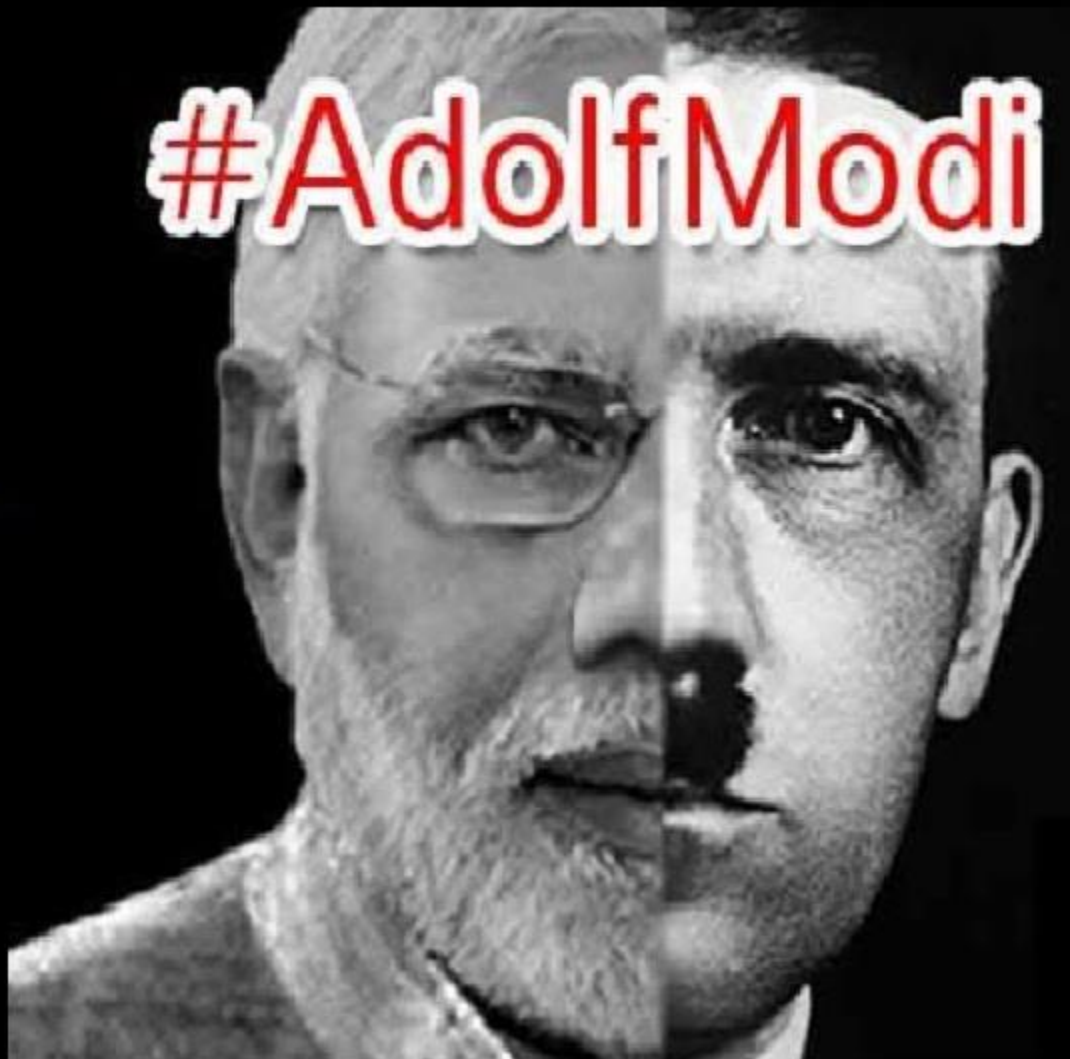


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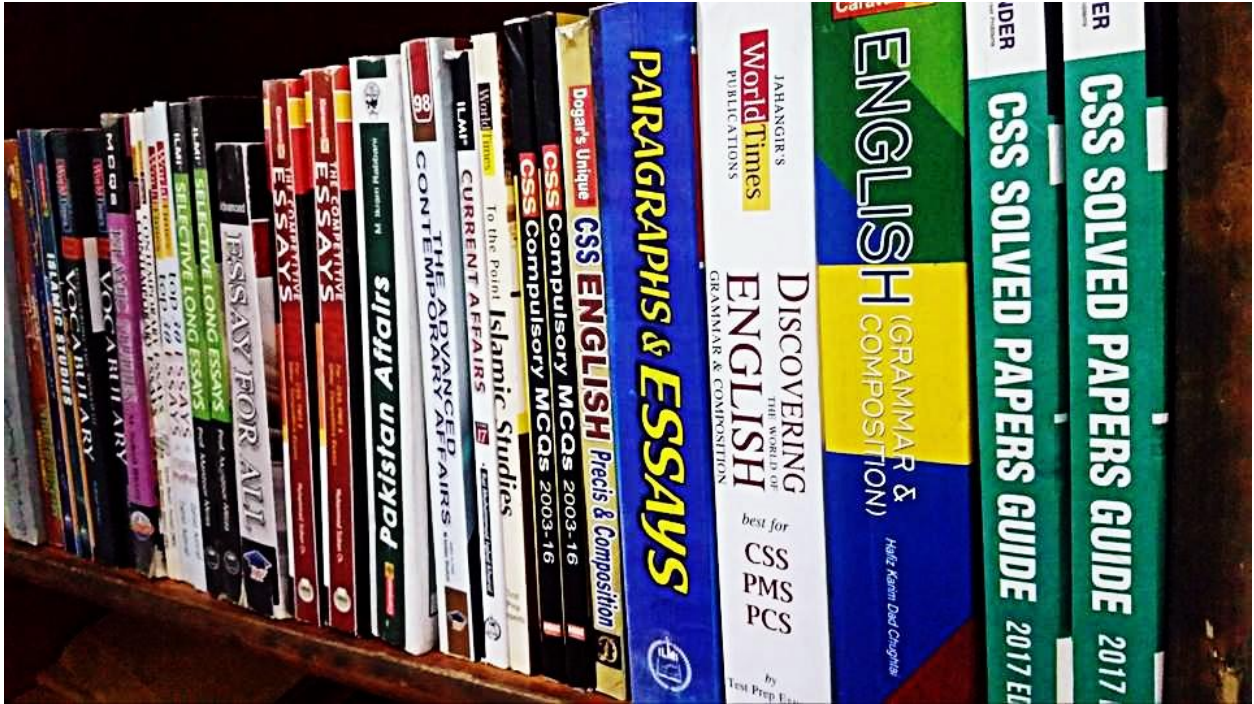
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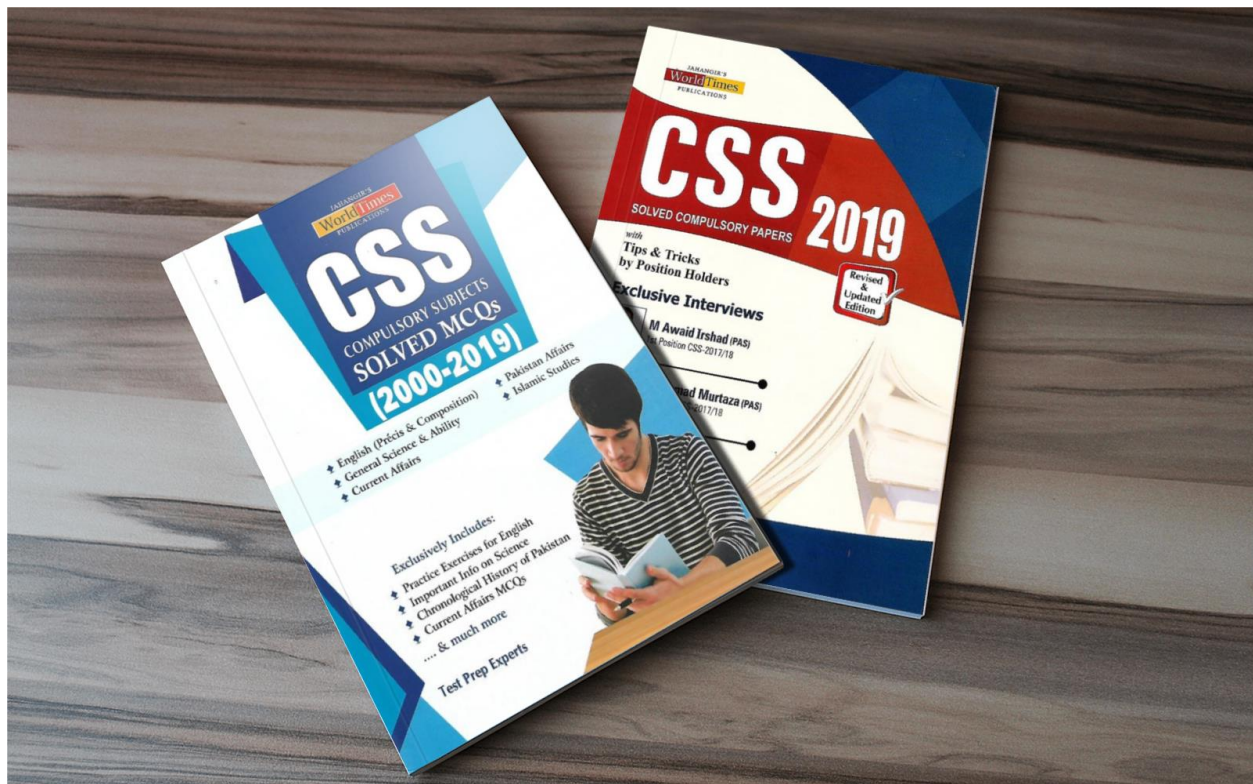
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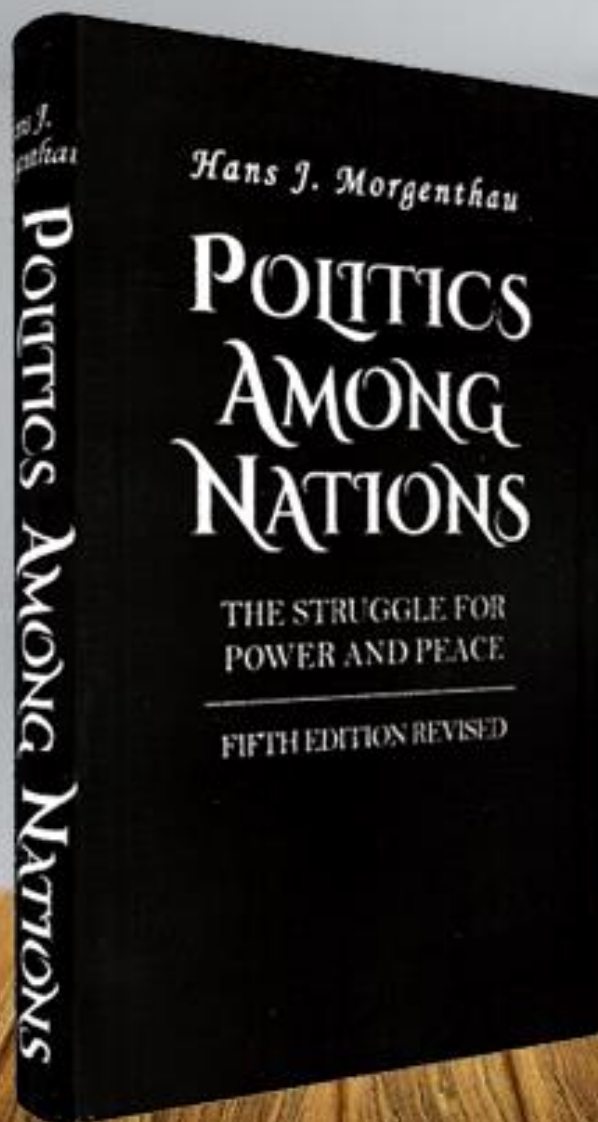
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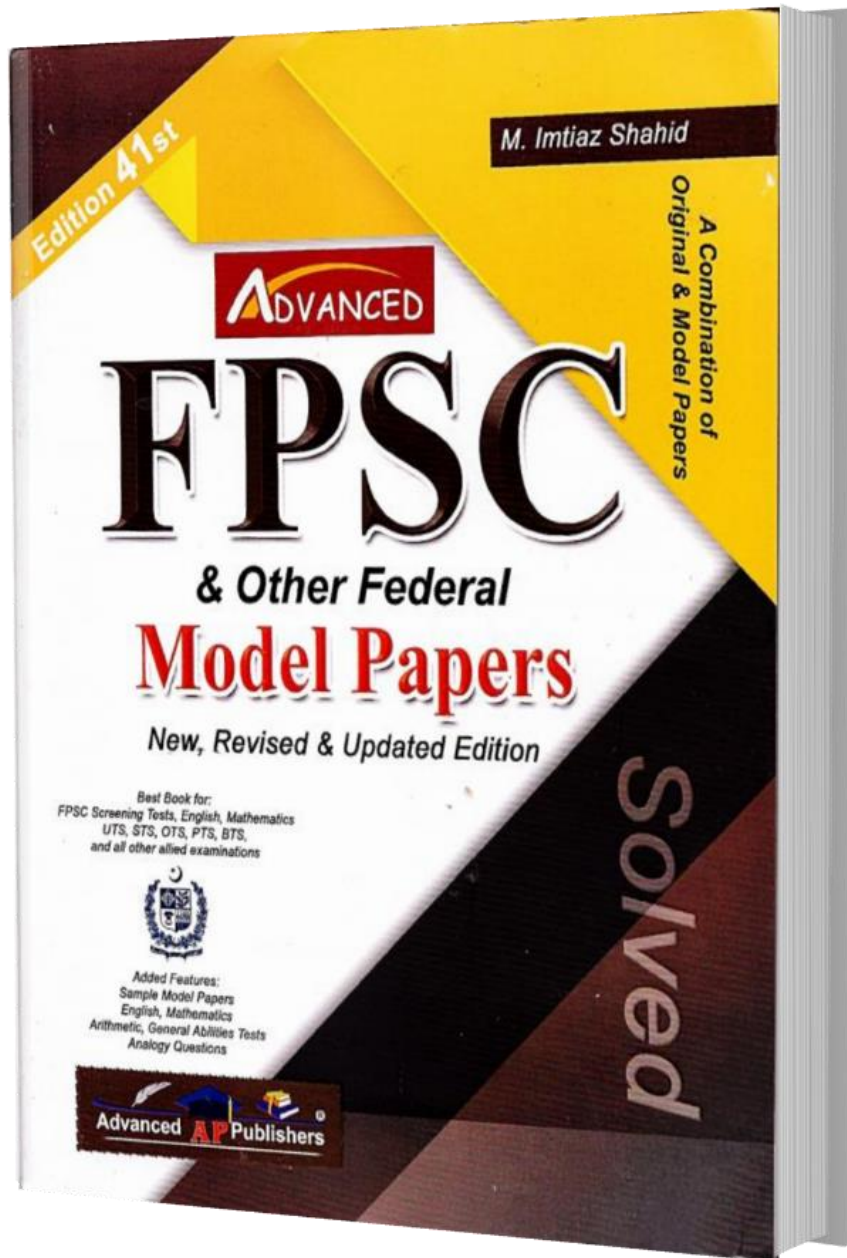
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# PAKISTAN

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## **Modi Made a Strategic Blunder By** **Mohammad Jamil**

PRIME Minister Imran Khan, during his visit to Muzzafarabad, rightly said, “Modi has committed a strategic blunder; he has played his last card, but internationalised the Kashmir issue”. The United Nations Security Council (UNSC) will hold a closed-door meeting on Friday to discuss India’s decision to revoke the special status of Jammu & Kashmir (J&K). It was in response to Pakistan Foreign Minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi’s letter; and of course due to China’s backing Pakistan’s request to UNSC to discuss the same. The UNSC will discuss the Jammu and Kashmir situation behind closed doors most likely on August 16,” UNSC President Joanna Wronecka told reporters. Occupied Kashmir is facing the worst humanitarian crisis in modern human history as strict curfew along with all communication blackout entered its 11th day today. Indian troops clamped tight restrictions, fearing anti-India protests, after New Delhi abolished the special status of Jammu & Kashmir on 05 August.

The people of occupied territory have no contact with the rest of the world as internet and phone lines are cut since that day. In blatant disregard for the fundamental rights of Kashmiri people, Indian Supreme Court refused to pass any orders on a petition seeking lifting of curfew and communication blackout in occupied Jammu & Kashmir in the wake of abrogation of Article 370 by the Indian Government. The petition filed by an activist Tehseen Poonawalla submitted that people were not able to even avail basic services such as hospital. However, a three-judge bench headed by Justice Arun Mishra adjourned the petition for two weeks without passing any order. The Supreme Court of India turned down multiple petitions challenging the government’s decision to strip off the special status given to India-occupied Kashmir (IoK). Unfortunately, most Muslim countries are either mute or have issued carefully worded statements.

They did not condemn India for Modi's unilateral action and emerging humanitarian crisis because like the western countries they also have economic interests there. Turkey and Malaysia expressed serious concerns; however China fully supported Pakistan's stance. For the last seven decades, the terrible massacre of Kashmiris in Indian Occupied Kashmir continues unabatedly. The catastrophe is big enough to move any conscious human being; but unfortunately the apathy and insensitivity of international community has encouraged India to perpetrate atrocities on the people of Kashmir in violation of universally accepted human rights. Not that international community is unaware of repression and heinous crimes in Indian Occupied Kashmir (IOK); it is rather the vested interest of western governments to remain mute just to appease India. Before Eid or on many other occasions, Indian authorities place all Hurriyet leaders under house arrest and in police stations; and on this Eid-ul-Azha they did the same.

Even today, Kashmir is boiling because of the killing of the Kashmiris who are protesting against atrocities committed by the Indian security forces, and also demand the right of self-determination as per UNSC Resolution of 1948. Especially, during the last three decades more than 500000 army and paramilitary forces stood humbled thoroughly and abysmally at the hands of unbending Kashmiris in Indian Occupied Kashmir (IoK). The crushing of Kashmiris' freedom sentiment by the Indian state had started off when it militarily occupied the princely state of Jammu & Kashmir in 1948. They left no savaging weapon untried to break and subdue the freedom-demanding Kashmiris, but they have completely failed to cow them down. The wholesale orgy of death and destruction that its rampaging military has been indulging so freely and abundantly that there is not a single home there without a family tragedy.

For years, India has deployed from five hundred thousand troops in Kashmir; and torture, extra-judicial killings, rape and fake encounters by Indian Security Forces in IOK continue unabated. The aim is to deter Kashmiri populace from demanding their right of self-determination. The repression, oppression and atrocities by Indian forces have turned Kashmir into a hell that would stretch Dante's imagination reflected in his famous poem Divine Comedy. However, these acts could not break the will of Kashmiris. The heroic struggle waged by the people of Kashmir is unparalleled in the history; they are committed to continue their struggle till their objective is achieved. It has to be said that no solution can be found without participation and consensus of the people of

Kashmir. Anyhow, today Kashmir stands as a potential nuclear flashpoint which could consume life of millions of people in an instant.

Frustrated by the apathy of the international community and non-implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolutions, Kashmiri youth took up the arms in 1989. However, after 9/11 political landscape of the world changed dramatically, adversely impacting the freedom struggles of the people the world over who were dubbed as terrorists. Nevertheless, writers, intellectuals and peace loving people condemned India's repression on people of Kashmir and also for treating them as second class citizens. Renowned Indian novelist and political activist Arundhati Roy time and again made a strong case for Kashmiri people's right to self-determination. Since the cold-blooded murder of Burhan-uddin Wani, an unprecedented movement and open rebellion against illegitimate occupation of India was witnessed in India-occupied Kashmir. The pellet guns used by security forces have damaged the faces of 1600 people and more than 1100 people have partially or wholly lost their eyesight.

—The writer is a senior journalist based in Lahore.

Source: <https://pakobserver.net/index.php/2019/08/17/modi-made-a-strategic-blunder/>

## **NSC on Kashmir | Editorial**

THE Indian-authored narrative that the recent moves by Delhi in India-held Kashmir are an ‘internal matter’ is a blatant falsehood, and it was only a matter of time before Pakistan reacted to this ill-advised action with steps of its own.

While a joint session of parliament, addressed by the prime minister and opposition leaders, was held on Tuesday, a clearer, firmer policy emerged yesterday as Pakistan’s response to the new crisis manufactured by the Indian establishment.

In a meeting of the National Security Committee chaired by the prime minister and attended by the military top brass, it was decided that Pakistan would downgrade diplomatic relations with India, suspend bilateral trade and take the matter to the UN, among other steps.

These are necessary moves that send a strong message across the border that Pakistan does not take India’s shenanigans in the occupied territory lightly.

From here on, Pakistan should mount a strong diplomatic offensive and take its message to world capitals.

Kashmir is internationally recognised as a disputed territory, so India’s chicanery — by attempting to ‘localise’ the issue through amending its constitution — should fool no one.

However, where strong diplomatic efforts are essential, Pakistan should not fall into the trap of exchanging bellicose rhetoric with India.

Prime Minister Imran Khan brought up the possibility of war during Tuesday’s parliament session; while there is justifiable anger in Pakistan over the Indian subterfuge in Kashmir, the leadership must carefully choose its words to respond to Delhi’s provocations, lest its statements be misconstrued.

The atmosphere in South Asia at the moment is highly tense and volatile.

Therefore, the Kashmir crisis needs to be handled with sagacity, firmness and far-sightedness.

Warmongers in India would love to trap Pakistan in a heated exchange of rhetoric that can spiral into actual hostilities.

Pakistan's leadership must resist this ruse and handle the situation with utmost care.

The battle for the rights of Kashmir must be fought primarily on the diplomatic front.

While the prime minister has constituted a team to look at legal, political and diplomatic ways of handling the situation, the effort would be best left to the Foreign Office that has the challenge of steering the issue before it.

There are experienced hands at the FO with deep knowledge of the region and decades of diplomatic experience; their combined wisdom should be used to counter Indian propaganda and express Pakistan's narrative on Kashmir on the world stage.

The OIC must be convinced to move beyond insipid statements of support for Kashmir towards more concrete action, while some of our Arab brothers, who have supported India's move, must be asked to consider Pakistan's stand on the crisis.

The bottom line is that the international community cannot sit and watch silently as India attempts to devour occupied Kashmir and crush its inhabitants.

Published in Dawn, August 8th, 2019

Source: <https://www.dawn.com/news/1498746/nsc-on-kashmir>

# **China Stands by Pakistan on Kashmir By**

## **Kamran Yousaf**

ISLAMABAD: China on Friday threw its weight behind Pakistan in the wake of India's illegal annexation of Kashmir, saying the longstanding dispute must be resolved "properly and peacefully" based on the UN Charter, relevant Security Council resolutions and bilateral agreement.

More importantly, Foreign Minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi, who held over two-and-half-hour long meeting with his Chinese counterpart Wang Yi, said Beijing would support Pakistan in the UN Security Council over its Kashmir row with India.

Qureshi dashed to China as part of diplomatic initiative by Pakistan to seek support of Beijing in view of the brewing row over Kashmir. The controversy has been triggered by India's unilateral action earlier this week to do away the special status of disputed Jammu and Kashmir region.

The move drew a strong condemnation from Pakistan, which in response downgraded diplomatic ties and suspended bilateral trade with India.

An official statement issued by the Chinese Foreign Office said Foreign Minister Wang noted that Beijing was seriously concerned about the latest escalation of tensions in Kashmir. He also warned against "unilateral actions" on the issue.

"The Kashmir issue is a dispute left from the colonial history. It should be properly and peacefully resolved based on the UN Charter, relevant UN Security Council resolutions and bilateral agreement," Wang was quoted as saying. "China believes that unilateral actions that will complicate the situation should not be taken."

This is the first time China took a clearer stance on India's Kashmir move. Earlier, Beijing statement was only referred to its dispute with India in the Ladakh region.

Foreign Minister Qureshi said he thanked his Chinese counterpart for a meeting on a short notice. Qureshi briefed the Chinese side on Pakistan's observations,

position and measures in response to the latest development of the situation in Kashmir.

Qureshi said that China is Pakistan's friend that has long been trusted, and that friendship between Pakistan and China is rock solid. He believed that China would stand up for justice on the Kashmir issue.

"Pakistan will continue to resolutely support China's just position on issues concerning China's core interests. The Pakistani side will continue to advance Pakistan-China all-weather strategic cooperative partnership."

Wang stressed that as all-weather strategic cooperative partners, China and Pakistan have understood and supported each other on issues concerning "our respective core interests".

"This is a good tradition that should be cherished by the two sides. China will continue to support Pakistan in safeguarding its legitimate rights and interests and uphold justice for Pakistan on the international arena," the Chinese statement said.

Wang also noted that Pakistan and India were both China's friendly neighbours and major developing countries that were in a crucial stage of development. "We call on the two sides to proceed from their national development and peace in South Asia, properly resolve historical grievances, get rid of the zero-sum mindset, avoid unilateral action and seek a new path to peaceful coexistence," Wang stressed.

Qureshi said China once again had proved that it was Pakistan's "trusted friend" as it fully supported Islamabad's stance on the recent developments in Kashmir. He said China endorsed Pakistan's position that India could not take unilateral step to change the status of disputed Kashmir region. "Chinese Foreign minister also agreed that Indian move has threatened the regional stability," Qureshi said in video message from Beijing.

Meanwhile, Chinese Foreign Ministry's Spokesperson Hua Chunying on Friday called on India and Pakistan to resolve their disputes through dialogue and negotiations and jointly uphold peace and stability in the region.

Regarding Pakistan's decision to downgrade diplomatic relations and suspension of trade with India, she said that Beijing noted relevant statement by Pakistan. "The pressing priority is that the relevant party should stop unilaterally changing the status quo and avoid escalation of tension."

Source: <https://tribune.com.pk/story/2031564/1-fm-quireshi-reaches-beijing-discuss-indias-kashmir-move/>



# **Remaking of Pakistan? By Syed Qamar afzal Rizvi**

TODAY, Pakistan is undergone to confront some underpinning challenges but not despairing—its people have the energy and uncompromising resolve of rebuilding this nation and have the capacity to rise phoenix-like from the ashes. The remaking of Pakistan into a welfare state is certainly a mammoth challenge but not impossible. Pakistan's promising future lies in its drive of selfless nationalism-an objective that needs a series of evolutionary reform in rendering this Government's mission possible.

A welfare state is a state that is rightly meant for the welfare of the people. It could be in terms of money or services. Cash payments, subsidies, concessions, grants and public distribution, and a state whose social justice system is unquestionable. All these welfare measures amount to the redistribution of governmental revenue to the needy. At the global level, Canada and the Scandinavian states-Sweden, Norway and Denmark-are the worth examples of the welfare state system. And yet, a paragon model for the welfare state system historically, rests with the State of Medina founded by the Prophet of Islam (PBUH) PM Khan's reform manifesto is encouraging yet it requires a resourceful strategy to confront the economic, political and institutional challenges.

First, our economic challenges: Needless to say that it is the economic stability and progress through which the future of a state seems predictable. Pakistan has been facing different challenges regarding its economy. The economic scenario of today's Pakistan is undoubtedly very critical—people are anxiously looking towards its leadership to resolve the present economic turmoil. Pakistan is fully and richly ridden with manifold opportunities which can astutely help us to solve the economic crisis faced by us. But make no mistake without tackling long-term challenges and problems decisively, the country could hardly be able to take advantages of the windowing opportunities. Surely, increase in debt, increase in import and decrease in export, low savings, lower investment, low tax collection-all these ills accompanied by lack of policy implementation, and fatal excessive taxation are indeed the striking challenges faced by the state economy. And yet truly, some of the solutions of these problems are none but offering low-interest rate, die hard-collection of the taxes, and befitting use of young labour force,

The first state-value or feature which is common among the Scandinavian welfare states is they collect a large proportion of their GDP in taxes. Norway collects 38pc, Denmark about 45pc, and Sweden about 44pc. This means that these states have a large and extensive tax infrastructure — and people pay a large proportion of their income in taxes. The rich pay more: in Denmark, the top marginal tax rate is about 60p. While comparing this with Pakistan, we receive only 12pc of our GDP in taxes. Denmark spends over twice as much of its GDP on social welfare alone. After recent tax reforms in Pakistan, the top marginal tax rate is just 15pc — significantly lower than Scandinavian countries. The present government's Ahsas Programme sustained by Benazir Income Support Programme is a positive move.

In addition, in terms of stabilizing the economy, we need to take some expedient measures to decrease inflation since our macroeconomic situation is not better. Our international reserves have to rise, and the fiscal deficit has to come down. IMF's current bailout package is not a permanent solution. Pakistan's credit ratings need be improved allowing it to access international capital markets on better terms. As for the foreign investment, the good news is that China, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, South Korea, and Malaysia are interested to invest in Pakistan. Establishment of the CPEC Authority is core to the future of this mega project.

Second, our political leadership crisis: The present political leadership's mindset is somehow changed from the past, yet to truly transform the DNA of premature democracy in Pakistan much needs to reform in terms of land reform and electoral reform. To provide the very fruition of transcending democracy, Pakistan political culture needs drastic changes via an evolutionary process. Nonetheless, envisaging the inflorescence of a new leadership beyond dynastic politics from constituency to the national level is a phantasy since dynastic politics has become institutionalized. In our attempt to exorcise the evil of dynastic politics, we need to adopt two core measures: First urbanization and second democracy within the political parties. Without fulfilling this objective, it seems impossible that we may change our political culture.

Third, our institutional disarrays: the institutional crisis is core to the ailments that we inherit from our syncretic approaches to colonialism. The reasons cited by the leading analysts for Pakistan's institutional struggles are varied and complex. Both Dr Ishrat Hussain and Michael Kugelman have tried to diagnose the root

causes involving this institutional disorder. In their view, the major causes include the politicization of the civil service, which has resulted in institutions monitored by unqualified political appointees; a strong legacy of undemocratic rule, which has undercut and degraded civilian tools of governance; deep institutional dependencies on donor organizations, which constrain the ability of institutions to craft long-term policies; a lack of institutional revenue, thanks in part to Pakistan's woefully low tax base; the political class's insufficient interest in improving the public welfare; and the state's outright neglect of institutions and needed governance reforms in health, education and justice system.

Nonetheless, Pakistan's institutional inefficiencies have paved the way for the military establishment to fill the flaws as becoming an emergency healer. But the impact of strategic planning in our national affairs cannot be survived without feedback from our security establishment. A good civil-military relationship is pivotal to future stability. Pakistan is truly blessed with multiple riches; its painstaking people, its unprecedented geography and natural resources, its impeachable defence which is unbeatable because of its professionally most capable armed forces. Our national task of state-building needs a systematic, sustainable approach tested by all variables in order to foster economic egalitarianism, political stability, institutional efficacy and balance in Pakistan.

—The writer, an independent 'IR' researcher-cum-analyst based in Pakistan, is member of European Consortium for Political Research Standing Group on IR, Critical Peace & Conflict Studies, also a member of Washington Foreign Law Society and European Society of International Law.

Source: <https://pakobserver.net/index.php/2019/08/15/remaking-of-pakistan/>

# **The Future of Kashmir By Syed Zeeshan Haider**

India has recently revoked a special status that Kashmir held and had been granted under Article 370 of the Constitution of India.

The most important element included in Article 370, in my opinion, was that anyone living outside Kashmir could not acquire land or property in Kashmir. So, what motivated India to decide to revoke Article 370? We will need to have a look at international precedents to understand this phenomenon.

The most important aspect that must be recognised is that when a political group or a government, anywhere in the world, seeks to dominate the population, they deploy different tactics. While the economy is sometimes used as a tactic, at other times, power and ideology are deployed. Sometimes, any combination of these three tactics is used.

To begin, it would be helpful to look back at some specific instances where just ideology was applied as a tactic. Cuba is a clear example of such a situation. Fidel Castro controlled the Cuban people using the communist ideology for several years. Despite the US's attempts to counteract this ideology, it remained unable to bring a regime of its liking into power in Cuba. But it is worth noting that during this entire era, the Cuban people never experienced the prosperity that could be seen in many of the non-communist states. In the end, that ideology was lost somewhere in the shadows. The former Soviet Union is the second example of a government built on a foundation of communism. But its collapse was a bigger disaster than that of Cuba. A time came when the communist ideology failed and the Soviet Union was split into pieces.

North Korea is an excellent example of the use of both ideology and power. Here, the people suffer in very poor conditions. This ideology could be failing in this case as well. There is also the example of the regime of Saddam Hussain, which was considered a symbol of power in Iraq. The Iraqi people feared Saddam immensely, who completely destroyed the Kurds using his power. But this use of power could not save his government. Gradually, the people's hatred for Saddam started to intensify until the US took advantage of the situation and,

after some time, Saddam's regime collapsed. One additional example of this kind of situation is in Libya. In the end, Muammar Gaddafi's regime and his government shared the same fate as that of Saddam. Thus, the formula of attaining dominance through the use of power seems to also end in failure.

Article 370 will potentially allow the rich private sector in India to acquire land in Kashmir and then evict Kashmiris from their land

Now comes the third tactic: money or the economy. To understand this tactic, it is important to first understand the ideology of Karl Marx. He posits the economy is the foundation for all affairs in the world and that the lust for wealth is embedded within the fundamental nature of humans. To apply this ideology to concrete examples in the world, we must look for a capitalist society. The US defeated Russia only because the US was a capitalist society where human nature could express its innate love for money. Thus, communism was defeated by the capitalist system. There are many examples like this, but in the context of the recent incidents in Kashmir, the clearest example can be found in Israel. Wealthy Jewish people acquired land in the region and then established their government by buying large swaths of land. There can be no doubt that Israel has exercised a lot of oppression as well, but the fundamental modus operandi was to purchase land and then establish dominance.

Returning to Kashmir, under Article 370, a non-Kashmiri could not buy property in Kashmir. This is the reason that India was unable to deploy the instrument of the economy to gain dominance, the way Israel did. But it seems that the current government has decided to deploy the economic tactic anyway by revoking Article 370. This will potentially allow the rich private sector in India to acquire land in Kashmir and then evict Kashmiris from their land, as happened in Palestine. This tactic is definitely more powerful than the instruments of ideology and power.

Prime Minister Modi has very shrewdly planned to make use of his economic power. He knows India has many business tycoons who can offer such high prices that it will be difficult for the Kashmiris to decline. The ideological Kashmiris will face real challenges in the time to come. On one side, billionaire Indian businessmen will be offering them attractive sums of money for their land while on the other side lie their ideological foundations. Which will win out in the

end: ideology or money? Only time will tell. But, based on what has happened historically, we can anticipate future events pretty clearly.

The writer is a freelancer

Source: <https://dailytimes.com.pk/447006/the-future-of-kashmir/>

## **Diplomatic Win For Pakistan | Editorial**

The UNSC decision to take up the issue of Kashmir and initiate a debate on the latest developments there is a major breakthrough for the diplomatic maneuverings that Pakistan had initiated immediately after India changed the constitutional status of the disputed region on August 5.

Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi, in a letter to the UNSC President, had on Tuesday requested a special meeting to be convened to discuss the Indian actions as well as the ongoing human rights violations in occupied Kashmir. In a tacit reminder of the possible fallout of the Indian actions, Qureshi had conveyed that “Pakistan will not provoke a conflict. But India should not mistake our restraint for weakness. If India chooses to resort again to the use of force, Pakistan will be obliged to respond, in self-defence, with all its capabilities.”

The UNSC may take up the issue today (August 16) under agenda item ‘Pakistan-India question’. Apparently, the decision was taken after China supported Pakistan’s request, suggesting that the issue is discussed behind closed doors. Last Friday, Qureshi had air-dashed to Beijing and had hours-long deliberations with the Chinese leadership seeking their support for Pakistan’s stance. Beijing had already expressed its annoyance over the Indian move to alter the status of Ladakh.

It is not known what position other permanent members of the Security Council, especially the US, will take when the ‘Pakistan-India question’ is taken up for discussion. The Russian representative at the UN said that his country had no objection to the Security Council meeting. But in a conversation with Qureshi, his Russian counterpart, Sergey Lavrov, is reported to have “emphasised the need to de-escalate tensions and to have no alternative to resolving differences between Pakistan and India on a bilateral basis by political and diplomatic means.”

Whatever the outcome of today’s meeting, it is indeed a victory for Islamabad to have succeeded in its diplomatic maneuverings for bringing back the Kashmir issue to the Security Council and for making the world realise that it is an

international issue with a potential to put the regional and world peace in danger and to lead to a much greater catastrophe.

Published in The Express Tribune, August 16th, 2019.

Source: <https://tribune.com.pk/story/2034553/6-diplomatic-win-pakistan/>



# **Rethinking Water and Urban Design By**

## **Moeen Khan**

With the monsoon season now in full swing, residents of major urban centers in Pakistan will have to see sights they are all too familiar with – choked sewerage, overflowing gutters, blocked traffic and flooded streets. As inconvenient as these problems may be, there is much more at risk than what meets the eye.

With rising population, disordered urbanization, lack of environmentally sensitive policy-making, dwindling water resources, and climate change, major cities like Lahore are certain to find themselves in a precarious situation in the future if remedies are not introduced on an urgent basis.

Lahore's single aquifer, for example, provides most of the water used for domestic purposes but the water table is declining by 2.5-3 feet per year due to over abstraction.

Much can be done to efficiently manage water resources in urban environments. Systematizing domestic water use, developing a well-planned water management system, introducing environmentally sensitive building technologies, and changing cultural norms dictating water use are important facets of such an approach. This is especially urgent if climate change resilient cities are to be developed in Pakistan.

Urban Design:

Consider the manner in which major cities in the country are currently being developed. The two largest cities in the country – Lahore and Karachi, have lost greenery to urban sprawl. Both cities have also become concrete hardscapes that have brought about a new set of problems including, but not limited to, urban runoff and soaring temperatures during summers due to changing microclimate.

Concrete jungle:

Take Lahore and consider how asphalt and concrete infrastructure is being built with little to no attention paid to the environmental impact. During the monsoon

(or even the occasional showers) sewerage systems are overwhelmed and valuable rainwater is simply discharged into sewers. This, despite the fact that virtually nothing of the water seeps down into the aquifer because there is very little open soil to absorb the moisture. Bear in mind that groundwater is also the primary source of water for a city of 12 million people, a resource that is being depleted at an alarming rate.

There are a number of solutions that have successfully been adopted by cities around the world. Roads, pavements, parking lots and other similar structures are now being built with pervious concrete and porous concrete.

Instead of causing flooding or being discharged into the sewers, such construction materials allow valuable rainwater to seep through to the aquifer.

In other words, a simple change in material use and design prevents urban flooding and stores water for future use, all with virtually the same structural integrity. While the initial costs are higher as compared to conventional concrete/asphalt, the porous variety is significantly more affordable in the long run.

With a life expectancy of around 20 years, it has lower installation and life-cycle costs and does not necessarily require investment in stormwater management infrastructure such as stormwater gutters. There are other advantages associated with such a design approach as well. Reduced water on roads during rainfall decreases the likelihood of traffic accidents.

Here is an example of how efficient porous asphalt roads are at preventing runoff.

Concrete or asphalt infrastructure also absorb more heat during the daytime and emits it during the night. According to studies, hardscapes are among the primary reasons why microclimate in a city is 3-4 degrees higher than surrounding areas, a phenomenon known as the Urban Heat Island (UHI) effect.

However, simple design changes, such as painting the surface in a brighter colour helps to reflect most of the heat absorbed from sunlight, thereby fighting off the heat island effect. The advantages, such an approach offers, are not just limited to water use either. Lower temperatures translate to reduced energy

consumption and reduced risk of heat-related illnesses/mortality for the elderly, young and poor.

The design thinking extends to residential infrastructure too. Pavements and parking areas in residential areas are also built using conventional concrete. However, environment-friendly designs for such structures are now widely being adopted as well.

Not only designs, like a grow-through pavement, are aesthetically pleasing, but they also help absorb rainwater (or even domestic water) and keep temperatures cooler.

Rooftop design:

With average temperatures rising owing to climate change, urban areas will become dangerously hot, leading to a sharp spike in water and energy consumption. It is of urgent importance to introduce wide-scale strategies to circumvent the impending threat if cities are to cope with such stress.

One effective way to do this is to alter the manner in which the roofs are designed. Simply painting the roofs in white colour can reduce air temperatures above the building by a margin of several degrees.

Similarly, green roofs – covering the roof with vegetation, are not only pleasing for the senses and reduce stress, but can help to decrease the temperature inside the building, combat urban heat island effect, help in noise reduction, cut back on carbon emissions, improve biodiversity and air quality. Most of the rainwater is retained by the soil instead of being discharged into the sewers or streets, thereby providing an excellent rainwater management strategy. Excess rainwater can also be stored in a water tank for later use. Even vegetated mats and plugs have been designed for rapid deployment of green roofs at a massive scale. There are also financial advantages associated with the design philosophy. Green roofs are estimated to increase the life of a roof by 200% and have the added effect of reducing energy consumption due to lower demand for air conditioning.

Another landscaping design similar to green roof is the concept of green wall. Dubbed the 'Living wall' – the idea is to grow vegetation on the walls of a building. The method provides many of the same benefits as green roofs and is highly efficient in reducing building temperature and absorbing water.

In cities across the world, community-driven projects have been initiated to allow residents to grow food on roofs as well. Such a technique has the added advantage of providing valuable household income for the poor.

Given the threat of climate change, civic bodies around the globe have progressively introduced policies, technological solutions and changes to the manner in which urban centers are developed and organised.

Pakistan, a country that is among states most threatened by climate change, has given scant attention to the matter. Of course, the solutions mentioned here are by no means exhaustive nor comprehensive, doing so is beyond the scope of this writing.

The aforementioned designs and systems have as much to do with preventing urban flooding as with ensuring that valuable water resources are preserved, that urban temperatures remain under control in a rapidly warming planet, and that a conscious approach regarding urban design is integrated into a cohesive urban development policy as part of Pakistan's climate change risk management strategy.

Source: <https://www.pakistantoday.com.pk/2019/08/10/rethinking-water-and-urban-design/>

# **The Only Way Out of Afghanistan is Through Pakistan By Shajeel Zaidi**

US wants out from Afghanistan. Pakistan can sense the impending doom, a return to the early 1990s when after the collapse of the Soviet Union and a complete abandonment of the country by the newly created Russian Federation, Afghanistan was quite literally thrown to the dogs. The United States had stopped routing aid to Afghanistan through Pakistan, had imposed the Pressler sanctions on Pakistan and the two countries relationships had progressed to an irreversible thaw. Afghan's slide to civil strife and a complete breakdown of law and order in the country didn't come as unexpected.

The situation would be similarly bleak if the 14,000 or so American troops stationed in Afghanistan withdraw prematurely. Despite the power and resources given to both the National Directorate of Security and the Afghan Army in the two decades since 9/11, Afghanistan's security infrastructure lacks the wherewithal to prevent the Afghan Taliban from storming Kabul or for the government forces to hold sway in the provincial capitals. After the American withdrawal, which is imminent, a weak Afghan government desperately clinging on to power in Kabul and a few provincial capitals, and an intense civil war taking place in the surrounding countryside seems like a very logical outcome.

Pakistan doesn't want that. It doesn't bode well for the stability of the region and especially for Pakistan's already vulnerable economy. That's why Pakistan is going all out to ensure a settlement in Afghanistan, pushing and prodding the Afghan Taliban to come to terms with US demands. The Taliban have been negotiating with the US directly since 2011, when Richard Holbrooke opened diplomatic channels with them through Germany and Afghanistan. At that time however, Pakistan did not have any kind of liaison role because the US distrusted Pakistan, accused the military establishment of double crossing them and thought they might get in the way of negotiations. The situation is different now. A much more pragmatic US administration has understood that it's in her interests to use Pakistan to coerce the Taliban to accept some of its less appealing demands.

The most notable sticking point for the US negotiation team under Zalmay Khalilzad is that the Taliban recognize the legitimately elected government of Ashraf Ghani and hold talks with them too. The black turbans, however, consider the Ghani administration a puppet government propped up by the US and deem it pointless to have any kinds of talks with a fangless President. While both sides had increased attacks – suicide bombings in the case of the Taliban – and air attacks in the case of United States in a bid to strengthen their position on the negotiating table, it was pointless because the negotiations did not result in any kind of deal.

Only Pakistan has the capacity and ability to force concessions from the Afghan Taliban. While it will be wrong to say that the Pakistani military controls the Taliban, they have a certain amount of leverage over them because the Taliban leadership is based within the territorial confines of Pakistan. Pakistani security forces released Mullah Baradar, the successor to Mullah Omar and now Political Chief of the Afghan Taliban, in October of 2018 on the request of Zalmay Khalilzad because US Officials wanted to conduct talks with him. It is not too hard to conceive that with a little arm twisting and pressure on high ranking militants' families living in Pakistan, ISI would not be able to influence the Taliban to not only accept but politically deal with the current Afghan dispensation.

People in the United States might morally abhor the social attitudes of the Taliban, but realpolitik dictates that US diplomats they engage the Taliban until they find an acceptable solution to the Afghan problem. Trump is seeking re-election and hearkens for a glorified exit from Afghanistan to sell to Middle America which is increasingly demanding that the US revert from all its foreign military commitments and move towards isolationism. Trump's political base will not be satisfied until there's a permanent ceasefire after the US withdrawal. Americans don't want to see a repeat of the US withdrawal from Vietnam in 1975, where soldiers were clambering on top of each other to get to the last US helicopter fleeing from Saigon – the city which was soon run over by Communists.

United States is playing on a weak footing because the Taliban know that they can easily outwait the United States. They have borne pressure when there were more than 200,000 foreign troops in Afghanistan

Knowing that, the Trump Administration wants a permanent ceasefire after its forces withdraw. The Afghan Taliban are loath to any kind of ceasefire because it would curtail their power. The only reason they enjoy ungrudging respect across Afghanistan is because they have a monopoly over violence. After the US withdrawal, they would be looking to consolidate their gains. Already by some estimates, they control about 70% of Afghanistan. Political deal or not, they would seek to take over the rest of the country. This would include defeating their decades old enemy, the Northern Alliance, crushing the Afghan Army in battle, and pacifying the fast-emerging Islamic State of Khorasan. Laying down arms is not politically viable for the Taliban. If they do so, their fighters would desert them for the Islamic State.

United States in collaboration with Pakistan must ensure that a power sharing formula between the Taliban and the Ghani government is agreed to. All this must be done before the upcoming Afghan Presidential elections. The first part of the withdrawal deal should lay out steps for the formation of a pre-election caretaker government which includes a broad coalition from all segments of the Afghan population, including the Northern Alliance. The ideal outcome after that would be for the Taliban to accept electoral democracy and contest the elections as a mainstream Islamist party, much like the Jamat-e-Islami in Pakistan and the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt does. From there, the United States should outline a plan were Afghan forces take on the Islamic State of Khorasan, which is an international terrorist organization and unlike the Taliban, has ambitions beyond the country. Obviously, the Taliban would be averse to taking dictation from the US government but as the famous saying goes, “the enemy of my enemy is my friend.”

United States is playing on a weak footing because the Taliban know that they can easily outwait the United States. They have borne pressure when there were more than 200,000 foreign troops in Afghanistan. Now, there are a measly 20,000. Here too, the United States should enlist Pakistan’s help, because since Pakistan is a part of this region and would hate to see any kind of instability in the region, it can coerce the Taliban to sit on the negotiating table with the Afghan government and agree to a power sharing deal. If there’s a civil war in Afghanistan, it will not bode well for Pakistan not only in terms of economy but also for peace in the country. In case of civil war, there would be an onslaught of millions of new Afghan refugees into Pakistan who would create a tremendous

burden on Pakistan's economy and its socio-political fabric. Further, a plethora of new Islamist fighters in Afghanistan can easily cross over the border to Pakistan, creating terror and destruction in her cities too. Pakistan's military leadership certainly does not want a repeat of latter part of the last decade when there was a new terrorist attack almost every single day.

US and Pakistani interests clearly align when it comes to the Afghan exit game plan. Thus, the crux of the US strategy must be to appease Pakistan, listen to what its needs are and what its core interests in the region are. More money or aid will not solve the problem. It will further intensify the impression that the US looks at Pakistan as a client state, giving it alms whenever it wants to get something done. Since Pakistan is chequered by its security paradigm vis-a-vis India and there has been an exacerbation in tensions on that front recently, the magic word is Kashmir. The US doesn't even have to do much, merely support Pakistan's stance on Kashmir on a public forum once or twice. This would annoy India a little but that's about it. In return, the United States would get the exact face-saving formula that it's looking for. If it ignores Pakistan on the other hand, Pakistan's clients in Afghanistan can create hurdles in any endgame which is agreed to, thereby compromising Trump's image in front of the American electorate.

The writer is a financial analyst

Source: <https://dailytimes.com.pk/449242/the-only-way-out-of-afghanistan-is-through-pakistan/>



## **Dealing With Floods | Editorial**

Pakistan is prone to natural calamities. Of such disasters, floods are the most frequent ones. Every monsoon season the chances of flooding increase manifold. The unusual rains this monsoon and India's release of water into River Sutlej have resulted in the rising water levels in the river. Now that water level of Sutlej is rising as Punjab's Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA) warns, the situation can turn hostile.

Indeed, the prevention of floods is not practical; however, protection from floods and managing them are possible. And given that there is almost no control in Pakistan over Sutlej, therefore, the authorities need to take more than the standard protection measures to protect human lives and properties.

The Chief Minister of Punjab, Usman Buzdar, has already responded to the warnings by the PDMA by summoning an emergency meeting. The focus of the meeting will be on protection measures against the flood. At the end of the session, instructions will be issued to the deputy commissioners and commissioners of districts to be on their toes. However, will the drill work? So far, it has not worked satisfactorily. Given that this is not CM Punjab's first meeting in this regard, he should have a fair idea of what improvements can be made in the government's response to such floods by now. It is evident that the typical preparations of the authorities fail to protect people's lives and properties as our experiences with floods have revealed time and again.

Likewise, the PDMA in Khyber Pukhtunkhwa (KP) has also warned the provincial deputy commissioners about India's opening of the water of Alchi dam. Hopefully, the authorities must have taken the protection measures. But will the steps be enough to protect people from the floodwater?

Nevertheless, authorities in both provinces need to be vigilant to deal with any emergency. Also, the provincial governments should leave no stone unturned in providing relief to those bearing the brunt of these floods. Furthermore, it is about time for the state to take an integrated approach to flood management on a national and regional level. Such an approach will help the government in reducing the loss of human lives and properties.

Considering the operational experiences that Pakistan has gained while dealing with disasters of different magnitude, any mishap, if it happens, will be unfortunate. Were that to happen will mean that Pakistan still lacks the will and capability to manage floods. The urban floods in Karachi have already exposed Sindh's inability to deal with unusual downpour. The floods that will hit Punjab and KP provinces will be the test of provinces' governance capabilities.

Source: <https://nation.com.pk/20-Aug-2019/dealing-with-floods>

## **For Stronger Bonds With Turkey | Editorial**

FEDERAL Cabinet at its meeting on Tuesday took an important decision to forging long term strategic relations with the fraternal country Turkey by approving Pak-Turkey Strategic Economic Framework (SEF) which aims at enhancing trade and investment relations between the two countries. The framework having nine working groups will give the necessary input to expand the bilateral relations in diverse fields which will also help Pakistan connect with the Central Asia, Russia and the West.

Undoubtedly Turkey is amongst the few countries which have always stood by Pakistan in the hour of trial be it in any calamity like situation or the external challenges including the FATF and Kashmir dispute. Therefore, the very roadmap for strengthening economic relations with a reliable and trustworthy friend is a truly very positive step that will bring both the countries further close to each other. The very decision of entering into strategic economic framework was reached during Prime Minister Imran Khan's visit to Turkey and given the desire on both the sides to further cement their economic relations, we are confident that the SEF will be operationalized instantaneously with focus on signing the long awaited Free Trade Agreement (FTA) in order to give the much needed boost to bilateral trade. Pakistan can only benefit from the FTA if it diversifies its export basket by bringing in the value addition as well as seeking reduction of duties from Turkey on its products on the pattern of Egypt and Jordan. We are confident that the way Ankara has shown open heartedness to Pakistan, it will be forthcoming to fully opening its market to our products by granting the necessary concessions. Then Pakistan can also benefit from Turkish experience of promoting its tourism industry and infrastructure. Turkish investment can also be attracted in special economic zones, food processing, mining and minerals besides the construction sector. Since the SEZ envisages establishment of high level cooperation committee to be headed by top leadership from both sides, we are confident that they will give their vision and ideas to take the relationship to new heights.

Source: <https://pakobserver.net/index.php/2019/08/22/for-stronger-bonds-with-turkey/>

## **Pak to Approach ICJ | Editorial**

AFTER registering a major diplomatic victory at the United Nations Security Council, which heard the plight of Kashmiri people after a gap of over fifty years, Pakistan has now decided to go all out to protect the rights of its Kashmiri brethren by taking the legal course.

Both Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi and Special Assistant on Information and Broadcasting Firdous Ashiq Awan announced on Tuesday that Kashmir dispute will be taken to the International Court of Justice (ICJ) at the earliest. This indeed is an important development and clearly reflects that government of Pakistan this time around is going beyond mere verbal rhetoric and taking concreted steps to give a very clear message to the oppressed people of Kashmir that the people and government of Pakistan stands by them and will go to any extent to free them from the cruel clutches of the Indian occupying forces which have unleashed genocide in the territory by not only completely locking down the valley but also arresting thousands of people and subjecting them to the worst kind of terrorism. Indeed Pakistan has a very strong case as India, by abrogating the special status of occupied Kashmir, has committed clear violation of all international laws and UN Security Council resolutions and its subsequent acts such as complete restrictions on movement of Kashmiri people, their detention and communication blackout also amount to war crimes. We are sure that a best panel of international repute would be engaged to effectively raise the voice of Kashmiri people at the top court, and the process needs to be completed at the earliest as each passing day is becoming worse for the Kashmiri people with the territory turned into a prison by the Indian authorities. Given the prevailing situation, we also expect that the ICJ will go for an early hearing of the case. If the ICJ can issue directions to Pakistan to provide counsellor access to a spy like Kulbhushan Jadhav who was engaged in sabotage activities, how can it remain unmindful to the plight of unarmed and innocent Kashmiris who are just asking for their right to self-determination as per the promises made to them by the UN Security Council? It is now up to the ICJ as to how it dispenses justice to the oppressed Kashmiris and how those committing war crimes in the occupied valley are held accountable.

Source: <https://pakobserver.net/index.php/2019/08/22/pak-to-approach-icj/>

# **Prime Minister as Polio Ambassador |**

## **Editorial**

Prime Minister Imran Khan will himself spearhead the war on polio from November after a recent rise in registered cases in the country, mainly in parts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, where resistance against the vaccinations runs high among parents due to unfounded religious and cultural beliefs. The prime minister has rightly told federal and provincial governments to launch result-oriented awareness and immunisation campaigns. Babar Bin Atta, prime minister's focal person on eradication of polio, has shared with the PM and some foreign delegates the concerns of the International Monitoring Board about gaps in Pakistan's vaccination strategy. Apart from such loopholes, the main culprit frustrating efforts to make Pakistan polio-free is propaganda against the vaccination among parents. The main source of propaganda is social media.

It is an encouraging sign that the prime minister himself will work as the ambassador of the polio campaign. Equally worth mentioning are the efforts of Babar Bin Atta who has been using social media platforms to counter the propaganda. Recently, we have seen a series of touching and effective messages going on air (in the form of ads) on mainstream electronic media about the importance of anti-polio vaccines.

Meanwhile, Nigeria has just celebrated three years without any polio cases, which means the African country is officially a polio-free state, leaving behind Afghanistan and Pakistan. Of these two countries, it is very likely that Afghanistan will beat Pakistan in the polio war as in 2019, Pakistan has seen 53 cases so far and Afghanistan 12.

The Bannu region is becoming the hotspot of polio vaccination resistance. Recently, a leader of a traders' body at a convention announced that they would boycott the vaccination drive if the government did not withdraw certain taxes. Over the years, polio drives have been used as a political tool. The militants of the Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan killed scores of polio workers only for their political and strategic gains. A polio-infested Pakistan serves their agenda of an internationally isolated country. Adding fuel to fire, a section of local influencers also tried to fan disinformation about polio campaigns. Several parents, under the

influence of the propaganda, marked the fingers of their children themselves to avoid vaccination.

The whole nation should stand by the prime minister in the war on polio.

Source: <https://dailytimes.com.pk/452180/prime-minister-as-polio-ambassador/>

# **Pakistan FATF-APG Facts and India's Blackface By Muhammad Adil Rauf**

Indian media is once again spreading false and misleading reports; claiming that APG has placed Pakistan on a “blacklist.”

Indian media is citing unnamed official sources, even though no statement has been issued by APG in this regard. Indian media first coined the term “Enhance Blacklist” themselves and then falsely associated it to the regional anti-money laundering watchdog.

However, the APG has no such list called “blacklist” nor do they have any jurisdiction to modify the status of any member country.

Only FATF has the authority to make any changes in the status of its member country, confirmed by a FATF official. Furthermore, Pakistan Finance Ministry has rejected the false media claims. They further clarified that only enhanced follow-up is required in some areas, identified in the Mutual Evaluation Report (MER) for further action, which was anticipated. They further added that the report was for the period from February 2018 to October 2018, in which the action tasks were not quite significant. However, since October 2018, Pakistan has made substantial progress on most of the action list, for which they have prepared a separate compliance report.

Only FATF has the authority to make any changes in the status of its member country

The Asia Pacific Group (APG) is a Financial Action Task Force-Style Regional Body, also called the “FATF-Asia Secretariat.”

The APG is an inter-governmental organisation; consisting of 41 member jurisdictions. It was established to observe and ensure effective implementation of international AML/CFT standards set by the Financial Action Task Force (FATF). The APG's primary functions include mutual evaluation of compliance by its member jurisdictions, technical assistance, typologies research and global engagement.

Through its mutual evaluation (peer review) program, APG devised monitoring and follow-up procedures to ensure effective monitoring of members progress on deficiencies identified in their Mutual Evaluation Report (MER). The APG has three follow-up processes, which members can apply to report on MER. These processes are a biennial update, meaning reduced follow-up, regular follow-up and enhanced follow-up based on the frequency of the submission of progress reports. The enhance follow-up requires expedited reporting by the member to the Mutual Evaluation Working Group. However, the frequency will be determined by members of the group.

The APG's 22nd annual meeting was held in Canberra, Australia, from August 18, 2019, to August 23, 2019. According to the APG press release, APG adopted six mutual evaluation reports submitted by China, Chinese Taipei, Hong Kong, Pakistan, Philippines and Solomon Islands. These reports are subject to post-plenary quality and consistency review before publication in early October 2019.

Earlier this week, Pakistan delegation, headed by State Bank of Pakistan Governor Dr Reza Baqir, attended the APG's 22nd annual meeting in Canberra, Australia.

The meeting adopted Pakistan's third Mutual Evaluation Report, covering a period from February 2018 to October 2018. Pakistan briefed APG's evaluation working group on the steps taken to improve its AML/CFT Framework and effective implementation of the FATF Action Plan. Pakistan is very much confident on the progress made specifically since October 2018. It is hopeful for a favourable outcome from FATF plenary in October 2019, where the implementation of Action Plan and APG findings will be reviewed.

Pakistan has been a member of the APG since 2000. Pakistan was placed on the FATF grey list due to deficiencies in its financial regime. Since then, Pakistan has committed to working with FATF and APG to strengthen its AML/CFT framework. Pakistan has taken substantial steps towards improving its financial regime. The last set of the action plan items are set to expire in October 2019, as per the timeline set by FATF.

Source: <https://dailytimes.com.pk/454548/pakistan-fatf-apg-facts-and-indias-blackface/>



# **PM Represents Nation's Aspirations |**

## **Editorial**

IN his televised address to the nation on Monday, Prime Minister Imran Khan once again in categorical terms represented the aspirations of people of Pakistan on the festering Kashmir dispute and the illegal steps and clampdown of Indian authorities in the occupied territory. He made it absolutely clear that Pakistan will go to the last extent to support the oppressed Kashmiri people, warning India that in case of aggression it would have far reaching effect on the entire world as both countries possessed nuclear arms.

The very address of PM Khan sent a loud and lucid message to India and the world community that come what may, Pakistan will continue to support and raise the voice of Kashmiri people for their right to self-determination and, indeed, given the blunder committed by Modi, the day is not far off when the Kashmiri people will also see the dawn of independence. The address was important in the context that the Prime Minister yet again exposed the extremist and evil mindset of RSS that how the outfit wants to create supremacy of Hindus in India and then the Prime Minister also presented his way forward by declaring first of all that the entire nation will express solidarity with their Kashmiri brethren every week. On this Friday, he said the people from all walks of life should come out of their homes, offices and schools for half an hour to express their love and bonds with the Kashmiri people. We have no doubt in saying that the entire nation is united on Kashmir and it will fully back the Prime Minister's call and turn out in big numbers regardless of their political affiliation to show to the world that their support to Kashmiris goes beyond verbal rhetoric. This will also send a very encouraging message to the Kashmiri people that they are not alone at this critical juncture and that their brothers and sisters stand shoulder to shoulder with them. The way Kashmir dispute has internationalized following Modi's controversial and unconstitutional step of annexation, it is now up to us to keep it on the international radar through full-fledged diplomatic efforts. As the Prime Minister will address the UN General Assembly session next month, the content of his speech should comprise only one point -Kashmir Dispute. We are confident that the PM will live up to his words and prove himself a true Ambassador of oppressed Kashmiri people. When other Muslim rulers join him is yet to be seen. Source: <https://pakobserver.net/index.php/2019/08/28/pm-represents-nations-aspirations/>

# **Foreign Policy: Kashmir Issue and the Dynamics of International Relations By Sheraz Zaka**

Imran Khan has urged Pakistanis to come out of their homes, offices and workplaces every week for half an hour to show solidarity with the Kashmiri people fighting Indian occupation. One expected him to tell the nation about his government's latest initiatives on the diplomatic and political fronts to mobilise international support for the Kashmiri struggle for the right of self-determination. More importantly, what are the options for Pakistan to deal with the worsening crisis? We cannot move the international community into action by raising the spectre of a possible nuclear conflagration.

Undoubtedly there has been unprecedented coverage in the western media of Indian brutalities and human rights violations that exposes Modi's claim of normality returning to the occupied territory. But that is not sufficient to compel other countries to stand with the Kashmiri people. The international community's silence over the lockdown of more than eight million people and the suppression of their fundamental democratic rights may be driven by geopolitical and economic considerations, but it also reflects our diplomatic failure.

Even Pakistan's closest allies in the Muslim world are not willing to express any sympathy for the plight of the Kashmiri people, leave aside condemning Modi's annexation of a disputed territory. It is not surprising that the UAE has honoured the Indian prime minister with its highest national award. Interestingly, Iran is one of the few Muslim countries to have spoken out for the Kashmiri people. Surely India's growing economic power has helped it expand its influence in the Gulf region, but our own diplomatic shortcomings have also been a factor in us losing our clout in what was once considered Pakistan's staunchest support base. The only solace for us is a statement issued by the OIC contact group expressing concern over the situation in Kashmir.

We must be very careful not to exaggerate the US role in resolving the Kashmir problem. Barring a few official comments expressing concern over recent

developments in Kashmir, there has not been any condemnation of the Indian action

It was indeed a diplomatic success for Pakistan when the UN Security Council held a meeting on the Kashmir issue for the first time in over 50 years. The statement by the UN Secretary General on Kashmir is also significant. But there is still no sign of international pressure on the Indian government to stop human rights violations in the disputed territory. For that there was a need for a more aggressive diplomatic initiative.

It is a right decision by the government to raise the issue at the UN's Human Rights Committee in Geneva. The committee has previously released two reports on the human rights situation in Kashmir. The censure of the Indian action by the UN committee would certainly be a moral victory for the Kashmiri people, but for that a lot of lobbying and diplomatic work is needed.

However, the option of taking the Kashmir issue to the International Court of Justice (ICJ) as indicated by the prime minister, should be reconsidered. Firstly, there is the question about the court's jurisdiction over the dispute. Secondly, any such move would need the consent of both parties in the conflict. The public announcement by the Pakistani leadership to go to the ICJ without even examining the ramifications of such a move is typical of the government's impulsiveness on crucial policy decisions.

We must be very careful not to exaggerate the US role in resolving the Kashmir problem. Barring a few official comments expressing concern over recent developments in Kashmir, there has not been any condemnation of the Indian action. It is a similar situation with the other Western countries.

China is one of the few countries that have come out with a categorical statement criticising the Indian action. With limited options Pakistan needs to up its diplomatic efforts. There is also a need to forge a national consensus on our Kashmir policy. Political instability at home would not help to meet serious diplomatic challenges.

While Pakistan's diplomatic and political support is crucial, it will be the struggle of the Kashmiri people that could ultimately push the international community to

act. It is evident that even the use of massive force by India has failed to put down the Kashmiri resistance.

It has been three weeks since a lockdown was imposed on the disputed territory. There have been few examples in recent times of such a protracted freedom struggle. Modi's virulent nationalism has widened the political and social fault lines in India. For Pakistan it is important not to see Kashmir as a territorial dispute, but a struggle for the right of self-determination.

The fact is that a coherent policy is needed to tackle this issue and raise it at the international level. The unfortunate truth is that we have not succeeded on the international front to convince the world to take action against Indian barbarity in Kashmir.

India has even managed to deflect international criticism despite the fact that its human rights abuses in IJK have been highlighted in the international media. Though this is partly due to Pakistan's inability to project the Kashmir cause positively in the international arena, it is also due to India's economic prowess. Sadly, in a world governed by realpolitik, might is right and the cries of the weak are often smothered by the strong.

Previous governments have been equally ineffective in projecting the Kashmir cause. But if the prime minister wants to change the status quo, there must be a robust and cohesive policy to counter India's belligerent attitude in IJK and convince the international community that violence against Kashmiris is unacceptable.

Holding rallies in the country will not be enough; our best diplomatic hands need to be mobilised to brief global capitals of the situation in IJK, so that the world – specifically those states who claim to be champions of human rights – can convince India to back off in the held region. The voice of Kashmiris needs to echo around the world, and their fundamental rights must be defended.

The writer is a constitutional lawyer, teacher and a human rights activist

Source: <https://dailytimes.com.pk/456828/foreign-policy-kashmir-issue-and-the-dynamics-of-international-relations/>

## An Insight into Pak-EU Strategic Ties By Syed Qamar Afzal Rizvi

A soft power European Union (EU) can influence translates into economic, political and cultural benefits. It turned out that promoting a nation's culture and political ideals on the global stage brings significant economic and strategic advantages. Researchers have found that a state's soft power has a significant impact on foreign direct investment (FDI), overseas student recruitment, tourism and international influence in forums like the UN General Assembly. The European Council states the EU's willingness to engage with the new government of Pakistan to support its efforts in advancing social and economic reforms, ensuring access to education, and addressing poverty and inequality through good governance and the respect of the rule of law. The European Council urges Pakistan to live up to its international commitments with regards to the promotion and protection of human rights and the rule of law. The Council draws particular attention to the freedom of religion or belief, abuses of the blasphemy law, the freedom of expression and media, the shrinking space for civil society, the rights of the people belonging to minorities, and women's and children's full enjoyment of their human rights.

The Council also reiterates the EU's wish to strengthen cooperation with Pakistan in the fields of security and defence, sustainable development, trade and migration. The Council calls on Pakistan to step up its engagement in constructive initiatives to support peace in Afghanistan and intensify its pursuit of cooperation with neighbouring countries, which would contribute to regional stability. The Council also expresses its expectation that the new framework for engagement with Pakistan, the EU-Pakistan Strategic Engagement Plan, will be signed at the earliest possible occasion. In response to the severe drought which is affecting large parts of southern Pakistan, the European Union is allocating EUR 100 000 in humanitarian funding to bring life-saving assistance to the most affected communities. The aid will directly benefit 15000 people in two of the hardest hit pockets in the region, namely Tharparkar district in Sindh Province and Naushki district in Balochistan Province.

The EU funding supports the Pakistan Red Crescent Society (PRCS) in delivering immediate assistance through the distribution of cash grants, enabling affected families to purchase essential items like food and fodder for their livestock and the provision of safe drinking water through installation of solar-powered boreholes and storage facilities. PRCS will also conduct hygiene and

water treatment awareness activities, and conduct a detailed needs assessment to determine the longer term needs of at-risk communities in Sindh and Balochistan.

In a meeting with President of the European Parliament Antonio Tajani, Minister for Human Rights Dr Shireen Mazari drew attention to the grave human rights situation in the India-occupied Kashmir and underlined the need for immediate action to stop the Indian atrocities. The Minister also called for steps to stem growing Islamophobia in Europe. She called on the EU to play its due role in this regard. During the meeting with the President European Parliament, she shared the government of Pakistan's commitment to protection and promotion of human rights in Pakistan and highlighted gross human rights violations by Indian forces in the IoK. Dr Mazari also shared concerns over growing Islamophobia in Europe. European Ambassador Jean-Francois Cautain told media that 17 out of 27 member states present in Pakistan would participate in the event, which aimed to promote the European culture and values.

The main purpose behind holding the event at an open place was said to create people-to-people linkages with any EU country representative. He also maintained that the general public would be provided with multiple displays of Europe as a culturally rich and friendly place. Stands by the EU as well as the members' states would showcase the respective cultures and traditions, languages, food and music as well as general information to Pakistan's general public. The EU Ambassador noted that the economic bloc fully recognized Pakistan's key role in promoting peace and stability in the South Asian region and beyond. The bloc was said to also support the government-declared goals of improving relations with its neighbours.

The Strategic Dialogue was preceded by the 5th Session of Pakistan-EU Political Dialogue in Brussels on 20 March 2019. The Strategic Dialogue encouraged for an open discussion on a wide range of areas of the bilateral cooperation as well as on regional and global challenges. The two sides duly reaffirmed their ardent commitment to the strengthening of multilateralism and adherence to the principles and purposes of the UN Charter as well as international law. Pakistan and the EU positively agreed the Strategic Engagement Plan (SEP), which intrinsically signifies the growing momentum of Pakistan-EU relations and sets the direction for enhanced engagement. The EU side welcomed the priorities

tabled by the Pakistani government — focusing on poverty alleviation, investment in human capital, good governance and the rule of law. Consequently, the Pakistan side invited the EU side to take benefit of the improved security situation as an opportunity to improve their relations in the areas of trade and investment as well as people to people contact including tourism.

Brussels is a strong supporter of Islamabad's democratic development, illustrated by four successive election observer missions from 2002 to 2018, and technical assistance provided to Pakistan's Parliament and to the Election Commission of Pakistan to advance electoral reforms. The EU is also committed to enhancing its cooperation with Pakistan in its fight against the shared burden of terrorism and extremism. In addition, the EU supports Pakistan's efforts to improve its human rights record, in particular in areas such as access to justice, freedom of religion or belief and the rights of women and girls, and provide education, vocational training and economic opportunities for all Pakistanis. Furthermore, Migration is another area of cooperation, where the two sides Belgium and Pakistan have concluded a readmission agreement. The EU also fully appreciates Pakistan's vital role in promoting peace and stability in the South Asian region and beyond, supporting the Government's declared goals of improving relations with its neighbours.

—The writer, an independent 'IR' researcher-cum-analyst based in Pakistan, is member of European Consortium for Political Research Standing Group on IR, Critical Peace & Conflict Studies, also a member of Washington Foreign Law Society and European Society of International Law.

Source: <https://pakobserver.net/index.php/2019/08/29/an-insight-into-pak-eu-strategic-ties/>

## ECONOMY

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### **Pakistan's Efforts to Evade FATF By Reema Shaukat**

IN a recent move one of National Assembly's panel approved a bill suggesting amendments in money laundering and foreign exchange regulation laws. According to experts, this will facilitate government as a further step to meet requirements of FATF which will finally review its decision about Pakistan's position in coming September. FATF, the global body working to curb money laundering and terrorism financing has placed Pakistan on grey list since February last year. In September, the FATF will take a decision about whether to further keep Pakistan on its watch list.

Financial Action Task Force (FATF) was formed in 1989 during the G-7 Summit to deal with the growing issue of money laundering. The task force at that time was charged with studying money laundering trends, monitoring legislative, financial and law enforcement activities taken at the national and international level, reporting on compliance, and issuing recommendations and standards to combat money laundering. After 9/11 this watchdog extended its work parameters to terror financing and related funding of terrorist organizations. The FATF also works in close cooperation with a number of international and regional bodies involved in combating money laundering and terrorism financing.

Pakistan already remained on the watch-list for a period of three years from 2012-2015.

Pakistan is again on a move and trying its best to defeat a move initiated last year by the US to put Pakistan on a global terror-financing watch list with an anti-money-laundering monitoring group, whereas India being member of FATF always try to blame Pakistan and drags that it should be placed in black category. Pakistan has been mounting in recent months to forfend being added to a list of countries considered non-compliant with terrorist financing regulations



by the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) — a measure that may hurt its already dwindling economy. Apart from Pakistan, other countries on FATF watchlist are Ethiopia, Iraq, Serbia, Sri Lanka, Syria, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Vanuatu and Yemen. According to NA panel's recommendations which if finally approved by Parliament, the State Bank of Pakistan's permission will be obligatory for inland movement of foreign exchange valuing more than \$10,000 by an individual. Further, it is for the first time that the central bank has been given powers to regulate inland movement of foreign currency to curb money laundering. In case of violation, the law enforcement agencies will be authorized to confiscate the currency and arrest the currency holders.

The National Assembly Standing Committee on Finance and Revenue approved the Foreign Exchange Regulations (Amendment) Bill 2019 and Anti-Money Laundering (Amendment) Bill 2019 with certain amendments aimed at addressing legal deficiencies pointed out by the FATF. The violation of the FERA law will involve "rigorous imprisonment for a term of up to five years or fine or both". According to experts these restrictions on inland movement of currency have been proposed to end the business of Hawala and Hundi, which is also a source of money laundering

In another amendment, the Government has surrendered the federal cabinet powers to approve bilateral agreements between the financial intelligence units. According to another amendment, the financial institutions will be bound to promptly share information on money laundering with FMU as against the current limit of seven days. The Standing Committee also approved to empower the investigation officers to attach property involved in money laundering for six months as against the current period of three months. It is proposed that the courts could grant further extension in the attachment period of up to one year. According to the proposals, the banks would also be bound to file suspicious transactions report and on failing to do so, the persons concerned will be liable to five years of imprisonment and a fine of Rs 500,000. Under the newly approved bill, the money laundering will now be a non-bailable offence. The Standing Committee also approved to empower the investigation officers to attach property involved in money laundering for six months as against the current period of three months. It will also be mandatory to keep the record of suspicious transactions for 10 years, which is double the current period. This bill will surely curb the money laundering activities in Pakistan.

Recently a delegation also visited from USA to meet PM'S Adviser and team on finance and give necessary feedback. During the meeting the delegation asked Pakistan to show tangible and satisfactory actions against banned organisations and their leadership to pacify more countries towards supporting its case to move out of the grey list of FATF in future. It was briefed that the international partners helped Islamabad engage foreign consultants to support and prepare key stakeholders such as Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan, National Counter-Terrorism Authority, State Bank of Pakistan and Federal Board of Revenue to take actions and formulate reports keeping in view the international perspective.

The Finance Adviser emphasised the importance of bilateral engagement with the US and told the delegation that over the past three months, the Government had taken significant steps to bring financial discipline that include reduction in current account deficit, focus on increasing revenue generation, measures to reduce fiscal expenditure, reduce fiscal borrowings, efforts to enhance foreign exchange reserves through bilateral and multilateral support, arrangement of petroleum credit facility. Apart from combating terrorism and terrorist financing groups, Pakistan has taken due steps to evade FATF sanctions and as part of its institutional development initiative, the SBP and the FBR are being resourced and empowered. At the same time to facilitate economic growth and support the people below the poverty line, various programmes to support Pakistan's export-oriented industries and health insurance schemes have been introduced for the poor.

— The writer works for Pakistan Institute for Conflict and Security Studies, a think-tank based in Islamabad.

Source: <https://pakobserver.net/index.php/2019/08/22/pakistans-efforts-to-evade-fatf/>

## **Pak, US For Economic Relations | Editorial**

AS the meeting of Prime Minister Imran Khan with US President Donald Trump proved to be important one in breaking the ice and resetting the relationship, it is heartening to note the desire of the US side to engage with Pakistan for promotion of economic relations.

A US delegation led by Acting Assistant Secretary of State for South and Central Asian Affairs Alice G Wells held a meeting with Adviser on Finance Hafeez Sheikh on Tuesday during which he was briefed about the country's economic reforms agenda. Alice G Wells said the US would continue to remain engaged with Pakistan in its economic reforms efforts and help build an environment that facilitates business development between the two countries. Certainly, the focus of present government of Pakistan is also on trade and economic relations whilst the US President during his interaction with PM Imran Khan had also talked about the great potential that exists between the two countries in economic sphere. Therefore, we expect that both the sides will now be interacting and engaging more frequently and deeply to achieve the objective put forth by their leadership. According to the US State Department's recent report, Pakistan remains an attractive market for US Companies due to favourable demographics, English language skills, low labour costs and natural resources; however, there are real trade and investment barriers that limit the ability of US Companies to enter the market and grow their businesses in Pakistan. Already PTI government has tried to ensure ease of doing business and we expect that it will be doing more to attract maximum investment from important countries such as the United States as their investment will also come with technology transfer in different fields that will immensely benefit the country. Overall US-Pakistan trade in 2018 reached a record high of \$6.6 billion, an increase of 4 per cent from the previous year and indeed by bringing value addition, Pakistan can substantially enhance its exports to the US. We understand there is desire on both the sides to bolster their economic relationship which will augur well for developing a relationship truly based on mutual interest and respect. Also most importantly as Pakistan has made significant progress over the last one year to meet the action of plan of FATF and took some serious actions against banned outfits and to check terror financing and money laundering, we expect that the US will also be forthcoming in supporting Pakistan get out of the grey list of the international watch dog.

<https://pakobserver.net/index.php/2019/08/08/pak-us-for-economic-relations/>

## **CPEC on Accelerated Path | Editorial**

AT its first meeting on Thursday, the National Development Council took some important decisions about the development of Balochistan and tribal districts as well as fast tracking the work on China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) project which is really indicative of the fact that the Council has set the right priorities to take forward the country.

Most importantly, the Council approved formation of CPEC Authority for ensuring accelerated implementation of the Corridor-related projects. This is really a welcome step and shows the commitment and seriousness of incumbent government towards this mega project which has the potential to change the entire economic landscape of the country. The CPEC Authority indeed will provide a much needed platform for multi-sectoral coordination and will prove to be instrumental in coordinating efforts for development and implementation of future CPEC projects. We are confident that skilful human resource fully cognizant with the contours of the Corridor would have been hired to run the Authority on modern lines. Up till now, power plants and road infrastructure projects under the CPEC have seen fast tracked implementation but now the first task for the CPEC Authority should be to activate the process of the establishment of special economic zones that will also see shifting of industry from China to Pakistan. These special economic zones are very important to put the country on the path of industrialization. This path will help the country address most of its economic woes, achieve sustainable growth, substantially enhance exports and create hundreds of thousands of job opportunities for the youth. Both the CPEC Authority and the Board of Investment should synergize efforts to attract maximum investment from other foreign companies and countries in these SEZs in order to really make them a successful model. Doing so will also help realize the long cherished dream of turning Gwadar into one of the busiest ports in the world.

Source: <https://pakobserver.net/index.php/2019/08/10/cpec-on-accelerated-path/>

# **Economic Front of Pakistan By Syed Ali Imran**

A Year is lapsed for PTI that came into power first time with rhetoric to make a new Pakistan by bringing corruption free good governance. If one may execute a quantitative analysis, economic indicators may be assumed as a tool of performance together with recovery figures through accountability and broadening of Tax Net. Good news is that the Current Account Deficit (CAD) and Trade Deficit (Twin Deficits) showing decreasing trend tremendously but slowing down of economy and fall in Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth rate is a very bad news. Slow down of economy was an obvious outcome for import based economy which got affected due to huge devaluation of Pak Rupee when Exchange rate is set to free. Though it helped to bring down twin deficits but introduced double digit inflation crossing 10%. It compelled State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) to raise Discount Rate which further resulted businesses to become costly. In short, controlling twin deficit increased twin input costs of doing business i.e. Exchange Rate and Interest Rate. Besides these economic indicators as a result of tight monetary policy other quantitative parameters are not showing much movement towards any outcome due to the fact that corruption is so deep rooted that proving a corruption out of corrupt environment is giving the accountability institutions a big trouble. On the other side, despite of the fact that new FBR Chairman is determined towards documentation of economy for better tax collection, tax evaders are retaliating and trying to skip this fiscal measure taken by the government by way of different threats. Is this mean that the government is failed to bring any positive change into economic system of the country? Answer to this question is too early to conclude when government is trying to change import based consumer behaviour of the country. PTI preferred to get an International Monetary Fund (IMF) program not only to bring liquidity into Pakistan but for financial discipline through various monetary and fiscal measures including a strategy to undo Pakistan's name from Grey List of Financial Action Task Force (FATF) by introducing Qualitative measures by strengthening regulatory bodies which will control Money Laundering and Terrorist Financing.

By increasing tax net and inflicting harsh measurers for the same government has opened another battle field with traders and retailers but in longer run when

this segment of economy who do not pay proper tax become documented through CNIC condition and paying GST deducted to national exchequer, it will result in increasing tax collection which ultimately be used in paying debt servicing and financing of subsidies

On flag hosting ceremony on SBP building at 14th August, Governor SBP Mr. Reza Baqir hinted about the economy on right track and all possible measures to deal with economic emergency have been so far applied that means worst is over. He emphasizes present economic policies to be consistent so that the final outcome would be based on the effects of these reforms. He stated that these painful measures will get long-term economic growth which will benefit the low income and middle class. Prime Minister Imran Khan also quoted several times that soon the country will get out of economic troubles and he considers 6 months remaining for results to impact national exchequer, positively. Question arises that if Lower Income and Middle Class are happy with the pain inflicted by tough economic measures. Simple reply to this query is NO. By controlling Twin Deficit, Khan's government is ready for GDP growth rate to slow down from 5.75% to 2.5% and inflation to rise as stated in IMF report for current fiscal year. As Economy from last couple of decades has become import based where local manufacturers are discouraged and easy money is earned at which even tax were not submitted to national exchequer, twin input cost i.e. Devaluation and Interest rate hike resulted an economic slow-down whereas government efforts to increase tax net making lock down calls from traders and middleman. This scenario is triggering economic chaos everywhere where no one can determine exact future of one's economic activity therefore unemployment is an ultimate outcome affecting Lower class house hold income, value of money and purchasing power. It is an apparent result of IMF conditions imposed over Pakistan for next 36 months. However, if government strict measures for financial discipline may successfully be installed it will become prosperity for lower income class in longer run and burden will be shifted to Upper Class in shape of direct taxation.

Government is committed towards achieving the toughest target imposed not only by IMF but itself for prosperous Pakistan. For said reason the government has set some goals which are set to be short term and long term. In short run Twin Deficits are controlled which increased twin cost of production specially for importers as explained above but it will help local industries to grow. Initially,

import based GDP will fall and then a pattern will be set where only essential imports will be allowed. Afterwards Export based GDP will increase and import substitution for local consumption will become future of the country that will save foreign exchange. For said reason government is trying to improve efficiency of quality control units. By increasing tax net and inflicting harsh measurers for the same government has opened another battle field with traders and retailers but in longer run when this segment of economy who do not pay proper tax become documented through CNIC condition and paying GST deducted to national exchequer, it will result in increasing tax collection which ultimately be used in paying debt servicing and financing of subsidies. Soon when tax net will increase it will bring stability in economy, tax rates will fall and indirect taxation will be replaced with direct taxation. This long term scenario seems very optimistic though when we have a border situation at Line of Control where military conflict with neighbours is very much possible inflicting pain to already downturned economy, spending on international relations for Kashmir Issue is set to increase, sword of FATF black list scenario on our head and non cooperative opposition is determined for toppling the government. Above all US-China Trade war has reduced the global economic activities due to which business opportunities are on declining trend. However it is said to be true that when a nation is lead by a non corrupt leader there would be a positive outcome at the end of the day. Pakistan's success on international front is one example where after 50 years we are able to voice for Kashmir at United Nations (UN) and getting it recognized internationally that India is an oppressor, occupying Kashmir against the resolutions of UN.

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Source: <https://dailytimes.com.pk/451215/economic-front-of-pakistan-ptis-one-year/>

# **Pakistan's Economic Policy Achieves Remarkable Results: Sina Finance**

BEIJING: :Pakistan's economic policy adopted by the present government led by Prime Minister Imran Khan during the last one year, has achieved remarkable results, Sina Finance, one of the largest financial news portals in China reported on Friday.

Recently, the Pakistani government released the first year of the government's report on the results of the administration.

The report shows that the Pakistani economy has emerged from the crisis in the past year and has gradually stabilized, it added.

The positive trend of the economic policy that reflects the stability of the Pakistani government is significant.

Among them, the improvement of business environment, the increase of taxation scale, the adjustment of development focus and the optimization of foreign-related cooperation are its outstanding features.

The positive changes in the above-mentioned strong base have laid a relatively reliable foundation for the development of Pakistan in the next stage.

The optimization of the business environment is conducive to expanding the attraction of foreign investment.

The report pointed out that in the past year, the Pakistani government's main investment department responsible for attracting foreign investment has approved the establishment of 11 special economic zones, which are distributed in the four provinces of the country.

In addition, in order to improve the ease of doing business, Pakistan has also implemented a series of reform measures.



Taking the establishment of a company as an example, the new company registration can be completed within one working day, the power supply can be in place within three months to four months, and the new building construction permit can be approved within about three months.

In the course of business, taxes, social security, and pension payments can be paid online.

At the same time, the government has set up a 24-hour hotline to answer questions and provide convenience for investors.

Under the influence of a series of positive measures, the ranking of the Bar Business Convenience Index has steadily increased from 147 to 136. The increase in the size of the tax will help alleviate the fiscal deficit.

The report shows that the government's series of tax reforms implemented in the past year have achieved remarkable results.

In July this year, the total domestic tax revenue of Pakistan was 234 billion rupees (about 1.45 billion US dollars), an increase of 60% year-on-year, and basically reached the target of 236 billion rupees.

The expansion of tax revenue is inseparable from the increase in taxpayers.

In the fiscal year of 2018/2019, the number of new taxpayers in Pakistan increased by 350,000, an increase of 137% over the previous fiscal year, indicating that the tax evasion problem that has long plagued Pakistan has been accelerated.

As long as this positive momentum is maintained, the situation of the Pakistani fiscal deficit will gradually ease.

The report pointed out that in the case of financial difficulties, the total size of development expenditure is limited.

In order to maximize the utility of limited resources, the Pakistani government has placed more emphasis on backwardness and delinquency in the development of key choices to achieve a balanced development between regions.

Among them, the province with the lowest level of development has received the largest share of public sector development funds totaling Rs 700 crore.

In addition to focusing on short-boarding in regional distribution, the Pakistani government also focuses on cultivating new economic growth poles in high-potential areas in the use of development funds.

It has established a technical and knowledge-intensive economic development working group and allocated Rs 14 billion as an incubation fund for 27 projects.

By focusing limited development funds on key areas and areas, the situation of horizontal and unbalanced economic development in Pakistan is improving.

The report pointed out that an important achievement of the Pakistani government in the past year has been the expansion of the connotation of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor, which further includes market access and industrial development in addition to traditional priorities such as energy project infrastructure construction.

New areas such as poverty alleviation through the people's livelihood, agricultural modernization, and the marine economy have enabled the corridor to keep pace with the times and better meet the needs of Pakistan's economic development.

In the future, as the economic measures of the economy will continue to be effective and the economic fundamentals will stabilize, Pakistan will gradually increase the priority of development and construction in economic policies.

By then, the construction of large-scale infrastructure projects under the corridor will accelerate.

Source: <https://www.thenews.com.pk/latest/516328-pakistans-economic-policy-achieves-remarkable-results-sina-finance?>

# **Economy on the Path to Recovery By**

## **Mohammad Jamil**

THE PTI government has indeed taken measures to reverse the economic downslide started with previous governments during the last ten years. This was significant in 2017-18 in the last year of PML-N government when highest ever trade deficit, current account deficit and fiscal deficit were recorded. The PTI government measures include documentation of economy to increase tax revenue, reduce imports and increase exports to control trade deficit; however, the decision to give extension to COAS General Qamar Javed Bajwa has resulted in boosting confidence to business community. The interbank market rupee has stabilized at Rs. 157 per US dollar, and during the last week, the KSE-100 index for first four days recorded gains of 3,650 points and closing at 31,884. On Friday, the benchmark index receded by 534.34 points firstly due to slight correction, and secondly due to fake news in Indian media that Pakistan has been blacklisted by FATF affiliate APG.

Investors' sentiments received a boost by the visit of the incumbent Chairman of Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan along with his team, which held discussions with the stakeholders on problems that plagued the market. Besides the companies that bought shares worth \$1.44 million, "brokers proprietary trading account" showed net purchases of \$1.74m which encouraged investors to believe that talks with the apex regulator may have progressed towards a market turnaround. On the economic front, the news of current account deficit having narrowed by 73pc in July raised confidence of investors who believed that the economy may finally be on the path of recovery. During the session, heavily oversold stocks were trading at 11-year low price-to-earnings ratio of just five times, inviting value investors. The recent State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) report indicates steep fall of 73 per cent in the current account deficit in July 2019 on month to month basis.

In July 2019, the exports have shown an increase of 10 percent to \$2.233 billion compared with exports of \$2.012 billion in July last year. If the trend of falling imports and increase in exports continues during the current fiscal year, it will help the government to reduce short term borrowings from multilateral donor agencies, banks and friendly countries to avert balance of payment crisis. It will

also help achieve exchange rate stability. However, the trade bodies have been critical of the restrictive import policy as in their view it would impede economic activity and impact growth in exports. The point of view of business community has some weight as export products producing industries consume imported raw material and intermediate goods. Over the past five decades successive governments had no interest to work out comprehensive industrial policies to promote establishment of industries that produce raw material for export industries and import substitute manufacturing industries.

As a matter of fact nationalization of industries of 1970s by Z.A Bhutto government had shattered confidence of entrepreneurs. Secondly, almost all governments in the past failed in introduction of new technologies, their indigenization by institutions of Research and Development, neglect of skill development, abnormal increase tariff of energy inputs created a discouraging environment that moved away Pakistan from becoming a manufacturing economy and turned it into an importing economy. This resulted in burgeoning current account deficit and an addition to the debt mountain. The PTI government has completed one year of its tenure but formulation of industrial policy is still awaited, as it was preoccupied with damage control exercise. Only four industries including textiles, leather goods, surgical items and sports goods export bulk of the value-added products. Unfortunately, the commercial councilors in the embassies abroad did not help exploring new markets for exportable goods and commodities from Pakistan. The PTI does not view defence and economic development in isolation from each other. An adequate defence is as necessary as a resurgent economy, which is must for maintaining and developing an effective capacity for the defence of Pakistan. Therefore, the PTI government formed the National Development Council (NDC) — with Prime Minister Imran Khan as its head and Chief of Army Staff General Qamar Javed Bajwa as one of its members — to accelerate economic growth and improve coordination among the provinces and the federation. Other members of National Development Council are Foreign Minister, Finance Minister, and top bureaucrats from relevant departments, and Chief Ministers of the provinces. According to a notification issued by the Cabinet Division, the newly formed body will set policies and chalk out strategy for development and provide guidelines for improving regional cooperation.

It has to be mentioned that the dismal economic situation was due to poor performance of PPP and PML-N governments in their tenures. PML-N government in its last tenure could not achieve its targets with regard to fiscal deficit, balance of payments vis-à-vis exports and imports; Pakistan's external debt mounted to around \$90 billion; economic reserves had declined to \$12 bn that were not enough for even three months imports. How Pakistan could achieve the robust economic growth in the presence of such economic indicators. Yet outgoing PM said that they left the economy in good shape? On 27 March 2018, Bloomberg quoting IMF's statistics said that Pakistan's foreign reserves may drop to an alarming low. It was understood that to manage economy, Pakistan will have to fall back on the IMF and other international finance institutions, and per force accept the conditionalities attached with the loans that are more often than not against the national interest.

—The writer is a senior journalist based in Lahore.

Source: <https://pakobserver.net/index.php/2019/08/27/economy-on-the-path-to-recovery/>

# **Is the Economy Out of Deep Waters? By Sarah Saleh**

The beginning of the fiscal year 2019 witnessed a massive drop in the current account deficit.

From 2.13 billion dollars in July 2018 it dropped to 579 million dollars in July 2019, shrinking by 73 percent. But much of the decline has come as a result of certain situations rather than the government policies that have worked out in our favour. For instance, the fall in the global oil prices has benefited us immensely by lifting the pressure from oil import bills. The State Bank has also attributed the decline in the current account deficit to decrease in the import of LNG, decline in machinery import and fall in global oil prices.

Government is optimistic that if the July trend of increasing exports coupled with remittances is sustained, the current account deficit will be brought down to one-digit figure

The trade deficit has also declined. In July 2019, exports experienced an increase of 14 percent, while imports declined by 18 percent. By comparing the data of July 2018 with July 2019, we can witness the fall in the monthly trade gap from two billion dollars to one billion dollars.

The boost in the exports came mainly from the rice and the textile sector, while the decline in imports is attributed to various government policies. Besides that, currency depreciation plays a huge role in the trade sector. When the currency of a country loses its value, its exports become cheaper thereby giving a price edge to that country's exports in the international markets. Similarly, imports of that country become expensive because of its devalued currency, and hence the rupee devaluation has a significant role in trade statistics. The decline in imports can also be attributed to a fall in machinery imports as the construction phase of CPEC project has come to an end.

The State Bank has also attributed the decline in the current account deficit to decrease in the import of LNG, decline in machinery import and fall in global oil prices

Just by looking at the above-mentioned data, some misleading conclusion can be formed, for instance that the economy is doing well now. It is misleading because we are still in deep waters, firstly, because the factors that have attributed to the macroeconomic improvement are highly volatile and not sustainable. Any hike in the global oil prices or the value of our currency is again going to deteriorate the situation. Secondly, by looking at the other economic variables we are once again overcome by a wave of plummeting optimism. The surging inflation rate is strangling the common man. The high interest rate is putting pressures on domestic investment. The manufacturing sector has shrunk by 3.6 percent, adding to the unemployment and decline in domestic production.

In such times, foreign direct investment might have brought some relief but the statistics present a gloomy picture in that sphere too. The FDI declined by 50 percent in the fiscal year 2019.

The whole scenario, therefore, leads to the conclusion that the fall in current account deficit is indeed welcome, but to celebrate it at this early stage is not only pointless but also foolish. It would have been entitled to celebration if it had occurred due to certain policy outcomes, which is not the case.

Government is optimistic that if the July trend of increasing exports coupled with remittances is sustained, the current account deficit will be brought down to one-digit figure. While optimism is a good thing, one must not forget that the key word here is 'sustained', and sustaining growth via such volatile factors is not so easy. There is no denying that many government policies have also paved way for the improvement in the current account deficit, but their share is not sufficient enough. In order to truly sustain these improvements we need to rely more on efficient policies than on other factors.

The writer is an economist, environmentalist, feminist, an animal rights activist and a poet

Source: <https://dailytimes.com.pk/456520/is-the-economy-out-of-deep-waters/>

# **The Forgotten History of the Financial Crisis**

## **By Adam Tooze**

September and October of 2008 was the worst financial crisis in global history, including the Great Depression.” Ben Bernanke, then the chair of the U.S. Federal Reserve, made this remarkable claim in November 2009, just one year after the meltdown. Looking back today, a decade after the crisis, there is every reason to agree with Bernanke’s assessment: 2008 should serve as a warning of the scale and speed with which global financial crises can unfold in the twenty-first century.

The basic story of the financial crisis is familiar enough. The trouble began in 2007 with a downturn in U.S. and European real estate markets; as housing prices plunged from California to Ireland, homeowners fell behind on their mortgage payments, and lenders soon began to feel the heat. Thanks to the deep integration of global banking, securities, and funding markets, the contagion quickly spread to major financial institutions around the world. By late 2008, banks in Belgium, France, Germany, Ireland, Latvia, the Netherlands, Portugal, Russia, Spain, South Korea, the United Kingdom, and the United States were all facing existential crises. Many had already collapsed, and many others would before long.

The Great Depression of the 1930s is remembered as the worst economic disaster in modern history—one that resulted in large part from inept policy responses—but it was far less synchronized than the crash in 2008. Although more banks failed during the Depression, these failures were scattered between 1929 and 1933 and involved far smaller balance sheets. In 2008, both the scale and the speed of the implosion were breathtaking. According to data from the Bank for International Settlements, gross capital flows around the world plunged by 90 percent between 2007 and 2008.

As capital flows dried up, the crisis soon morphed into a crushing recession in the real economy. The “great trade collapse” of 2008 was the most severe synchronized contraction in international trade ever recorded. Within nine months of their pre-crisis peak, in April 2008, global exports were down by 22 percent. (During the Great Depression, it took nearly two years for trade to slump by a



similar amount.) In the United States between late 2008 and early 2009, 800,000 people were losing their jobs every month. By 2015, over nine million American families would lose their homes to foreclosure—the largest forced population movement in the United States since the Dust Bowl. In Europe, meanwhile, failing banks and fragile public finances created a crisis that nearly split the eurozone.

Ten years later, there is little consensus about the meaning of 2008 and its aftermath. Partial narratives have emerged to highlight this or that aspect of the crisis, even as crucial elements of the story have been forgotten. In the United States, memories have centered on the government recklessness and private criminality that led up to the crash; in Europe, leaders have been content to blame everything on the Americans.

In fact, bankers on both sides of the Atlantic created the system that imploded in 2008. The collapse could easily have devastated both the U.S. and the European economies had it not been for improvisation on the part of U.S. officials at the Federal Reserve, who leveraged trans-atlantic connections they had inherited from the twentieth century to stop the global bank run. That this reality has been obscured speaks both to the contentious politics of managing global finances and to the growing distance between the United States and Europe. More important, it forces a question about the future of financial globalization: How will a multipolar world that has moved beyond the transatlantic structures of the last century cope with the next crisis?

## TALL TALES

One of the more common tropes to emerge since 2008 is that no one predicted the crisis. This is an after-the-fact construction. In truth, there were many predictions of a crisis—just not of the crisis that ultimately arrived.

Macroeconomists around the world had long warned of global imbalances stemming from U.S. trade and budget deficits and China's accumulation of U.S. debt, which they feared could trigger a global dollar selloff. The economist Paul Krugman warned in 2006 of “a Wile E. Coyote moment,” in which investors, recognizing the poor fundamentals of the U.S. economy, would suddenly flee dollar-denominated assets, crippling the world economy and sending interest rates sky-high.

But the best and the brightest were reading the wrong signs. When the crisis came, the Chinese did not sell off U.S. assets. Although they reduced their holdings in U.S.-government-sponsored enterprises such as the mortgage lenders Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac, they increased their purchases of U.S. Treasury bonds, refusing to join the Russians in a bear raid on the dollar. Rather than falling as predicted, the dollar actually rose in the fall of 2008. What U.S. authorities were facing was not a Sino-American meltdown but an implosion of the transatlantic banking system, a crisis of financial capitalism.

And the crisis was general, not just American, although the Europeans had a hard time believing it. When, over the weekend of September 13–14, 2008, U.S. Treasury Secretary Henry Paulson and other officials tried to arrange the sale of the failed investment bank Lehman Brothers to the British bank Barclays, the reaction of Alistair Darling, the British chancellor of the exchequer, was telling. He did not want, he told his American counterparts, to “import” the United States’ “cancer”—this despite the fact that the United Kingdom’s own banks were already tumbling around him.

To Europeans, the crisis was the United States’ comeuppance.

The French and the Germans were no less emphatic. In September 2008, as the crisis was going global, the German finance minister, Peer Steinbrück, declared that it was “an American problem” that would cause the United States to “lose its status as the superpower of the world financial system.” French President Nicolas Sarkozy announced that U.S.-style “laissez faire” was “finished.” To Europeans, the idea of an American crisis made sense. The United States had allowed itself to be sucked into misguided wars of choice while refusing to pay for them. It was living far beyond its means, and the crisis was its comeuppance. But confident predictions that this was a U.S. problem were quickly overtaken by events. Not only were Europe’s banks deeply involved in the U.S. subprime crisis, but their business models left them desperately dependent on dollar funding. The result was to send the continent into an economic and political crisis from which it is only now recovering.

Even today, Americans and Europeans have very different memories of the financial crisis. For many American commentators, it stands as a moment in a protracted arc of national decline and the prehistory of the radicalization of the

Republican Party. In September 2008, the Republican-led House of Representatives voted against the Bush administration's bailout plan to save the national economy from imminent implosion (although it passed a similar bill in early October); a few months later, after a lost election and at a time when 800,000 Americans were being thrown out of work every month, House Republicans voted nearly unanimously against President Barack Obama's stimulus bill. The crisis ushered in a new era of absolute partisan antagonism that would rock American democracy to its foundations.

Europeans, meanwhile, remain content to let the United States shoulder the blame. France and Germany have no equivalent of *The Big Short*—the best-selling book (and later movie) that dramatized the events of 2008 as an all-American conflict between the forces of herd instinct and rugged individualism, embodied by the heterodox speculators who saw the crisis coming. Germans cannot ignore that Deutsche Bank was a major player in those events, but they can easily explain this away by claiming that the bank abandoned its German soul. And just as the Europeans have chosen to forget their own mistakes, so, too, have they forgotten what the crisis revealed about Europe's dependence on the United States—an inconvenient truth for European elites at a time when Brussels and Washington are drifting apart.

### A FISTFUL OF DOLLARS

Europe's persistent illusions were on full display in an August 9, 2017, press release from the European Commission. In it, the commission announced that the "crisis did not start in Europe" and that the underlying problem had been "exposure to sub-prime mortgage markets in the United States," which triggered the deep European recession that followed. Brussels went on to take credit for mitigating that recession through the "strong political decisions" of EU institutions and member states.

The timing of the press release was significant. It came on the tenth anniversary of what most experts consider to be the true start of the global financial crisis—the moment on August 9, 2007, when the French bank BNP Paribas announced that it was freezing three of its investment funds due to volatility in asset-backed securities markets in the United States. This was the first indication that the downturn in housing prices, which had begun in early 2007, would have global

ramifications. That same day, the European Central Bank (ECB) was sufficiently alarmed to inject \$131 billion in liquidity into Europe's banking system.

The commission's analysis of what happened in 2007 was telling. Set aside, for a moment, the fact that problems at a French bank were the occasion of the anniversary, that there were massive homegrown real estate busts in Ireland and Spain, and that Greece and Italy had accumulated dangerous debt stocks of their own. What, exactly, did the implosion of U.S. subprime mortgage markets expose?

The United States' mortgage system was obviously broken. Some of the lending was criminal. And the design of mortgage-backed securities, many of which earned the highest bond ratings by bundling together bad mortgages, was flawed. But none of these problems explains why the downturn precipitated a global banking crisis. After all, investors lost more money when the dot-com bubble burst in 2000 and 2001, but that did not bring the global financial system to the brink of disaster.

What turned 2008 into the worst banking crisis in history was a new business model for banks. Traditionally, most banks had funded their operations through what is known as "retail" banking, in which consumers lend money to banks in the form of deposits, which banks use to make loans. Beginning in the 1980s, however, banks across the world increasingly moved toward "wholesale" banking, funding their operations through large, short-term loans from other financial institutions, such as other banks and money market funds. The motive for this shift was profit and competitive survival. Wholesale funding gave banks the ability to borrow much larger sums of money than they could in the retail market, allowing them to become more leveraged—and thus more exposed to risk—than ever before.

But the real threat to the global economy was not just that banks in the United States, Europe, and, to some extent, Russia and Asia were becoming overleveraged; it was also that much of these banks' short-term funding involved currency mismatches. In order to do business in the United States, non-U.S. banks needed dollars, which they obtained from wholesale markets through a variety of methods: borrowing unsecured cash from U.S. sources, issuing commercial paper (essentially short-term IOUs), and, crucially, using currency-

swap markets to receive short-term dollar loans in exchange for their own local currencies, with a promise to “swap” the currencies back at the end of the loan term. In short, foreign banks were racking up sizable liabilities that had to be paid in dollars. If the money markets where they obtained these dollars ceased to function, many of the world’s banks would immediately be at risk of failure.

And in fact, that is precisely what happened. The first big bank to fail spectacularly was the British lender Northern Rock, in August and September 2007. It had no exposure to American subprime mortgages, but its funding model relied overwhelmingly on wholesale borrowing from around the world. What cut off Northern Rock’s access to funding was BNP Paribas’ August 9 announcement. This sent a signal to wholesale lenders that more banks were holding bad assets than anyone had previously understood. With the extent of the contagion unknown, wholesale lending ground to a halt. Five days later, Northern Rock informed British regulators that it would need assistance.

The shutdown in bank funding quickly rippled across the global financial system, even reaching Russia and South Korea, countries remote from the subprime debacle but whose banks relied on the same wholesale markets now under stress. The world was witnessing a trillion-dollar, transnational bank run.

By late 2007, the world was witnessing a trillion-dollar, transnational bank run. People tend to think of globalization as involving the rise of emerging markets such as China and India, and in manufacturing and commodities, these countries have indeed been the engines of growth. But in the early twenty-first century, financial globalization still revolved around the transatlantic axis, and it was between the United States and Europe that the real disaster threatened. The Bank for International Settlements estimated that all told, by the end of 2007, European banks would have needed to raise somewhere between \$1 trillion and \$1.2 trillion in order to cover the gaps on their balance sheets between dollar assets and dollar funding. In the good times, these banks had easily obtained funding through currency swaps and wholesale markets. Now, with interbank markets drying up, they were desperate for dollars.

By the fall of 2007, officials in the United States had begun to fear that European banks, in a frantic bid to earn dollars to pay their bills, would liquidate their dollar portfolios in a giant fire sale. And because these banks owned 29 percent of all

nonconforming, high-risk mortgage-backed securities in the United States, this was not just a European problem. The nightmare scenario for the Americans was that European banks would dump their dollar holdings, driving the prices of mortgage-backed securities to rock bottom and forcing U.S. banks, which held even larger quantities of those securities, to recognize huge losses, thus triggering a bank run that would have overwhelmed the furious efforts of the U.S. authorities to restore stability. It was this risk of simultaneous implosion on both sides of the Atlantic that made 2008 the most dangerous crisis ever witnessed.

### CALLING THE FEDS

With disaster threatening, the question became how to respond. In the fall of 2008, governments across the West rushed to bail out their ailing financial institutions. In the United States, Washington came to the aid of the investment bank Bear Stearns, Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac, and the insurance giant AIG. The United Kingdom effectively nationalized HBOS, Lloyds, and the Royal Bank of Scotland. Belgium, France, Germany, Ireland, and Switzerland all took emergency measures to rescue their own banking sectors.

As the trouble spread, crisis diplomacy kicked in. The inaugural G-20 leadership summit convened in November 2008, bringing together heads of state from developing countries such as Brazil, China, and India, in addition to those from the developed world. The birth of the G-20 reflected a multipolar world economy in which emerging markets had new weight. But it also made recourse to institutions such as the International Monetary Fund, which many developing countries viewed with hostility, all the more sensitive. No one in Washington wanted a repeat of the controversies of the Asian financial crisis in the late 1990s, when the IMF's draconian loans came to be seen by their recipients as violations of national sovereignty.

Behind the scenes, U.S. officials were putting an alternative rescue mechanism in place. The central problem was that the world's banks needed dollar funding. And the only institution that could fill that need was the Federal Reserve.

Officials at the Fed had already started to worry about European banks' funding gaps toward the end of 2007. By December of that year, Bernanke and Timothy Geithner, then the president of the New York Federal Reserve Bank, had begun offering special liquidity programs to Wall Street, giving U.S. financial institutions

access to cheap cash in the hopes of stabilizing their balance sheets and avoiding a ruinous selloff of mortgage-backed securities. Immediately, European banks started dipping into these funds. The Europeans took more than half of the \$3.3 trillion offered through the Fed's Term Auction Facility, which auctioned off low-interest short-term loans, and 72 percent of the deals provided through the Single-Tranche Open Market Operation, a little-publicized Fed liquidity program that ran from March to December of 2008. (Credit Suisse alone took one-quarter of that program's funds.)

For the Fed to be acting as lender of last resort to foreign banks was no doubt unusual, but these were desperate times, and it needed to avoid a European fire sale of U.S. assets at all costs. As the crisis intensified, however, the Fed's leaders found that simply providing the European banks with access to the Wall Street liquidity programs would not be enough. Their funding needs were too great, and they lacked sufficient high-quality collateral in New York. So Geithner and the New York Federal Reserve resorted to an indirect mechanism for providing them with dollars, repurposing a long-forgotten instrument known as a "liquidity swap line."

Liquidity swap lines are contracts between two central banks, in this case, the Fed and a foreign central bank, to temporarily exchange currencies: the Fed provides its counterpart with a fixed amount of dollars and in return receives an equivalent amount of that bank's local currency. (The foreign central bank also pays a margin of interest to the Fed.) Liquidity swap lines had been used extensively in the 1960s to deal with tensions in the Bretton Woods system—which, by compelling countries to back their money with gold, led to frequent currency imbalances—but had since been confined to emergencies, as when they were used to help the Bank of Mexico during the peso crisis of 1994–95. The revival of liquidity swap lines in 2007–8 ensured that there would be no dangerous spikes in the funding costs of key Asian, European, and Latin American banks. If interbank funding got too tight, the global financial system would receive dollars directly from the Fed.

The major beneficiaries of the swap lines were the central banks of Japan, Europe, and the major emerging-market countries, which could now take dollars from the Fed to pass on to their own struggling banks. The Fed introduced the liquidity swap lines in December 2007, and they were rapidly increased to a

permissible limit of \$620 billion. On October 13, 2008, they were uncapped, giving the major foreign central banks unlimited dollar drawing rights. By December 2008, the swap lines were the single largest outstanding item on the Fed's balance sheet. The swap lines operated over various terms, ranging from overnight to three months. But if, for accounting purposes, they were standardized to a 28-day term, between December 2007 and August 2010, the Fed provided its Asian, European, and Latin American counterparts with just shy of \$4.5 trillion in liquidity, of which the ECB alone took \$2.5 trillion. That the European banks' giant funding gap did not escalate into a full-blown transatlantic financial crisis is thanks in large part to these swap lines.

Although the swap lines could be dismissed as technical in-house arrangements between central banks, they represented a fundamental transformation of the global financial system. The world's central banks effectively became offshore divisions of the Fed, conduits for whatever dollar liquidity the financial system required. The Fed, that is, made itself into a global lender of last resort. Whereas before 2008 many had expected an imminent dollar selloff, the crisis ended up confirming the centrality of the Fed to the global financial system. And by successfully managing the crisis, the Fed reinforced the dollar's attractiveness as the world's commercial currency.

But in establishing the swap-line system, the Fed also confirmed a hierarchy of central banks. The system included the obvious European central banks, such as the ECB, the Bank of England, and the Swiss National Bank, and those of Canada and Japan. But it also included the central banks of major emerging-market financial centers, such as Brazil, Mexico, Singapore, and South Korea. They were in; the likes of China, India, and Russia were not. Veterans of the swap-line program at the Fed, who spoke to me on the condition of anonymity, admitted that they knew that by rolling it out they were straying into geopolitical terrain. They carefully compiled a list of the 14 central banks that were to participate in the program, all of which had to be approved by the U.S. Treasury Department and the State Department. The Fed's minutes from the meeting of the Federal Open Market Committee on October 29, 2008, record that at least two applicants were rejected, but their names were redacted. Not everyone was sufficiently important—or sufficiently politically and economically aligned with the United States—to qualify.



The swap-line system wasn't secret, but it wasn't trumpeted, either. This was no Marshall Plan moment, and U.S. officials had no desire to publicize the fact that they were coming to the world's rescue. The inability of Europe's megabanks to come up with the trillions of dollars they owed posed such a risk to the U.S. economy that doing nothing was simply not an option. So discreetly, the Fed offered the Europeans a helping hand.

The world's central banks effectively became offshore divisions of the Fed. The liquidity swap lines wound down rapidly in 2009, as private credit markets began to recover. The full details of the liquidity programs were not disclosed until 2011, when the U.S. Supreme Court ordered the Fed to release the data to reporters from Bloomberg. There was good reason for secrecy: central banks do not wish to stigmatize borrowers that avail themselves of support when they need it, and announcing that the world's most important central banks were desperate for dollar funding could have frightened international markets. The result, however, is that the Fed's actions to save the global financial system have largely been forgotten. An unprecedented intervention effectively disappeared down a memory hole.

## THE FIRE NEXT TIME

Today, the swap lines are an obscure part of the narrative in the United States; in Europe, they have been forgotten altogether. The European Commission is free to peddle its story that it was prompt action by the European authorities that saved Europe from a crisis made in the United States. European banks such as Barclays and Deutsche Bank can proudly proclaim that, unlike their American counterparts, they came through the crisis without state assistance, despite the fact that they took hundreds of billions of dollars in liquidity from the Fed. Although such depictions are profoundly misleading, they speak volumes about the state of transatlantic relations in the early twenty-first century. The United States and Europe remain massively interdependent, but they lack a common story to glue the relationship together.

The year 2008 can thus be seen as a moment of transition. On the one hand, it marked a twenty-first-century global crisis. On the other hand, the management of that crisis relied on networks of interdependence shaped by the twentieth-century history of the transatlantic relationship—networks that were deep but that leaders on both sides of the divide now seem eager to leave behind.

What are the implications for the future? Many predicted that in the aftermath of the crisis, the dollar would lose its status as the world's leading currency, but the opposite has happened. According to figures compiled by the economists Ethan Ilzetzki, Carmen Reinhart, and Kenneth Rogoff, today the dollar is the anchor currency—the standard against which other currencies are pegged—for countries representing around 70 percent of global GDP, up from closer to 60 percent at the turn of the millennium. It was European, not American, finance that retreated. The events of 2008 left the European banks in a weakened position, and since then, they have repeatedly looked to Washington for support. When the eurozone crisis was at its most acute, in 2010, the Fed reopened its swap lines, and in November 2013, they were made permanent.

At the same time as the Fed tided the European banks over during the crisis, U.S. regulators began to take an increasingly dim view of their stability. During negotiations in the Basel Committee on Banking Supervision throughout 2010, U.S. and European officials clashed over tightening banking rules and capital requirements. And after Obama signed the Dodd-Frank financial regulations into law in July of that year, U.S. regulators began using the law's provisions to force European banks in the United States to either comply with the tougher standards or exit the U.S. market.

The ultimate outcome of the crisis was thus an unwinding of the extraordinarily tight connection between U.S. and European finance that had characterized the 1990s and early years of this century. Between 2009 and 2017, the foreign claims of banks as a share of global GDP—a rough proxy for financial globalization—fell by roughly 22 percentage points, or around \$9.5 trillion. The entirety of that reduction was attributable to European banks, with much of it coming in 2009 through a collapse of European claims on the United States. Deutsche Bank's April 2018 decision to reduce its presence on Wall Street was a belated example of this broader European retreat.

At the same time as European finance has deglobalized, emerging markets have taken center stage. Cheap dollar finance enabled by the Fed's policy of low interest rates has sucked emerging markets into a deep entanglement with the U.S.-dominated financial system. By 2015, China's businesses had borrowed over \$1.7 trillion in foreign currency, the largest part of that in dollars, to feed their

rampant need for investment finance. This is profitable for everyone involved and widely seen as a harbinger of China's integration into international finance; yet with this new development come new dangers. The actions taken by the Fed to manage the 2008 crisis were underpinned by the remnants of a transatlantic relationship dating back to the end of World War II; given today's fraying transatlantic ties, it is an open question whether it will be able to repeat its efforts on a truly global scale when the next crisis arrives.

Nor is it clear that the Fed will have as much political leeway as it did in 2008. When asked about the politics of the swap lines back then, one Fed veteran who spoke to me on the condition of anonymity remarked that it had been as though the world's central bankers had a guardian angel watching over them on Capitol Hill. Some legislators clearly understood what was going on, but no unhelpful and potentially inflammatory questions were asked, such as whom the billions of dollars flushing through the swap lines would ultimately benefit. The Fed had carte blanche to do what was necessary. Given what has since emerged about the scale of its actions, the shift in the political climate in the United States, and the likelihood that the next crisis will be in the emerging markets, and quite possibly in China, it may take more than a guardian angel to save the global economy next time.

Source: <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/world/2018-08-13/forgotten-history-financial-crisis>

# **Economic Front of Pakistan By Syed Ali Imran**

A Year is lapsed for PTI that came into power first time with rhetoric to make a new Pakistan by bringing corruption free good governance. If one may execute a quantitative analysis, economic indicators may be assumed as a tool of performance together with recovery figures through accountability and broadening of Tax Net. Good news is that the Current Account Deficit (CAD) and Trade Deficit (Twin Deficits) showing decreasing trend tremendously but slowing down of economy and fall in Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth rate is a very bad news. Slow down of economy was an obvious outcome for import based economy which got affected due to huge devaluation of Pak Rupee when Exchange rate is set to free. Though it helped to bring down twin deficits but introduced double digit inflation crossing 10%. It compelled State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) to raise Discount Rate which further resulted businesses to become costly. In short, controlling twin deficit increased twin input costs of doing business i.e. Exchange Rate and Interest Rate. Besides these economic indicators as a result of tight monetary policy other quantitative parameters are not showing much movement towards any outcome due to the fact that corruption is so deep rooted that proving a corruption out of corrupt environment is giving the accountability institutions a big trouble. On the other side, despite of the fact that new FBR Chairman is determined towards documentation of economy for better tax collection, tax evaders are retaliating and trying to skip this fiscal measure taken by the government by way of different threats. Is this mean that the government is failed to bring any positive change into economic system of the country? Answer to this question is too early to conclude when government is trying to change import based consumer behaviour of the country. PTI preferred to get an International Monetary Fund (IMF) program not only to bring liquidity into Pakistan but for financial discipline through various monetary and fiscal measures including a strategy to undo Pakistan's name from Grey List of Financial Action Task Force (FATF) by introducing Qualitative measures by strengthening regulatory bodies which will control Money Laundering and Terrorist Financing.

By increasing tax net and inflicting harsh measurers for the same government has opened another battle field with traders and retailers but in longer run when

this segment of economy who do not pay proper tax become documented through CNIC condition and paying GST deducted to national exchequer, it will result in increasing tax collection which ultimately be used in paying debt servicing and financing of subsidies

On flag hosting ceremony on SBP building at 14th August, Governor SBP Mr. Reza Baqir hinted about the economy on right track and all possible measures to deal with economic emergency have been so far applied that means worst is over. He emphasizes present economic policies to be consistent so that the final outcome would be based on the effects of these reforms. He stated that these painful measures will get long-term economic growth which will benefit the low income and middle class. Prime Minister Imran Khan also quoted several times that soon the country will get out of economic troubles and he considers 6 months remaining for results to impact national exchequer, positively. Question arises that if Lower Income and Middle Class are happy with the pain inflicted by tough economic measures. Simple reply to this query is NO. By controlling Twin Deficit, Khan's government is ready for GDP growth rate to slow down from 5.75% to 2.5% and inflation to rise as stated in IMF report for current fiscal year. As Economy from last couple of decades has become import based where local manufacturers are discouraged and easy money is earned at which even tax were not submitted to national exchequer, twin input cost i.e. Devaluation and Interest rate hike resulted an economic slow-down whereas government efforts to increase tax net making lock down calls from traders and middleman. This scenario is triggering economic chaos everywhere where no one can determine exact future of one's economic activity therefore unemployment is an ultimate outcome affecting Lower class house hold income, value of money and purchasing power. It is an apparent result of IMF conditions imposed over Pakistan for next 36 months. However, if government strict measures for financial discipline may successfully be installed it will become prosperity for lower income class in longer run and burden will be shifted to Upper Class in shape of direct taxation.

Government is committed towards achieving the toughest target imposed not only by IMF but itself for prosperous Pakistan. For said reason the government has set some goals which are set to be short term and long term. In short run Twin Deficits are controlled which increased twin cost of production specially for importers as explained above but it will help local industries to grow. Initially,

import based GDP will fall and then a pattern will be set where only essential imports will be allowed. Afterwards Export based GDP will increase and import substitution for local consumption will become future of the country that will save foreign exchange. For said reason government is trying to improve efficiency of quality control units. By increasing tax net and inflicting harsh measurers for the same government has opened another battle field with traders and retailers but in longer run when this segment of economy who do not pay proper tax become documented through CNIC condition and paying GST deducted to national exchequer, it will result in increasing tax collection which ultimately be used in paying debt servicing and financing of subsidies. Soon when tax net will increase it will bring stability in economy, tax rates will fall and indirect taxation will be replaced with direct taxation. This long term scenario seems very optimistic though when we have a border situation at Line of Control where military conflict with neighbours is very much possible inflicting pain to already downturned economy, spending on international relations for Kashmir Issue is set to increase, sword of FATF black list scenario on our head and non cooperative opposition is determined for toppling the government. Above all US-China Trade war has reduced the global economic activities due to which business opportunities are on declining trend. However it is said to be true that when a nation is lead by a non corrupt leader there would be a positive outcome at the end of the day. Pakistan's success on international front is one example where after 50 years we are able to voice for Kashmir at United Nations (UN) and getting it recognized internationally that India is an oppressor, occupying Kashmir against the resolutions of UN.

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Source: <https://dailytimes.com.pk/451215/economic-front-of-pakistan-ptis-one-year/>

# EDUCATION

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## **Higher Education Funds | Editorial**

A FEW months ago, the country's public-sector universities were rocked by the news of an impending cut in government spending on higher education. The latest information confirms just how drastic the change has been. A vice chancellors' committee comprising the heads of some of Pakistan's top-notch universities has called for an additional official grant of Rs10bn for these centres of higher education to cope with a worrisome situation. The call, made on Tuesday at a press conference after a meeting at the Higher Education Commission Secretariat in Islamabad, has come amid reports of stalled programmes and the cancellation of many important initiatives, all resulting from the budgetary cut. The recurring budget for public universities was cut from Rs65bn in the last fiscal year to only Rs59bn this year. The consequences have been severe. So much so that some of these universities are struggling to pay staff salaries, and it appears that all — or at least a majority of — the fancy schemes through which the universities were supposed to raise their own funds have failed to take off.

Experts had pointed out that the cut would limit students' access to research and knowledge and adversely affect the salaries of teachers. It is feared that scholarships will dwindle and that the reduction in the budget will spell disaster for those students who have few resources. As it is, the country was already spending a paltry sum per student. The latest information from the campuses is alarming and the VCs are demanding some quick measures to avoid the system from falling apart. They want to invite the relevant ministers for urgent discussions regarding the funds that are needed to course correct quickly, together with arranging some emergency fund-raising activities. The outcome of this two-pronged advance that engages the government at one level and simultaneously seeks to identify sources of funds is crucial to the future health of higher education institutions in the public sector. However, the final responsibility of sustaining the universities rests with the state.

Source: <https://www.dawn.com/news/1498744/higher-education-funds>

# **Education Means More Than Just Job**

## **Prospects By Soufia Siddiqi**

Through a series of recent writings on the education sector in Pakistan, a tricky narrative seems to be emerging around the utility of going to school or university in this country.

Even though the great potential of education is pointed out, the more forceful argument seems to lean towards the diminishing utility of schooling because of the particular manner in which it happens in our context or, more likely, the lack of economic gain from it.

Before we go any further, let's set the record very straight and very clear: it is always better to be in school than out. It takes a certain level of privilege to be commenting on life — education quality in particular — all of which is engendered by the fact that those of us commenting went to school.

Of course, you could ask me whether we should also let children do obnoxious amounts of drugs and eat sticks of butter to find out neither are good for them, but we know school is about a lot more than intoxication and fat.

The non-academics of schooling

So what exactly does going to school do for children that can be gleaned from even our dilapidated version of an education system?

For starters, try being your current self as you are reading this, but spending time only with people six years younger or about 25 years older than you (likely your parents) — would it wear you out?

The number one reason we must commit to giving children a school experience is because it offers them the chance to participate in a peer community, and this informs a necessary part of their mental, emotional, cognitive and social growth.

This couldn't be truer in the Pakistani context, where even in the most rundown schools, provided there is a boundary wall, a group of children comes together for hours at a stretch.



Whilst we can debate what they do during those hours, there is enough ethnographic evidence on the classroom to suggest that even in the most disruptive environments, children successfully identify important elements of the real world: patterns, some routines, social cues, memories and, above all, human relationships.

In fact, the quality of an education experience is inevitably mediated by how well many of these factors are curated by adults for the modulated, sometimes regimented, development of children. I am not arguing a binary here: schools cannot be straitjackets, just as they cannot be Run Wild zones.

But they must exist to enable young minds and bodies to learn to co-exist beyond the general familiarity of their own homes.

In other words, schools offer an important democratic function by compelling students to deal with both those external to them, and how they feel when they are in a public environment.

#### Reality checks in education

There's a counter to this as well: these aren't the schools in Pakistan. The schools in Pakistan, we commonly complain, have insular notions of pedagogy, bigoted perspectives in our social studies textbooks and not enough space (physical and mental) to let children socialise effectively.

None of these are incorrect accusations, but they also do not represent a much more sophisticated picture of the varying efforts being made across our country to salvage our most important asset — the future of our children.

Consider a modest whitewashed education building that stands firmly in the midst of what used to be a Muttahida Qaumi Movement territory in Karachi. At the country's only privately-run exam board, a group of dedicated, middle-class Pakistanis who were born and raised in this country are slowly changing the way we think about 21st century learning in some of our most disadvantaged schooling spaces.

The experiments they try in pedagogy, curricular add-ons and how to assess all of this so that students and teachers learn continuously are simple, but revolutionary for how seamlessly they get education actors to think critically within the government's education process. This is what has attracted policymakers from Balochistan, Washington DC and now the Punjab towards their model.

Related: Either be in power or be a subject to it — Pakistani schools as mediums to perpetuate obedience

In a different part of the same city, another experiment is being conducted and carefully monitored by Pakistan's largest not-for-profit education system. Started with the mission to reverse the abysmal level of opportunity available to some of Pakistan's poorest children, The Citizens' Foundation (TCF) tries to place the child at the heart of everything it does.

In some instances, this has generated significant critique, which has challenged Pakistanis to think more holistically about learning: a beautiful building is the right of a Pakistani child because aesthetics and good experiential design are fundamental to becoming a well-rounded human being.

But in its latest experiment, the TCF represents the real possibility of embodying at the level of the average individual, what is often priced for the children of the upper economic classes: the ability to think conceptually from a young age, develop spatial skills through play and take shared pride in real, not imagined, identities.

#### More than employment

There is something fundamentally empowering about these kinds of learning processes, irrespective of how they translate across multiple forms of assessment or household surveys.

At best, good learning teaches young minds to explore the world around themselves; at worst, an uninspiring learning process compels students to toe a line, which is bound to be broken by one or another incident in real life.

The questions such encounters raise in the human mind are both unavoidable, and a constant feature of how human beings develop the mettle to keep growing. Sometimes, this may come at considerable risk to the stability of their immediate present, but on other occasions, this may be the trigger to changing the assumptions we hold about the sanctity of long-established values.

In 2015, when I was working with female farmers in communities across Thatta, many parents would comment that the reason they wanted their children — boys and girls — to go to some kind of school, even if it wasn't the best, was because they could then read to their parents. Personal letters, medical prescriptions, bills and above all, a newspaper or book could all be accessible in a way they just weren't at the time.

I was once also told they wanted their girls to have an education so they could replace somebody like me — the problem-solver, yes, but from a different context.

This realisation that even a small amount of schooling can yield significant marginal benefits in the lives of our poorest citizens contests assumptions made in colloquial narratives about the singularly economic motivations behind seeking an education.

Evidence on gender parity from the Annual School Census 2018 for Punjab, for instance, demonstrates that there are just about as many girls in primary school now as there are boys (0.96) even if this ratio is not mirrored in our labour market or its signals.

Whilst boys do begin to outnumber girls at the secondary level, first-level analyses for Punjab are showing that this is linked more with accessibility issues than gendered positions amongst students or their parents on continuing an education.

More importantly, preliminary reports from reviews of one of the largest education stipend programmes in the country (possibly the world), Zewar-e-Taleem (ZeT), indicate inconclusive causality between financial incentive and educational demand.

This is a useful flag to the Government of Punjab, not just to restructure ZeT for more targeted subsidising of girls' education in creative ways, but to use data and technology more intelligently to bring efficiency to service delivery.

The good news is that the School Education Department (SED) is already moving in this direction, having recently launched an e-transfer application that has resolved nearly 18,000 teacher transfer cases in the first month of its operation (which would manually have taken six to eight months), according to a source close to the SED.

But the most intriguing insight from ZeT is that once in school, girls seem to generate enough will and positive externality to associate education with more than some form of monetary compensation or reward.

A recent report on the state of reading amongst Pakistan's children by The Wilson Center confirms this phenomenon: data from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa shows that the demand for girls' enrollment is at — if not above — capacity.

Now read: *Why Pakistani schools continue to fail students like Aafiya*

Across Swat — of anti-girls' education rhetorical fame — I have been fortunate enough to witness the urgency and singular purpose with which parents and young activists are leading their communities to ensure all children get to school, stay there and learn something in the process so that their lives are a step ahead of the previous generation's.

Tucked away in the mountainside of Tehsil Kabal, a persistent schoolteacher has been operating off a few mats and a chalkboard to make sure the little boys and girls in his makeshift primary school stay relatively on track.

Further up, a group of rights campaigners led by an enthusiastic Dardic linguist from Bahrain, Swat continues its push for primary education to be delivered in a child's mother tongue so that it is easiest to comprehend what is being taught.

These seemingly underdeveloped school environments and their caretakers are teaching students the best kinds of lessons: of resilience, agility, empathy, care, love and service in the face of potentially no return.

These are the 21st century skills Pakistani children need most in an uncertain, often brutal world that challenges us daily to remember what makes us dignified humans.

The way forwards for education

There may be a temptation to think mass education in Pakistan, too, is the consequence of industrial hysteria — even if imaginary — as it was in the post-World War I Western world.

The voices from the field remind us, though, that everyday experiences of education are not explicable through linear equations between learning and employment. The traditional notion of the ‘market’ also does not help understand why Pakistanis struggle so earnestly to learn something.

The demand for education in this country, it is clear, is mediated by a far more complex web of motivations and aspirations than we are currently even documenting: something all universities and think tanks involved in the education sector must think about seriously.

And if we look at the education superstars in this country, can we be genuinely convinced we are a one-dimensional lot for which all educational roads lead to the singular aspiration for a monetary gain?

The problem with money is that we can't live without it. So of course it features in every conversation we have, as does education. We need to do better by ourselves and look at the nuance of both these terms to wonder whether it is just money that drives education — its investment, outcomes and externalities.

The stories I have narrated here might help you start to realise the answer to the above can be a firm ‘no’. Ours is not a country that lacks imagination. Nor do we not have the resources to try and start thinking differently about how and why we learn.

Analysis: Why haven't past education reforms had more effect?

But to do so, perhaps we have to wade past the fallacy of grand narratives, big data, sweeping assumptions and the constraints of structures: money, the electorate, the invisible hand(s), cyclical illiteracy, religious friction.

We prefer to explain our problems at a distance, removed from us. But what if we owned these problems as ours, so that we would be in a position to present their solutions, not forces beyond our control?

When French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu first wrote of the interplay between the education structures that seemingly bind us through our social positions, and the inescapable urge as a human being to be free, he created a theory around habitus.

The ultimate result of any fight between structure and perceived agency, he argued, was a student's unconscious conditioning into 'thinking' he was 'free' (the study was of a boys' elite school).

By the end of his life, Bourdieu had challenged his own theory. His contention? The world had transformed itself too much through technology, the media, behavioural economics and resistant politics to argue anymore that a student could ever be kept shackled in his/her mind by the confines of a textbook, classroom or lacklustre teacher. Structures could be overpowered by a relentless struggle for human dignity and agency.

This is what we must remind the Pakistani learner every single day. I am very sure many of our students, teachers and parents already know this inside. That's why they go to school.

Soufia Siddiqi is an education research consultant and technical advisor to the Government of Punjab.

Source: <https://www.dawn.com/news/1497079>

## **Sorry State of Education By Alijan Dilwash**

Education plays a variety of significant roles for the development and advancement of a country. An educated nation can step forward towards prosperity and peace. Today those nations have progressed whose citizens were knowledgeable and skilled workers. The education system of Pakistan poses many challenges which include shortage of teachers, excessive absenteeism, lack of basic facilities like textbooks, modern methods of teaching, modern curriculum and lack of a conducive and friendly environment. Ghost teachers are another issue because there are many teachers who do not attend their classes rather they sit at home or start secondary businesses while receiving monthly salaries. Literacy rate in the country is low, about 60 per cent. Besides this, one of the most common issues being faced is old methods of teaching that has not been changed since independence. According to reports, no Pakistani university is among the top 600 universities in term of research; in 2017, the World Intellectual Property Organisation received only 193 patent applications but unfortunately 10 were considered eligible for grant of patent. Pakistani educational institutions should take measures for the betterment of the education system in the country and bring improvements in the shape of modern techniques, especially in primary education. The authorities should select skilful teachers with modern training because education is a significant area. If it is ignored then it would be very difficult for the nation to move towards development and progress.

We have long neglected education. We have not treated it as a priority. Now is the time to pay attention to this significant issue. We should have a system that promotes both science and culture. We see now our education system only promotes the will to power with this ism and that ism.

Source: <https://tribune.com.pk/story/2042170/6-sorry-state-education/>

## **Education Issues By Fogia Sadiq Khan**

It is time to visit the status of education, particularly since the 18th amendment has made it the state's responsibility to provide free and compulsory education to all children of the age of 5-16 years. We review some literature (National Education Policy Framework 2018, ASER 2019, World Bank 2013, IGC Pakistan 2010, I-SAPS, Naviwala 2016) in this article.

Service delivery in the education sector is primarily the responsibility of provincial governments post the 18th amendment. After doing away with the concurrent legislative list in the constitution; planning, policy, and curriculum, and standards are now in the purview of provincial governments, amongst others. Interprovincial coordination, standards in higher education, and all regulatory authorities under a federal law are still with the centre, amongst others. The federal government is also entrusted with a role to promote national cohesion in education.

Teachers are considered to be most critical factor in imparting quality education to students and there is weak teacher accountability. According to the latest ASER survey, 13% teachers in the surveyed public schools and 11% teachers in the surveyed private schools were found to be absent. The public educational system has internal governance issues. One of the reasons behind teachers' absenteeism could be the politics of patronage. There is need to institute effective planning, management and monitoring to deal with weak governance structures.

In terms of public education reforms, some provincial governments have undertaken credible interventions. In Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, monitors visit schools every month and publish their results and the teacher absenteeism has gone down as the result of these efforts.

For any policy to work, it has to make an explicit policy goal of improving learning outcomes

Despite efforts, there are still challenges. The net enrolment rates (NER) in primary education have remained static and there has been even a decrease in enrolment in some provinces. There is also geographical deprivation reflected in



the disaggregated enrolment statistics. Less developed areas lag behind in NER than the national average. The highest percentage of OOSC belong to Balochistan and FATA.

As per ASER statement based on secondary sources, there are still 22.8 million out of school children (OOSC); 12.2 million girls and 10.6 million boys. Though, the percentage of OOSC has slightly gone down (17% in 2018) compared to earlier (19% in the previous year). In other words, 83% of children (6-16 years) are enrolled in schools (77% in government schools, 20% in private schools, and 3% in Madrassahs). Boys' enrolment is higher than girls' enrolment.

According to the results of ASER's survey of learning outcomes, it has slightly improved in 2018, compared to 2016. Children in class 5 were tested to read a class 2 level story in Urdu or regional languages. Slightly less children (44%) could not read the story than before (48%), leading to the assumption that slightly more could read. Children were also tested for English and arithmetic learning. Private schools' students performed better than public schools, boys outperformed girls in literacy and numeracy, and children belonging to richest quartile have highest percentage of enrolment and the poorest quartile has the lowest. Gender intersects with poverty as girls even in the poorest households are more likely to have lower enrolment (46%) compared to the boys (67%). A sizeable number of government primary schools lack essential facilities such as the toilets, drinking water, boundary walls and playgrounds.

According to some recent literature, it might be better to teach children in the languages they understand, rather than teaching them badly in English. A study of historical data reveals that two extra years of schooling in mother-tongue raised the literacy and returns to it. Some provincial governments in the past announced to opt for English-medium route. However, PTI government in Punjab wants to reverse it and wants to introduce a new Urdu-medium curriculum.

Private schooling option is not limited to elite only. Private schools cater to low-income group as well. For example, in Punjab, there are both public and private schools as multiple options. Tahir Andrabi, Asim Khwaja and co-authors' research on education has pro-market orientation to it. According to them, availability of low-fee private schools is the "most significant development." Parents actively demand education for their children. This rise in private

schooling is often possible due to low salaries that female teachers are willing to accept in their local areas due to lack of opportunities outside (in other words, they are being exploited but leading to better options for students). Boom in the private education can be further improved by alleviating the constraints and providing better access to resources, information, and improving the regulatory framework.

In terms of the way forward, the education framework has identified four priority areas: decrease OOSC, bring about uniformity in education, improve the quality, and enhance skills trainings. Just to illustrate one priority area – to decrease OOSC; the Framework emphasizes to focus on disadvantaged districts by maximizing the use of existing school infrastructure, introducing afternoon shifts, improving missing facilities, providing better access to secondary education especially for girls, better targeting of BISP's Waseela-e-Taleem, better utilisation of stipend for girls, supporting the provincial governments, launching educational internship programs, mobilizing the community, and tracking results, amongst others. It sets agenda in a similar way for other declared priority areas.

For any policy to work, it has to make an explicit policy goal of improving learning outcomes. All else will fall in place. It might also be useful to research how some provincial governments in Pakistan are achieving better outcomes in education than others. It could help the provincial governments to learn from each other's education governance and management.

The writer is an Islamabad-based social scientist

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Source: <https://dailytimes.com.pk/369489/education-issues-2/>

## WORLD

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# **US's Foreign Policy and Kashmir By Umair Jamal**

After India's illegal annexation of Jammu and Kashmir, Washington is clearly in a tough spot. Seemingly, the U.S. neither wants to openly threaten India over the issue nor does it want to derail the progress concerning the Afghan peace process where Pakistan's role has become central.

Pakistan, on its part, is going to make sure that Washington sees the Kashmir situation as an irritant to the ongoing Afghan peace process which has been taken away from Pakistan's focus to the Eastern border. Arguably, there is not any love lost for PM Modi's government in Washington as the former policy of sidelining minorities and promoting Hindutva in the country have created a wedge between the two countries. Moreover, India has scrapped Article 370/35A at a time when the U.S. is trying to negotiate its troops withdraw from Afghanistan.

The timing of the decision is surely going to create a lot of distress in Washington DC as the US doesn't want India or Pakistan to be sidetracked from Washington's principal partnership goals. In Pakistan's case, Washington cannot afford to see another derail of the Afghan peace process. However, given the developing situation across the Line of Control (LoC) and illegal annexation of the Jammu and Kashmir, Pakistan's entire focus is going to be on the Eastern border. This is exactly the situation which the U.S. didn't want to happen. From Pakistan's perspective, it should be clear to Washington that the deployment of 10000 troops and a working plan to send 25000 more troops are not meant to contain militants but to scale hostility along the LoC.

President Trump's FP team is not going to appreciate Modi's decision as it comes days after the former offer to mediate between India and Pakistan. On the one hand, it undermines the US's legitimacy and political clout in the region. A report published by an Indian news publication disclosed that the US was informed by the Modi administration about New Delhi's plan to scrap article 370/35A of the

constitution. While the U.S. has neither confirmed nor denied the report, the timing of the decision couldn't have been worse for D.C.

What remains clear is that President Trump offer to mediate in the Kashmir issue has not resulted in India deciding the issue of Kashmir. However, the statement may have forced India to move its timeline for the decision. Clearly, India didn't like President Trump's statement that the former had asked for the latter's mediation in the Kashmir conflict. The statement, which created a huge commotion in India, gave BJP enough pull to implement the controversial plan which has remained a part of BJP's election manifesto for some time.

From here onward, Pakistan and the US's policy may see frictions over the issue as Pakistan is not only going to push ahead with an agenda that ensures New Delhi exclusion from Afghanistan but will also ask for Washington's intervention in Kashmir

Pakistan has plenty of options at its disposal when it comes to challenging India's illegal annexation of J&K. Clearly, India's move has taken away any credible chance of negotiations with New Delhi over the issue. For months, Pakistan has maintained that resolution of the Kashmir conflict can only come through negotiations. However, India's unilateral decision to annex Jammu and Kashmir illegally means that New Delhi is not interested in dialogue or diplomacy. Rather, the BJP led government is focused on instability in the region.

In 2007-08, Pakistan and India came very close to signing an agreement which could have resolved the issue of Kashmir. However, today's India is much different than India of 2007-08: hyper-nationalism and the brewing political environment of communal exclusivity have made it virtually impossible for any government to make a deal with Pakistan over the issue of Kashmir. After the abolition of Article 370 and 35A, any bilateral or trilateral discussion over the subject has become null and void as India is not likely to take up the issue in the future.

In the coming days and weeks, Pakistan is going to make sure that the international community endorses the former's stance over the issue of Kashmir and demonizes India's recent actions. Particularly, Pakistan would like to enlist

the support of Washington as the latter's support can still create adequate troubles for New Delhi's diplomacy.

Islamabad is likely to ensure that India doesn't have a space in the post-US Afghanistan which is one of the reasons that New Delhi has moved a factious plan to snatch away Kashmiri right of self-determination. From here onward, Pakistan and the US's policy may see frictions over the issue as Pakistan is not only going to push ahead with an agenda that ensures New Delhi exclusion from Afghanistan but will also ask for Washington's intervention in Kashmir. In this regard, Pakistan should be expected to follow aggressive regional security and foreign policy to neutralize India's influence in areas which can undermine Pakistan's interests. In the coming days and weeks, Washington may have to deal with another India-Pakistan crisis or some serious security situation in either Kashmir or Afghanistan – both situations are a worrying point for DC.

The writer is a freelance journalist

Source: <https://dailytimes.com.pk/444186/uss-foreign-policy-and-kashmir/>

# **Boris Johnson, Brexit and UK's Future By** **Muhammad Omar Iftikhar**

There seems to be an uncanny resemblance between the US President, Donald Trump and the new Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, Alexander Boris de Pfeffel Johnson or Boris Johnson as he is commonly referred to. It seems that both Trump and Johnson – apart from sporting their blond hair – are peculiar when it comes to verbal confrontations, tend to follow policies associated with political party dogma and are more likely to implement ethnocentric strategies. Both Trump and Johnson, however, have a long association with the media of their respective countries, which, as some claim, could be their reason to reach the echelons of power. Ironically, Boris Johnson was born in New York.

Boris Johnson, despite being in the news before entering 10 Downing Street as the Premier, had become the talk of the town in 2015-16 for his strong support for Brexit. Although Brexit is destined to give a drastic socio-economic blow to Britain, Johnson, on the other hand, remains satisfied with his decision for a no-deal Brexit.

Ironically, Johnson's one of the major tasks now is his "do or die" pledge to deliver Brexit. The time limit: three months. The EU leaders are wondering if Boris Johnson is misleading them over his intentions for a no-deal Brexit. A no-deal Brexit, in the broader sense, would mean the UK would face endless border queues, a scarcity of medicine and disruption in flights. Moreover, the businesses in the UK who have their clients in the EU will face disruption in data management and will have an adversarial impact especially on technology-based organizations. After a no-deal Brexit, the UK's profitable financial services sector would lose its exclusive rights that permit British-based companies to function in the EU's single market.

Johnson has been adamant to take Britain out of the EU without any deal which will harm the socio-economic fabric of Britain. While the economic and trade growth of Britain – as critics opine – will decline

The no-deal Brexit would also end many of the UK's provisions, agreements and pacts that cover all domains related to tariffs to how people move about from the

UK into the EU; from the pricing, manufacturing and trade of goods to the creation, storage and sharing of data among companies to laws and regulations related to human resources, capital, asset management. In short, all sectors including and no limited to aviation, manufacturing, transportation and others will be affected. Every legal point must be agreed upon by the British authorities with their EU counterparts if there is no withdrawal agreement in place. Furthermore, in the absence of a deal, the UK would need to trade with the EU on the default terms of the World Trade Organization (WTO), including tariffs on agricultural goods. Even though Johnson's predecessor, Theresa May, pledged her full support to Johnson, it seems as if the new British Premier will complete tasks on his own without asking for anyone's help because he may want to prove his political acumen.

Moreover, when Johnson resigned as the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs in July 2018 after he could not agree with Theresa May's Brexit plans, it is evident he would not want May's suggestion in how he will deal with Brexit.

As Boris Johnson begins his new journey as the British Premier, he is compelled to experience and resolve Britain's political calamity following its exit from the European Union which will formally take place on October 31. Johnson will use his experience of being a former member of the Parliament, Mayor of London, and now as Leader of the Conservative Party to enter talks with the European Union in an attempt to encourage, influence and perhaps convince them to look into a withdrawal deal. If not, Johnson will have no other choice but to lead Britain into an era of economic vagueness.

Johnson has been adamant to take Britain out of the EU without any deal which will harm the socio-economic fabric of Britain. While the economic and trade growth of Britain – as critics opine – will decline. Taking Britain – the fifth largest economy of the world – away from the EU will shake Britain's financial markets and will dwindle London's stance as a global financial center.

The writer is an independent researcher, author and columnist

Source: <https://dailytimes.com.pk/442798/boris-johnson-brexit-and-uks-future/>

## Climate Emergency | Editorial

The heatwave in Europe and the records set this summer – July being the hottest month according to recorded temperature in the past – tells us that it is not even up to debate anymore; climate change is a reality that is degrading the environment now. Even a cursory analysis of the data reveals that the general trend is that temperatures will rise and weather patterns will become more unpredictable in the coming years.

Most policymakers and the public in general have been content with the fact that this problem is one that will not affect us in the next forty years, but if the recent evidence is anything to go by, at this rate the situation in the next four decades will be much worse than we originally imagined. Europe's heatwave led to increases of 3 Celsius in some countries and Greenland saw its vast ice sheet melt to record levels and in recent years starting from 2003.

Europe has seen six heatwaves with the time between them decreasing. After 2003 it took seven years for the next heatwave to hit in 2010, following which the gap reduced to five years, with the next one coming in 2015, then two, with a heatwave in 2017 and finally only one year; with two record-breaking hot months in 2018, in both June and July. If a continent with relatively lower temperatures can be so adversely affected, Asia's fate might be much worse in the next decade.

As an agrarian country, Pakistan's whole way of life is threatened if weather patterns continue to get more erratic. Entire villages and settlements on the banks of rivers are threatened, fields of crops are likely to see more inconsistency in yield numbers and extreme weather conditions such as droughts and floods will hit the country with more frequency and cause greater devastation. The monsoon season will hit harder when the total duration is shorter, glacial melt will not only flood rivers but also cause permanent temperature increases in the north and the heatwaves in the summer will only get worse going forward.

Reducing emissions and increasing the tree cover of Pakistan are steps that must be taken to slow down these disastrous outcomes, however, the situation is



now at a point where simply planting more trees and reducing our carbon footprint will not be sufficient. Urban drainage to mitigate the effects of floods, improving on drinkable water storage to increase capacity and investing in aquifer systems are only some examples of what needs to be done to preserve the current way of life in Pakistan. The government talks about improving the lives of citizens, but if this emergency is not dealt with adequately, we might not even be able to ensure survivability for many in different parts of the country. Action needs to be taken now.

Source: <https://nation.com.pk/04-Aug-2019/climate-emergency>

## **Rusting American Dream | Editorial**

Authorities in the United States (US) are calling the two mass attacks in the just the last few days, one at the Gilroy Garlic Festival and another at a Walmart in El Paso 'domestic terrorism'. They still refuse to acknowledge these two incidents as cases of white supremacist terrorism. How many more attacks need to be carried out for the US government to categorise such shootings and massacres as acts of white supremacist terrorism?

READ MORE: AC sends Maryam Nawaz on remand till August 21

And the irony of all ironies is that the US President Donald Trump refuses to view white nationalism as a worldwide threat. But is it surprising? No, not at all! Trump himself came to power by fanning the flames of white supremacist ideology during his political rallies.

Congress refuses to recognise the white supremacist threat. Nor do the legislators acknowledge it as a movement of hateful ideology. There is more to the rise in crimes driven by white supremacist ideology. Racism manifesting itself in the white supremacist ideology is again on the rise in the US.

Racism, however, this time, is not limited to the blacks only. Muslims, Asians, Africans, Hispanics and migrants all are the victims of the new racism fuelled by the rhetoric of the US president. According to The New York Times, white extremist shooters have now killed at least 63 people in the United States over the past 18 months.

Do people have any hope that the government will do all that is necessary to counter white terrorism?

The former Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) supervisor Dace Gomez explains this for us. He says, "There's some reluctance among agents to bring forth an investigation that targets what the president perceives as his base." Considering his remarks, it seems there is no stopping to the white violence in the foreseeable future. And why surprise if the white supremacists tear the American society apart by depriving it of all its diversity.

Source: <https://nation.com.pk/07-Aug-2019/rusting-american-dream>

# **Why India Wants Status Quo in Afghanistan? By Adeela Naureen / Waqar K Kauravi**

As the Trump-Khan meet in the White House generated a heated debate in the international media, India appeared to be flustered by a perceived sidelining of her interests in the region. Two factors, Afghanistan and the K-Bomb (as described by the Indian press about the Kashmir issue), were widely discussed in the Indian media.

Indian investment in Afghanistan in the past decade includes billions of dollars in infrastructure, military, bureaucracy, culture and a tacit support to her proxies in the Afghan government, especially the NDS. India may not like her investment to go down the drain, and this was quite obvious from the statements emerging out of the South Block in New Delhi. Although Indian policymakers had foreseen that the peace process will pick up pace in the coming months, Trump's decision to fast-track the process came as a shock.

Currently, the Indian stance on Afghanistan is a tangent to almost all major stakeholders in Afghanistan. The troika of America, Russia and China met in Beijing last month, and invited the pivot state of Pakistan to join the parleys, excluding India. Indian leadership, with a declared policy of isolating Pakistan in the region, has painstakingly worked for the past five years to make sure all kinds of pressures are brought onto Pakistan, and that it is coerced into following Indian dictates.

India has built an alliance with the Iranian and Afghan government to physically bypass the Af-Pak economic lifeline of Karachi-Kandahar and Karachi-Khyber-Kabul through the Chabahar-Milak-Zaranj-Dilaram-Kabul route, as well as an overhead air bridge between Delhi and Kabul, and was successful in denting Pak-Afghan trade by offering the alternative route.

Another factor that helped India to counterbalance Pakistan's alleged support to freedom fighters in occupied Kashmir was through use of her proxies in Afghanistan, and keeping the Durand line on fire. The Indian military also ventured into the Pakistani airspace and targeted alleged terrorist camps in

Balakot in February. The so-called surgical strike was thwarted by the Pakistani Air Force in a counter-strike which downed two Indian fighter jets in Kashmir. This skirmish, under the nuclear overhang, proved that Kashmir did remain a nuclear powder keg and that both sides had to gradually de-escalate to ease tensions and anxiety in South Asia.

Indian policy on Afghanistan is born out of an old but time-tested Chanakya strategy which calls for befriending the enemy's neighbour and creating a two-front situation. India may not have fully appreciated that Trump's 2020 campaign has a major denominator, and that's Afghanistan. Trump cannot afford to start a presidential campaign without making major headway on Afghanistan. No wonder the Trump-Khan meet focused on finding ways and means for the Afghan peace process.

It is also important to note that a post-war sustainable Afghanistan is only possible with the US and her allies in the Gulf coming up with a mini Marshall Plan, while accruing assurances from the Taliban, to make sure that the Afghan soil is not used against American interests in the region. For this purpose, Pakistan has emerged as pivotal to the Afghan peace and it appears that all roads to Kabul will have to pass through Islamabad.

Another factor in the perceived endgame in Afghanistan is the interest of other regional players like China and Russia. China would like to have peace along the Durand Line so that her investment of \$56 billion in the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) remains safe, and the route passing west of the Indus River and Balochistan does not become a new battleground. For Russia, the spectre of the IS spreading its influence in her soft belly of Central Asia is perceived as an Achilles heel.

Pakistan has remained a frontline state in the War on Terror and has suffered tremendous losses in men and material. It would like to have a peaceful Afghanistan which ensures that it does not continue to become a base for proxy war against her.

Given this, why would India want a status quo and what could be her new strategy in Afghanistan?

India may want a delay in the peace process to make it costly for all stakeholders, especially Pakistan, and try to induce it into a reaction. She can also try to convince the Afghan elite and their surrogates that a Taliban-dominated government in Kabul will be a disaster for them, and build a perception of return of a Taliban era of the 90s. She may also want her proxies to target non-Pashtun communities like the Uzbeks, Hazaras and Tajiks and create cleavages within the Afghan polity. The Indian lobby will attempt to convey that Pakistan was a slippery ally to the US head honchos on the Hill. Meanwhile, she could use her diaspora in the US for vote bank tactics and even threaten Trump on withdrawing from the Indo-Pacific alliance.

Although Afghanistan has no direct linkage with Kashmir, it is perceived that a second front along the Line of Control with Pakistan may open up, resulting in the increased violence in occupied Kashmir. Despite the oppression faced by the Kashmiris, the freedom movement will not be subsiding.

After the abrogation of Article 370 of the Indian Constitution, following PM Imran Khan's visit to the White House and President Trump's offer of mediation on the Kashmir issue, we are likely to witness further violence in two parts of Southern Central Asia — Kashmir and Afghanistan. Before taking the unconstitutional step over occupied Kashmir, India sent 25,000 additional troops to the disputed region, destabilising the whole of South Asia and trying to spoil efforts for peace in Afghanistan. T

he Trump administration has to remain vigilant about the Indian attempts to increase violence as it suits Indian interests in the coming days.

As it is, with the recent surge of violence in Afghanistan (especially the attack in Kabul which targeted ex-NDS chief Amrullah Saleh) and the attacks on Pakistani troops in areas adjoining Afghanistan, one will have to wait and see who amongst all the stakeholders will be interested in maintaining a status quo in Afghanistan.

Published in The Express Tribune, August 8th, 2019.

Source: <https://tribune.com.pk/story/2030366/6-india-wants-status-quo-afghanistan/>

# **North and South Korea — The Coming Back**

## **By Aneela Shahzad**

In spite of all efforts by the United States to restrict North Korea in its isolation, the country seems to be treading a geopolitical path of its own. The question that needs our reflection is: Has the seven-decade-old US foreign policy on North Korea, which seemed to be so pragmatic and astute, eventually come to a totter? Or is this present North Korean foreign policy expansion just an impasse in the US foreign policy that will be reverted in time?

If we look back at how WWII ended in the Pacific theater, we will recall the occupation of South Korea and North Korea by the US and Russia respectively, immediately after Japan's destruction of the cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. At that time, the US and USSR's policy in dividing the country between them at the 38th parallel seemed to be a consensus on letting Russia have its long time wish of touching the warmer waters to its east, and the US of having a permanent presence in this end of the Pacific — an effect that would be maintained only in a divided Korea. The North to be enveloped in socialist attire and the South in a capitalist one, severed to alienate the two people, who were actually one, to the extent that both would remain mutually threatened by each other to this day. This should not be a surprise, as history shows us that the moment one state entity is divided into two, it becomes impossible for any of the two to overcome their self-interests, many of which need to be sacrificed in a reunification.

But contrary to this effect, as the decades have passed, we see the North and the South endeavouring to come closer to end the era of hostility between them. Several regional and global factors may have played their role in shaping the mindsets in the two Koreas to this end. We will start with an analysis of their internal economic evolution.

The story of NK's economic evolution can be condensed into the pre-1990 period when the country had a staggering 39% industrial growth rate, and the post-1990 period when the US started sanctioning the country, truncating it from the global economic platform, coupled with the 1996 floods and famine that killed 3 million North Koreans further bringing economic activity to a standstill.

The reverse of this is true for SK whose economy was stagnant under US-instated Syngman Rhee's authoritarian rule in the first decade. Only after Rhee's ousting and later its complete alignment with US foreign policy in dispatching its troop to the Vietnam War theatre, for which it received reimbursements of an estimate of \$235,560,000 at that time, did SK tread the path of industrialisation, becoming one of the fastest growing economies.

It may be noted here that SK and Japan, both being close allies of the US in the eastern Pacific, were comfortably placed for economic cooperation. That is why, after diplomatic normalisation in 1965, and Japan's promise of financial aid in the name of compensation for Japanese colonial rule over Korea, SK became the backyard for intermediate industries that would meet the high-end industrial need of Japan. After the 1997 currency crisis, however, SK opened itself to the free market, allowing several global enterprises to move into the country, making it less dependent on Japan.

This further changed with Japan's economic-bubble-burst in the 1990s and China's rise as a global economic power in the 2000s — events which gradually siphoned SK's trade flow towards China. Increased relations with the socialist powerhouse have had the natural effect of softening SK towards China's interests, especially towards China-friendly NK. China's obvious immediate interest would have been the diffusion of hostilities between its two first door neighbours, as superpower dynamics go against a power that is war-prone in its immediate neighborhood. This explains the Inter-Korean summits between the leaders of North and South Koreas since 2000.

In the September 2018 Summit, the two sides agreed to completely cease all hostile acts against each other to devise substantive military measures to transform the Demilitarised Zone into a peace zone and vowed on cooperation and military confidence building. This was followed by an agreement that sought the transfer of wartime operational control (OPCON) of the US-ROK combined defence mechanisms from US to South Korean leadership; and the suspension of the massive US-ROK joint Vigilant Ace air drill that had been a deterrent against NK. Later President Moon Jae-in was found creating a soft corner for NK in his Europe tour, for which he has been affronted by critics in the US.

On the other hand, Trump's summits with Kim Jong-un show a tug of war wherein both sides have insisted on their own methodology for achieving a peace deal. On one side, the US has insisted on complete denuclearisation. Mike Pompeo has asserted that 60% of NK's nuclear warheads and fissile material need to be shifted out of the country before having a peace deal. On Kim's side the demand has been for an 'end-of-war declaration' before the denuclearisation process begins — and the juggling seems to be going on with no hope of results.

The truth seems to be that the US is in a very difficult situation as it feels its long-trusted allies are drifting away from them and into the China whirl. With an SK drawn towards peace with its parted half, perhaps sensing China as a better provider of security than a US who's Trans-Pacific Partnership has been rejected by the eastern Pacific nations; with a Japan that is eying markets all the way to Asia and Europe in sharing China's Belt and Road; and with an NK as adamant as ever — the US is becoming jittery. They have the choice: either a unilateral enmity against NK in China's backyard; or a quiet embrace of the Red-Tide in this long-hanging issue, as was symbolised by Trump's 'stepping across that line' in Truce Village inside the border zone on 30th June that the US and the erstwhile USSR had drawn in 1945.

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Source: <https://tribune.com.pk/story/2032095/6-north-south-korea-coming-back/>



## **Kashmir on Int'l Radar | Editorial**

REVOCAION of special status of occupied Kashmir by India in complete violation of all international laws including UN Security Council resolutions and the clampdown that is continuing in the territory ever since 5th August indeed has put the Kashmir dispute on the international radar like never before.

Credit for this definitely goes firstly to the Kashmiri people who are standing firm against the Indian tyranny and persecution and then to the incumbent Pakistani leadership who have mounted a strong diplomatic offensive to truly highlight the plight of Kashmiri people and expose the ugly Indian designs. Tension between nuclear armed neighbours – Pakistan and India – on Kashmir is something that the world community especially the United States cannot remain oblivious to it. This is the reason that over the last few days one has seen President Donald Trump taking the Kashmir issue very seriously and making efforts to defuse tension between Pakistan and India. Firstly, he made telephonic contacts with Prime Minister Imran Khan and the Indian PM Narendra Modi and then whilst talking to the media at the White House reiterated that he would do his best to mediate on the explosive and complicated Kashmir dispute. Trump said that he would discuss this possibility over the weekend with Narendra Modi when he is slated to meet him at the G-7 Summit in Biarritz, France. The US President has repeated the mediation offer regardless of the fact that India earlier rejected the same. This shows for the first time the real seriousness of Washington on Kashmir dispute. India has always been strongly averse to any third party mediation but given the character of Donald Trump of routinely doing impossible things and the US being the superpower can use its clout and influence on New Delhi to move towards the resolution of the festering dispute as it is the only course to ensure durable peace and security in South Asia. The voice of Kashmiri people has now also started resonating in the US Congress where key lawmakers are urging New Delhi to end the occupation and allow its residents to speak. Congressman Adam Smith, Chairman of the House Armed Services Committee, called India's US Ambassador on Tuesday and expressed his concern over ongoing communications blackout, increased militarization of the region and enforcement of curfews. Then Congresswoman Yvette Clarke of New York addressing PM Modi said, "He has no right to do what he is doing to the people of Kashmir, and it is up to us to raise our voices for justice, self-

governance and for no discrimination based on religion.” These indeed are positive vibes that are emanating from the world’s most important capital Washington in support of Kashmiri people who expect the same kind of support from other major capitals especially the Arab world. As PM Imran Khan has declared himself as the Ambassador of Kashmir, we are confident that he and his team will continue to present the true picture of human rights violations in occupied Kashmir to the world leaders and forums and keep reminding them of their obligations to the resolution of the dispute. We have to keep the dispute alive and on the international radar till the Kashmiris get their right to self determination. As the UN General Assembly session is scheduled next month, PM Khan has directed the PTI leadership in Washington to mobilize community members and the human rights organizations for the protest against the Indian Prime Minister on the eve of the UNGA session. Actually there is need to unmask the true face of Modi before the world who already stands exposed because of his extremist RSS mindset. Pakistani and Kashmiri expatriates need to come forward in big numbers to tell the world as to what kind of brutalities and human rights violations the people of occupied Kashmir are currently faced with.

Source: <https://pakobserver.net/index.php/2019/08/23/kashmir-on-intl-radar-2/>

# **Russia And China Are Coming Closer Again**

## **– OpEd By Jonathan Power**

In her famous decree in 1767 Empress Catherine the Great proclaimed Russia to be a European power. She wanted Russia to be a major player in European politics. She compelled the Europeans to accept Russia as a great power as a condition for doing business. In 1815 Russia was considered an equal in the 1815 Concert of Europe.

In contrast, Imperial China at that time was self-sufficient and inward looking. It basked in its own superior culture. It did not want to open up trade relations with Europe and the emperor questioned the ability of the British who were knocking on the door to “acquire the rudiments” of Chinese civilization.

Fast forward to the twenty-first century, what have we? The heart of Russia, economically, politically, scientifically, culturally and educationally is west of the Ural mountains. This part would like to be European and at one time there was talk from Soviet president Mikhail Gorbachev and Russian presidents Boris Yelstin and Vladimir Putin of a desire to join the EU and NATO.

President George H. W. Bush, (Senior), appeared to want to keep that hope alive (despite some actions that weren't in Russia's interests), but he didn't win a second term, defeated by a less visionary Bill Clinton who rebuffed Russia, expanding NATO eastward and breaking a solemn American promise made to Gorbachev not to. Now the Russian leadership doesn't speak of joining up with Europe, although my feeling from continued visits there over 50 years is that most people in the west of Russia would like to be attached to Europe. (East of the Urals I don't know about.)

There was some rapprochement during the era of President Barack Obama which led to significant cuts in both sides' nuclear weapons, but Obama was outwitted on Russian policy by a hostile Republican Congress. Trump, a Republican, has built on that.

In contrast, China has continued today its tradition of being the Middle Kingdom, “all under heaven”. It believes it has a superior culture. Its population size gives

its belief in itself enormous heft. It wants to be politically self-sufficient and like Russia it doesn't want to be encircled- by America's allies, Japan, South Korea, Australia, the Philippines, Vietnam and by American warships that patrol off its coast in a way that the US would never permit off its coast. This explains its militarization of nearby small islands.

The West, in particular the US, but supported more quietly by the EU, has for years kept up a drumbeat of criticism because of China's government decision to remain communist-ruled while becoming capitalist economically and keeping political power exclusively in its own hands. The US for a least a decade has gratuitously added China to its list of nuclear targets. (Since the Korean War in 1950-53 China has never militarily seriously threatened American interests.) Now President Donald Trump is sledgehammering China in a trade war and some of his advisors are talking about introducing short-range missiles that could be nuclear armed on the soil of its local allies. The EU might not like all of this but it doesn't loudly speak up against it.

It's not surprising that after two decades of drifting apart Russia and China are now embracing each other. A rebuffed and wary Russia and the confident behemoth China, constantly challenged by the West, find that once again, as in Soviet times, they should seek each other's support, politically and economically.

This does not mean they are totally at loggerheads with the West – not yet. China has backed up America's attempts to persuade North Korea to give up its nuclear arms. Until last year, when the US counterproductively blackballed it, it participated in the biennial "Rim of the Pacific" military exercises involving 20 nations and commanded by the US. Despite the hype, although China has substantially increased its military spending it's from a small base. China believes in soft power more than hard power.

Russia helped the US and the EU negotiate with Iran a means of capping its nuclear research so that nuclear bomb-making was impossible. It still allows American troops and materials to travel overland to fight the Taliban in Afghanistan. The US buys rocket engines from it and uses Russian rockets to carry its astronauts to the jointly owned International Space Station. Russia has worked with the US to remove chemical weapons from Syria.

The above is the big picture. We can see why, despite some positive elements, Russia and China are being pushed into a tight embrace. In the small picture are the everyday slights that the US and the EU inflict on China and Russia.

Does the West think, even for one minute, where its negative policies will lead? I see little sign of it. Neither of these two proud countries will allow themselves to be bullied. They never have.

Note: Jonathan Power was for 17 years a foreign affairs columnist and commentator for the International Herald Tribune. Copyright: Jonathan Power.

Source: <https://www.eurasiareview.com/15082019-russia-and-china-are-coming-closer-again-oped/>

## **G7 – A Summit of Divided Minds | Editorial**

This year's G7 summit in France's scenic town of Biarritz has concluded without much fuss; this should be the main highlight of the gathering of the seven industrialised countries' heads. Public's memory is still fresh with the scene of last year's summit in Quebec when US President Donald Trump castigated the host, Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, and openly rejected the joint communiqué. For the recently concluded G7 summit, one can say that the annual get-together of heads of state was a nice photo-op. There came no display of provocation or discourtesy from any side, even though a previously unannounced, but very welcome, guest from Tehran sat in the audience. The only side who could have raised objection to Iran Foreign Minister Jawad Zarif's presence was the US. But it chose to look the other way.

Even prior to the inauguration of the summit, French President Emmanuel Macron vowed to bring US and Iran closer and trigger talks on sanctions and the nuclear deal, but the summit proved to be a non-starter. Instead, Trump called for the inclusion of Russia to the group, but the proposal did not interest any other member. Russia used to be a member of the G8 until 2014, when it annexed Crimea, which resulted in its expulsion. These disagreements betray deep fissures in the group. More accurately, there is a divide between the US and the rest on a range of issues like trade, tariffs and foreign policy.

The summit's only gains came for British Prime Minister Boris Johnson who found an admirer in the person of Trump. Johnson and Trump had perfect chemistry as the latter declared the former the "right man for Brexit". Johnson expects a trade deal from the US to keep afloat in the post-Brexit era. At times, Johnson kept a distance from Trump and stood by his European colleagues on issues like Trump's escalating trade war with China. "We are in favour of trade and peace on the whole," Johnson told Trump, even though Trump promised him a big trade deal. The other sigh of relief from the summit could be Trump's comment that he might have second thoughts on the China trade issue.

The summit, however, failed to present a united front on issues like Iran, climate change and trade and tariffs. It was held under tight security to keep anti-capitalism demonstrations in nearby Bayonne in check. Their concerns never

came under discussion. In all, the gathering of not-so-like-minded allies has ended without any sour point.

Source: <https://dailytimes.com.pk/454525/g7-a-summit-of-divided-minds/>

# **Donald Trump and Peace in South Asia By**

## **Muhammad Nadeem Bhatti**

Donald Trump entered the 2016 presidential race as a Republican and defeated 16 other candidates in the primaries. Commentators described his political positions as populist, protectionist, and nationalist. He was elected in a surprise victory over Democratic nominee Hillary Clinton, although he lost the popular vote. He became the oldest first-term U.S. president, and the first one without prior military or government service. It's no secret U.S. President Donald Trump can sometimes be nicer to his country's perceived enemies than its friends. But Trump's unorthodox negotiating style appears to be wearing thin in Kashmir. Trump's advice that Pakistan and India must "work towards reducing tensions" in the wake of the abrupt cancellation of the special status and autonomy of India-held Kashmir shows just how grave the situation is between the two nuclear-armed states. A tough situation, but good conversations", is how Mr Trump described the current state of affairs in this region through his tweets, after speaking by phone to the leaders of the two countries in the space of a few days. Many on this side of the border would have taken Mr Trump's latest attempt to disentangle Pakistan and India as a rudimentary effort at freighting – not quite the mediation he offered over Kashmir during Prime Minister Imran Khan's visit to the White House last month. It is intended to de-escalate present hostilities to avert a potential war in the region that would have long-term repercussions for the entire world. This is not for the first time that America has intervened to ward off possible military conflict in the region. But this time, Washington should play a more proactive role and make good on Mr Trump's 'offer' to mediate on the Kashmir dispute for long-term peace.

A constructive American engagement with both sides focused on finding a solution to the Kashmir dispute is important to ensure lasting peace in South Asia for the sake of its people as well as for international security and order. There is no doubt that India, which has always been averse to any suggestion of mediation over the Kashmir dispute by a foreign power or even by the UN, will put up strong resistance to such efforts. Nonetheless, it is important to convince New Delhi to listen to the voice of reason once the international community, led by America, realizes that peace and an improved relationship between India and Pakistan is in the best interest of all those with stakes in this region.



The Kashmir conflict is a territorial conflict primarily between India and Pakistan over the Kashmir region. The conflict started after the partition of India in 1947 as a dispute over the former princely state of Jammu and Kashmir and escalated into three wars between India and Pakistan and several other armed skirmishes. China has also been involved in the conflict in a third-party role. Both India and Pakistan claim the entirety of the former princely state of Jammu and Kashmir. India controls approximately 55% of the land area of the region and 70% of its population, Pakistan controls approximately 30% of the land, while China controls the remaining 15%. India administers Jammu, the Kashmir Valley, Ladakh, and the Siachen Glacier. Pakistan administers Azad Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan. China administers the mostly uninhabited Shaksgam Valley, and the Aksai Chin region.

Within this context, the regional bloc may not be able to play any meaningful role in the current crisis between India and Pakistan. Can SAARC envision itself as a provider of regional public goods in promoting peace and security? But the truth is that SAARC has no vital role in that. If this South Asian Association of Regional Cooperation cannot play vital role in this scenario then this organization should be dissolved. India has stopped trade with Pakistan so there is no concept of South Asia Association of Regional Cooperation here. The Islamic countries which are more than 57 are still silent on this issue. If not 57 but only 15 major countries like Saudi Arabia, Arab Emirates, Qatar, Bahrain, Turkey and Others like that break connection with India, stop trade or ban their visas, this will hurt India a lot. But it is strange to notice that no other country has raised his voice against this brutal situation.

On the other side Donald Trump is still trying to play the positive role of this South Asian issue. With Reference to my recent visit in USA I came to know that people are happy to have president like Donald trump and his policies are for the welfare and the radiant future of United States of America. As America is a superior power Donald Trump should play his positive role immediately to stop both countries to from going to war.

Washington should play a more proactive role and make good on Mr Trump's 'offer' to mediate on the Kashmir dispute for long-term peace.

Source:<https://nation.com.pk/28-Aug-2019/donald-trump-and-peace-in-south-asia>

# **Protracting US-Iran Standoff By Khalid Chandio**

The recent crisis between the US and Iran is an outcome of the fragile security dynamics of the Middle East. The deployment of two US warships, USS McFaul (DDG-74) and USS Gonzalez (DDG-66) in the Persian Gulf has intensified the tensions between Iran and the US. The Middle East, unfortunately, has remained a victim of intra and extra-regional security frictions. The current crisis between Iran and the US has also attracted focus from European powers. Firstly, powers like Germany, the United Kingdom and France are party to the P5+1 nuclear agreement with Iran, and secondly, the Middle East has, for long, been the strategic backyard of Europe. If it remains fragile for longer time, the spillover effects of this crisis can also impact Europe. The ongoing migrant crisis has caught the attention of European governments and multilateral institutions such as the European Union.

The Trump administration is taking the Iranian question seriously. However, while defending the decision to withdraw from Syria, President Donald Trump had said that America was not going to be the “policeman of the Middle East”. But yet again it is the centripetal force of the Middle Eastern dynamics, which has led the US to undertake active engagement in the region. Trump often called those wars ‘stupid’ where the US was engaged in the world, wars started by his predecessors; and that is one of the reasons why he wants America to leave Afghanistan as soon as possible. But it is surprising to see the same Trump administration beating the war drums against Iran, and in an apparent hurry to bring Tehran to heel.

According to Karim Sadjadpour, President Trump often does not hesitate while referring to broader foreign or defence policy issues concerning America, while Khamenei prefers private discussions concerning Iran.

The crisis started when the Iranian forces shot down the US surveillance drone on June 20, 2019. If one looks at the pages of US-Iranian relations since the Iranian Revolution, there were many ways where chances of confrontation remained high and those of collaboration low. As the things unfold, we have seen that both the states do not want war, but one cannot rule out the possibilities of

brinkmanship that might lead to a crisis that will engulf the entire region. The costs of war would be horrific keeping in view the capabilities of both the US and Iran.

The recent crisis between the US and Iran is an outcome of the fragile security dynamics of the Middle East

Apparently, the US strategy seems to be to limit the Iranian role in the Middle East, while the Iranian strategy revolves around pleading its case against the US' withdrawal from the nuclear deal.

The situation is still grim. Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Zarif, during an interview to BBC recently said, "No one would be safe" in a conflict. He added: "American weaponry is going into our region, making our region ready to explode...If they want to talk about our missiles, they need first to stop selling all these weapons, including missiles." Iran, which has felt the need to abide by the treaty, may now begin to test limits of its literal commitment to the treaty.

On July 19, the British-flagged oil tanker Stena Impero was seized by Iran's Revolutionary Guard on a key shipping route. HMS Duncan has joined frigate HMS Montrose to escort vessels sailing under the British flag through the Strait of Hormuz. The detention of an Iranian oil tanker in the Gibraltar and the quid pro quo detention of a British oil tanker in the Persian Gulf signalled that the two sides are about to up the ante. However, at the same time, the decision by the authorities in the Gibraltar to not seize the Iranian oil tanker after detaining the tanker and its staff for six weeks, and Greece's decision not to allow the oil tanker to dock its ship indicates that Europe still appears divided on adopting a predictable, clear, unanimous and consistent stance in the ongoing crisis. But the ongoing US Iran standoff can also expand the existing fissures between the US and Europe. This can also be detrimental for US and European cooperation in the Middle East.

The US-Iran standoff, if escalated, can push the Middle East and the neighbouring region in another spell of crisis. It will also unleash forces of proxy and sectarian conflict across the region in the Middle East, such as Yemen, Syria, Iraq and Lebanon. The Strait of Hormuz may become subject to recurring spells of disruption from actions and counter-actions of regional and extra-

regional actors. If options ranging from limited to full-blown military action are pushed, it will only strengthen the relevance of the Revolutionary Guards and Iran's ruling party. The US-Iran standoff can also adversely impact the ongoing efforts of the US in Afghanistan. Iran enjoying significant influence in the Dari speaking areas may create roadblocks in the ongoing intra-Afghan peace process.

The writer has been working as Research Fellow at Islamabad Policy Research Institute (IPRI), Pakistan. He works on International Studies with particular focus on US Foreign and Defence Policies

Source: <https://dailytimes.com.pk/456487/protracting-us-iran-standoff/>

# **Riddance to the INF Treaty By Andrew S. Erickson**

In early August, the United States formally withdrew from the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty, a landmark 1987 arms control accord with Russia. Just two weeks later, on a small island off the Californian coast, the Pentagon tested a land-based missile once banned under the agreement. The demise of the INF Treaty is now official, on paper as on the ground.

The treaty's collapse was a long time coming. An agreement cannot work if only one party honors it, and the INF Treaty's sole cosignatory, Moscow, had been flouting its rules for years. During his presidency, Barack Obama considered withdrawing from the INF for precisely the same reason that helped drive President Donald Trump's decision. Still, to many observers, the decision to ditch the treaty is misguided and dangerous. The Trump administration, they argue, is dismantling guardrails that were erected to keep tensions from escalating into a destabilizing arms race. At a time when several elements of the global arms control architecture are fraying, this latest casualty could only make matters worse.

But that line of criticism misses the point. If unilateral U.S. adherence to the treaty was futile in the face of repeated Russian transgressions, it had become outright dangerous in the face of a much more potent adversary—China. During the INF Treaty's 32-year lifespan, China developed the world's foremost conventional missile force, brimming with the very weapons that the treaty prohibited the United States from developing: ground-launched cruise and ballistic missiles with a range of 500 to 5,500 kilometers.

Today, China uses that missile arsenal to threaten the United States and its allies and partners throughout East Asia. Exiting the INF Treaty is no panacea, but it opens much-needed possibilities for Washington to reset the military balance with Beijing in its favor. Washington should use this opportunity to develop and deploy its own missiles to counter the Chinese threat—or risk being steamrolled in a future confrontation.

## **CHINA PULLS AHEAD**

The INF Treaty, with its narrow focus on the United States and Russia, always acted as a straightjacket for U.S. strategy in Asia. In theory, the United States could have pushed for China to join the treaty—but China wouldn't, and it still won't. Beijing derives great benefit from its large land-based missile force and has made clear that it won't accede to any substantive arms control agreements for the foreseeable future. At an emergency session of the U.N. Security Council on August 22, for instance, China's permanent representative to the United Nations, Zhang Jun, enjoined Washington to "exercise restraint and earnestly preserve the existing arms control regime" while insisting that China's own missiles pose "no threat to any country."

The INF Treaty, with its narrow focus on the United States and Russia, always acted as a straightjacket for U.S. strategy in Asia.

Over the last three decades, China has made meteoric military progress by pursuing technologies that place opponents on the wrong side of physics. Ballistic missiles, which travel at multiple times the speed of sound and are therefore extremely difficult to intercept, have been the cornerstone of that effort. China can develop and deploy these weapons far more cheaply and effectively than the United States can defend against them, making any future conflict with China an extremely expensive and risky undertaking. All in all, Beijing "controls the largest and most diverse missile force in the world, with an inventory of more than 2,000 ballistic and cruise missiles," Admiral Harry Harris, then the commander of the U.S. Pacific Command, testified in 2017. According to Harris, some 95 percent of those missiles would have been prohibited by the INF Treaty, had China been a signatory.

Beijing has benefitted from other forms of American myopia as well. Arms control debates tend to focus on nuclear weapons, of which China has far fewer than Russia or the United States. But China's inventory of conventional missiles exceeds its nuclear inventory by a ratio of at least 7:1. Earlier this summer, Beijing fired six anti-ship ballistic missiles into contested waters in the South China Sea, a signal of assertiveness to its neighbors, Washington, and the world at large. It now fields several dozen such "carrier killer" missiles, named for their potential ability to destroy warships or aircraft carriers far from Chinese shores.

The vast majority of China's missiles are land-based, rather than deployed on aircraft, ships, or submarines. That spells additional trouble for the United States.

Large missiles of the type covered by the INF are substantially easier and cheaper to develop and operate on land than at sea or in the skies. They are also difficult to find and neutralize prior to their launch. This was true of Saddam Hussein's Scud missiles during the first Gulf War, which the U.S. military struggled to locate even in exposed desert; it is even truer of China's arsenal of cruise and ballistic missiles, which is hidden in varied terrains and extensive underground facilities, and made even more elusive by road-mobile launchers and a network of secure fiber optic cables built to ensure communication with the launch brigades.

Aside from its disruptive cybertechnologies, China's missile-centric military buildup may be the single biggest factor eroding U.S. power and influence in Asia. In a moment of crisis, this destructive arsenal could embolden Beijing to pursue its oft-invoked "core interests"—including its disputed claim to sovereignty over Taiwan—by trying to establish a fait accompli, forcing Washington and its regional allies to cave before the fighting even begins. U.S. air bases and aircraft carriers are technologically sophisticated compared to China's, but they are vulnerable to Chinese missile forces. As a result, Washington should take a page out of Beijing's own post-Cold War playbook and build a deterrent based on land-based missiles. Luckily, the death of the INF Treaty offers the perfect opportunity to do so.

## HOW TO CATCH UP

Unshackled from the INF Treaty, what can the United States do to level the playing field? To begin with, it can once again develop and test ground-launched medium- and intermediate-range missiles. Testing has begun on a ground-launched variant of the Tomahawk, allowing deployment within approximately 18 months. A mobile, ground-launched intermediate-range ballistic missile (IRBM) with a range of 3,000 to 4,000 kilometers will eventually follow but will likely take several years to develop, because unlike the Tomahawk the IRBM lacks a post-Cold War analog on which to base new missiles.

China's missiles may be the single biggest factor eroding U.S. power and influence in Asia.

As these new missiles become available, the United States should deploy them in the Asia-Pacific. For now, the most realistic and promising location is the U.S. overseas territory of Guam. Other U.S. territories in the Pacific, Australia, Japan,

the Philippines, and South Korea are also potential locations. To be sure, small islands such as Guam have only limited concealing terrain, while foreign governments may face popular opposition to hosting U.S. missiles. But the winds of public opinion could shift quickly, especially if China's military capabilities and regional ambitions continue to expand. And if peacetime politics preclude a permanent deployment in these countries, the United States can still pursue agreements that would allow it to rapidly deploy missiles for a limited period in times of crisis. (The recent deployment of mobile artillery rocket systems to Australia for extended exercises suggests that such cooperation can work.)

U.S. withdrawal from the INF Treaty doesn't close the door on future arms control initiatives. On the contrary, it puts new possibilities on the table: Russia remains free to work with the United States on nonproliferation, including in the emerging realms of hypersonic and undersea nuclear weapons, and on Moscow's uniquely hazardous nuclear-powered cruise missile program, none of which is currently governed by any agreement. For the time being at least, Chinese leaders remain vocally opposed to any IRBM development by the United States but unwilling to make any concessions when it comes to their own, much bigger conventional stockpile. If the Chinese eventually come to the arms control negotiating table, it will be because Washington pursued new capabilities, not because it unilaterally tied its hands.

Source: <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/china/2019-08-29/good-riddance-inf-treaty>



## **US-Taliban Deal | Editorial**

MEDIA reports suggest that following nine rounds of their talks in Doha, the United States and Taliban are close to signing a deal that could bring an end to 17 year conflict in Afghanistan. The two sides have confirmed that they are preparing to ink an accord that might form the basis for reconciliation talks among Afghan factions to iron out future course of action and direction in which Afghanistan will go.

There is not yet official confirmation as to what has been agreed upon by the two sides but information leaked to media by the two sides indicate this would bring down the level of presence of American troops in Afghanistan and Taliban would undertake they would not allow their country to be used by Al-Qaeda or other groups against any other country. Analysts, however, believe that sustainability of the understanding between Washington and Taliban is doubtful as Americans would still be keeping a sizeable number of troops in Afghanistan – 8,600 as against 14,000 at the moment, meaning thereby that Americans would not be reducing their troops even by 50% against original demand of Taliban for total withdrawal and an end to occupation of Afghanistan. It is also ironical that even before signing of the deal, President Trump has started hurling threats on Taliban that his country would come back to Afghanistan with force like ... never before if there was another attack on the United States. He is hinting about permanent US presence in Afghanistan, which would not only be a source of concern for those Afghans who never compromised on their independence and sovereignty but will have serious repercussions for regional countries and regional peace and security. Apart from establishment of permanent military bases, Americans have never made secret of their intentions to expropriate huge mineral wealth of Afghanistan. Under these circumstance, the causes for trouble would remain in Afghanistan even if Afghan factions successfully overcome their differences during reconciliation talks, which itself would prove to be a tricky process.

Source: <https://pakobserver.net/index.php/2019/08/31/us-taliban-deal/>

# **Trump's Global War on Trade By Azhar Azam**

President Donald Trump once again popped up on Twitter with his impulsive brashness over China, and announced 10% additional tariffs on the remaining \$300 billion worth of Chinese goods starting September 1. While conceding to have constructive talks with Chinese officials about a future trade deal, Trump rationalised his tariff placement as a retaliation to Beijing's reluctance to buy US agriculture products in large quantities and stopping Fentanyl exports into the US.

Beijing dubbed the act a serious violation of the agreement between the US and Chinese presidents at the G-20 summit in Osaka, and threatened necessary countermeasures.

As Trump historically hasn't retreated from his tariff misadventures, his provocative action would invite Beijing to take retaliatory measures. Hence, the tense situation could dramatically escalate the trade war between the world's two largest economies.

It is shocking that at a time when the US-China trade talks were sailing smoothly towards a decisive deal, Trump lashed out with a series of grating tweets. The hasty but expected proclamation elaborates that the kernel of Trump's tariff strategy has a political backdrop.

Unwinding US military engagements in Afghanistan and trade deals with China, the EU, Japan, and Mexico were Trump's key promises to his people during his previous presidential campaign. But to date, he has only been able to accomplish a trade agreement with Mexico.

As he has set September as deadline to arrive on a peace deal with the Taliban, he is desperately trying to achieve it, while also trying to strike trade pacts with China, Japan, and the EU. While the new tariffs on Chinese goods would take effect from September 1, Trump craves to pull the plug on trade strains with Beijing quickly.

Trump's political gambles are hurting the US economy too. As the fresher tariffs aim to penalise Chinese consumer electronics, clothing, shoes, and toys, American buyers of these goods are the definitive victims of Trump's actions.

Trump's previous tariffs in May of 25% on \$250 billion worth of Chinese goods were expected to have cost every American household \$500 annually. If the new tariffs are implemented, Oxford Economics estimates it will cost American families roughly \$700-900, while the Peterson Institute reckons a higher figure of \$1,270 per annum, according to a report by Newsweek.

Retailers will be the prime target of these tariffs, which will stumble as the new levies will "disproportionately impact apparels, footwear, consumer electronics, and toys", said Kate McShane of Goldman Sachs in a note to her clients.

Immediately after Trump's tariff announcement, the shares of Wall Street retailers also tanked by 3%. Wall Street experts also agree that departmental stores are exposed to substantial risks. The US Chamber of Commerce has shown its disappointment on Trump's tariff hike as its Executive Vice President stated, "Raising tariffs will only inflict greater pain on American businesses, farmers, workers and consumers, and undermine an otherwise strong US economy."

Global stock markets were also apprehensive of Trump's tariff decision. London's Financial Times Stock Exchange 100 Index, the French stock market, German Dax Index, and Nikkei witnessed nervous investors' reactions and sank sharply.

Trump's self-initiated trade war with China not only preys on his voters and haters equally, but it would also put a squeeze on the US economy and GDP, which would be subject to contract over flagging purchasing power of the people across the country.

Additionally, as a result of Trump's irrational and unscrupulous trade war, American multinational companies would be forced to shift their manufacturing plants to nearby countries — thereby losing manufacturing jobs in the US — the crux of Trump's campaign towards China.

Trump's global war on trade might perhaps help him with another term as president, but by the damage to the US economy and American buyers could be irreversible.

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Source: <https://tribune.com.pk/story/2030365/6-trumps-global-war-trade/>

## **The Population Bust By Zachary Karabell**

For most of human history, the world's population grew so slowly that for most people alive, it would have felt static. Between the year 1 and 1700, the human population went from about 200 million to about 600 million; by 1800, it had barely hit one billion. Then, the population exploded, first in the United Kingdom and the United States, next in much of the rest of Europe, and eventually in Asia. By the late 1920s, it had hit two billion. It reached three billion around 1960 and then four billion around 1975. It has nearly doubled since then. There are now some 7.6 billion people living on the planet.

Just as much of the world has come to see rapid population growth as normal and expected, the trends are shifting again, this time into reverse. Most parts of the world are witnessing sharp and sudden contractions in either birthrates or absolute population. The only thing preventing the population in many countries from shrinking more quickly is that death rates are also falling, because people everywhere are living longer. These oscillations are not easy for any society to manage. "Rapid population acceleration and deceleration send shockwaves around the world wherever they occur and have shaped history in ways that are rarely appreciated," the demographer Paul Morland writes in *The Human Tide*, his new history of demographics. Morland does not quite believe that "demography is destiny," as the old adage mistakenly attributed to the French philosopher Auguste Comte would have it. Nor do Darrell Bricker and John Ibbitson, the authors of *Empty Planet*, a new book on the rapidly shifting demographics of the twenty-first century. But demographics are clearly part of destiny. If their role first in the rise of the West and now in the rise of the rest has been underappreciated, the potential consequences of plateauing and then shrinking populations in the decades ahead are almost wholly ignored.

The mismatch between expectations of a rapidly growing global population (and all the attendant effects on climate, capitalism, and geopolitics) and the reality of both slowing growth rates and absolute contraction is so great that it will pose a considerable threat in the decades ahead. Governments worldwide have evolved to meet the challenge of managing more people, not fewer and not older. Capitalism as a system is particularly vulnerable to a world of less population expansion; a significant portion of the economic growth that has driven capitalism

over the past several centuries may have been simply a derivative of more people and younger people consuming more stuff. If the world ahead has fewer people, will there be any real economic growth? We are not only unprepared to answer that question; we are not even starting to ask it.

### BOMB OR BUST?

At the heart of *The Human Tide* and *Empty Planet*, as well as demography in general, is the odd yet compelling work of the eighteenth-century British scholar Thomas Malthus. Malthus' 1798 *Essay on the Principle of Population* argued that growing numbers of people were a looming threat to social and political stability. He was convinced that humans were destined to produce more people than the world could feed, dooming most of society to suffer from food scarcity while the very rich made sure their needs were met. In Malthus' dire view, that would lead to starvation, privation, and war, which would eventually lead to population contraction, and then the depressing cycle would begin again.

Yet just as Malthus reached his conclusions, the world changed. Increased crop yields, improvements in sanitation, and accelerated urbanization led not to an endless cycle of impoverishment and contraction but to an explosion of global population in the nineteenth century. Morland provides a rigorous and detailed account of how, in the nineteenth century, global population reached its breakout from millennia of prior human history, during which the population had been stagnant, contracting, or inching forward. He starts with the observation that the population begins to grow rapidly when infant mortality declines. Eventually, fertility falls in response to lower infant mortality—but there is a considerable lag, which explains why societies in the modern world can experience such sharp and extreme surges in population. In other words, while infant mortality is high, women tend to give birth to many children, expecting at least some of them to die before reaching maturity. When infant mortality begins to drop, it takes several generations before fertility does, too. So a woman who gives birth to six children suddenly has six children who survive to adulthood instead of, say, three. Her daughters might also have six children each before the next generation of women adjusts, deciding to have smaller families.

The population bust is going global almost as quickly as the population boom did in the twentieth century.

The burgeoning of global population in the past two centuries followed almost precisely the patterns of industrialization, modernization, and, crucially, urbanization. It started in the United Kingdom at the end of the nineteenth century (hence the concerns of Malthus), before spreading to the United States and then France and Germany. The trend next hit Japan, India, and China and made its way to Latin America. It finally arrived in sub-Saharan Africa, which has seen its population surge thanks to improvements in medicine and sanitation but has not yet enjoyed the full fruits of industrialization and a rapidly growing middle class.

With the population explosion came a new wave of Malthusian fears, epitomized by the 1968 book *The Population Bomb*, by Paul Ehrlich, a biologist at Stanford University. Ehrlich argued that plummeting death rates had created an untenable situation of too many people who could not be fed or housed. “The battle to feed all of humanity is over,” he wrote. “In the 1970’s the world will undergo famines—hundreds of millions of people are going to starve to death in spite of any crash programs embarked on now.”

Ehrlich’s prophecy, of course, proved wrong, for reasons that Bricker and Ibbitson elegantly chart in *Empty Planet*. The green revolution, a series of innovations in agriculture that began in the early twentieth century, accelerated such that crop yields expanded to meet humankind’s needs. Moreover, governments around the world managed to remediate the worst effects of pollution and environmental degradation, at least in terms of daily living standards in multiple megacities, such as Beijing, Cairo, Mexico City, and New Delhi. These cities face acute challenges related to depleted water tables and industrial pollution, but there has been no crisis akin to what was anticipated.

Yet visions of dystopic population bombs remain deeply entrenched, including at the center of global population calculations: in the forecasts routinely issued by the United Nations. Today, the UN predicts that global population will reach nearly ten billion by 2050. Judging from the evidence presented in Morland’s and Bricker and Ibbitson’s books, it seems likely that this estimate is too high, perhaps substantially. It’s not that anyone is purposely inflating the numbers. Governmental and international statistical agencies do not turn on a dime; they use formulas and assumptions that took years to formalize and will take years to alter. Until very recently, the population assumptions built into most models

accurately reflected what was happening. But the sudden ebb of both birthrates and absolute population growth has happened too quickly for the models to adjust in real time. As Bricker and Ibbitson explain, “The UN is employing a faulty model based on assumptions that worked in the past but that may not apply in the future.”

Population expectations aren't merely of academic interest; they are a key element in how most societies and analysts think about the future of war and conflict. More acutely, they drive fears about climate change and environmental stability—especially as an emerging middle class numbering in the billions demands electricity, food, and all the other accoutrements of modern life and therefore produces more emissions and places greater strain on farms with nutrient-depleted soil and evaporating aquifers. Combined with warming-induced droughts, storms, and shifting weather patterns, these trends would appear to line up for some truly bad times ahead.

Except, argue Bricker and Ibbitson, those numbers and all the doomsday scenarios associated with them are likely wrong. As they write, “We do not face the challenge of a population bomb but a population bust—a relentless, generation-after-generation culling of the human herd.” Already, the signs of the coming bust are clear, at least according to the data that Bricker and Ibbitson marshal. Almost every country in Europe now has a fertility rate below the 2.1 births per woman that is needed to maintain a static population. The UN notes that in some European countries, the birthrate has increased in the past decade. But that has merely pushed the overall European birthrate up from 1.5 to 1.6, which means that the population of Europe will still grow older in the coming decades and contract as new births fail to compensate for deaths. That trend is well under way in Japan, whose population has already crested, and in Russia, where the same trends, plus high mortality rates for men, have led to a decline in the population.

What is striking is that the population bust is going global almost as quickly as the population boom did in the twentieth century. Fertility rates in China and India, which together account for nearly 40 percent of the world's people, are now at or below replacement levels. So, too, are fertility rates in other populous countries, such as Brazil, Malaysia, Mexico, and Thailand. Sub-Saharan Africa remains an outlier in terms of demographics, as do some countries in the Middle



East and South Asia, but in those places, as well, it is only a matter of time before they catch up, given that more women are becoming educated, more children are surviving their early years, and more people are moving to cities.

Morland, who, unlike Bricker and Ibbitson, is a demographer by training, is skeptical that humanity is on the cusp of a tectonic reversal in population trends. He agrees that the trends have changed, but he is less prone to the blanket certainty of Bricker and Ibbitson. This is not because he uses different data; he simply recognizes that population expectations have frequently been confounded in the past and that certainty about future trends is unreasonable. Morland rightly points out that even if fertility rates fall dramatically in Africa, there will be decades left of today's youth bulge there. Because he is more measured in his assessment of the ambiguities and uncertainties in the data, Morland tends to be more circumspect in drawing dramatic conclusions. He suggests, for instance, that China's population will peak short of 1.5 billion in 2030 and then stagnate, with an aging population and gradual absolute decline thereafter. Bricker and Ibbitson, on the other hand, warn that China's fertility rate, already in free fall, could actually get much worse based on the example of Japan, which would lead China to shrink to less than 700 million people in the second half of the century. Morland does agree with Bricker and Ibbitson on one important point: when it comes to global population, the only paradigm that anyone has known for two centuries is about to change.

## GREAT EXPECTATIONS

The implications of the coming population bust occupy a large portion of Bricker and Ibbitson's book, and they should occupy a much larger portion of the collective debate about the future and how to prepare for it. The underlying drivers of capitalism, the sense that resource competition and scarcity determine the nature of international relations and domestic tensions, and the fear that climate change and environmental degradation are almost at a doomsday point—all have been shaped by the persistently ballooning population of the past two centuries. If the human population is about to decline as quickly as it increased, then all those systems and assumptions are in jeopardy.

Both books note that the demographic collapse could be a bright spot for climate change. Given that carbon emissions are a direct result of more people needing and demanding more stuff—from food and water to cars and entertainment—

then it would follow that fewer people would need and demand less. What's more, larger proportions of the planet will be aging, and the experiences of Japan and the United States are showing that people consume less as they age. A smaller, older population spells some relief from the immense environmental strain of so many people living on one finite globe.

That is the plus side of the demographic deflation. Whether the concomitant greening of the world will happen quickly enough to offset the worst-case climate scenarios is an open question—although current trends suggest that if humanity can get through the next 20 to 30 years without irreversibly damaging the ecosystem, the second half of the twenty-first century might be considerably brighter than most now assume. The downside is that a sudden population contraction will place substantial strain on the global economic system. Capitalism is, essentially, a system that maximizes more—more output, more goods, and more services. That makes sense, given that it evolved coincidentally with a population surge. The success of capitalism in providing more to more people is undeniable, as are its evident defects in providing every individual with enough. If global population stops expanding and then contracts, capitalism—a system implicitly predicated on ever-burgeoning numbers of people—will likely not be able to thrive in its current form. An aging population will consume more of certain goods, such as health care, but on the whole aging and then decreasing populations will consume less. So much of consumption occurs early in life, as people have children and buy homes, cars, and white goods. That is true not just in the more affluent parts of the world but also in any country that is seeing a middle-class surge.

The future world may be one in which capitalism at best frays and at worst breaks down completely.

But what happens when these trends halt or reverse? Think about the future cost of capital and assumptions of inflation. No capitalist economic system operates on the presumption that there will be zero or negative growth. No one deploys investment capital or loans expecting less tomorrow than today. But in a world of graying and shrinking populations, that is the most likely scenario, as Japan's aging, graying, and shrinking absolute population now demonstrates. A world of zero to negative population growth is likely to be a world of zero to negative economic growth, because fewer and older people consume less. There is nothing inherently problematic about that, except for the fact that it will

completely upend existing financial and economic systems. The future world may be one of enough food and abundant material goods relative to the population; it may also be one in which capitalism at best frays and at worst breaks down completely.

The global financial system is already exceedingly fragile, as evidenced by the 2008 financial crisis. A world with negative economic growth, industrial capacity in excess of what is needed, and trillions of dollars expecting returns when none is forthcoming could spell a series of financial crises. It could even spell the death of capitalism as we know it. As growth grinds to a halt, people may well start demanding a new and different economic system. Add in the effects of automation and artificial intelligence, which are already making millions of jobs redundant, and the result is likely a future in which capitalism is increasingly passé.

If population contraction were acknowledged as the most likely future, one could imagine policies that might preserve and even invigorate the basic contours of capitalism by setting much lower expectations of future returns and focusing society on reducing costs (which technology is already doing) rather than maximizing output. But those policies would likely be met in the short term by furious opposition from business interests, policymakers, and governments, all of whom would claim that such attitudes are defeatist and could spell an end not just to growth but to prosperity and high standards of living, too. In the absence of such policies, the danger of the coming shift will be compounded by a complete failure to plan for it.

Different countries will reach the breaking point at different times. Right now, the demographic deflation is happening in rich societies that are able to bear the costs of slower or negative growth using the accumulated store of wealth that has been built up over generations. Some societies, such as the United States and Canada, are able to temporarily offset declining population with immigration, although soon, there won't be enough immigrants left. As for the billions of people in the developing world, the hope is that they become rich before they become old. The alternative is not likely to be pretty: without sufficient per capita affluence, it will be extremely difficult for developing countries to support aging populations.

So the demographic future could end up being a glass half full, by ameliorating the worst effects of climate change and resource depletion, or a glass half empty, by ending capitalism as we know it. Either way, the reversal of population trends is a paradigm shift of the first order and one that is almost completely unrecognized. We are vaguely prepared for a world of more people; we are utterly unprepared for a world of fewer. That is our future, and we are heading there fast.

Source: <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/asia/2019-08-12/trumps-assault-global-trading-system>

# **Getting Real With The US Foreign Policy**

## **Establishment Realists – Analysis By Michael**

### **Averko**

On Russian related matters, the more sane among us can perhaps be forgiven for becoming sedated by the kind of absurdities regularly spewed by some high profile individuals. The realist wing of the US foreign policy establishment has at times held back in rebuking this reality. We all have our biases, with the ideal to nevertheless be reasonably fair and balanced – a point which leads to a detailed critical overview of some trends among US foreign policy establishment realists.

The realist leaning National Interest, exhibits a different choice of words, relative to actions taken by the Russian and US governments. At that venue, George Beebe's August 12 piece "How Trump Can Avoid War With Russia", states: "Reducing Russian cyber aggression will require agreeing on rules to govern US as well as Russian involvement in the affairs of other states. Punishing Moscow's transgressions must be complemented by rewards for good behavior, or we will simply reinforce perverse incentives for Russia to defy American policies, deepen security cooperation with China, and subvert NATO and the EU."

In comparison, Beebe is tame in his prose dealing with post-Soviet US actions (in Yugoslavia, Iraq, Libya and Syria), which within reason can be considered as unnecessarily aggressive and deserving of condemnation. The aforementioned "Russian cyber aggression", is something continuously brought up with a lack of conclusive evidence. Beebe's use of "punishing" versus "rewards" towards Russia is along the lines of treating a child.

Dmitri Simes' August 8 National Interest article "Delusions About Russia", begins with "Russia is a dangerous adversary." Neocons and neolibs will find little, if any disagreement with his opening comment. In conjunction with that thought, the second sentence in Simes' piece is somewhat contradictory in saying "But treating it as an outright enemy could result in a self-fulfilling prophecy, triggering mortal threats to its neighbors which otherwise might not be in the cards."

Enemy (whether outright or otherwise) is a synonym of adversary. In the post-Soviet era, Russia and America haven't fought each other. With that in mind, the use of enemy and adversary is in line with tabloid sensationalist inaccuracies, as opposed to a realist seeking a more balanced overview. (The National Interest has had its tabloid moments, like Michael Peck's April 3, 2016 article "How Poland Saved the World From Russia", which I took some pleasure in answering.)

Putting aside the attempt to accommodate neoliberal and neocon biases, here's an alternative to Simes' opening salvo: "Russia could be a dangerous adversary. This can unnecessarily occur by incessantly disregarding legitimate Russian concerns." Thereafter, a litany of fact based examples can be provided.

Categorizing Russia as a "formidable geopolitical rival" to America (and vice versa) arguably serves as a better characterization than "dangerous adversary". In line with a pragmatic approach, this suggestion is in sync with the foreign policy realist, who second guesses the extent to which these two countries should be at odds with each other.

From a non-establishment realist perspective seeking improved US-Russian ties, the rest of Simes' piece is for the most part agreeable. Not too long ago, the US based mass media journalist Natasha Bertrand (who the Johnson's Russia List promoted blogger "Yalensis" has called a "whore") suggested in so many words that Simes might be, or is, a Kremlin flack. It's that kind of mass media portrayal which might compel Simes to express himself in the beginning of his article at issue. (Bertrand has ties to MSNBC, Politico and The Atlantic.)

Regardless of whether that's the case, there's a basis for the US foreign policy establishment to broaden itself with other sources. BTW, Simes been at the forefront in having the likes of the Atlantic Council's John Herbst and former Obama administration official Charles Kupchan, appear on Russian national television, where he co-hosts a show on Channel 1. Comparatively speaking, the major US TV news networks don't (in overall terms) do a better job in getting diverse views on issues concerning US-Russian relations.

This very point leads to the matter of projection. A US mass media elite saying that Russian media is restricted comes to mind. Projecting some negative US

behavior to Russia relates to the suspect claim that the Russian government is looking to promote racial division in the US. That demonic image of the Kremlin was spun by NBC's Richard Engel this past May. A couple of months later on NBC, US Democratic Party presidential candidate Kamala Harris, flippantly presented this claim as fact, minus any conclusive proof.

Upon further review, Engel's "proof" includes a subtle acknowledgement of lacking conclusive evidence – an underhanded way of covering his butt if the claim gets completely demolished. Russia is by no means a monolithic country. As is true with many, if not most other nations, individual Russians can pursue agendas on their own, without the approval of the Russian government. The US comedian Dave Chappelle aptly noted that Russia isn't responsible for bigoted instances in the US. In Russia, the US and elsewhere, there've been features on intolerance in the US, with some of that coverage being inaccurate.

Regarding a foreign government seeking to sow ethnic discord in another country, consider the comments of the US State Department's George Kent at a one-sided Capitol Hill discussion on Crimea, hosted this past March by the Atlantic Council, US Institute of Peace and Ukrainian Embassy. At about the 45 minute mark of this taped event, Kent pointedly said that "Crimea is Ukrainian" in the Ukrainian and Crimean Tatar languages – never minding the majority ethnic Russian population in Crimea and the fact that Russian is the most preferred language there. In addition, Kent made no mention that the majority of Crimea's ethnic Ukrainian population support Crimea's reunification with Russia.

Kent's suggestive advocacy to pit non-Russians in Crimea opposed to Russia/Russians was propagandistically presented by Nick Schifrin in an Al Jazeera segment around the time of Crimea's reunification with Russia in 2014 – something I had previously noted. Upon being reunited with Russia, Crimea has been spared the level of nationalist violence that has existed in some other parts of the former Ukrainian SSR. Within Crimea, there's no noticeable call to leave Russia and rejoin Ukraine.

Over the years, Doug Bandow has expressed views which generally put him in the realist wing of the US foreign policy establishment. His comments on Crimea further highlight some of the limits within US foreign policy establishment realist circles. Bandow's August 30, 2018 National Interest article and August 1, 2019

American Conservative piece, advocates an internationally supervised referendum in Crimea.

It's crystal clear that a well over 2/3 majority in Crimea support their area being reunited with Russia. It's a high point of hypocrisy to dwell on Crimea having another referendum, while not advocating a referendum for Kosovo. Such an inconsistency jives with the anti-Russian biases regularly presented in US mass media without much of a rebuttal.

On the subject of Russia and Ukraine, I'm reminded of a September 5, 2014 PBS NewsHour segment, where noted foreign policy realist John Mearsheimer said: "The Russians have made it very clear that they're not going to tolerate a situation where Ukraine forms an alliance with NATO, the principle reason that Russia is now in Ukraine and trying to wreck Ukraine.

And let's be clear here. Why Russia is trying to wreck Ukraine, is because Russia doesn't want Ukraine to become part of the West. It doesn't want it to be integrated into NATO or the EU. And if we follow the prescriptions that Bill and I know Mike favors as well, what we are going to end up doing is further antagonizing Putin. He is going to play more hardball. And the end result is that Ukraine is going to be wrecked as a country, and we're going to have terrible relations between Russia and the West, which is not in Russia's interest and not in our interest."

At a University of Chicago event, Mearsheimer also singles out Russia as seeking to "wreck" Ukraine. He doesn't use that word to characterize Western actions. Hence, his usage comes across as disproportionate and puzzling. (Offhand, I don't recall Mearsheimer using a word like "wreck" to describe US actions in Yugoslavia, Iraq and Libya.) When compared to Russia, Mearsheimer has said that he finds more fault with the Western stances taken on Ukraine.

All of the following highlighted points have been agreeably acknowledged by Mearsheimer:

A good deal of Ukraine's problems pertain to some internal dynamics in Ukraine, which don't specifically involve Russia or the West.



The leading Western governments took a casual approach to the overthrow of Ukraine's democratically elected President Viktor Yanukovich, shortly after he signed an internationally brokered power sharing arrangement with his main opponents.

Following Yanukovich's overthrow, there were a series of increased anti-Russian acts in Ukraine.

Russia (prior to Yanukovich being overthrown) was if anything more open than the leading Western nations to a jointly negotiated Russian-Ukrainian and Western agreement on how Ukraine's economy should develop.

Forget about Russia for a moment. Like it or not, there're pro-Russian elements in Ukraine who've opposed some key aspects of the Euromaidan. The overwhelming majority of the Donbass situated rebels are from the territory of the former Ukrainian SSR. For its part, the Russian government can't be seen as being too oblivious to the concerns of Russian speaking pro-Russians just outside Russia's border.

I'll add that it's ultimately not in Russia's interest to have on its border, a relatively large country like Ukraine, with considerable socioeconomic problems. Such a scenario can lead to a negative spillover effect. On the other hand, there're anti-Russian elements who (whether they admit to it) seek to make propaganda points out of increased tensions with Russia. A good number of these folks reside safely beyond Russia and Ukraine.

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Source: <https://www.eurasiareview.com/27082019-getting-real-with-the-us-foreign-policy-establishment-realists-analysis/>

# **How Land Use Impacts Our Climate By Syed Mohammad Ali**

Jane Goodall, the world-renowned primatologist, has very aptly noted the irony of how “the most intellectual creature to ever walk Earth is destroying its only home”. Human-caused climate change has indeed put an immense strain on the delicate ecosystem of our planet, the consequences of which are becoming increasingly apparent.

Varied forms of human behaviour have combined to wreak havoc on the natural environment. Polluting industrialisation processes, use of fossil fuels to meet growing energy demands and creation of unsustainable food production systems are all major contributors to an ever-growing environmental crisis.

While heat-trapping gases are recognised as a major cause of global warming, focusing on land use is a still ignored, yet very important aspect of contending with climate change. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) has just released a sobering report which highlights how current patterns of used land are not only making global warming worse, but also making food more expensive, scarcer, and less nutritious.

Land comprises only 30% of the Earth, and it is warming much faster than the rest of the planet. In turn, climate change is worsening land degradation. It has caused deserts to grow and has made forests more vulnerable to drought, fire, pests and disease.

Scientists had long thought that one of the few benefits of higher levels of heat-trapping carbon dioxide in our atmosphere was that it made plants grow more. But scientific studies are showing how high levels of carbon dioxide reduce protein and nutrients in many crops. The stability of food supply is projected to decrease as the magnitude and frequency of extreme weather events such as floods and droughts disrupt existing food chains.

Human land use is not only part of the environmental problem; it can also offer a potential solution. Rethinking our agriculture and forestry policies can become a powerful force in combatting climate change. At present, agriculture and forestry

are estimated to account for about 23% of the heat-trapping gases warming the Earth (which is only slightly less than gases from automobiles, boats and planes). Add in transporting food, energy costs, and packaging and that proportion grow to over 35%.

Yet land is also a great carbon “sink” which sucks heat-trapping gases out of the air. Agriculture and forestry still pull more carbon dioxide out of the air than they put into it. However, if we continue to deforest and destroy our soils, the carbon currently being absorbed by our land will go into the atmosphere instead and make the rate of global warming even worse.

Overall, land emissions are increasing, and the aggressive cutting down of forests persists in places like the Amazon (Brazil, Colombia and Peru). Palm oil production has played havoc in tropical forested areas of Africa and Asia. It is easy for richer countries in Europe to criticize this deforestation, but even an environmentally conscious country like Germany continues to import large amounts of soy from Latin America, where forests are being destroyed to plant the crop, to feed unsustainable numbers of livestock in Germany.

If people change their diets, reducing red meat and increasing plant-based foods such as fruits, vegetables and seeds, the world can save as much as another 15% of the current emissions by mid-century. Reducing food waste can fight climate change as well given that global food waste alone accounted for 8% to 10% of heat-trapping emissions between 2010 and 2016.

If people change the way they eat, grow food, and manage forests, it could help save the planet from a dangerously warmer future. Given the interconnected nature of our global production and consumption system, however, this change needs to occur within and across all countries around the world.

Planting trees is one important part of rethinking the land use strategy, which currently seems in vogue within Pakistan. However, other issues which also merit equal attention are our agricultural and urban development strategies, which in their current form remain quite unsustainable.

Source: <https://tribune.com.pk/story/2039806/6-land-use-impacts-climate/>

# **Trump's Unpredictable Policies and Peace in Afghanistan By Aisha Noor**

The US may be negotiating an agreement with the Taliban for withdrawal of American and NATO forces from Afghanistan. The US and the Taliban have held talks in Qatar several times this year to formulate a deal. The framework would allow for a phased withdrawal of US troops, and in return, the Taliban would prevent extremist groups from operating in areas they control. It would give Donald Trump a chance to claim success in ending America's longest war, and on the other hand, it would be a chance for the Taliban to claim they have achieved their goal of driving out US and NATO troops.

President Trump said on Tuesday, "The Taliban would like to stop fighting us. They've lost a lot." Asked by a reporter if the Taliban can be trusted, Trump replied, "Nobody can be trusted", describing Afghanistan as "the Harvard University of terrorism."

Yes, the US president is right to say that no one is to be trusted. President Trump proves himself to be an unpredictable person in his decisions and actions. On Tuesday, he reiterated his will to reduce the number of US forces in Afghanistan. Ryan McCarthy, an acting army secretary, says, "We have not received any direction to do anything at this point."

The US agenda clearly focuses on countering terrorism. Pakistan's key role in pushing the Afghan Taliban to reduce battlefield violence is equally important though tough at this point. Trump's policy of Pakistan mediating for Afghan peace has been met with scepticism in Washington. Though failing to stand with Pakistan now could come back to harm the US in future.

Last month, in my article "PM Imran Khan's Pragmatic Visit to the United States", I threw light on billionaire businessman leader Trump's relationship with Prime Minister Imran Khan, a player-turned-politician. I predicted relations and decisions based on the personalities of the two leaders. I think the unpredictable Trump can be predicted now. I wrote, "Despite good relations, both leaders would seek their interests, one a businessman and other a player. Khan now throws the ball in Trump's court and will see how it works...Khan cares about culture, politics,

and philosophy. Trump, a businessman used to calculated decisions, seeks his interests after discussing a wide range of issues. His decisions in the past show him to be an unpredictable personality.

President Trump said on Tuesday, “The Taliban would like to stop fighting us. They’ve lost a lot”

Trump’s recognition of Jerusalem as the capital of Israel has infuriated the Arab world and upset his Western allies, sparking more violence in the region. The US president disregarded global opinion on the matter. In the Oval Office meeting, Trump and Khan’s talk was on bilateral relations. Both countries wish to move forward keeping in view their own interests.

After three days of that meeting, the Taliban said that they would visit Pakistan whenever they received a formal invitation, as they routinely pay visits to other countries to explain their position regarding the peace process. The Taliban spokesman said that the visit could take place in the coming weeks. Taliban’s immediate response, no doubt, was to be taken as a positive gesture towards Pakistan’s struggle for the peace process in the region. During the meeting, Trump made a broader and a surprising offer to mediate between Pakistan and India on the perennial dispute over Kashmir, which created fury in the neighbouring country.

But now America’s involvement in the Kashmir issue seems all the more suspect when it is being said that the US was already aware of India’s intention to scrap Article 370. It is another thing that the US has denied it. After a long silence on the Kashmir issue since India’s growing violence, Trump said on Tuesday that he would do his best to mediate in the “explosive and complicated” Kashmir dispute between the nuclear-armed Pakistan and India.

Would the United States see Islamabad as an integral part of the solution to end the Afghan war when Pakistan already has been engaged in the disputed Kashmir with its growing chaos unleashed by India and its unjust acts of exploitation and oppression? The Afghan peace process or mediation in the Kashmir issue, time will reveal the priorities of the United States.

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