the EU and NATO represent a bigger strategic mistake than the invasion of Iraq. In multiple instances, his handpicked foreign policy advisers have attempted to lock in decisions before the president can sabotage them with an impulsive tweet. Even when his administration has had the germ of a valid idea, Trump has executed the resulting policy shifts in the most ham-handed manner imaginable.

Most of these foreign policy moves have been controversial, counterproductive, and perfectly legal. The same steps that empowered the president to create foreign policy have permitted Trump to destroy what his predecessors spent decades preserving. The other branches of government endowed the White House with the foreign policy equivalent of a Ferrari; the current occupant has acted like a child playing with a toy car, convinced that he is operating in a land of make-believe.

After Trump, a new president will no doubt try to restore sanity to U.S. foreign policy. Surely, he or she will reverse the travel ban, halt the hostile rhetoric toward long-standing allies, and end the attacks on the world trading system. These patches will miss the deeper problem, however. Political polarization has eroded the notion that presidents need to govern from the center. Trump has eviscerated that idea. The odds are decent that a left-wing populist will replace the current president, and then an archconservative will replace that president. The weak constraints on the executive branch will only make things worse. Congress has evinced little interest in playing a constructive role when it comes to foreign policy. The public is still checked out on world politics. The combination of worn-down guardrails and presidents emerging from the ends of the political spectrum may well whipsaw U.S. foreign policy between “America first” and a new Second International. The very concept of a consistent, durable grand strategy will not be sustainable.



The combination of worn-down guardrails and presidents emerging from the ends of the political spectrum may well whipsaw U.S. foreign policy between “America first” and a new Second International.

In that event, only the credulous will consider U.S. commitments credible. Alliances will fray, and other countries will find it easier to flout global norms. All the while, the scars of the Trump administration will linger. The vagaries of the current administration have already forced a mass exodus of senior diplomats from the State Department. That human capital will be difficult to replace. For the past two years, the number of international students who have enrolled in U.S. university degree programs has fallen as nativism has grown louder. It will take a while to convince foreigners that this was a temporary spasm. After the Trump administration withdrew from the Iran nuclear deal, it forced SWIFT, the private-sector network that facilitates international financial transactions, to comply with unilateral U.S. sanctions against Iran, spurring China, France, Germany, Russia, and the United Kingdom to create an alternative payment system. That means little right now, but in the long run, both U.S. allies and U.S. rivals will learn to avoid relying on the dollar.

Perhaps most important, the Trump administration has unilaterally surrendered the set of ideals that guided U.S. policymakers for decades. It is entirely proper to debate how much the United States should prioritize the promotion of human rights, democracy, and the rule of law across the world. What should be beyond debate, however, is that it is worthwhile to promote those values overseas and enshrine them at home. Trump’s ugly rhetoric makes a mockery of those values. Although a future president might sound better on these issues, both allies and rivals will remember the current moment. The seeds of doubt have been planted, and they will one day sprout.

The factors that give the United States an advantage in the international system—deep capital markets, liberal ideas, world-class higher education—have winner-take-all dynamics. Other actors will be reluctant to switch away from the dollar, Wall Street, democracy, and the Ivy League. These sectors can withstand a few hits. Excessive use of financial statecraft, alliances with overseas populists, or prolonged bouts of anti-immigrant hysteria, however, will force even close allies to start thinking about

alternatives. The American advantage in these areas will go bankrupt much like Mike Campbell in *The Sun Also Rises* did: “gradually and then suddenly.” Right now, the United States’ Jenga tower is still standing. Remove a few more blocks, however, and the wobbling will become noticeable to the unaided eye.

What would collapse look like? The United States would remain a great power, of course, but it would be an ordinary and less rich one. On an increasing number of issues, U.S. preferences would carry minimal weight, as China and Europe coordinated on a different set of rules. Persistent domestic political polarization would encourage Middle Eastern allies, such as Israel and Saudi Arabia, to line up with Republicans and European allies, such as Germany and the United Kingdom, to back Democrats. The continued absence of any coherent grand strategy would leave Latin America vulnerable to a new Great Game as other great powers vied for influence there. Demographic pressures would tax the United States, and the productivity slowdown would make those pressures even worse. Trade blocs would sap global economic growth; reduced interdependence would increase the likelihood of a great-power war. Climate change would be mitigated nationally rather than internationally, leaving almost everyone worse off.

#### WHAT, ME WORRY?

It would be delightful if, ten years from now, critics mocked this essay’s misplaced doom and gloom. The state of U.S. foreign policy seemed dire a decade ago, during the depths of the financial crisis and the war in Iraq. That turned out to be more of a blip than a trend. It remains quite possible now that Trump’s successor can repair the damage he has wreaked. And it is worth remembering that for all the flaws in the U.S. foreign policy machine, other great powers are hardly omnipotent. China’s and Russia’s foreign policy successes have been accompanied by blowback, from pushback against infrastructure projects in Asia to a hostile Ukraine, that will make it harder for those great powers to achieve their revisionist aims.

The trouble with “after Trump” narratives, however, is that the 45th president is as much a symptom of the ills plaguing U.S. foreign policy as he is a cause. Yes, Trump has made things much, much worse. But he also inherited a system stripped of the formal and informal checks on presidential power. That’s why the next president will need to do much

more than superficial repairs. He or she will need to take the politically inconvenient step of encouraging greater congressional participation in foreign policy, even if the opposing party is in charge. Not every foreign policy initiative needs to be run through the Defense Department. The next president could use the bully pulpit to encourage and embrace more public debate about the United States' role in the world. Restoring the norm of valuing expertise, while still paying tribute to the wisdom of crowds, would not hurt either. Nor would respecting democracy at home while promoting the rule of law abroad.

All these steps will make the political life of the next president more difficult. In most Foreign Affairs articles, this is the moment when the writer calls for a leader to exercise the necessary political will to do the right thing. That exhortation always sounded implausible, but now it sounds laughable. One hopes that the Church of Perpetual Worry does not turn into an apocalyptic cult. This time, however, the sky may really be falling.

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## [Syria in 2019 is Not Iraq in 2003 By Sam Sweeney](#)

Proponents and opponents alike of a U.S. presence in Syria would do well to remember this fact. Over the last few months, the status of America's presence in Syria has been a roller coaster of epic proportions. President Donald Trump's announcement in late December that the United States would withdraw all troops from the country in the shortest time possible came as a shock to the military, to many in the administration itself, and most especially to those in northern Syria where U.S. troops are operating. Later it was announced that the United States would keep four hundred service members in the country, which will shift the burden to allies but preserve the precarious balance that currently exists in the country's north. The details remain unclear and may consist of an even slower drawdown. President Trump had campaigned on getting the United States out of Syria after the defeat of the Islamic State, but no one expected the announcement to come so soon and so suddenly. The announced withdrawal prompted criticism from the president's friends and foes alike, but also was welcomed in some corners. Those supportive of the president's move to withdraw pointed out, rightfully so, that many of those advocating for a U.S. presence in Syria were the same figures who led us to war in Iraq. They were wrong then, and are wrong now, the argument goes. But is the situation of Syria in 2019 comparable to that of Iraq in 2003?

Reading the predictions and analysis about the impending U.S. invasion of Iraq in 2002 and 2003 is like reading a fantasy novel. Most of those tasked with informing the public about the war were spectacularly wrong about what would happen, and it is surprising more careers did not end as a result. In fact, the Washington Post editorial board wrote in February 2003: "After Secretary of State Colin L. Powell's presentation to the United Nations Security Council yesterday, it is hard to imagine how anyone could doubt that Iraq possesses weapons of mass destruction." (There weren't any weapons of mass destruction left in Iraq.) The whole debate leading up to the war could be a seminar in epistemology: how do we know what is true and what isn't, and with what certainty?

Many of the same “experts” who got us into Iraq then advocated for an aggressive U.S. stance against dictatorial Arab regimes in 2011, and they were joined by a wider range of voices on the Left and Right who felt that the moment for change in the Arab world had finally come as protestors marched in the streets of Aleppo, Cairo, Benghazi, and elsewhere.

#### Do You Know What Happened Today In History?

Many argued that the Arab Spring of 2011 was fundamentally different from the 2003 invasion of Iraq, because in 2003 the United States was toppling a dictatorship unilaterally (despite the allied support), while in 2011 the people themselves were rising up to oppose their own dictators. While listening to the hopeful rhetoric about democracy and peace during the Arab protests in 2011, however, it is easy to forget that much of the same rhetoric had existed among Iraqi exiles leading up to the U.S. invasion of 2003. In both cases, however, rhetoric failed to match reality. There was no political plan or movement to rally around, and like Iraq in 2003, unity in places like Libya and Syria in 2011 came from a negative, rather than a positive. Everyone was against Muammar el-Qaddafi or Bashar al-Assad—what came next was undefined.

It is understandable, then, that President Trump is hesitant to listen to the same “experts” and policymakers that drove us to war in Iraq, and are seemingly pushing us to an unnecessary war with Iran, when they say we must remain in Syria. They never learned their lesson from Iraq, and only a few ever came clean about their responsibility for the terrible mistake of the 2003 invasion. Rep. Walter Jones, recently deceased, sought atonement for his initial support of the war by writing letters to the families of those killed in Afghanistan and Iraq. His was a lonely path; most experts kept advocating for war elsewhere, and they predicted disaster wherever the United States was not busy overthrowing a government.

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Unfortunately, our public debate over a U.S. presence in the Middle East is dominated by those who want all or nothing: U.S. troops in every country of the region all the time, and

those who want to withdraw from everywhere immediately. This ignores the fact that not all interventions are created equal, and that the situation in northern Syria is fundamentally different from Iraq.

In northern Syria, our ally to defeat the Islamic State has been the Syrian Democratic Forces, a Kurdish-led amalgamation of the myriad religions and ethnicities found in the area. United States and allied support for the Syrian Democratic Forces allowed them to remove the extremist group from its former strongholds in places like Raqqa and Manbij, and with our help its members eliminated the last remaining piece of territory held by the terror group on March 23.

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President Trump rightfully sees that the United States had no role to play in Syria from the beginning. Under President Barack Obama, the U.S. tepidly funded opposition groups with arms, but never fully committed to removing Assad from power. He was criticized for not going all in for the opposition, but the opposition had no coherent plan to govern the country. Protestors called for freedom and democracy, but seemed to confuse these concepts with anarchy, as they sought to bring down every functioning aspect of the Syrian state, along with its leader. Areas where the opposition did gain control eventually became safe havens for extremists, as there was no functioning security apparatus that could keep the wolves at bay. As it turns out, maintaining security and stability in Syria is hard work, as in Iraq.

Back to Iraq: in the chaos following the 2003 U.S. invasion, most Iraqis would have said that America was an occupying force in their country. Iraqis I talk to refuse to believe that America was sincere in its intention to institute democracy in the country, because they refuse to believe that the most powerful country on earth did not know what it would create when it removed Saddam Hussein from power. America knew that chaos would ensue, and therefore some other intention lay at the heart of America's invasion. Stealing oil and protecting Israel are the most common explanations given, but think of the craziest

conspiracy theory possible and some Iraqi has used it to explain the U.S. invasion of their country.

But is the U.S. presence in Syria also an occupation? Not if you ask those living in areas where U.S. troops operate. Locals throughout northern Syria see America as a guarantor of stability and a bulwark against aggression by Turkey or the Syrian regime, though most are realistic about the fact that America is looking after its own interests and will someday leave. Most importantly, though, they see us as a partner in the fight against the Islamic State, whose presence continues under the surface. Of course, there are differing opinions, but after two trips to the area over the last few months, I am confident that America is not seen as an occupying force by the vast majority of people. So why the difference from Iraq? Because Syria 2019 is not Iraq 2003. It is unfortunate that those who got Iraq so wrong just happen to be right about Syria; it discredits the case for staying.

Unlike the Syrian opposition or U.S. officials in Iraq post-2003, the Syrian Democratic Forces understand that freedom is predicated on stability. Its members have worked hard to get local buy-in to their political project, known as the Autonomous Administration, which reflects the unique nature of the area of Syria they inhabit. Historically, the areas north and east of the Euphrates River, known as al-Jazira, had closer ties to northern Iraq and southern Turkey than they did to the rest of Syria. While most of Syria is overwhelmingly populated by Arabs, northeastern Syria is a patchwork of ethnicities and religions. Arabs, Kurds, Armenians, Syriacs, Turkmen, Circassians; Muslims, Christians, Yezidis . . . the list goes on and on. The Syrian Democratic Forces has worked with all of these communities to ensure they are partners in the governing process, all the while rejecting the Arab chauvinism that characterizes the Syrian regime. It is working better than many would expect, and it may be the key to preventing a resurgence of the Islamic State in the area. But it will not last without outside support, given Turkish and Syrian regime threats to invade should the United States withdraw.



## Sri Lankan tragedy calls for global action By Talat Masood

The eight devastating bomb blasts that targeted three churches and several posh hotels in Sri Lanka killing nearly 300 people and leaving hundreds injured have shaken the conscience of the civilised world. Simultaneously, it has once again reminded us of the horrible spectre of 9/11 and the active presence of Islamic State, al Qaeda and several other terrorist outfits. The intensity, sophistication and simultaneity of the Sri Lankan attacks were a demonstration of how global terrorist organisations are trying to outmanoeuvre the state security and intelligence organisations. More troubling aspect is the supposed facilitation of local persons for such a major terrorist plan that could not be executed without a significant support base.

Sri Lankan security agencies have so far not been able to confirm the identity of the perpetrators of crime. They maintain the terrorists were local with possible affiliation with overseas militant organisations and religious extremist factions.

There is also a perception that it came in retaliation for the terrorist attack on the mosques in New Zealand. Whatever the evil motives, the fact that internal terrorist organisations in collaboration with foreign elements and affiliates of different faiths and denominations remain active is alarming. Fingers are also being pointed towards the remnants of Tamil Tigers as there are many discontented elements that either independently or in collaboration with Islamic State or other groups could also be involved. According to the Sri Lankan government, a local religious group, National Thowheed Jamaath, is behind the attacks. Although many experts believe that they are too weak and could not have launched a major operation, if at all, without the full backing of international terrorist networks. It is possible that the Sri Lankan government is still unsure and may have been groping in the dark.

Militant organisations benefit from finding space in weak states to carry out their nefarious designs. But several sophisticated militant groups have defied conventional wisdom by striking in developed nations that have sophisticated security and intelligence services. Militant organisations have also taken advantage of globalisation by expanding their network across countries. This is the negative face of globalisation.

Apart from severe agony suffered by the huge loss of human lives, the terrorist attacks would be a major setback, albeit temporary, to Sri Lanka's flourishing tourist industry, prospective investment and the economy as a whole. Terrorists aim as much to hurt the economy as they relish death and destruction.

Considering the nature of terrorism and its global reach, it becomes mandatory on every nation to fully cooperate with each other on intelligence and other aspects that would shrink the operating space of militant groups. Building protective walls, fencing and use of satellites and other technological means are necessary but not sufficient for combating terrorism. Cooperation among nations, a satisfied polity and economic development do contribute toward combating terrorism.

Several countries continue to use militant proxies to harm their regional or global opponents. They promote and patronise these groups. Pakistan has been a victim of it and so has been Sri Lanka. For several decades India in a clandestine way or openly has sided with Tamil insurgents. During the Tamil insurgency, RAW provided military training and indoctrination to these insurgents. It is only when Indian leadership realised that the policy would backfire on its own unity that they retracted.

The recent unfortunate events in Sri Lanka remind us of our national tragedy when terrorists committed the most horrendous attack on innocent students and teaching staff at the Army Public School in Peshawar. It shook Pakistan to its core and prompted it to take the challenge of terrorism more seriously. It also resulted in the formulation of the National Action Plan. Recent terrorist attacks on the Hazara community and security forces in Balochistan and upsurge in the incidents in North Waziristan should also be a matter of serious concern. Our government would be well advised to pay greater attention to security and take the local population along in fighting this menace.

According to international observers, Pakistan ranks among the seven most dangerous countries for Christians. This is a huge stigma and the Pakistani leadership will have to make sustained efforts in close cooperation with religious and civil society leaders to overcome this weakness. Our record in dealing with other religious minorities, like Hindus, raises similar concerns. Cases of forced conversions have been on the rise. We need to develop a culture that respects religious freedom.

Prime Minister Imran Khan's call to Iran for closely cooperating on security and other allied border problems of smuggling and drug trafficking is a wise step. Its faithful implementation would be the key to success. After all India's super-spy Kulbhushan Jadhav, until caught by Pakistani security forces, was operating from the Iranian side of the border. Iran would be justifiably expecting of Pakistan to implement, in letter and spirit, its part of responsibilities. Moreover, close cooperation with Iran and distancing itself from the Arab-Iran rivalry would undoubtedly strengthen national unity and increase our leverage in the Muslim world. This, however, in no way should be an impediment to our exemplary relationship with Saudi Arabia. All these measures — if implemented in good faith — should greatly contribute toward furthering peace and development in the region. Greater harmony among Muslim countries should reduce space for terrorist groups that exploit religion or sectarian differences to advance their nefarious designs. At the global level, promoting religious harmony should be the essence of the policies of major powers. Unfortunately, the global trend is just the opposite. There is a wave of acute narrow nationalism and emergence of leaders like President Trump and of certain East European countries that have sharpened religious differences. These trends need to be curbed but it would only be possible if international situation changes toward a more cooperative and liberal polity.

The Sri Lankan tragedy once again brings to the fore the urgent need for greater cooperation on security issues at the global level. But whether the world is prepared for it is a big question mark.

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## [Political calculations in Sudan | Editorial](#)

General al-Burhan is the commander of the Sudanese ground forces and is believed to enjoy some popularity within the army's lower ranks. Some opposition groups see him as more acceptable because he is considered not to be an Islamist. Yet, he, too, has a murky past.

As an officer in the ground forces, he had served in both South Darfur and South Sudan. In the 2000s, he was also a mid-ranking commander in the notorious Border Guards, a sub-group of the Janjaweed militia.

In recent days, people in Darfur have expressed their outrage at al-Burhan's appointment as head of the military council, claiming that under his command, the Border Guards committed killings and forced displacement.

He also seems to support the Popular Defence Forces (PDF), which was created in 1989 by al-Bashir as a loyal paramilitary organisation with an Islamist ideology which in the 1990s fought in the war in South Sudan.

Over the past few days, a video from a news broadcast has been widely circulated on social media, which shows General al-Burhan addressing the PDF, calling them the "legitimate sons" of the Sudanese army, and saying that he would never accept their dissolution under any circumstances.

Al-Burhan's deputy, General Hemedti, also has a similar background. In the mid-2000s, he was a commander of the Fut-8 battalion of the Border Guards in Darfur, where, in 2007, he led a rebellion against the army, which had failed to pay his men salaries. He eventually made up with Khartoum and in 2013 he was appointed head of the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF), which absorbed former Janjaweed militia. The move was engineered by al-Bashir to punish Janjaweed leader Sheikh Musa Hilal who had started criticising him.

But more recently, not fully trusting Hemedti, al-Bashir began appointing some of his loyalists to the RSF, to ensure the paramilitary force was under tight control. Hemedti was said to have had close ties to Taha al-Hussain, the former director of the president's office, who was dismissed in 2017 and then swiftly appointed as an adviser at the Saudi ministry of foreign affairs after moving to Riyadh.

Since the protests erupted, Hemedti has been careful about his public statements, displaying a great deal of political acumen and opportunism. He distanced himself and his militia from any act of violence against the peaceful protesters and expressed support for the demands of the Sudanese people and respect for human rights.

His appointment as a deputy chair of the transitional council prompted outrage on social media and was widely rejected by people in Darfur, Blue Nile and South Kordofan states, where his militia has been committing crimes against the civilian population.

Hemedti also appears to be involved with the war effort in Yemen. The fact that the two generals in charge are linked by the major roles they have played in the wars in Darfur and Yemen is not coincidental. The UAE and Saudi Arabia have hastened to recognise the military council, while the African Union and the European Union have both rejected it. General Hemedti, in turn, announced that the Sudanese troops would abide by its commitments to the Saudi-led coalition in Yemen.

No doubt, the overthrow of al-Bashir and his close corrupt and brutal clique out of power is a positive development, but what is currently going on is not a full-fledged revolution, like the ones in October 1964 and April 1985. There is yet to be a break with the old regime.

It is true that General al-Burhan has struck a conciliatory tone and seemingly accepted the popular demands for freedom, peace and justice. He also made some promises about moving away from the old regime by uprooting it, fighting corruption and pursuing justice

and accountability. But there are also plenty of doubts about his true intentions and agenda.

There are real concerns that the new transitional military council is just a puppet of the old regime, which was created to buy time and ensure the continuity of the status quo. To date, it is not clear what the fate of figures of the old regime, including al-Bashir, will be and how the military council will deal with the deep state and its militias, security and financial arms.

At the same time, tensions within the regime itself remain. The appointment of Hemedti, a commander of a militia who did not graduate from a Sudanese military academy to such a high position within the state is a shocking precedent and could play a detrimental role in Sudanese politics.

It shows the weakness of the Sudanese army and the collapse of the Sudanese state institutions. This situation could trigger tensions between different groups in the regime and destabilise the state further.

Meanwhile, there are also real fears that the popular opposition could also fragment along generational, ideological, geographical and ethnic lines. A rift between the youth and traditional political forces has started to appear over how to deal with the military council and what political priorities should be pursued.

Such divisions could be exploited by the military council and the old regime to carry out a full-fledged counterrevolution. Many regional powers are not interested in seeing the foundations of democracy being laid in Sudan and are ready to do whatever it takes to undermine any peaceful democratic transition.

Furthermore, the Sudanese people also fear that their country could descend into chaos and total war, if the change does not come soon.

There are many lessons to be learned from the fate of post-independence of Sudan, the October Revolution of 1964, the April Uprising of 1985 and the separation of South Sudan. The popular protest movement has a unique opportunity not to repeat the mistakes of the past, and seek national unity, equal citizenship for all ethnic groups and reconciliation. Only a strong and united popular front could withstand the counter-revolution the Sudanese generals, the deep state and foreign powers would surely launch in order to undermine the revolutionary movement.

Excerpted from: 'The political calculations of Sudan's military regime'.

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## [The Mueller Report Exposes U.S. Election Weaknesses By Paul R. Pillar](#)

"America First" should translate into defending democracy at home before trying to defend it abroad.

It would be a profound mistake to overlook the Mueller report's detailed account of a foreign government's multifaceted efforts to interfere in a U.S. election. Russian efforts extended not only to the already well-known trolling and manipulation of opinion but also to hacking that included attempted intrusions into county election offices and election technology companies, according to special counsel Robert Mueller. Although there is no evidence that the intrusions changed any vote totals, the first lesson about foreign governments and U.S. elections is clear: beware of such governments—and not just Russia—as a possible threat to the independence and integrity of U.S. elections.

Another lesson worth learning involves not what foreign governments do that is threatening but instead the favorable example they set for how the United States could do better—much better—in conducting its own elections. It is easy to find such exemplars among the stable, well-established democracies of, say, Western Europe. But lessons can also be drawn from countries that are less western and where democracy is less well-established. A couple of such countries have been holding elections this month.

One is Israel, which recently elected a new national legislature. Israel's claim to being democratic is grossly vitiated by the denial of political rights to large parts of the population that inhabit territory that Israel rules, whether or not it ever takes the step of formally asserting sovereignty over any of that territory. But for the privileged parts of Israel's population who can exercise the rights of citizenship, Israel really knows how to run an election very well. All citizens are automatically registered to vote upon reaching the age of eighteen. Election day is a national holiday. Special arrangements are made to accommodate those, such as public safety employees, who nevertheless have to work on that day, as well as for people who are confined to hospitals or are inmates in prisons.

Free public transportation is provided to those who have to travel back to their local neighborhood to vote. Enough polling stations are established so that each one serves no more than a few hundred voters.

#### Do You Know What Happened Today In History?

Another example is India, which has begun a multistage national election that will stretch over several weeks. India is strongly committed to ensuring that every one of its nearly nine hundred million eligible voters will have a chance to vote, unimpeded by distance or other hurdles. This requires an enormous effort in which more than eleven million security personnel and other government employees temporarily become election officials.

Indian election rules dictate that no voter should have to travel more than two kilometers to vote. In remote areas, the burden is on the government rather than the voter to bring citizens and polling places together. The Washington Post tells the story of how one team of government-employees-turned-election-workers traveled for hours along mountain roads and trekked further along slippery paths, carrying a portable voting machine, to collect the vote of a single woman in a remote hamlet in the northeastern corner of the country.

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Such commitment to inclusive democracy is the opposite of the impediments that many voters unfortunately encounter in the United States, in the form of long lines, short voting hours, or unjustified challenges to their eligibility to vote. The impediments are partly due to the same inattention to public services that produce crumbling roads and bridges. They also are due to one political party having decided that low voter participation will hurt it less than it hurts the opposition party. The impediments to voting are one reason recent objective assessments of democracy have been giving American democracy mediocre marks. During the last couple of years the Economist Intelligence Unit's annual ranking of countries' adherence to democratic values has assessed the United States to be only a "flawed" democracy rather than a "full" one.

An underlying fragility of India's democracy, despite the strong commitment to voter participation that the current Indian election demonstrates, was exhibited in the 1970s when Prime Minister Indira Gandhi declared a state of emergency, imposed martial law and threw opposition politicians into jail. In an apocryphal remark, U.S. Ambassador Daniel Patrick Moynihan is said to have joked to President Gerald Ford, "Look at the bright side, Mr. President: during your presidency the United States became the world's largest democracy." Not apocryphal was Moynihan's more serious comment: "When India ceased to be a democracy, our actual interest there just plummeted. I mean, what does it export but communicable disease?"

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Although the United States has much more than that to export, its adherence to liberal democratic values—of which the right to vote is one of the most important—has traditionally been a major shaper of its image and influence overseas. It behooves the United States to spend more effort and attention on repairing democracy in the homeland than it has done in recent years—and more than any effort to impose democracy in someone else's country.

Source : <https://nationalinterest.org/blog/paul-pillar/mueller-report-exposes-us-election-weaknesses-54052?fbclid=IwAR34ENeEz7ghcspnBg4Zxs187DXnrDIk1nDwbZsTOEfcbumh0x-sz50jcTk>