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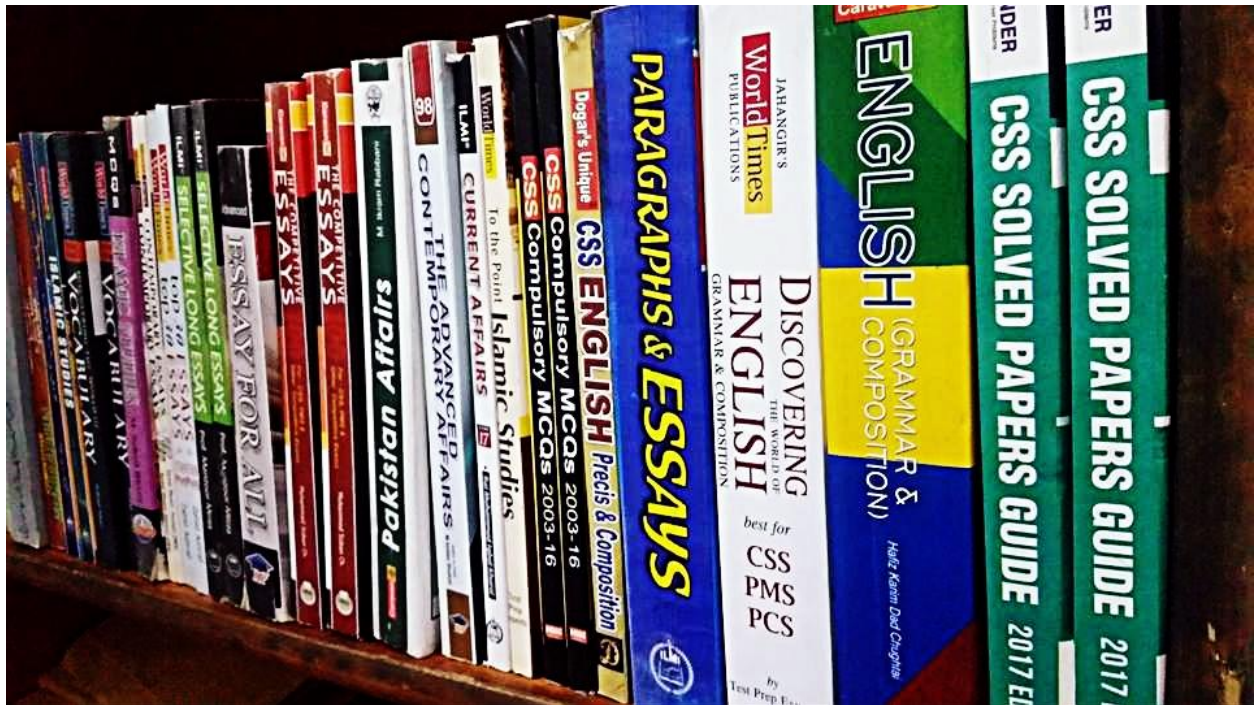
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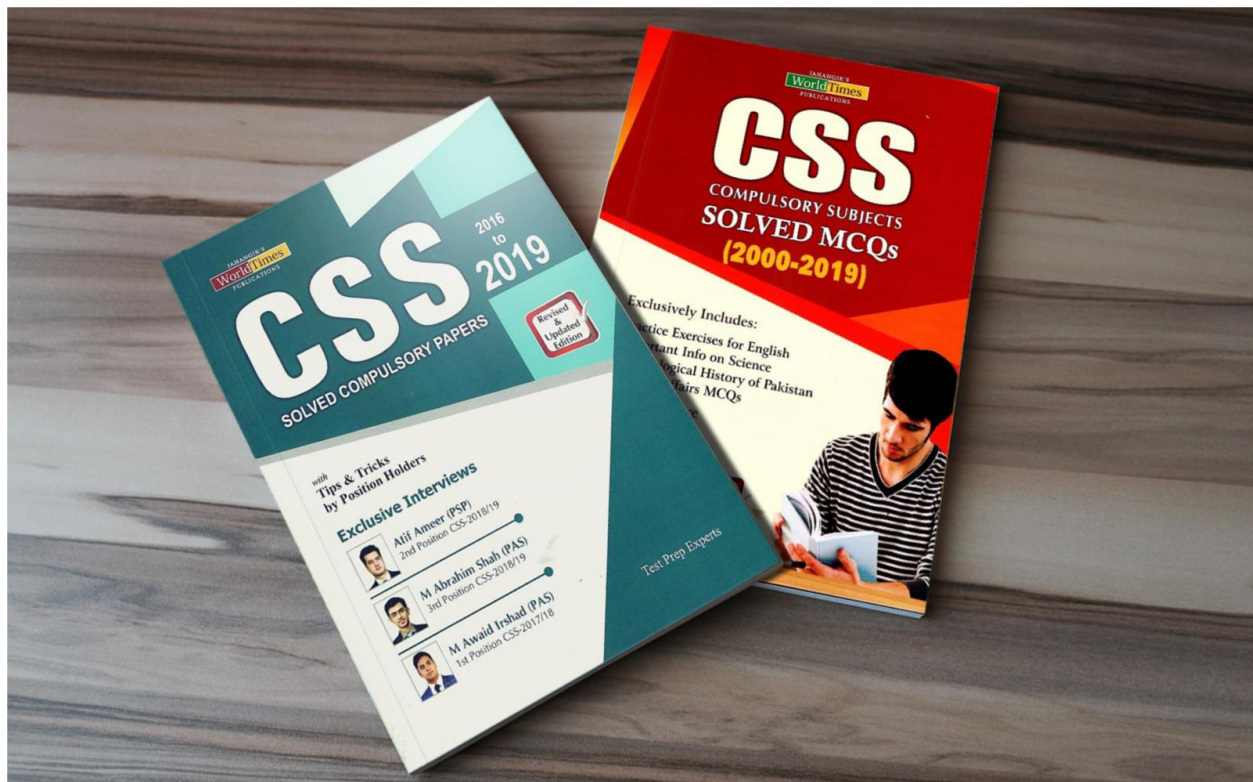
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PAKISTAN

Understanding Climate Change in Pakistan **By Khayyam Munawar**

At its heart, denying climate change is a conflict between facts and values. The effects of climate change are quite real despite the claims made by multi-billion-dollar industries which argue against it to safeguard their own interests. There is substance behind the argument which suggests that the annual temperature of the earth is gradually rising. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) stated that the average surface temperatures on Earth rose by 0.95 degrees Celsius between 1880 and 2016. This holds true for Pakistan too. Even though it contributes to only 1% of the annual global emissions and has a relatively small carbon footprint in comparison. It is projected that temperatures all over Pakistan would increase by 3°C within the next 20 years and around 5-6°C by the end of this century. We stand as the earliest victims of disruptions in weather cycles, threatened food production, rising sea levels, abnormal precipitation, catastrophic flooding and depletion of ice sheets and glaciers which are the core source of sustenance in an agricultural land such as Pakistan.

A minute contribution to the global emissions does not mean we have effectively controlled our individual greenhouse output over the years, in fact our total emissions have increased by 114% since 1990. Energy production and the transport network within Pakistan combined, contribute to over 62 % of our CO₂ emissions (Pakistan is dependent on fossil fuels for 61% of its energy production) which are the culprit of the greenhouse effect.

Malpractices in the industrial sector, an overall lack of regulations and ignorance of the previous governments towards effects of climate mean that the total CO₂ emissions of Pakistan have increased from 68,565 kilotons(kt) to almost 1,66,299 kilotons(kt) in the last 30 years and are expected to rise much further.

How has Pakistan been affected by this phenomenon of climate change? Studying the data over Lahore alone over a span of 10 years proves the erratic movement in average temperatures, precipitation levels and UV indexes. Highest temperature recorded in 2019 was 46°C which was 4.5% higher than the highest temperature recorded in 2009. Similarly lowest recorded temperatures have risen by almost 57% from 7°C in 2009 to 11°C in 2019. UV indexes recorded in peak summers saw an increase of more than 50% over the last 10 years which indicates depletion of the ozone layer. In February 2009, precipitation was measured at 2.48mm while in 2019 the spell was measured at 182mm and lasted 13 days. These rainfalls devastated major parts of Pakistan including KPK, Punjab & some areas of Baluchistan resulting in over 140 deaths.

In the years 2017 and 2018, districts of Baluchistan and parts of Sindh suffered dry spells due to rainfall being well below normal leading towards mild to moderate drought like conditions. On the other side of the spectrum, areas of Punjab and KPK suffered mild to heavy flooding resulting in severe damage to infrastructure and loss of life. These are some of the anomalies in the weather cycles which suggest that our climate is changing. Prime Minister, Imran Khan stressed over the severity of these climate changes in his speech at UNGA as he explained how 210 million lives are at the mercy of the nature. "Nature is something you cannot negotiate with" added the prime minister.

The answer to a majority of our problems could be renewable energy. Corporations worldwide have started shifting their operations to solar or wind energy, offloading the local grids and improving their long-term sustainability. Such examples exist in Pakistan too and include the Kohinoor Textile Mills and Gadoon Textile mills. Pakistan has an ample capacity for both solar and wind-based electricity production. Punjab gets around 3500-3600 sun hours a year and Pakistan as a whole can generate up to an approximate of 2.9 million MW clean energy from solar power alone. Similarly, Sindh has a vacant area of around 9749 km² which is sufficient to produce over an additional 11000 MW of clean, waste free, sustainable wind-based energy. With proper investment and implementation by both the public and private sector renewable energy sources can increase their share in the total energy production of the country from 5% to 15% while decreasing the cost borne by the consumer. Furthermore; the government should regulate emissions from transport vehicles as they are the most overlooked. Introducing policies such as those in line with the regulations

imposed in UK or by the European union that include the banning of vehicles above a certain age or condition ,the introduction of annual MOTs, emission checks and certificates that declare vehicles fit or road worthy would certainly help control Co2 emissions in check. USA has implemented a gas guzzler tax over inefficient vehicles but allows tax cuts and government grants for electric vehicles which has helped shift the demand towards EVs. Electric vehicles are also marginally cheaper to run and maintain in the long term.

The Ministry of Climate Change is hoping to introduce a well-structured EV policy and members of the cabinet approved the draft of the electric vehicle policy and called it a move in the right direction. Companies such as TESLA successfully operate in the USA under the policy of zero emissions and a similar step in this direction would yield positive results to the environment of Pakistan too.

Back in 2014, The government of KPK took a great initiative when it decided to plant over a billion trees. It has since become a national action plan, to which the current government is committed. However, we as individuals have a stake in the wellbeing of our country and the earth and should devote ourselves to reducing emissions, saving energy, adopting sustainable business practices, recycling and reusing materials, managing waste, and if you can plant a tree in your backyard and do your part, why wait? Without drastic action today, adapting to the impacts of climate change in the future will be much more difficult and expensive.

Source: <https://nation.com.pk/14-Dec-2019/understanding-climate-change-in-pakistan>

PM's Visit to Saudi Arabia | Editorial

THE bonds of friendship and fraternity that exist between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia are unique and these can be witnessed from frequent high level exchanges between the two countries. PM Imran Khan paid a visit, fourth since May 2019, to the Kingdom on Saturday where he held wide-ranging talks with top Saudi leadership focusing on bilateral relations and regional situation.

Prior to visit, a perception was created that all is not well between the two countries due to Pakistan's decision to attend Kuala Lumpur Summit. We understand that those who are not happy over Pak-Saudi everlasting relationship spread such rumours. The cordiality shown by Saudi Crown Prince Mohamad Bin Salman during his meeting with Imran Khan and then the Crown Prince as a special gesture seeing the PM off at Riyadh International Airport would definitely have frustrated those who wanted to cultivate seeds of differences between the two countries. The meeting between the Crown Prince and the PM in fact provided an opportunity to both sides to discuss future course of action to expand their relations in different fields. As we are striving to promote tourism sector, the Saudi side offered all possible support to Pakistan in its development. In this context it was also decided that a Saudi team would undertake a visit to Pakistan soon. Indeed under Crown Prince Mohammed Bin Salman, the Kingdom has opened greatly for foreign tourists and Pakistan certainly can benefit from its experience and build necessary infrastructure with Saudi support to attract tourists from other countries.

The Crown Prince's visit to Pakistan in February this year had ushered in a new era of deeper engagements in various domains including economic investment, energy, security, defence and people to people contact. The visit saw Saudi Arabia announcing an investment package of \$20b that also included Saudi investment in an oil refinery in Gwadar. Both sides need to step up efforts to early realisation of this investment that in fact will go a long way in further diversifying their bilateral relationship. As regards Kuala Lumpur Summit, we believe that Saudi Arabia is an important country of the Islamic world and we are confident that Saudi Crown Prince will personally attend this Summit on the invitation of Malaysian friends in order to discuss and formulate a way forward to address various challenges being presently faced by Muslim world. This Summit

may also discuss as to how the OIC can be revitalised to live up to the expectations of Muslims across the globe.

Source: <https://pakobserver.net/pms-visit-to-saudi-arabia/>

Solution of Kashmir Dispute By Malik Muhammad Ashraf

On the World Human Rights Day, Prime Minister Imran Khan in a tweet made an appeal to the world's conscience and the upholders of the international law and to the UN Security Council to act against the illegal annexation of Indian Occupied Jammu and Kashmir. In yet another tweet he condemned the siege of IOK for the last four months and demanded an end to the gross abuse of human rights and atrocities being inflicted on Kashmiri men, women and children by the Indian occupation forces in violation of all international humanitarian and human rights laws. He saluted the brave Kashmiris fighting for their right of self-determination and vowed to stand behind them resolutely.

In his address to the UN General Assembly—which was the best ever exposition of the cause of the people of Kashmir and the implications of the Indian action for peace and security in the region—he also tried to stir the conscience of the world community and sought their intervention in stopping the impending humanitarian crisis. Nobody in his right mind can take an exception to the narrative that the Prime Minister has been trying to expound and persists with. But the dilemma is that in the permeating global environment, conscience plays no role in addressing humanitarian issues and conflicts which continue to consume thousands of human lives. Those who really matter in regards to the settlement of the conflicts and observance of human rights look at these things through the prism of their strategic and commercial interests and consequently there is a selective application of the international law and the internationally recognized human rights. Had it not been so, Palestine and Kashmir issues would have already been resolved.

In the aftermath of the Prime Minister's address to the UN General Assembly, we have seen muffled concerns expressed by different countries and world bodies on the situation in Kashmir demanding ending of the lockdown but nobody has addressed the real issue of self-determination and taken concrete steps towards the resolution of the Kashmir dispute in consonance with the UN resolutions. The world community is not only showing criminal indifference to the humanitarian crisis in IOK and the illegal Indian action to annex the territory but is also looking the other way on the anti-Muslim actions of the Modi regime within India. First it

deprived 1.9 million Bengali Muslims who were residing in Assam for decades before partition and now through the new citizenship bill which denies Muslims the right of citizenship. The bill which has racist and xenophobic connotation has already triggered protests in several states of India.

Indian move to annex IOK, continued lockdown and echoes of claims on Azad Kashmir have created a radically new and dangerous situation. I am sure this heinous action by India could not have been taken without secret nod of the powers which are in strategic partnership with her. The Indian leadership made a conscious decision knowing well that in the obtaining global environment they could easily get away with their inhuman actions and the defiance of the UN resolutions. Regrettably even the UN is not in a position to play any positive role without the support of the pro-Indian powers enjoying veto power. That is a stark reality.

There seems no possibility of India retracting from the aggressive course that it has adopted by pummeling the international law and the internationally recognized human rights unless something dramatic happens on the global level forcing the big powers to change their stance and support the righteous cause of self-determination rising above their strategic and commercial interests. That seems a remote possibility.

Pakistan and India are nuclear powers, as such no military solution to the Kashmir dispute is possible. Pakistan cannot go beyond extending moral, political and diplomatic support to the cause of Kashmiris. In fact it cannot afford to get militarily involved in the Indian held Kashmir unless the situation deteriorates and there is bloodshed and people start fleeing the Valley which puts Pakistan's restraint under unbearable stress. In such a situation Pakistan may be unable to avoid extending material assistance to the freedom struggle of the people of Kashmir. Pakistan surely does not want that and it was the reason that the Prime Minister warned the protestors from crossing over to the Indian side.

In the current situation even the Pakistani nuclear deterrent cannot stop India from the massacre of the Kashmiri people. It comes into play only in a situation when god-forbid Pakistan is directly attacked and its territorial integrity is threatened. However no rational mind would tend to believe that India would go

for the option of mutual destruction through nuclear war which could also have disastrous consequences beyond our region and the world at large. I think those powers which are presently condoning inhuman actions of Modi regime in the Indian held Kashmir are also fully aware of the consequences of such an eventuality and would be more than inclined not to allow the things to come to such a pass.

What it all means is that for the people of Kashmir it is going to be a long drawn out struggle and it is only them, the international community and the UN, if they ever feel their obligation towards them as per the UN resolution that the Kashmir dispute could be resolved. Much will actually depend on whether the people of Kashmir can continue their freedom struggle with the same ferocity and determination under the changed circumstances are not. Pakistan for which Kashmir is an unfinished agenda of the partition will and must continue to persist with its moral, political and diplomatic support to the freedom struggle in IOK as long as it does not succeed.

Malik Muhammad Ashraf

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Source: <https://nation.com.pk/13-Dec-2019/solution-of-kashmir-dispute>

Growing economic ties with Qatar | Editorial

Qatar would soon sign a preferential trade agreement and a free trade agreement with Pakistan. The agreements would enhance bilateral trade between the two friendly countries. The enhanced trade will be beneficial for both countries, more so for Pakistan; it will generate more jobs for Pakistanis within the country and in Qatar and also bring in the much-needed foreign exchange. Pakistan has offered to set up a factory in Qatar to manufacture football for the Football World Cup 2022 as well as other tournaments. Offer has also been made for the export of other sports goods. There is a good demand for football in Qatar considering that football is the most popular sport in Qatar and other countries of the Middle East. Nebras Power, a major investment group in Qatar's energy sector, has expressed an interest in making direct investment in Pakistan's power sector.

The two countries would further enhance cooperation in the fields of energy and aviation. With a view to strengthening economic ties, officials from the commerce and energy ministries of Pakistan attended the fifth Pak-Qatar Joint Ministerial Commission meeting held in Qatar last month. Pakistan has also offered security for the 2022 FIFA World Cup. The Government of Pakistan has endorsed a report sent by the Government of Qatar to the WTO to recognise its products such as LNG and natural gas as eco-friendly.

Qatar has requested additional traffic rights to enhance aviation links with Pakistan. Given the growing air traffic through and from Qatar, this is one of the significant aspects of economic ties. Qatar Airways, which started operations with two passenger aircraft in January 1994, now has a fleet of more than 200 aircraft with 43,000 employees. The two-way trade between Pakistan and Qatar reached Qatari riyal 9.5 billion in 2018, witnessing an unprecedented rise of 63 per cent. Currently around 150,000 Pakistanis work in Qatar, sending \$400 million remittances annually to home. Pakistan should further capitalise on the growing economic ties with Qatar. In the South Asian context, it should be borne in mind: the only pariah at the stock exchange is the bankrupt.

Source : <https://tribune.com.pk/story/2114408/6-growing-economic-ties-qatar/>

US Resolution on Kashmir | Editorial

A resolution has been tabled in the US House of Representatives urging India to end communication curbs and its mass detention policy in Kashmir. The resolution also calls for the preservation of religious freedom for all residents of India-Occupied Kashmir (IOK). The bipartisan resolution to restore human rights in IOK was moved on Friday by Democrat Congresswoman Pramila Jayapal and Republican Congressman Steve Watkins.

Jayapal, who in 2016, became the first Indian-American woman elected to Congress, knows a thing or two about human rights. After immigrating to the US as a teenager, she spent much of her life as a rights activist. Just last year, she was arrested while participating in a protest against the Trump immigration's policies. She is also no friend of Pakistan, having criticised alleged rights violations here. But that has not stopped Indian trolls and armchair experts from attacking her. While some attacks are frivolous and benign, racist comments were also directed at her, and some even questioned the veracity of her accusations, citing the fact that the Indian media says all is well in Kashmir. You know, the same Indian media that still claims India successfully attacked Balakot when every single foreign news outlet and a few smaller Indian ones agree that India only killed a few trees. Even Congressman Watkins, an Afghan war veteran, is not considered pro-Pakistan. But like his colleague, he is troubled by the events in IOK.

The resolution actually does make explicit mention of the threat of "cross-border terrorism", but rejects India's arbitrary detention, use of excessive force against civilians, and suppression of peaceful protest. Yet, it is likely that the authors themselves know India will disregard the resolution if it passes. Why else would it contain a sentence calling for New Delhi to condemn religiously-motivated violence, which has provided the entire foundation of Modi's political career.

Published in The Express Tribune, December 10th, 2019.

Source: <https://tribune.com.pk/story/2114443/6-us-resolution-kashmir/>

Welcoming The New CJP | Editorial

The new Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Gulzar Ahmad will head the Supreme Court (CJ) of Pakistan till February 2022. Like every former head of the institution, he, too, has already informed the nation about the issues dearest to him. Honourable CJP wants every institution free of corruption. One cannot but agree with the words of the incumbent CJP when he said, “Corruption and illegalities, in all the departments of the State, need to be seriously addressed and eliminated ... [corruption] is the most basic ... scrooge that does not allow the country to grow and prosper.”

People have high hopes and expectations from the honourable CJP. The reason for such high hopes is that masses knew him as Justice of the apex court who would not shy from giving strong verdicts and comments against governments and bureaucrats. Thus people will have high expectations from him and will think of him as a CJP who will protect their rights.

The honourable CJP has, however, taken control of the judiciary at a time of great tension. The unfortunate event in Lahore where the lawyers attacked Punjab Institute of Cardiology made people wonder if the legal fraternity is the protector of the law of the land. After the controversial verdict of the special bench against former dictator Musharraf, many people see tension and conflict among state institutions inevitable. These are two of the many challenges where the state and nation will need the wisdom of the honourable CJP.

But these are not the only issues that the CJP will deal with as the head of the judiciary. The most tiresome problem will be reforming the legal system of the country. Probably improving the criminal justice system should be as worthy of the CJP’s attention as elimination of corruption would be all these years. It is to say with pain that the justice system of the country is slow, flawed and continuously decaying. In Pakistan, it takes years for a civil and criminal case to reach its logical end. Indeed, many of the country’s problems can be traced to the lack of new mechanisms of justice that are responsive to people’s requirements.

However, if the CJP ensures the provision of expeditious justice to the general public, which is also a constitutional requirement, people's faith in the legal system of the country will restore. Given that the honourable CJP holds the constitution in the highest esteem, people are looking forward to him as the CJP who will ensure that every department works for people's welfare.

Source: <https://nation.com.pk/23-Dec-2019/welcoming-the-new-cjp>

Af-Pak Relations | Editorial

Pakistan's government has reiterated its good wishes to Afghanistan's incumbent president, Ashraf Ghani who won a slim majority of votes in September's election. The poll was not a smooth process, as it plunged the country into a political crisis; and allegations of fraud marred it. Pakistan welcoming preliminary results tells that Pakistan considers a democratic Kabul essential for the political stability of the war-torn country. The completion of the election process will have far-reaching consequences on the security of the region as well. However, the days ahead are not only crucial for the Afghan government but Pakistan as well.

Just a month ago, the president of the United States (US) Donald Trump restarted peace negotiations with the Taliban. The future political landscape of the country can turn upside down in case Trump's negotiation team strike a deal with the Afghan Taliban without securing any guarantees for the incumbent Afghan government. Trump is in a hurry to strike an agreement with the Afghan Taliban before the 2020 presidential elections. And the haste can lead to a negotiated settlement that can undermine the present political set up in Afghanistan. Such a negotiated settlement that can undermine Ghani's government is what Pakistan needs to avoid.

For the Afghan government, Pakistan's goodwill gestures and messages of working together for regional stability will not matter if the Taliban carry on with their attacks in a post-war Afghanistan. Therefore, Pakistan needs to convince the Taliban to come to a dialogue table and reach a power-sharing formula with the Afghan government. In the absence of any such formula or understanding, avoiding a bloody civil war will be impossible. And the most vulnerable ones will be ordinary Afghans. The task ahead of Pakistan is very critical. If Pakistan succeeds in bringing the Taliban to agree on power-sharing with Ghani's government, the Afghan people will think of Pakistan as a country that really cares for them.

Anything short of this will harm Pakistan's interests in the war-torn country. And Pakistan cannot afford to lose Afghanistan or Afghan people. The policymakers in Islamabad need to understand that India is enhancing its influence in the

country through investing significantly in infrastructure projects across all of Pakistan.

Pakistan, on the other hand, under a severe economic crunch, cannot compete with India financially. The only way Pakistan can create a positive image and perception in Afghan people minds is by playing its role in saving the country from a civil war. And the looming civil war can be averted if Pakistan succeeds in making the Taliban accept the incumbent government as one that is truly representative of the Afghan people.

Source: <https://nation.com.pk/25-Dec-2019/af-pak-relations>

Jinnah's Pakistan in 21st Century By Dr Nasreen Akhtar

STANLEY Wolpert greatly acclaimed Quaid-i-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah, in his book Jinnah of Pakistan. Wolpret writes, "Few individuals significantly alter the course of history, fewer still modify the map of the world, hardly anyone can be credited with creating a nation-state. Mohammad Ali Jinnah did all three." Definitely, Jinnah was an exceptional leader and statesman who had wisdom and vision – he had convincing power, through dialogue, he forced both British Empire and Hindu leadership that Muslims had their own identity and they could not live with a different nation – Hindu. Jinnah's course remained democratic and he never chose undemocratic tactics in achieving a new Muslim state-Pakistan. After independence, Jinnah gave an inclusive image about the new country that how the new State should be made a great, peaceful and progressive in the world. In series of speeches he delivered, as Governor General of Pakistan, provided the path to the policy makers that how Pakistan should be; on Pakistan's Constitution he said, "The Constitution of Pakistan will be of a democratic type, embodying the principles of Muslim democracy."

Our salvation lies in following the golden rules of conduct set for us by the Prophet of Islam [Peace Be Upon Him].The Quran is the general code for the Muslims" a religious, economic, social, judicial, criminal and civil code. Objective Resolution 1949 defined Islamic principles – this resolution remained the core part of Ayub's Constitution 1962 –the Constitution of 1973 also included Objective Resolution and Article 227 states, "All existing laws shall be brought in conformity with the injunctions of Islam as laid down in the Hoy Quran and Sunnah, and no laws shall be enacted which is repugnant to such injunctions". Theoretically, all three Constitutions -1956, 62 and 73 provided Islamic clauses but it's never been practised in accordance with Quran or Shariah. Even judicial system does not reflect Article 227 in its verdict. For instance, in recent judgment (in Musharraf's case) Para 66 has become bone of contention and new debate has taken place in the country. Judicial system is being criticized- one would like to know that if is it Jinnah's Pakistan or Islamic State without Islamic values?

To know Jinnah's principles the contextual explanation is very important for any speech. As the President of the first Constitutional Assembly, Jinnah

categorically defined the future of the new state that lied in Islamic principles. Though he preferred 'parliamentary democracy' in new Pakistan but he desired to practise the golden rules set by the Great Prophet (PBUH). Jinnah tasked to the legislators to make Constitution. But post- Jinnah Pakistani political leaders could not frame a democratic Constitution and ruled Pakistan without its Constitution till 1956 – the first Constitution was made and abrogated in 1958.

Over the past seventy two years, Pakistan has experienced different systems. Four military rulers (Ayub Khan, Yahya Khan, General Zia, Pervez Musharraf) and civilian rulers mainly from the two political parties – PPP and PML-N, badly failed to practise Jinnah's political principles and they did not even care to create peace and harmony among the four provinces – federating units. However, all of them politicized the diversity of culture and divergence of opinions in different regional units. Their politics never represented Jinnah's Pakistan who strongly believed in "Faith, Unity, Discipline". Four federating units are being governed by people who never understand the philosophy of Federation – we have to accept this reality. Hence, Jinnah's Pakistan is waiting for socio-economic justice, rule of law and corruption free society.

Jinnah's Pakistan has not been ruled by the statesmen or visionary leaders. Consequently, rulers promoted 'patrimonialism' instead of democratic norms and values. Prime Minister Imran Khan immensely idealizes the 'Madina State' and wants to make Pakistan a welfare state. He is facing multiple challenges –mainly opposition political parties are not interested in legislation, whereas bureaucracy which has been politicized by the previous rulers – is a main hurdle in removing the old practices. Founding father, Jinnah, knew the bureaucratic behaviour. He gave his message to the Pakistani bureaucrats. On 25 March 1948, in his address to the Gazetted Officers at Chittagong Jinnah said, "Your conduct and dealing with the people in various Departments, in which you may be; wipe off that pat reputation- you are not rulers. You do not belong to the ruling class, you belong to the servants. Make the people feel that you are their servants and friends, maintain the highest standard of honour, integrity, justice and fair-play. If you do that, people will have confidence and trust in you and will look upon you as friends and well wishers".

Jinnah wanted to establish a welfare State. If we look at his historical speeches from 1943 to 1944 Jinnah decisively stated that the "new Muslim state will be a

true welfare state, based on principles of Islamic social justice with equal rights for all citizens, including minorities. Jinnah had observed, Muslims in United India were badly treated, discriminated and targeted by Hindu extremists- they [Muslims] were not enjoying their fundamental rights. Today's India, under Prime Minister Modi, has proven Jinnah's vision was right and his ideology to defend Muslims 'as a separate nation' was inevitable. Presently, Pakistan is facing internal and international challenges. Internal challenges include: societal and institutional issues and imbalance of power among the federating units. Emerging primary external challenges is India and Afghanistan – their nexus is a grave threat to Pakistan's security. But Pakistan has achieved adequate power to defend its sovereignty and survival – Jinnah, certainly, knew Pakistan's enemies and he said, "There is no power on earth that can undo Pakistan".

—The writer is Assistant Professor, IIUI, Islamabad.

Source: <https://pakobserver.net/jinnaqs-pakistan-in-21st-century/>

Two-Nation Theory Vindicated | Editorial

CHIEF of Army Staff General Qamar Javed Bajwa has aptly pointed out that the Quaid-i-Azam's vision about creation of Pakistan based on the 'Two-Nation theory' has been vindicated. Speaking at Quaid's mausoleum in Karachi, where he visited on Wednesday to pay homage to the father of the nation on his birth anniversary, in an apparent reference to what is happening to Indian Muslims, he said creation of Pakistan based on Two-Nation Theory is an even more acknowledged reality today.

It was foresight of Quaid-i-Azam to have made demand for a separate homeland for Muslims of the sub-continent realizing the inherent dangers for them in a Hindu-dominated India as are highlighted by recent events in the neighbouring country where Muslims are once again out on roads to safeguard their interests and protect their identity. The two-nation theory was challenged by critics after break-up of the then East Pakistan in 1971 forgetting that it was product of a conspiracy and not failure of the theory itself. Quaid-i-Azam described Hindus and Muslims as two separate nations emphasizing "Hindus and Muslims belong to two different religious philosophies, social customs and literary traditions. They neither intermarry nor eat together, and indeed they belong to two different civilisations which are based mainly on conflicting ideas and conceptions." Growing levels of intolerance in India towards Muslims is a proof that the Two-Nation Theory was correct and that Muslims have no future in India. Modi is espousing a brand of religious nationalism that views India as fundamentally a Hindu nation and there are now formal campaigns in the country to force non-Hindus especially Muslims to either convert to Hinduism or leave India. The episode of Babri Masjid, non-permission for construction of mosques, lynching of Muslims in the name of protecting cows, discriminatory citizenship bill, denial of government jobs and brutalities being committed against Kashmiris are a few example to substantiate the belief that the theory is not 'dead' as claimed by Indira Gandhi in 1971. Based on what is happening to Muslims in Modi's India, Pakistan is a gift of Allah Almighty but regrettably we are not valuing its worth as we should have. The unending vicious cycle of political and economic instability is clouding minds of the youth about the state, which was formed on just basis but has not generally been run justly.

Source: <https://pakobserver.net/two-nation-theory-vindicated/>

Pak-Saudi Relations By Muhammad Asif

Noor

Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Faisal bin Farhan Al-Saud was in Islamabad for his maiden visit to Pakistan after assuming office in October. The visit of the Saudi Foreign Minister has also come at a time when Prime Minister Imran Khan made a quick visit to the Kingdom to meet the Saudi leadership including Saudi Crown Prince Mohammad bin Salman for the consultation on bilateral matters and developments in the regional context especially in the backdrop of Summit of Muslim leaders in Malaysia. Although such high level visits are a regular practice between both countries but recent changes in the dimensions of Muslim world where conflicts fault lines between the countries are getting deeper and deeper with each passing day. Kuala Lumpur Summit was hosted by Prime Minister Dr. MahatirMohamad, wherein the Turkish President Erdogan, Qatari Emir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-thani and Iranian President Hasan Rouhani were present to witness the dialogue on the role of development and how to improve and achieve the national sovereignties with increasing global challenges. The summit was meant to provide solutions the problems afflicting the global Muslim communities especially marred with conflicts and backwardness where the summit provided some practical steps towards these problems. Pakistan however skipped this Summit and Prime Minister Imran Khan after Saudi Arabia went to later went to Kingdom of Bahrain for another fruitful consultation over the building of relations between the states. In Bahrain Prime Minister Imran Khan was conferred with the Highest Civil Award by King Hamad bin Isa Al-Khalifa and both states signed multiple MoUs in the fields of higher education, scientific research, sports and medical sciences. Committing on the Summit first and later to skip it altogether was criticized by various quarters and advised on the other hand to take a caution efforts and steps in the foreign policy matters especially when there are scores of issues that Pakistan need support from the countries. One of the key foreign policy challenges for Pakistan has remained how to balance and navigate its policy in the volatile Middle East and Gulf region. Through diplomatic adroitness and pragmatism of the leadership in Islamabad, Pakistan will be able to deal with all the challenges especially in finding the balance in its relations with the Muslim world. Pakistan should follow the historic path of its diplomatic traditions wherein we have been successfully remained neutral in the troubling political paradigm of the Muslim world especially.

What was desired from the countries on Kashmir was little less than what was expected as despite been making it a global issue, on Kashmir there is only diplomatic talk from the countries except few who have spoke about the atrocities of the Indian government in Kashmir

The year 2019 has remained a momentous year for both Pakistan and Saudi Arabia as both states came out of their own challenging phases to build relations on number of issues especially after previous government took stand on not sending the troops to Yemen supporting Saudi forces. Change of the government in Islamabad made some head ways wherein Crown Prince Salman with a modern and forward looking new vision for the Kingdom found a young and dynamic partner in Imran Khan. Both heads also sought renewed commitment when Crown Prince arrived in Islamabad. During the visit the Crown Prince and Prime Minister Imran Khan develop a chemistry and instant friendship. Crown Prince also in his state address called him “Pakistan’s Ambassador in Saudi Arabia” which was lauded by many in Pakistan and abroad. During this year alone several high level visits from both sides had been done amplifying the significance of the importance of relations between both states.

Although there are tough challenges for both states in their own regional and political sphere of influence but both states also support each other by handling the challenge. Pakistan on one hand is facing with the crippling economic vows in all dimensions and government is aiming to find new contracts and partners to bail the country out of the tough challenges. Kingdom on the other hand has faced the tough challenge at the regional level especially focusing on its own security and stability. Recently a huge blow to one of the largest oil facility of Aramco has led to not only rise in the world oil prices causing economic pressures on governments but also increased the tension between Riyadh and Tehran where US sent more supporting troops to the Kingdom. Pakistan on the other hand has faced tough challenge on Kashmir this August when the BJP led government has repealed the Article 370 causing ripples across the region and shocked not only Islamabad but also Kashmiris aswell. Pakistan has also sought help from different countries to pressurize the Modi led government including Saudi Arabia which has strong and close ties with India. Recently both countries also signed one of the biggest trade deals in the history of India in the petrochemicals. It is necessary for Pakistan to balance out the relations between

the countries and set foot towards peace and stability in the region with the support from its partner countries like that of Saudi Arabia. What was desired from the countries on Kashmir was little less than what was expected as despite been making it a global issue, on Kashmir there is only diplomatic talk from the countries except few who have spoke about the atrocities of the Indian government in Kashmir. Pakistan is expecting to that Saudi Arabia can help in twisting the arms of on Kashmir but that will depend on how well Pakistan maneuver to raise the support especially from the Saudi side on India.

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Source: <https://dailytimes.com.pk/527845/pak-saudi-relations-part-i/>

Forgotten Water Crisis | Editorial

“Thousands have lived without love, not one without water,” the English poet W. H. Auden once said. And his words ring true in the case of Pakistan where the water crisis is getting worse with every passing day. Multiple studies conducted on the water resources of the country warn the government about the possibility of Pakistan reaching absolute water scarcity by 2025. The water shortage in the country is reaching an alarming level. However, the authorities remain negligent about the crisis that’s posing a severe threat to the country’s stability: politically and economically.

The irony is that every pillar of the state takes up the issue, yet none of such interventions has proved fruitful to this day. Whenever the government tries to deal with the water crisis , it makes hue and cry around the issue. But then the government relegates it to the list of things least concerning to it. The latest report published by the body that Prime Minister (PM) appointed to address the growing discord among the federating units because of the water crisis has some valuable recommendations. If the government takes these recommendations seriously, the water crisis can be managed.

But the real question is this: will the government show any seriousness to deal with the water crisis that has already undermined the national harmony? Only recently, a former Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) decided to solve this arduous issue his way. He created dam fund for building dams to solve the water problem that was rightly billed as an existential crisis for Pakistan. But right after his retirement, all talk and debate around water crisis subsided. Was the government insincere? Was it always eyewash? Why has the attention on the matter declined so dramatically? PM Khan says that his government will ensure speedy work on hydro projects. Hopefully, his words will not be made fun of as another U-turn.

Source : <https://nation.com.pk/28-Dec-2019/forgotten-water-crisis>

Prospering Pak-UAE Relations By Reema Shaukat

2nd December is marked as National Day of United Arab Emirates. The UAE has proved itself as one of growing economies in a very short span of time. The UAE's political system has been designed to ensure that country's heritage is maintained, adapted and preserved by combining tradition with a modern administrative structure. Pakistan recognized UAE in 1971 and UAE comprises seven Emirates and all have distinct national identity. An agreement was reached between the rulers of six of the Emirates (Abu Dhabi, Dubai, Sharjah, Umm al-Quwain, Fujairah and Ajman), and the federation to be known as the United Arab Emirates was formally established on 2nd December 1971. The seventh Emirate, Ra's al-Khaimah, acceded to the new federation the following year.

The bilateral relations between the United Arab Emirates and Pakistan have acquired new dimensions at political, economic and social levels emerging into trust-worthy strategic partnership and are still continuing. Right from the beginning, the UAE has extended generous humanitarian assistance, support for better health and education to Pakistan whenever required. The UAE which has become hub of investment, exports, technologies, tourism and renewable energies and large number of Pakistanis are contributing to the UAE's economic boom. In Pakistan, UAE surely has encouraged investment and helps in greater trade and commerce activities. UAE is one of the largest investors in the Pakistan but bilateral trade has been steadily growing over the years and people-to-people contacts are constantly on the increase. The founder of UAE Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan was keen to give an impetus to the bilateral relations between the two countries from the very beginning. It was further strengthened and patronized by H.H. Sheikh Khalifa Bin Zayed Al Nahyan, the President of the UAE and H.H. Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid al Maktoum, Vice-President, Prime Minister and Ruler of Dubai. Both countries reaffirm their strong commitment to further reinforce the bonds of friendship. They urge the need to expand the horizon of their bilateral cooperation in diverse fields reflecting deep-rooted and historic ties. Pakistan offers vast opportunities for foreign direct investment and joint ventures in infrastructure development, electricity generation, water desalination, agricultural based industries, insurance and real estate. Apart from trade and economic relations, Pakistan-UAE military ties are time tested. The

Pakistani military has a historic role in helping to train and equip the UAE military, such as training fighter pilots of the UAE Air Force and other defence-related equipment and technology acquisitions. Apart from exchange of delegates at official and unofficial level, military conducts joint exercises to strengthen their capabilities. High levels military delegates from both sides visit time to time to boost their military ties.

The UAE has always been among the first countries to deliver humanitarian relief and assistance to Pakistan in times of need. In 2011, it launched the Pakistan Assistance Programme for building schools, colleges and hospitals in Pakistan. Previously, the Abu Dhabi Fund for Development funded the UAE-Pakistan Friendship Road, linking North and South Waziristan. Simultaneously, entrepreneurs from Pakistan are warmly welcomed in the UAE, with many of them flourishing in the country's favourable business environment. For the past few years, on 23rd of March and 14th of August, which are marked as Pakistan Day and Independence Day of Pakistan respectively, the tallest skyscraper in the world, Burj Khalifa, is brightened up with the colours of the Pakistani flag to acknowledge the deepest relations between both states. The assistance from UAE is in return nurtured with Pakistan's commitment to the relationship which particularly has enhanced in the last few years. Attempts were made to malign relations between the two brotherly countries when the UAE awarded Indian PM Modi with their highest civilian award. Pakistan has always handled such gestures diplomatically and on Kashmir cause they have attained world's attention. So those who try their energies for spoiling both countries connexions must keep in mind that they will not be able to be successful as the mature leadership understand their duties and dynamics of alliance between them. From both sides head of states and high officials carry exchange visits to strengthen ties and enhance diplomatic relations without confusion.

Considering the economic factor, it is important to know that around 1.6 million Pakistani expatriates are working in the UAE who contribute around \$4.5 billion annually to the GDP or macro economy of Pakistan. The UAE is the largest investor in Pakistan among the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) and according to one of the reports of the UAE Ministry of Foreign Trade, public and private sectors invested about \$3.74 billion in Pakistan during 2004-2010. Apart from investment in other major sectors, prospects of initiating joint ventures in aluminium products, agriculture, horticulture, farming, dairy farming and livestock,

financial sector, housing prefabricated houses and affordable low income houses are bright. Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) can also be tapped. UAE has also shown interest for investment in CPEC flagship project and hope that UAE will benefit from this greater connectivity corridor. A large number of Pakistanis not only live in UAE but through tourism, both sides benefit from each other. Apart from cultural exchange programmes UAE has served as a home ground for the Pakistani cricket team since 2009.

The leadership from both sides believe that they should focus on supporting efforts to achieve development, security and peace at regional and international levels through its constructive initiatives. These initiatives are aimed at achieving stability and prosperity for all peoples. Both look forward in continuing to promote the values of tolerance, dialogue, coexistence and cooperation in the face of various regional and international challenges.

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

Source: <https://pakobserver.net/prospering-pak-uae-relations/>

FM's Sri Lanka Visit | Editorial

DURING his visit to Sri Lanka, Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi held very useful and productive talks with the newly elected leadership including President Gotabaya Rajapaksa. As the visit has come soon after the installation of new Sri Lankan government, it really shows how much importance Pakistan attaches to its ties with Colombo and how much it is content and happy over the election of Gotabaya to the top slot.

The election of Gotabaya has been seen as a very positive development in Pakistan because of his pro-Pakistan posture. He really sees Pakistan as a true friend of Sri Lanka which helped the country defeat the 26-year long Tamil insurgency in 2009. Pakistan was a key supporter of Sri Lanka in her battle against separatist Tamil Tiger rebels who were believed to be supported by India. Though Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi was also quick to congratulate Gotabaya over his victory but in reality India is in a state of mourning over his election as it desperately wanted to see the victory of Sajith Premadasa, a candidate of Wickremesinghe's United National Party (UNP). Anyway it is now up to the two countries to further strengthen and cement their relations in different realms for the benefit of the peoples of both the countries. In fact there is great scope of defence cooperation between the two countries for which military exercises, defence seminars and training of military personnel could be conducted on a regular basis. It was because of Indian diplomatic missive that Colombo had reportedly backed off from striking a deal with Pakistan for the purchase of JF-17 thunder fighter jets back in 2016. In our view, it is now the most appropriate time, our authorities can again sit with the Sri Lankan officials to make a positive headway on it. In addition, Pakistan can also help Sri Lanka to set up cement and sugar plants for the long term benefit of its economy. Similarly both the sides can explore the fields of gems and jewellery as well as closer collaboration in science and technology, education and health care. For this, both the countries really need to enhance people-to-people contacts at different levels including political, parliamentary and business levels. The people of Pakistan also look forward to the visit of Sri Lankan President Gotabaya Rajapaksa in order to write a new chapter in the bilateral relationship.

Source: <https://pakobserver.net/fms-sri-lanka-visit/>

Rebooting Pak-Australia Relations By Syed Qamar Afzal Rizvi

AUSTRALIA and Pakistan enjoy a long-standing strong and growing relationship underpinned by deepening people-to-people links. Australia established diplomatic relations with Pakistan after its 1947 partition from India and has had a resident mission in the country since 1948. Australia is committed to supporting Pakistan as a partner in its efforts to address security threats, build economic prosperity and enhance development. Recently, Chief of Army Staff General Qamar Javed Bajwa visited Australia on a two-day official trip on the invitation of Australian Army Chief. During his meetings with Australian military and civilian leadership, the COAS highlighted regional security situation and Pakistan Army's contributions towards peace and stability. Australia and Pakistan share a common heritage and bilateral interests. Both the states are members of the Commonwealth and are the defacto federations with bicameral legislatures. Pakistani people share a passion for sports and the arts, and Islamabad's strong people-to-people links centre on an active and successful Pakistani community in Australia. The Australian Government remains concerned about the human rights situation in Pakistan, including the use of capital punishment and the treatment of ethnic and religious minorities.

Notably, the Australian Government's aid program is committed to promoting prosperity, reducing poverty and enhancing stability, with a strengthened focus on our region—the Indo-Pacific. Australia weaves strong interests in Pakistan given its size, economic potential and strategic position in South Asia, and is committed to supporting Pakistan to build economic prosperity, and promote sustainable, equitable development. The 1.5 Track Security Dialogue between Islamabad and Canberra was initiated in 2010. The 1.5 Track Dialogue has involved a number of key decision-makers and think tanks from both sides thereby enhancing Defence cooperation mechanism between the two sides. The focus of cooperation remains pivotal for the training programme. Retrospectively in Feb 2015, an Australian delegation led by Chief of Defence Forces of Australia Air Chief Marshal Mark Binskin, visited Pakistan where he also met the then PAF Chief Air Chief Marshal Tahir Rafique Butt and the then Army Chief Gen Raheel Sharif.

Army Chief General Qamar Javed Bajwa's latest Australian visit has enhanced the scope of bilateralism including defence cooperation between Pakistan and Australia which could act as the impetus for broader cooperation, especially in fields of education, investment and regional connectivity. The COAS also affirmed that Pakistan will continue to support all peace efforts in the region. Both civil and military leadership of Australia appreciated Pakistan's contribution and achievements in the war against terror and acknowledged sacrifices of Pakistani nation and its Army in this connection.

The Australian Government has publicly asserted that the stability and security of Pakistan are important to Australia's national interest, saying that 'Australia is committed to supporting Pakistan as a partner in its efforts to address security threats, build economic prosperity and enhance development'. This commitment from Canberra is founded on the premise that stability in Pakistan matters because of its influence on Australia's regional and broader interests. Commentators have similarly argued that the geopolitical situation of Pakistan is significant to Australia's interests in the Indo-Pacific region and is important to the international community's interests in South Asia.

Kate Boswood of the Australian Strategic Policy Institute assesses that Pakistan is geopolitically significant due to four key attributes. Firstly, it is located at the crossroads of South Asia, Central Asia and the Middle East, and is adjacent to the global energy supply artery in the Indian Ocean. Secondly, it has a large population base of over 170 million people, with a coming 'youth bulge' in the future. Thirdly, Pakistan is a nuclear-armed state. Fourthly, it has a history of being destabilized by the centrifugal actors in the region. Based on these attributes, The Australian government has had held the view that any foreign attempt to destabilize the Pakistani state has the potential to negatively impact the stability of South Asia and, indeed, the global order. Needless to say, as witnessed by China-Pakistan's CPEC engagement, Pakistan is at the heart of a regional market with a large population, diverse resources, and untapped potential for trade. However, Pakistan faces a number of challenges to realising its true economic potential. Economic growth is constrained by energy and infrastructure deficits, skills shortages, regional instability and other barriers to trade. Pakistan's access to a strong and healthy workforce is further affected by high malnutrition rates, poor water and sanitation practices and other health issues, such as polio. At same time, improving Pakistan's education outcomes

and increasing access to education is important for Pakistan's human development. Nevertheless, the security establishment is highly concerned about the regional security since insecurity continues to undermine Pakistan's stability and development, particularly in provinces bordering Afghanistan where economic and human development indicators are amongst poorest in country.

The Pakistan government estimates the direct and indirect costs of terrorism over the last 13 years have been USD102.51 billion. Frequent natural disasters further impede development outcomes and economic growth. The Pakistan-Australia Joint Working Group on Border Management and Transnational Crime Cooperation is strengthening cooperation to combat transnational crime, such as terrorism financing and illegal migration. The Australian Federal Police has a 27-year relationship with Pakistan law enforcement. Working together, Australian and Pakistan agencies have successfully disrupted transnational crime,

The Pakistani community in Australia plays a significant role. According to the 2016 census, there were more than 61,000 Pakistan-born people living in Australia. More than 13,000 Pakistanis are studying in Australian universities. In September 2018, there were 72 Pakistanis studying in Australia on long-term scholarships under the Australia Awards program. These awards promote knowledge, education links and enduring ties between Australia and Pakistan. Over 2019-20 the Australian Government will ungrudgingly provide an estimated \$32.2 million in development assistance to Pakistan. This rightly includes an estimated \$19.0 million through the bilateral country program. Islamabad faces enormous complex challenges for grooming its economic potential. Energy and infrastructure deficits, skills shortages and regional instability are the main impediments to economic growth. Today, Pakistan is determined to use all its potential to uplift its economy.

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Source: <https://pakobserver.net/rebooting-pak-australia-relations/>

FATF and Pakistan's preparedness By DR.

Waqar Ahmed

In my previous pieces, I have argued that capacity building interventions at regulatory bodies and institutions responsible for financial surveillance in Pakistan may not be enough. To come out of the terror financing grey list and to remain out of it in the future, reforms cannot be limited to the Financial Monitoring Unit or the central bank. Secondly, going forward, a mix of institutional reforms and diplomatic efforts are required.

To be fair with government authorities, there has been a push to understand the desires of terror financing watchdog, the Financial Action Taskforce (FATF). Currently, government functionaries are trying to meet demands under two different lists – one provided by International Cooperation Review Group (ICRG) and another by Asia-Pacific Group (APG). Pakistan has admitted that it is partially compliant on 22 of the 27 points in the action plan and non-compliant on five targets of the ICRG – a position not seen favorably by FATF. While Pakistan will submit the next report to APG during December 2019, there is the general feeling that FATF will retain Pakistan in the grey list beyond February 2020.

While some may see this as a success at some level i.e. Pakistan not being downgraded from the grey list, this progress report is discouraging news for the financial sector in the country and potential long term investors who keenly look at indicators around financial integrity. Having discussed the matter with some such private sector representatives, it seems in their assessment, Pakistan could stay in the grey list for another 2 to 3 years, unless significant efforts at both institutional and diplomatic levels bear fruit. They are worried that friends of Pakistan, which initially were backing Pakistan's stance at FATF, now also wish to see time-bound tangible progress.

Lately, Pakistan has offered an attractive policy rate which in turn lured high levels of foreign portfolio investment. But even in this case, members of the Pakistani diaspora who wanted to contribute more are now reluctant to invest short-term capital often called 'hot money' for the reason that this could result in unnecessary scrutiny by their host countries.

Dr. Waqar Ahmed

The private sector also demands that Pakistan's government be more open to citizens and inform timelines during which progress could be achieved, or what could be the implications if the government remains unsuccessful with ICRG (which remains more critical than APG). Nobody seems to be playing a lead role as a communicator on this subject. There has to be an official spokesperson on this subject to let us know performance every time there is an Economic Coordination Committee meeting –where this agenda should be prioritized.

Lately, Pakistan has offered an attractive policy rate which in turn lured high levels of foreign portfolio investment. But even in this case, members of the Pakistani diaspora who wanted to contribute more are now reluctant to invest short-term capital often called 'hot money' for the reason that this could result in unnecessary scrutiny by their host countries. They concede that progress is there, but that Pakistan's risk profile still needs improvement.

We are also informed through media reports that the central bank has initiated outreach sessions with the commercial banks all across the country to better sensitize on the demands by ICRG and APG. One would expect that an independent evaluation may be conducted on an urgent basis if such outreach efforts are indeed contributing to the understanding of banking sector staff? The evaluation will go a long way in satisfying ICRG if Pakistan is able to demonstrate, in number terms, how many adverse cases were intercepted.

Pakistan's evolving diplomatic relations in the region and abroad also need to be studied here to properly respond to the challenge. The US Department of State's annual Country Report on Terrorism, describes how there are elements in Pakistan which could target neighboring countries. At the same time, the tone of such observations is relatively soft compared to the previous year's report. This is perhaps due to some decent on-ground measures taken by Pakistan. How can the foreign policy design build on this success? After all, Pakistan's Prime Minister and all other relevant institutions have repeatedly condemned elements trying to strengthen the narrative in favor of militancy and to de-stabilize peace in the region.

An evaluation is also required as to why federal and provincial governments, and relevant institutions have remained slow in achieving the targets set in a home-grown idea – National Action Plan (NAP) which did carry steps to improve the

counter terror financing regime? Why is it that the country requires more departments and units to meet FATF's demand (including the newly planned FATF Secretariat at Prime Minister's office) when there already is the National Counter Terrorism Authority– an entity responsible for coordinating all the above mentioned. Perhaps FATF and other desirous to see quick improvements in the country's risk profile would be better convinced if existing institutions are strengthened instead of creating new layers of bureaucracy.

Source : https://www.arabnews.pk/node/1592936?fbclid=IwAR3rsm-AVkxTL17FvmZNDGfyZVM5VgoimmqxRGW9VGmh0Tb1m8IX6y6kBg#disqus_thread

Current State Of Civil-Military Relationship **And Future Trends By UMER KARIM**

Pakistan's unique political history has made the relationship between the executive and military one of the defining features of the nation's political spectrum. The civil-military relationship at times has been centered around a negotiation of roles and responsibilities between the two institutional structures, while at other occasions it has been manifest by a power contest between the two institutional rivals ending not only with submission, but also a formal expulsion from the power domain of one of the contestants.

The political setup that emerged after the departure of President Gen. Musharraf was one where the military after its overarching political presence of the last 10 years had decided to take a step back and allowed the democratically elected government to exercise political powers. Yet owing to the deteriorating security situation within the country, the military's special vestiges within the policy making domain remained intact.

Meanwhile, in this reshuffling of the political cards, Pakistan's supreme court in general and its Chief Justice Iftikhar Chaudhry in particular emerged and asserted himself as a powerful player by means of judicial activism — instrumentalized through the use of suo motu notices on matters of public interest. It was the Supreme Court that eventually removed Prime Minister Yousuf Raza Gillani in a contempt of court case.

It won't be wrong to say that this judicial intervention has not gone down well in certain quarters and has been considered an institutional challenge mounted by the Supreme Court at the very last moment. This inadvertently has brought both the civil and military leadership even closer.

Umer Karim

The military was back into political grapevine as it was allegedly behind the rise of the Imran Khan-led Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) that posed a significant political challenge to the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N). PMLN eventually won the 2013 elections convincingly, yet Nawaz Sharif never forgot his past with the military. The civil-military ties started on a positive note but

gradually became bitter, first owing to a PTI-led sit-in in Islamabad and later on due to incidents like the Dawn leaks. The Sharif-military uneasiness was never resolved and ended only when the Supreme Court, while investigating the Panama Papers case, sent the prime minister packing. Essentially, Sharif was knocked out of the political fray but this time not by the military but by the courts, again establishing themselves as an independent institutional entity.

With the elections of July 2018, finally the political dichotomy of the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) and Pakistan Muslim League that had dominated the country's political fold for the last thirty years was over and it was the turn of the Khan-led PTI to form a government. This development had tremendous implications for the state of civil-military relationships. As the new government took charge, it was visible that both the executive and military essentially had developed a symbiotic relationship, with trust on both sides. This new political order was one where the two powerful components of the state rather than negotiating or contesting each other's power domain, often at the cost of mutual damage, were actually happy in coordinating and helping each other.

From a civil perspective, Prime Minister Khan had no previous beef with the military and therefore no accounts to settle. His sole focus happens to be on recovering the country's wealth primarily embezzled by politicians which is a point of no objection for the military. For its part, the military has been largely able to maintain its say in the national security and foreign policy-making domains.

This new dynamic in the civil military affairs still revolves around the personal relationship between two men – Khan and Army Chief Gen. Qamar Javed Bajwa – and their mutual trust. This has factored into the government's decision to award General Bajwa a full-term extension. However, this personal connectivity must not be considered a hybrid regime as has been apparent from the recent saga involving Sharif and his departure from the country. It was understandable that any deterioration in Sharif's health would have negative implications for the current political balance within the country. Yet Khan enacted significant hurdles to obstruct Sharif's exit and without a court intervention the latter would not have been able to travel abroad.

This shows that even despite all symbiosis and the government's decision to award an extension to Gen. Bajwa, there remains a level of disparity between the political goals of Khan's government and what the security circles consider best for the country.

As the Supreme Court took up the petition regarding the extension of the army chief and suspended the government's extension order, a new crisis emerged. Eventually the court gave an interim extension to the army chief for six months while instructing the government to draft a legal bill.

It won't be wrong to say that this judicial intervention has not gone down well in certain quarters and has been considered an institutional challenge mounted by the Supreme Court at the very last moment. This inadvertently has brought both the civil and military leadership even closer.

Depending on how the country's political spectrum now evolves, there are signs that the current state of affairs within civil-military ties will be sustained until leaders on both sides bid farewell to their positions.

Source : <https://www.arabnews.pk/node/1594016?>

The US And Pakistan-China Matrix By Bilal Habib Qazi

Prime Minister Imran Khan's second visit to the United States to attend the 74th session of United Nations General Assembly unveiled a new debate within the international community regarding Pakistan administration's tilt towards the United States.

The visit became the focal point of discussion when a United States' senior official made a statement regarding Washington nascent concern to have high-level engagement and to rebuild ties with Islamabad. It was to be believe that the Pakistani Prime Minister would definitely welcome such offers because the county needs close ties with the United States to overcome the economic deficit through International Monetary Fund's periodic aid and to gain more support of big powers on the matter of ongoing tensions with India on the issue of Kashmir. On which, the political analysts and general community within Pakistan, developed a hypothesis that Pakistan such move will not only affect the China-Pakistan joint economic venture entitled 'China-Pakistan Economic Corridor', but it also destabilizes the equilibrium of Pakistan-China relations.

Before forecasting anything regarding the future of China-Pakistan relations, one needs to understand the dynamics of these relations. Predominantly, China and Pakistan's relations are based on economic cooperation, defences cooperation, nuclear cooperation and cultural ties, and both countries are also determined to work jointly for regional peace and stability. Both, Pakistan and China exemplify their ties with various terms and phrases like 'all-weather friends', 'iron brothers', 'time-tested, 'deeper than the oceans and higher than the Himalayas. sweeter than honey', and lately, as 'strategic and stronger than steel'.

Beside it, China is also tirelessly supporting Pakistan to curb the menace of terrorism within the country and in the region. To align Pakistan on the rail of prosperity and innovation, China hosts a large number of Pakistani students and researcher with diverse scholarships each year. Both countries, China and Pakistan always support each other's stance either it is to be made on the Shanghai Cooperation Organization's meetings or United Nation's general assembly session for mutual prosperity. Both countries design their intra-regional

and inter-regional policies by keeping in views the challenges and opportunities for the other. Today, it is due to shared prosperity that Pakistan is going to be a bridge between China and Middle East through CPEC. In the age of Globalization, due to increasing number of people to people linkages, China and Pakistan relationship entered into the phase of complex interdependence that makes utter impossible for one to weaken its ties the with other.

Throughout the journey from 'Potential Stakeholder' to 'Global Competitor', China and the United States' intention for each other changed vividly over the past few decades. Although, once China was a de facto partner of the United States during the cold war, now it is being taken as economic competitor by the United States.

China is also being perceived as a severe challenge for the United States' policies for the world, particularly the South Asian region. Due to Pakistan's strategic geographical proximity, both countries, China and United States have deep interest in strengthening the ties with Pakistan. Islamabad always tries to maintain a balanced approach in relations with Beijing and Washington, even it played a pivotal role in Sino-US rapprochement during early 1970s by arranging US secretary of state Henry Kissinger's visit to Beijing, resulted in the establishment of full diplomatic relations between the two countries.

China also fully supported the United States to put Union of Soviet Socialist Republic out of Afghanistan in the last few years of Cold War. The political analyst claims that China also hiddenly backed Pakistan's decision to join hand with the United States in the War on Terror- in which Pakistan bear a heavy loss in terms of country's economy, peace, security and stability. Despite of declaring economic aid given to Pakistan as dead investment by President Donald Trump as he tweeted 'The United States has foolishly given Pakistan more than 33 billion dollars in aid over the last 15 years, and they have given us nothing but lies', the United States always looks towards Pakistan to have peace in Afghanistan as it cannot be achieved without the active role of latter in the peace process. That's is why the Trump Administration is looking for fresh ties with Pakistan, Today, Peace in Afghanistan has become the central concern for China, US and Pakistan. So, Pakistan improving ties with the United States can help China and the United States to work together for peace and stability not only in Afghanistan but in whole region.

Recently, Pakistan's foreign minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi's responsive statement 'Pakistan does not agree with the opinion of Alice Wells. It's her personal opinion and it doesn't make any difference' to Alice Wells' claim knocked out all the fears and misconceptions regarding CPEC. The Pakistani administration understands different tactics to have a balance in reactions with two big powers. As history repeats itself, Pakistan's growing ties would energize the China-US ties as it would have the potential to settle the various disagreements between the two countries which would be beneficial for global development.

Source : <https://www.eurasiareview.com/03122019-the-us-and-pakistan-china-matrix-oped/>

ECONOMY

Positive Signals Rising From Pakistan's Economy By M Bilal Lakhani

Dramatically rising from the ashes of its predecessor, a phoenix, in ancient Greek mythology, is a bird reborn after a catastrophe with more strength and power. After posting 49 months of back-to-back current account deficits, Pakistan's economy suddenly posted a surplus. The stock market rose by over 8,000 points in the last few weeks. One billion dollars of hot money poured into the country but is a clear sign of confidence in the stabilisation of the economy. Is Naya Pakistan's economy about to rise like a phoenix or is this a mirage?

Let's talk about the current account deficit turning a surplus. Recall, defaulting on our external liabilities is the single biggest crisis the PTI government inherited. When the PML-N finished its term, the caretaker government rushed to China for a stopgap financing arrangement to avoid default. Businesses couldn't open LCs because the country didn't have enough dollars to make the imports it needed.

As a result, the PTI government had to administer chemotherapy to fight the cancer of twin deficits ripping our economy. The chemotherapy had painful side effects in the shape of inflation and devaluation. However, months later, the first positive signals are palpable. The cancer of deficit is crumbling under the treatment's sustained pressure; the current account deficit is finally under control!

At the height of the crisis, I argued in this paper that the PTI government was doing the right thing by administering this economic chemotherapy. I was criticised by those who argued the economy was being run into the ground by PTI's 'incompetent' economic managers. Today, a spectacular 8,000-point bull-run on the KSE demonstrates that smart money and investors think Pakistan is about to take off, not collapse. Hot money pouring in from foreign investors shows the economy has stabilised, even though I'm not comfortable with the volatility of hot money.

The reason this is great news is because reducing the current account deficit is the only way to break out of our debt cycle with the IMF. The reason every new government rushes to the IMF is because the net outflow of dollars from the country exceeds the net inflow. If we can keep our deficits to a minimum, it will transform the very nature of our economy and boom and bust cycles.

Moreover, positive signs show at least some reform is taking place to restructure the economy; 800,000 new tax filers and dramatic increases in tax collection are the most promising signs of an emerging fundamental paradigm shift. Pakistan's biggest issue is that people will pay Zakat but not their taxes. This makes them politically disengaged and leaves the government unable to finance development, unless it borrows. If the government continues its fight to bring previously untouched sectors into the tax net we can finally enter sustainable growth cycles.

Even on growth which the opposition constantly criticises the government on, Pakistan is expected to beat its target by a significant margin. Journalists who don't understand economics 101 have been screaming about a collapsing or shrinking economy. News flash: Pakistan's economy didn't shrink under the PTI. It just grew at a slower pace. And now that pace is picking up. There's still a long way to go for Pakistan's economy to perform at its peak but we are headed in the right direction.

Why the alarmist, doom and gloom narrative in the media then? The opposition finds a way to spin every good news on the economy negatively, often using incorrect facts. For example, the news of a current account surplus was countered by PML-N leaders with the idea that exports aren't rising. A blatant lie, exports were up nearly 10% in the month we posted a current account surplus. Here's the kicker: exports actually declined during the PML-N's five-year tenure. And the biggest reason exports haven't increased in Pakistan is because of the PML-N policy of keeping the rupee artificially over-valued to subsidise elite consumption.

Published in The Express Tribune, December 1st, 2019.

Source: <https://tribune.com.pk/story/2109528/6-positive-signals-rising-pakistans-economy/>

Moody's Upgrades Pakistan's Outlook From Negative to Stable By Ghulam Abbas

As a sign of improving economy, Moody's Investors Services have upgraded the country's outlook from 'negative' to 'stable', reaffirming the country's rating of B3, the agency announced on Monday.

Moody's had downgraded Pakistan's ratings outlook to negative last year in June, citing heightened external vulnerability risk due to depleting foreign exchange reserves.

Although Moody's overall statement indicates that Pakistan is much on track of International Monetary Fund's (IMF) guidelines, the rating agency also highlighted the risks identified by IMF and the Financial Action Task Force (FATF).

The agency said that while the fiscal strength has weakened with higher debt levels largely as a result of currency depreciation, ongoing fiscal reforms, anchored by the IMF programme, will mitigate risks related to debt sustainability and government liquidity. The reforms would also mitigate debt sustainability and government liquidity risks.

While appreciating the steps taken for widening the tax net, the agency claimed that the support from IMF and World Bank will raise effectiveness of the revenue measures. However, Moody's estimates that the revenue growth targets set by the IMF programme are challenging to achieve in full in a subdued economic growth environment. In particular, Moody's expects Pakistan's GDP growth to slow to 2.9 per cent in FY2020 from 3.3 per cent last fiscal year, given tight financial conditions that continue to weigh on domestic demand, before rising to 3.5 per cent in FY2021.

As per Moody's, the IMF programme, which commenced in July 2019, targets higher foreign exchange reserve levels and has unlocked significant external funding from multilateral partners including Asian Development Bank (ADB) and World Bank. Nevertheless, unless the government can effectively mobilise

private sector resources, foreign exchange reserves are unlikely to increase substantially from current levels.

Regarding debt, the agency expects, government's public debt to slowly decline over the next few years to around 75-76 per cent of GDP by 2023, which is still a high debt burden, from a peak of around 82-83 per cent of GDP currently. In addition to the gradual decline in the debt burden, the government has already reprofiled a substantial portion of domestic debt from short-term treasury bills into longer-term floating rate bonds. This will reduce gross borrowing requirements to around 25 per cent of GDP in FY2020, from nearly 40 per cent in the last fiscal year. The government is aiming to lengthen domestic maturities further and reduce its reliance on treasury bills and floating rate debt. Moody's expects that banks and other domestic institutional investors will retain a strong appetite for government securities. Lower gross borrowing requirements and exposure to floating rate liabilities sustained over time will reduce the government's exposure to liquidity and interest rate risks that are currently very high.

It expects that the completion of power projects will reduce capital goods imports, while oil imports will remain structurally lower given the slow transition in power generation away from diesel to coal, natural gas and hydropower. Tight monetary conditions and import tariffs on nonessential goods will also impact broader import demand for some time, although Moody's sees the possibility of monetary conditions easing when inflation gradually declines towards the end of the current fiscal year.

Moody's also expects exports to gradually pick up due to the exchange rate depreciation over the past 18 months, also contributing to narrower current account deficits. It said that if the government's policy to increase trade competitiveness and encourage production works, exports will grow more.

Giving the rationale, Moody's said, "The change in outlook to stable is driven by Moody's expectations that the balance of payments dynamics will continue to improve, supported by policy adjustments and currency flexibility."

"The rating affirmation reflects Pakistan's relatively large economy and robust long-term growth potential, coupled with ongoing institutional enhancements that raise policy credibility and effectiveness, albeit from a low starting point. These

credit strengths are balanced against structural constraints to economic and export competitiveness, the government's low revenue generation capacity that weakens debt affordability, fiscal strength that will remain weak over the foreseeable future, as well as political and still-material external vulnerability risks," it said.

Concurrently, Moody's has affirmed the B3 foreign currency senior unsecured ratings for The Second Pakistan Int'l Sukuk Co Ltd and The Third Pakistan International Sukuk Co Ltd. The associated payment obligations are, in Moody's view, direct obligations of the Government of Pakistan.

Pakistan's Ba3 local currency bond and deposit ceilings remain unchanged. The B2 foreign currency bond ceiling and the Caa1 foreign currency deposit ceiling are also unchanged. The short-term foreign currency bond and deposit ceilings remain unchanged at 'Not Prime'. These ceilings act as a cap on the ratings that can be assigned to the obligations of other entities domiciled in the country.

Moody's expects policy enhancements, including strengthened central bank independence and the commitment to currency flexibility, to support the reduction in external vulnerability risks. In particular, the government is planning to introduce a new State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) Act to forbid central bank financing of government debt and clarify SBP's primary objective of price stability. At the same time, it has strongly adhered to its commitment to a floating exchange rate regime since May 2019. These enhancements to the policy framework will foster confidence in the Pakistani rupee, while the use of the exchange rate as a shock absorber increases policy buffers.

Notwithstanding improved balance of payments dynamics, Pakistan's foreign exchange reserve adequacy remains low, said Moody's. Foreign exchange reserves have fluctuated around \$7-8 billion over the past few months, sufficient to cover just 2-2.5 months of goods imports. Coverage of external debt due also remains low, with the country's External Vulnerability Indicator — which measures the ratio of external debt due over the next fiscal year to foreign exchange reserves — remaining around 160-180 per cent.

Moody said that the government needs to effectively mobilise private sector resources, in order to increase foreign exchange reserves substantially from current levels.

On the fiscal side, Pakistan's metrics have weakened recently, with wider fiscal deficits and an increase in government debt burden largely as a result of currency depreciation over the course of fiscal 2019.

Moody's expects the government's fiscal deficit to remain relatively wide at around 8.6 per cent of GDP in fiscal 2020, compared to 8.9 per cent in fiscal 2019, before narrowing to an average of around 7 per cent over fiscal 2021-23. High interest payments owing to policy rate hikes will continue to weigh on government finances and significantly constrain fiscal flexibility. Meanwhile, government revenue as a share of GDP, while likely to increase, is growing from a lower base, having declined significantly in FY2019.

On the expenditure side, the government has introduced a new Public Financial Management (PFM) Act, which was approved in June 2019, to instill budget discipline. The Act is in line with IMF's recommendations and serves as primary legislation that will be accompanied by other secondary legislation to increase fiscal policy effectiveness.

Institutional enhancements, including increased central bank independence and the implementation of the new PFM Act, effective fiscal 2020, also raise monetary and fiscal policy credibility and effectiveness. Moody's expects the government to introduce and approve a new SBP Act within FY2020, which will forbid central bank financing of government debt and reinforce price stability as the central bank's primary objective.

On political side, the agency says that political risks remain material despite a gradual normalisation of the working relationship between the federal government and the military and judiciary, as the institutional structure involves provincial level implementation of some fiscal and development policies, including services and property tax administration and the management of special economic zones.

PAKISTAN'S REACTION TO MOODY'S RATING:

Reacting to the new rating of the agency, Ministry of Finance said that Moody's, while appreciating Pakistan's reform agenda, has highlighted the country's progress towards macroeconomic stabilisation with reduced vulnerabilities on the external account. The agency, as per the statement, takes note of the ongoing fiscal reforms which will help in mitigating risks related to debt sustainability and government liquidity, the ministry added.

It also said that the rating affirmation reflects Pakistan's relatively large economy and robust long-term growth potential, coupled with ongoing institutional enhancements that raise policy credibility and effectiveness.

It further said that the upgradation of outlook to stable is an affirmation of the government's success in handling the country's economy. "The government remains fully committed to its reform agenda, which is producing the outcomes that will lay a firm foundation for accelerated, sustainable and inclusive growth in the future," the ministry concluded.

Source: <https://www.pakistantoday.com.pk/2019/12/02/moodys-upgrades-pakistans-outlook-from-negative-to-stable/>

PSX Becomes Best Performing Market By

Salman Siddiqui

KARACHI: The Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) has made a sharp turnaround from being the worst-performing market in the recent past to the world's best performing market, indicating the revival of investor confidence in the country's economy.

PSX benchmark KSE 100-share Index gained 36% in dollar terms, or around 10,500 points, in the past three months (Sept 2 to Dec 2) and closed at a 10-month high at 40,124 points on Monday.

"With the 36% surge, Pakistan's benchmark index is the number one as per Bloomberg in (the) last three months," remarked Topline Securities CEO Muhammad Sohail before investors restored to profit-selling and pulled the index down on Tuesday.

Moody's upgrades Pakistan's outlook to 'stable' from 'negative'

Adviser to Prime Minister on Finance and Revenue Dr Abdul Hafeez Shaikh said on his twitter handle on Sunday (Dec 1) that the benchmark index gave the highest return in November after a gap of six and a half years.

"The KSE-100 index was up 14.9% in November 2019, the highest one-month return after May 2013," he said in the tweet. "The strong rally in the stock market shows increasing investor confidence in the stabilisation measures taken by the government." Market capitalisation surged over 25%, or Rs1.54 trillion, in the past three months to Rs7.62 trillion on Monday compared to Rs6.08 trillion on September 1.

Next Capital Managing Director Muzammil Aslam said the back-to-back arrival of good news encouraged investors to continue making extensive buying since mid-August.

He recalled that the smart rally began in mid-August when the stock market, standing at a five-year low, attracted investors to make renewed buying. The index had nosedived to 28,765 points by August 16.

“Share prices of some of the stocks have gained up to 200% in different sectors, including oil marketing companies (OMCs) and cement, in the past three months,” he said.

Other stocks, which played the leading role in supporting the rally, were from the pharmaceutical, chemical and banking sectors.

The first good news, which pushed investors to resort to heavy buying, was the government notification for a three-year extension in service of the current chief of army staff about three months ago.

Later, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) expressed satisfaction over the structural reforms undertaken to fix the faltering economy in its first economic review in November following the approval of a \$6-billion loan programme for Pakistan in July.

November was also the month when State Bank reported a current account surplus after a gap of four years and tax collection and the number of tax return filers went up.

Such positive news sparked a stock buying euphoria as the investors continued to make extensive buying. Accordingly, the market saw a small rally with gains of over 10,000 points in the past three months.

‘Strong stocks rally reflects investor confidence in stabilisation measures’

The market also enthusiastically welcomed a report of Moody’s Investors Service which upgraded Pakistan’s credit rating outlook to B3 stable from negative on Monday (Dec 2). The US-based global credit rating agency had downgraded the outlook to negative about 18 months ago in June 2018. Foreign investors, however, remained net sellers of stocks worth \$5.73 million in the three months under review, according to the National Clearing Company of Pakistan Limited (NCCPL).

“It remains uncertain whether investors will continue to sell stocks tomorrow (Wednesday) onwards or they will return to the buying counters,” Aslam said.

The KSE-100 index on Tuesday opened positive and remained in the green territory by the end of first half of trading. However, it closed down 335.49 points, or 0.84%, to 39,788.73 points.

Published in The Express Tribune, December 4th, 2019.

Source: <https://tribune.com.pk/story/2111231/2-psx-becomes-best-performing-market/>

ADB Provides Relief | Editorial

With the current economic situation and the rise in inflation, the Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaaf (PTI) government is relying heavily on foreign aid under the International Monetary Fund (IMF) program to help ease the situation domestically. Pakistan has been able to comply with many of the clauses postulated by the IMF and after the recent review, a loan of \$1 billion has approved by the Asian Development Bank (ADB). This loan will go towards helping the government implement reforms and actions to improve the current account deficit, strengthen the revenue base of the country and to help the poor against the impact of the economic crisis afflicting them.

Since the growth of the economy is projected at 2.8 percent in the current fiscal year due to the low revenue collection and the losses being incurred by the local industry due to an increase in costs of production, the government needs foreign aid to help bridge the gap in the economy. PTI's economic plan does not follow an ad-hoc relief trajectory for the masses, rather it is a plan laid out over the next three years in order for the country to have a sustainable growth trajectory, the only aspect which can provide relief at this point is foreign funds coming in. Another extension of the same agenda is another policy-based loan being offered by the ADB worth \$300 million, which is supposed to help the government in ensuring financial stability, governance and tackling hurdles in the policy infrastructure in Pakistan's energy sector.

At this point, the government needs to work towards providing incentives to local investors to invest in the economy and provide relief to local industries and businesses so that the uncertainty in the market can be overcome by steady activity in the market. The biggest hurdle right now is that despite progressive policies, there are hindrances in implementation and due to the vast network, many are adamant on finding easier means to conduct business activities, which is why there is a lot of push against the change being implemented by the government.

It is important to engage stakeholders so that the government can fight the narrative of it lacking any business acumen and work its way towards earning the trust of multiple stakeholders within each sector in order to work efficiently. These

international funds can provide relief only to a point till internal matters are sorted and for that, collaboration is the key.

Source: <https://nation.com.pk/07-Dec-2019/adb-provides-relief>

Rupee Appreciation | Editorial

The Pakistani rupee is starting to see better days after the Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf (PTI) government depreciated the currency substantially, claiming that the previous value was being artificially maintained and was hence, affecting the market. As of Sunday, December 8, the Pakistani rupee climbed to five-month high as opposed to the dollar. The United States (US) dollar which was standing at Rs164 previously, now stands at Rs154.70. This is because the government has managed the current accounts deficit by bringing down the imports, and is also focused on increasing the foreign reserve due to the financial aid that the country is receiving. This has helped the rupee balance itself against the dollar in the open market.

This is good news for the local investor, who was uncertain about the market conditions and was prone to investing more in buying foreign currency instead of increasing reserves of the national rupee. This gradual appreciation of the rupee has stabilised the exchange rate, and investors who were previously buying dollars are now liquidating them to get the Pakistani rupee instead. This will definitely improve the position of the rupee further domestically, especially because a ban on imports significantly reduces the need for foreign currency amongst the business and investment sector.

“One of the biggest reasons is that the country has come out from a huge current account deficit of \$20 billion in FY18 and now[in] October, [it] posted a surplus for the first time after four years,” explained Forex Association of Pakistan President Malik Bostan. This will take away the attraction for investment in the US dollar, as the appreciation of the currency will offer more stability in the exchange. It is also expected that the import bill will reduce further in the next fiscal year. With that agenda in mind, it is likely that the current trajectory will push through and help the Pakistani rupee stabilise in the open market. The devaluation upset a lot of stakeholders in the country, however, the market forces have now started setting the real exchange rate.

PTI’s plan for the economy is unusual, non-linear, full of experimentation, and very gradual. However, it is showing results on the economic front. If the government can also convert that into profits for the local industry and

businesses, a huge chunk of the population aggravated by the current policies and in opposition to the radical changes in the system, might just shift support for the amateur political party.

Source: <https://nation.com.pk/09-Dec-2019/rupee-appreciation>

Pakistan's New Tax Reforms By Muhammad Khudadad Chattha

Pakistan has embarked on an ambitious \$400 million tax reform programme in partnership with the World Bank. At a macro level, the project has two components: the results-based component and the investment financing component. The results-based component is worth \$320 million and is further divided into four main objective areas, namely, Controlling Taxpayer Obligations (\$104.5 million), Simple and Transparent Tax System (\$98 million), Facilitation of Compliance (\$72 million) and Institutional Development (\$45.5 million). The investment financing component, worth \$80 million, will be used to upgrade the ICT systems currently being used by the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR).

One of the best parts of the programme is that the federal government and provinces will automatically exchange data. This in turn will help the FBR and the provincial revenue boards to audit taxpayers better. One of the key problems in enforcing taxes in developing countries is the huge size of the informal economy and the lack of data to audit taxpayers. This data sharing would help address this problem to an extent.

Another positive component is the rationalising of tax exemptions and disclosing the beneficiaries of the exemptions, as by making the government conduct cost-benefit analysis and disclosing the beneficiaries of the exemptions, there will be added pressure on the government to rationalise these exemptions. The big question is whether the public and media can keep a check on the government when it provides this information. Other positives include the simplification of the Sales Tax Return and removing low-yielding withholding taxes.

On the questionable parts of the programme, there are three major concerns that might undermine the reform effort. First, the programme's cost is huge. For instance, \$32 million are being spent to help rationalise the withholding tax regime, \$40 million to make a risk-based assessment tool and \$35.5 million on redesigning FBR's business process. A lot of money across all programme components is being spent on conducting workshops and paying consultants, which is problematic.

Second, the main strategy for the broadening of the tax base relies entirely on automated data sharing and recruiting data analysts to help identify new taxpayers. The narrow tax base has been one of the central problems of taxation in Pakistan. Hence it is slightly disappointing that the main strategy to broaden the tax base is so limited in its scope. Simply investing in ICT infrastructure and hiring data programmers will not help expand the tax base unless coupled with changes in the tax law, the incentive structure of FBR officials and addressing the larger political economy issues around taxation.

Third, arguably the most important part of this reform programme will be its implementation, which seems to have received little attention so far. The official World Bank document has hardly one page on implementation, where it simply states that the FBR is primarily going to be responsible for the process. The tricky thing about reforms in developing countries is that implementation holds the key to success. Even the most well-designed reform programmes fail miserably when the implementation is not customised according to the unique context.

The programme certainly takes a few much-needed steps to transform Pakistan's tax administration. However, the strategy to broaden the tax base needs to be bolstered so that it does not solely rely on data-sharing provisions and hiring data analysts. For instance, one of the biggest bottlenecks in the broadening process is the exceptionally long process to bring new people into the system. There are many other factors that contribute towards the low tax base which need to be addressed. Additionally, the implementation of this programme needs serious attention. This is what will eventually determine the success of the programme and of the current government in reforming the tax administration.

Published in The Express Tribune, December 11th, 2019.

Source: <https://tribune.com.pk/story/2115096/6-pakistans-new-tax-reforms/>

Digital Pakistan Vision & Challenges By

Abdul Rahman Malik

PAKISTAN is amongst such fortunate countries where youth population is 60% of the total population. This percentage of the regular users of digital services such as digital payments or e-payments, internet access and professionals in smartphone usage provides infinite opportunities to succeed as going digital. It is the gigantic and innovative initiative taken by Prime Minister Imran Khan to upgrade digital banking infrastructure and easing the conditions or requirements and exhausting paperwork to avail digital services such as e-payments, online transactions and the issuance of credit cards, and their use at online stores ie in-store shopping, fuel fill-up at stations, online utility bill payments and universities fee payment gateways, but unfortunately, such easy and instant payment facility is currently available to elite business class and involves too much Paperwork, guarantees and regulations. It would be great to boost and promote digital services paving the way for International digital bigwigs ie Google, PayPal, Amazon, eBay, Yahoo, Alibaba Group, Alipay, Stripe and Apple to enter Pakistani financial markets specially the PayPal, eBay and Amazon are strongly required by freelancers and authors to get their Payments processed. At present, only Skrill, Payoneer and traditional IBAN/Swift code or wire transfers are available to Pakistan which is very costly, time consuming having inflated fee of 10% to 30% plus bank charges of local bank to process the amount. On other hand, our neighbouring country India has reaped benefits of digital world as the world's best companies ie PayPal, Amazon and Google are serving country with their innovative digital products and services. By giving access to these digital payment giants, Pakistan will open doors for Foreign Direct Investment and it will also reduce heavily demanded paper currency as people avoid using cash and prefer using their credit and debit cards at online stores, in-store shopping purposes.

Even Pakistan's governance model may go ahead with modernizing and upgrading Reporting system, complain management, receipts and payments, public sector spending through an electronic dashboard that will refresh automatically if any development related or public sector transaction takes place. The ownership certificates, heirship certificates, birth certificates, domicile, PRC and all other certificates should be generated online through developing

softwares mobile applications of Android or such as devices that will reduce the process and improve the productivity of the public sector institutes. District Accounts Officers, Account Generals of Provinces and Accountant General of Pakistan so that trail may be available to track salary disbursements. There should be central directorate of all the departments so that they may have coordination on digital grounds especially the FBR, AGP, Finance Ministry and Departments, Establishment Division, Cabinet Division, NAB and Intelligence Directorates. Digital Pakistan vision will have a great impact to attract Foreign Direct Investment, strengthening of rupee against dollar, stabilization of the economy and discouraging paper currency that usually falls heavy upon rupee and due to substantial pressure, the rupee gets devalued and inflation jumps up.

The government should make the digital literacy a compulsory part in every ministry at Federal, provincial and district level by setting up IT skill development centres to train the supervisory and office staff so that digital communication infrastructure may be implemented. Moreover, the Government should establish a venture capital firm to support, incubate, accelerate and fund the startups that will ultimately develop and accelerate the mushrooming growth of big startups. The entrepreneurship courses must be introduced with the help of SMEDA, LUMS, IBA Karachi, IBA, Sukkur, SZABIST, NUST, FAST, COMSATS, Virtual University and SDPI so that entrepreneurs may learn to launch their startups successfully to conquer the digital world. Higher Education Commission, IT Boards, Technical Education, Intermediate Education Boards should promote digital Pakistan vision by introducing governance, payment solutions and fund the ideas at school and college level. Though some online shopping sites such as Popular Daraz.pk and Yayvo.com have started accepting Credit/Debit Cards issued by Pakistani banks but still the number transactions is very low owing to hassles involved in getting credit cards from the banks. At present, only a few banks are issuing Credit Cards with online transactions and Point of Sale (POS) transactions that include Standard Chartered Bank, unfortunately, limited to big cities such as Karachi, Lahore, Islamabad, including Bank Al Falah which issues Credit Cards on quick processing lasting for 10 to 20 days.

Silk Bank is also the favourite bank of many customers who are interested in digital Transactions. Silk Bank offers a wide range of Credit Cards as per income levels of customers. UBL is also offering credit cards but it has too many conditions and terms. Besides these banks, there are other banks that are

issuing credit cards such as HBL, MCB, ABL, Faisal Bank, Askari bank and JS Bank. The government especially state Bank of Pakistan must direct the public and private banks to lower the markup ratio and ease the conditions to avail this facility especially suited to salaried class and Businessmen. In big cities, credit cards are issued instantly by commercial banks to the employees of Government and companies but in small cities, the untrained and local managers avoid issuing credit cards to customers since it involves risks of recovery or payment of credit Bill. I have personally visited many banks where I maintain my bank account, but regrettably, all the managers expressed their inability or forbade to get Credit Cards since it is very costly and you cannot be issued credit cards in small cities. There is also a big concern regarding inflated taxes levied upon the business community which need to be reduced if they use Digital currency since digital currency will enable FBR to track payments and appraise the financial strength of the Individuals. The e-currency spectrum will help reduce the crime rate, tax evasion, hoarding of money as People will use credit cards and digital wallets such as PayPal, Ali Pay, Google pay those can easily be tracked and monitored through digital systems.

— The writer is freelance columnist, based in Sindh.

Source: <https://pakobserver.net/digital-pakistan-vision-challenges/>

Improving Economic Health | Editorial

Pakistan is proving itself in terms of fulfilment of the clauses set by the International Monetary Fund (IMF), as part of their loan programme. Due to the progress in the last couple of months, Pakistan has witnessed the approval of a \$300 million loan from the Asian Development Bank (ADB). This is a great development of part of our country, that has been tackling the economic crisis since the Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaaf (PTI) government assumed power. The IMF has itself noted that Pakistan's economic reform programme is on track, as the decisive policy implementation by the government is helping to preserve economic stability aiming to put the economy on the path of sustainable growth. The major development, in this case, is how the government has managed to bring down the trade deficit by 35 per cent in just a matter of a year, with strict control over imports in order to boost the exports of the country. At the same time, the government's policy to shift to a market-determined exchange rate has worked in its favour. The Pakistani rupee now stands at PKR154 against the dollar, and those who were inclined towards buying dollars are now interested in getting their funds liquidated to get more Pakistani rupee. This works out in favour of our own economy.

The government is also planning to inject funds into the economy via foreign investment. The ADB is also looking towards another loan for infrastructural development and reforms in the country. Along with this, the government is already working to improve the environment of the workforces in the country, strengthen governance, and foster private sector investment. There is a need to rethink the working strategy of state-owned enterprises too in order for them to not be a burden on the domestic economy.

This is a tough challenge that the government has undertaken, with the economic policy having a grave effect on the buying power of the consumers and the losses being incurred by the domestic businesses. The GDP of the country is barely available for developmental funds. If the government manages to overcome the domestic challenges, Pakistani economy might be destined to see better days, along with a better relationship with the IMF – one of increased belief in the ability of Pakistan to execute plans and overcome challenges faced by the country.

Source: <https://nation.com.pk/22-Dec-2019/improving-economic-health>

2019 A Year of Economic Ups & Downs By

Imran Ali Kundi

The top leadership of the government is claiming to achieve the economic stabilisation in year 2019, while the independent economic experts and masses believe that government's policies had slowed down the business activities and increased the inflation rate to highest level in nine years.

Economic managers of the government believe they achieved economic stabilisation after averting the possible default. The government had successfully controlled the soaring current account deficit, trade deficit, and budget deficit in the second half of 2019. Similarly, it built reserves by taking new loans, increased number of tax filers and slightly enhanced exports of the country. However, the government failed to control the increasing inflation rate, achieving tax collection targets. It allowed the local currency to depreciate to record level.

On the other hand, business community remained annoyed with economic policies of the incumbent government. Leading businessmen of the country reposed their confidence in Army Chief General Qamar Javed Bajwa as they complained of a dismal economic situation and sought solution of their problems. Similarly, common people also faced increasing inflation rate that touched 9 years high level due to impact of higher energy prices and currency depreciation. Some reports suggested that Pakistan was in stagflation – a condition in which the economic growth rate is slow while unemployment and prices of goods and services are high.

To achieve the economic stabilisation, the PTI government was forced to replace its economic wizard, Asad Umar with Abdul Hafeez Shaikh, who assumed the charge of Adviser to Prime Minister on Finance and Revenue. The government also changed the heads of central bank and tax department to achieve the desired results. The government had appointed Dr Reza Baqir, a long-time economist with the International Monetary Fund (IMF), as the governor of the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP). Meanwhile, Syed Shabbar Zaidi, a Karachi-based partner in the chartered accounting firm A.F. Ferguson, was appointed as new chairman of the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR).

In January 2019, the PTI government presented its second mini-budget for last fiscal year in National Assembly, dubbing it as an economic reforms package which was needed to fix the economy. The mini budget carried encouraging tax measures for small and medium enterprises, agriculture, housing, print media industry and stock market. Despite mini-budgets, the tax collection remained one of the main challenges for the government. The FBR never achieved its monthly tax collection target in any month of the year 2019.

Launching the Economic Survey in June 2019, the PTI government had admitted to miss all economic targets including GDP growth, industrial, agriculture and others in its first year in office, 2018-19. The GDP growth had touched nine years lowest level of 3.3 percent as against the target of 6.2 percent. Similarly, the growth of the agriculture sector recorded at 0.85 percent as against the target of 3.8 percent. The industrial sector's growth had remained at 1.4 percent as compared to target of 7.6 percent.

The PTI, who had criticised amnesty schemes in the past, introduced its first tax amnesty scheme called 'Assets Deceleration Scheme 2019'. The scheme helped around 110,000 people to disclose their assets. The PTI-led government presented its first full-fledged budget in June 2019, which was termed tough by the stakeholders in terms of taxation. The government introduced massive taxation measures worth Rs512 billion to meet ambitious tax collection target of Rs5.555 trillion, which was set on the direction of the IMF. The militarily and civil establishment had decided to cut their budgets. The defence budget remained static at Rs1,152 billion. Similarly, the civil government reduced its expenditures by 5 percent to Rs437 billion from Rs460 billion.

In July 2019, the IMF approved a 39-month extended arrangement under the Extended Fund Facility (EFF) \$6 billion loan programme for Pakistan. At the same time, the IMF Executive Board's approval allowed immediate disbursement of about \$1 billion. The remaining amount will be phased over the duration of the programme, subject to four quarterly reviews and four semi-annual reviews. The IMF approved the loan package after Pakistan accepted tough conditions of the Fund including imposing massive taxation measures in budget, increasing power tariff and gas prices, depreciating the local currency and increasing the interest rate. Following the approval of IMF's loan, other international financial institutions

like World Bank and Asian Development Bank and others had also started disbursing loans to Pakistan.

Pakistan could not manage to get its name removed from Financial Action Task Force (FATF)'s grey list in 2019. In October 2019, the FATF gave additional time to Pakistan till February 2020 to take 'extra measures' for 'complete' elimination of terror financing and money laundering. The FATF observed that Islamabad will have to take further steps in these four months. The FATF has linked the blacklisting of Pakistan with unsatisfactory steps to curb money laundering and terror financing. The FATF will make final decision in February 2020.

Pakistan has jumped up 28 places on the World Bank's (WB) Ease of Doing Business Index and secured a place among the top 10 countries with the most improved business climate.

The incumbent government borrowed massively in last fiscal year. The federal government added Rs7.6 trillion to public debt in the last fiscal year, which skyrocketed to Rs31.8 trillion by the end of June. The federal government's debt increased at an alarming pace of 31.3 percent due to shortfall in tax collection, uncontrolled expenditures on debt servicing and defence, and depreciation of the currency.

In major achievement, the government controlled the Current Account Deficit (CAD) that narrowed by over 31 percent in last fiscal year due to reduction in trade deficit and healthy growth in workers' remittances. The CAD has gone down by \$6.31 billion to \$13.6 billion in previous fiscal year (July 2018 to June 2019) from \$19.9 billion of the preceding year. The CAD is also continuously declining in current fiscal year. The country witnessed a surprise current account surplus of \$70 million in October — a feat achieved after four years of deficit. During July-November, CAD clocked in at \$1.821 billion, declining by a massive 73 percent over \$6.733 billion in same period last year.

This consistent sharp decrease has helped the government improve its foreign currency reserves and stabilise the exchange rate. The total liquid foreign reserves held by the country stood at around \$18 billion. Reserves improved due to reduction in CAD and inflow of loans from multilateral, bilateral and banking sources. Exchange rate had also stabilized after US dollar had touched highest

ever Rs164 in July 2019. In December, the dollar value came down to Rs155 due to improvement in CAD and foreign exchange reserves. The government also controlled the trade deficit of the country by reducing imports and slightly increasing the exports in the previous year.

However, the inflation rate was continuously increasing due to the government's economic policies like allowing currency depreciating in initial months of the year, increase in power and gas prices. Inflation has skyrocketed to 12.7 percent in November touching the highest level in almost nine years. The State Bank of Pakistan increased the interest rate to 13.25 percent to control the soaring inflation in last year. However, the high interest rates had affected the industrial expansion while also hurting the economic growth prospects.

Last year, the government was unable to achieve its tax collection targets despite imposing mini budgets. In fiscal year 2018-19 that ended on June 30, the FBR collected Rs3,820 billion missing the annual tax collection target by Rs578 billion. Later, in the budget for current fiscal year 2019-20, the government had set ambitious tax collection target of Rs5.55 trillion. However, the FBR is struggling to achieve the target, as it faced Rs211 billion shortfall in first five months of the current fiscal year. On the other hand, the government had increased the number of tax filers in the country. The number of tax filers increased by 0.6 million during Tax Year 2018 as number of return filers went up from 1.9 million (Tax Year 2017) to 2.5 million (Tax Year 2018). The amount received along with increased number of filers stood at Rs5 billion.

Pakistan's budget deficit touched all-time high of Rs3.44 trillion in last fiscal year as the PTI-led government failed to enhance tax collection and reduce expenditures despite announcing two mini budgets and so-called austerity measures. However, the government controlled the budget deficit in the first quarter (July to September) of current fiscal year. Pakistan's budget deficit was recorded at Rs286 billion during July to September period of the year 2019-20. In terms of GDP, the country's budget deficit was recorded at 0.7 percent during the first quarter of the ongoing financial year as compared to 1.4 percent in the same period of last year.

The incumbent government failed to bring reforms in the public sector entities during last year, as the Pakistan International Airlines (PIA), Pakistan Steel Mills and others are continuously facing massive losses.

Source: <https://nation.com.pk/30-Dec-2019/2019-a-year-of-economic-ups-downs>

Time For a Paradigm Shift in Pakistan's Trade By Aadil Nakhoda

KARACHI: One of the major challenges the current government faced when it came to power was the burgeoning current account deficit, primarily driven by the increasing trade deficit.

The meagre foreign currency reserves at that time and limited sources of foreign currency inflows to maintain exchange rate stability required the government to impose policies to reduce the current account deficit.

The trade deficit constitutes a significant proportion of the current account deficit. Although the immediate impact was mainly undesirable as it contributed to price inflation and shortages, the government became successful in curtailing the trade deficit. This consequently eased the pressure on the foreign exchange reserves and resulted in exchange rate stability. Measures including depreciation of the overvalued rupee, subsidised exports and restriction on imports all combined to reduce the trade deficit.

With the trade deficit narrowing to desired levels, the focus should now shift to prioritising export growth through improving the quality of local production by fostering innovation and competition. This may require exporters to have easier access to inputs, both domestically produced as well as imported variants.

The cumulative trade deficit from July to November 2019 – first five months of FY20, as reported by the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS), was 33% lower in dollar terms than the value reported for the same period of previous year. Imports declined 18.41% while exports increased 4.79%.

The trade deficit in November 2019 was 29.65% lower than the deficit reported in November 2018. Imports decreased 13.99% and exports increased 9.35%. This growth in exports has to become sustainable as the future policies seeking reduction in the trade deficit must be export-focused rather than forcing compression of imports.

A closer look at the export values reported for the first five months of FY20 indicates that the food group and textile group have performed relatively better than other major groups.

Food-group exports increased 16.20% over the same period of previous fiscal year, mostly driven by strong numbers for rice, fish and fish preparations as well as meat and meat preparations.

Exports of the textile group increased 4.68%, with knitwear, bedwear and readymade garments the most significant contributors. The three aforementioned products added \$286 million to the growth of \$436 million in the export value for first five months of FY20 relative to the value reported for the same period of previous fiscal year.

On the other hand, the growth in exports of raw cotton and cotton yarn was marginally positive. Exports of leather manufactures as well as surgical goods and medical instruments increased approximately 10%. Exports of tanned leather decreased 18.78%.

The emphasis on exports of processed goods indicates the increasing potential of value addition in industries in Pakistan.

Import slowdown

Considering the imports, there has been a decline across all major groups between July and November 2019 over the same period of last year. The largest decline was reported for the transport group, where imports decreased 41.91% or approximately \$540 million.

Imports of completely built units (CBUs) decreased more than 73%, with arrivals almost coming to a halt. Imports of raw cotton and synthetic fibre also declined, and so were imports of manufactured fertiliser.

On the other hand, imports of electrical equipment and apparatus as well as imports of telecommunication equipment increased. These products also showed a significant growth in the values reported for November 2019.

Although the latter can be explained by an increase in documentation requirements for mobile phone imports, the rise in imports of electrical equipment and apparatus is a positive change if such imports are contributing to improvement in the productive capacity of industries.

The index for the production of large-scale manufacturing items from July to October FY20 indicates a decrease of 6.48%.

However, there is a slight uptick in the production of textile products as it recovers from negative growth in the previous fiscal year and a relatively strong recovery in the leather industry. These changes are reflected in the export figures.

Interestingly, the domestic production of fertiliser has also increased while its imports have declined.

Furthermore, according to data reported by the State Bank of Pakistan, period-to-period growth rate of export receipts is positive for all months in the current fiscal year.

The period-to-period growth rate of import payments is negative since February 2019, with absolute values above 20% for all months in the current fiscal year.

The intensity in the fall of import payments and the rise in export receipts suggest that the policies adopted to compress imports and boost exports have had some success this fiscal year. However, the important piece of the puzzle is to ensure that the export growth is sustainable and the growth continues at desirable levels. The sustainability may require exporters to access better-quality inputs, which should involve stronger export-import linkages.

Revised free trade deal

Pakistan has recently amended the Pakistan-China Free Trade Agreement to boost exports to Beijing. Exports from Pakistan to China are currently restricted to a few products. More than 40% of exports comprised cotton yarn.

Negotiations have included 313 products that will receive immediate tariff relief from China. On the other hand, China will also receive concessions from Pakistan on raw material, intermediate goods and machinery.

Pakistan should establish value chains with Chinese producers with the aid of these concessions, particularly in industries where investors can realise immediate advantage. Pakistan should also promote its export linkages in its more established markets in order to boost exports of value-added products.

Therefore, it is also critical that the benefits provided under the GSP Plus scheme, awarded by the EU, are better utilised and Pakistan must participate in the global and regional value chains.

As 2020 heralds a new dawn, the focus must shift towards trade policies that support export growth and promote participation in the global and regional value chains and away from taking restrictive measures to limit imports.

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EDUCATION

The Reforming College Education: Pakistan Needs To Up Its Game By Abdul Rahman Malik

College education has been the most neglected segment in Pakistan especially in Sindh where colleges are not provided with the development funds, modern methods of teaching, language, and computer labs and interactive classrooms. The obsolete promotions system and the old nomenclature of posts date back to the 1980s, non-provision of scholarships for higher education to government college teachers, so much so that the heads of colleges are not appointed based on administrative skills and competence.

As a result, they mess up the college funds and run after development funds neglecting the key point of imparting quality education to the underprivileged areas of the province. The situation becomes grimmer when the colleges are established on a political basis and notified without following the procedure of SNE, building, population and feeding schools that may guarantee the smooth running of the college.

The non existence of any clear rules and recruitment policy for the appointment of principals in the government colleges have wreaked havoc with college education outreach and standards since the principals being unaware of even ABC of audit and accounting, DDO powers, responsibilities, drafting and correspondence, communication, office administration, linkages, financial audit, monitoring and evaluation of teachers and students' outputs, curriculum development, course plan, planning development schemes such as repair and renovation of college building and procurement procedure.

These trivial issues might have been resolved at the college level, had there been qualified and competent Principals having problem-solving skills and management skills

Mostly the professors in BPS-19 and BPS-20 are posted on administrative or management cadres such as regional directors, DGs and Chairman BISEs. There is no College Teachers Training Institute (CTTI) that may impart training to newly appointed lecturers and other staff that it may increase their productivity. Even representation in the college education department is denied and usurped by powerful PAS, PSS, PCS, PMS and OMG officers who are unaware of the college matters and issues.

Teachers dejected and disillusioned over delayed promotions, often take 18 years to the next grade yet some unfortunate ones get promotions after reaching the superannuation or after retirement. Earlier, the college teachers were provided move over to the next grade after completing their minimum service slab on the given scale but later it was withdrawn.

Later, time scale was granted to the teachers of school education such as PSTs, JSTs and HSTs, and the subject specialists of higher secondary schools, but the college education or higher education teachers were denied these monetary benefits since it provided respite against delayed DPC (Departmental Promotion Committee) by Board I and II to consider the cases of promotions from BS-17 to BS-20 respectively.

It is alarming that some teachers retire serving on the same grade throughout their service period and some get only one promotion to the next grade, given the obsolete promotion system and the so-called Four Tier i.e. Grade wise promotions and appointment for BS-17, BS-18, BS-19, and BS-20.

On the other hand, Punjab and KPK have introduced a five-tier Means Appointment and Promotions System for BS-17, BS-18, BS-19, BS-20, and BS-21. but in Sindh, the old four-tier is in practice with a ratio of 60:40 means 60% promotions for Male and 40% Promotions for Female. The delayed DPCs after two to five years have wreaked havoc with service structure and pensionary benefits as enjoyed by other employees of various departments of Sindh, Punjab and KPK provinces.

Teachers' Unions in all four provinces i.e. SPLA (Sindh), KPLA (KPK), BPLA (Baluchistan) and PPLA (Punjab) have protested for their rights and have been successful in getting their demands approved except SPLA, owing to internal

differences, insincerity, individualism and disintegration on the basis of lack of consensus and no consultation with the college fraternity.

The old players of SPLA went on a solo flight and kept the members of SPLA in limbo that resulted in their downfall who sabotaged the real voice of college teachers and dragged the college teachers in the quagmire of disappointment, deprivation, and injustice. The disparities still continue haunting the college fraternity.

The college teachers were provided move over to next grade after completing their minimum service slab in the given scale but later it was withdrawn. Some progressive young leaders rose up to win support for time scale and staged a showdown which drew the attention of the authorities to the long due issue of promotions and supplementing it with time scale until they get regular time-based promotions. But the old leaders could not digest the successful protest and the landmark court decision directing CM Sindh and Secretary College Education to resolve the issues of promotions and time scale after determining financial requirements and policy matters on a priority basis.

Some teachers demand the grades in the lines of University since B.Com, B.Sc, BA (now replaced with Ad.Sc and Ad.A), MA level students have been imparted education at Degree and Post-Graduate Study level at the Degree Colleges and Post Graduate Studies centers. The up-gradation of posts such as lecturers from BS-17 to 18 and above in the lines of University as the college teachers are regulated through the Higher Education Commission.

The old stalwarts of colleges were lured by the lucrative administrative positions in the regional directorates, DG office, Boards and Principal Ship. They do not know that the civil servants get 5 Promotions in their entire career as per their promotion policies i.e BS-17 to BS-22. Inversely, the college teachers are the most neglected fraternity that has been deprived of all such perks and amenities as safeguarded by the respective Civil Servants Ordinance, the constitution of Pakistan. Such injustice warrants that Government should resolve the issues on a priority basis.

It is unfortunate that the college teachers having no representation in College Education Department Secretariat, there are several doctors serving in Health

Secretariat, several engineers serving in PHED Secretariat on administrative posts of SO, DS, ADS, and Secretary level positions but regrettably, college professors even at grade 19, 20 are denied such representation just because they do not have a management or executive cadre like PSS, PMS, POS, PCS or OMG, AAG, etc, even when college teachers are appointed through competitive examination of SPSC, FPSC or other Provincial Public Service Commissions.

It is also pertinent to note that the civil servants are unaware of the technical terms and issues of colleges and only college teachers can address the needs and resolve the issues of college teachers properly and on a priority basis. The college teachers should also be allocated a 5% to 10% share in administrative posts in Secretariat as our college teachers are the most efficient and talented and can better deliver in policymaking and updating curriculum, service rules drafting and making informed decisions on administrative grounds.

It is shocking and disgusting to express that the teacher who is the factory to produce all the officers, is deplorably considered “not fit” for administrative positions though he/she is recruited through the same SPSC/FPSC. It would be great if the government introduces executive service to join the civil service or secretarial service like SOPE (Section Officers Promotions Exam) conducted by FPSC from the Federal Employees in Grades 7 to 16 have 8 years Experience.

After passing SOPE, they are awarded CSS cadre OMG (Office Management Group). They have been doing a tremendous job as these officers are well aware of day to day office matters and meet deadlines quite easily and require fewer directions. The government should also revise the SNE of the colleges by creating three additional posts i.e. Vice-Principal BS- 18 and Sub Engineer BS 11/16 and Assistant Director (Finance and Planning) BS-17 to run the administrative, development and accounting matters smoothly.

SPLA in limbo that resulted in their downfall who sabotaged the real voice of college teachers and dragged the College Teachers in the quagmire of disappointment, deprivation and injustice

The Federal colleges and Punjab colleges have Vice Principals who look after or officiate in the absence of principals. There should be either direct appointments

through a search committee or Public Service Commission for the position of vice-principals and principals so that most experienced persons may be appointed on the administrative posts. Furthermore, local and international scholarships and study leaves are not granted to college teachers to pursue M.Phil and Ph.D. or Postdoctoral studies as availed by university teachers.

The new college teachers appointed through SPSC should undergo the induction or orientation training to be organized at directorate level or a training wing or proposed institute i.e. College Teachers Training Institute (CTTI) or College Management Institute (CMI), may be established to impart training on teaching methodologies and lecture process, policy matters and orientation training for principals and vice-principals on administration, management, supervision, auditing, strategic planning and innovation to improve college education and bringing it at par with international standards.

The projectors should be used and the laptop scheme should be initiated for teachers so that teachers can impart education on modern lines and make learning a fun process as students get bored from the lecture of 40 to 45 minutes. The presentations on multimedia projects will make learning interactive and collaborative.

Regrettably, though, there are multimedia projectors installed at some colleges but they have been out of order for years and the principals, lacking visionary thoughts, have not even bothered to make them functional because of the unavailability of computers lecturers and technicians. There should also be computer lab assistants, besides just Lab assistants at colleges.

Principals are the team leaders rather than just a boss to scold, report, temper with ACRs or take action against teachers on personal grudges and lenient on blue-eyed teachers. As a fact, the bosses will never take responsibility but they shift responsibility, on the other hand, the leaders always believe in teamwork and take the responsibility of either good or bad and defend their teammates.

Regrettably, so many principals are imposed upon the colleges lacking the competency to run the day to day affairs. Owing to their incompetence, inefficiency, and lack of training, the college academic, and administrative issues surface which prompts the supervisory authorities to intervene and resolve

issues. These trivial issues might have been resolved at the college level, had there been qualified and competent Principals having problem-solving skills and management skills. It is also necessary that Executive Management Training should be made compulsory for the Principal before joining. This will further their deliverables.

It is the need of the hour to address the woes of College Teachers and the College. These should be resolved on the war-footing basis to transform colleges into great seats of learning since colleges fill the gaps of higher education where there are no universities. The colleges serve as higher Education intuitions offering degrees at Undergraduate, Graduate and Post Graduate level.

Source: <https://www.globalvillagespace.com/reforming-college-education-pakistan-needs-to-up-its-game/>

State of Higher Education By Asma Nisar

According to article 26 of the human rights declaration, education is the fundamental right of every human on earth. The article further states that every state should strive to provide free and easily accessible education to its citizens. In the modern, globalized world, education has emerged as a potent tool to cultivate a modern, peaceful and well-informed society. It is no longer considered as a luxury but essential for a nation's survival.

Higher education is aimed at educating, training, undertaking research and rendering amenity to the community. The higher education system in Pakistan is facing a plethora of problems including uncertainty regarding the medium of education and preferred system of education etc., poor funding i.e. around 2.4 per cent of the total budget, inefficient teachers promoting the culture of rote learning and killing innovation, commercialisation of education by setting up multiple private institutes and universities, lack of technical education providing institutions, lack of accountability and administrative failure of the institutions to provide adequate facilities to the students.

In addition to these problems, there is no concept of providing counselling to the young generation about the scope and latitude of their desired degrees in the national and international job markets. As if these were not enough problems marring our education system, not a single university in Pakistan seems concerned about the physical and mental well being of its students. Unfortunately, hundreds of students have attempted and dozens succeeded in committing suicides in the past two years after surrendering at the hands of pressure related to education.

Similarly, political affiliations of the students and teachers, and their consequent contests have resulted in multiple deaths and injuries thus promoting a climate of violence in campuses. The QS University ranking 2019 has portrayed the abysmal picture of the state of higher education in Pakistan. According to the latest report, only two universities out of the 188 Pakistani universities made it to the top 500 while merely seven made it to the top 1000. If the government of Pakistan kept its eyes closed towards this deadly problem, Pakistan will not be able to become a reality of Jinnah's dream. The government should try to bridge

the gap between theory and practice by implementing the policies designed for the uplift of education in the country, the development of a uniform curriculum, which has emerged as a Gordian knot for the system, should be ensured to end opacity and bridge the gap between the multiple standards of the education system.

In addition, the university administrations should strive to provide adequate facilities to their students to ensure their physical and mental wellbeing. The government should learn lessons from the Chinese, Singaporean and South Korean models of education, which used education and knowledge as a tool to emerge as powerful nations. The presence of a huge fraction of the young population between the ages of 15-64 years makes Pakistan in a position to use its demographic dividend to boost its otherwise dwindling economy.

By making huge investments in the education sector, Pakistan should make efforts to develop an egalitarian system of education by encouraging mass enrolment, research and specialization which will eventually lead to winning of enormous economic rewards for Pakistan. Pakistan should endeavour to remove social stratification from the educational sector and should safeguard merit. Eradication of corruption and nepotism must be ensured by the policymakers to avoid misuse of the public money invested primarily for the promotion of quality education.

Last but not the least, our education system is in a dire need of critical education sector reforms i.e. the teachers and instructors at the higher education imparting institutes must fulfil their duty of imbuing youngsters with essential moral values. This is high time the policymakers should come out of their comfort zones and observe the pitiful state of education in Pakistan. Lest the state takes up the responsibility of uplifting the poor education system, Pakistan would remain at the bottom of the human development index. And our vision of developing a 'Naya Pakistan' will remain a distant dream.

Asma Nisar

The writer is a freelance columnist.

Source: <https://nation.com.pk/20-Dec-2019/state-of-higher-education>

Higher Challenges in Higher Education of Pakistan By Dr Hazir Ullah

Public Sector Universities are grappling with diminishing resources, largely because of significant declines in state funding in the current (2019-20) budget and poor management of resources. There is no doubt in accepting the fact that 2019-20 is an intensely challenging year for higher education in Pakistan. The Higher Education Commission (HEC) has advised the public sector universities to cut down their administrative expenses. It has also directed the universities to impose a ban on hiring non-teaching administrative staff and procurement of equipment (i.e., computer, machinery etc.) to deal with the budgetary cuts. The Commission also recommended a “Fund-raising Programme” so that industrialists, alumni and other relevant people can donate funds. I think the notion of “Fund-raising Programme” in today Pakistan may be a nice thought for those in leadership positions, but I don’t think it is a realistic thought. The decline in state funding to the public sector universities has come to a point where universities, I believe, are not able to manage the shortfall with fund raising from industrialists and alumni. Knowing the impossibility of fund raising from industrialists and alumni, universities have started to increase tuition fee, enrollment and teaching load while considering other ways to raise revenue.

It will not be a sweeping statement to argue that almost all public sector universities in the country are under increasing pressure to increase enrollment at BS, MS and Ph. D levels to meet their financial needs. For increasing the number of students, many universities have started BS morning, BS evening, MS/M. Phil Morning with thesis and MS/M. Phil evening without thesis. In addition to these initiatives, a number of public and private sector universities have started MS/M. Phil on weekend. Increasing enrollment compels universities to relax their admissions criteria. Lowering admissions requirements and standards to admit more and more students is no more than a compromise on the standard and quality education. Similarly, a considerable number of universities have also increased tuition fee from fall 2019 semester. Increasing tuition fee shows government attempt to make education a private good in the public sector universities. Increased tuition fee will shut the door of higher education to students from low and middle income families. Many universities

have increased the faculty teaching load without bothering about its impact on the quality of teaching and learning.

It is important to remember that increasing students' intake in universities beyond their capacities will lead to "institutional massification" and will result in a significant deterioration of quality. The authorities should not shut their eyes to the fact that increase in enrollment without a commensurate increase in qualified faculty is causing a deterioration in the quality of teaching and learning. Heavy teaching load also leaves no time for independent research and students' guidance/supervision. The increased enrollment and teaching load seriously questions the very aim of higher education and quality teaching-learning as majority of the qualified faculty members are heavily into administration tasks i.e., admission, coordination etc. Also, the proportion of staff with PhDs is low to supervise the number of MS and Ph. D students. In a nut shell, all these measures adopted by universities to meet their financial needs are increasing the strain on faculty and students. The increase in enrollment and teaching load places heavy burden on the teachers how to manage the quality in their teaching and fulfill their research missions.

It is important to remember that increasing students' intake in universities beyond their capacities will lead to "institutional massification" and will result in a significant deterioration of quality. The authorities should not shut their eyes to the fact that increase in enrollment without a commensurate increase in qualified faculty is causing a deterioration in the quality of teaching and learning

I am cognizant to the fact that when you run a public sector university, you're always struggling to do more with less. But we should understand that at a certain point, you don't do more with less; you have to do less with less. I think we should keep the enrollment in line with the capacities of our universities. Do more with less will, in fact, further deteriorate the existing deteriorated standards of higher education. I think the authorities are not addressing the underlying problem but are trying to throw ash in public eyes. There is no doubt in accepting the fact that there has been an erosion of the public mission of higher education in this country. Universities have become divorced from their missions outlined by HEC. The Higher Education Commission (HEC) of Pakistan, from the very inception of its up-gradation from University Grant Commission (UGC) to HEC in 2002, held, besides other aims, quality teaching and research as its priority

agenda. HEC committed to initiate all kinds of steps guaranteeing quality education/research and realization of the concept of knowledge economy in true sense. I appeal to the chairman higher education commission to defend the real aim of higher education and communicate a strong message to the top political leadership of the country to fulfill their commitment regarding higher education in Pakistan. Similarly, the universities, instead of increasing enrollment, tuition fee and teaching load, should undertake a very extensive review of their existing operational processes and resources in their respective universities. They should look at such things as centralizing I.T., being strategic in our sourcing, sharing service centers, changing the ways maintenance and purchasing are done in our universities.

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Source: <https://dailytimes.com.pk/465876/higher-challenges-in-higher-education-of-pakistan/>

Comparative Attitude in Education By **Noman Nayyir Kulachvi**

Consciousness is a fresh and stimulating energy by which humans are considered superior to animals. It is a kind of light that helps mankind to attain ultimate success. There is no alternative of consciousness; it is a kind of a treasure, a reality that completes humanity. Every human is born with different consciousness, and if there are 7.7 billion people across the world, not a single man is the carbon copy of another. Resemblance between two individuals may be possible with respect to their physical structure, but from a metaphysical point of view, no two men are identical. Therefore, a comparison between two people on the basis of their consciousness is a ridiculous approach. That is why the philosophy of a role model is futile and unnecessary as every human being is a model in his own nature.

No two persons can be compared at any stage in their life if that this comparison is made in the field of education and intellect. Collectively, we have gotten into the habit of asserting pressure on the minds of our children in the shape of imposing our desires that, at times, produce dire consequences. We don't have any idea of the loss we are facing by virtue of this practice.

At the initial stage of schooling, parents inculcate their ambitions into the minds of children, to acquire first position or to be like the child of their friend. This unnecessarily asserted pressure produces negative effects on the minds of our children. Every child has instinctive qualities by birth, and nature teaches him to utilise them, but parents, society and academic environment turn a blind eye to these abilities, and let them go to waste in ignorance. Not everybody can become a doctor or an engineer. If the child of your friend is a successful doctor, it doesn't mean that your child is also like him. This sort of pressure with respect to education is leading us to a bad state, but we are unable to understand the real causes of decline in children's academic performances.

We connect a child's failure to many reasons but are ignorant to the main cause. Acquiring first position in university or securing more marks than others is not the only achievement and real success. We forget that many successful people in world were against regular education. Bill Gates, a dropout of the Harvard

University, says that he was never remembered as a topper in his alma mater, but he has lots of top students working under his leadership. The basis of intelligence and success is the ability and not formal education. What education does, it polishes the inbuilt potential in humans and enhances their hidden talents, and therefore, education is compulsory and grooming is mandatory for moral growth.

Collectively, we have gotten into the habit of asserting pressure on the minds of our children in the shape of imposing our desires

In today's world, we have to free our children of two main mental evils. The first one is to abandon education that is opposite to the aptitude of our children, and the second one is to remove the comparison-based culture and attitudes. Comparatively based attitude can only be developed if two children have an identical level of consciousness, which is impossible. That is why a comparative attitude evokes pessimism among children. Resultantly, a child starts to follow the paradigm of readymade education in our society in lieu of understanding the 'phenomenon of world' by utilising his instinctive qualities. This corrodes his aptitude and inbuilt abilities.

If we leave our children to their inbuilt abilities, they will surely find a way and choose the best profession in which they can prove themselves. In our society, the cause of many psychological ailments is the use of dissimulation and simulation: we hide what we actually are, and sometimes, we act how we are not. It starts in childhood; we are taught to act in a dual capacity, and we have this attitude until our death. A person having a great aptitude for singing becomes an engineer for fulfilling his parents' desire. He is coerced to study engineering, which is entirely opposite to his aptitude and natural tendency.

With this practice, some children are affected by the very dangerous ailment of split personality. It is a psychological illness that makes a person act in dual personalities. This disease also develops a sense of guilt among children, mainly due to comparative treatment; sometimes, it leads them to the edge. They commit suicide when they fail to achieve a good position in a college examination.

All this happens due to stress imposed by parents in childhood. In every aspect of life, the comparison-based attitude develops a negative thinking in the minds of humans. It also compels humans to grow and get ahead at every cost, without caring whether the means are fair or unfair. The comparative attitude in human beings is awful; it not only develops a negative approach on an individual level but its also coerces a person to affect his society in an adverse manner. In this way, he creates many social evils, and a bad society is developed where hate and selfishness prevail. His society is plagued by sordid impulses, widespread apathy and pervasive soullessness.

We should eradicate comparatively based attitude, especially in the field of education, so that we could provide our children a stress-free atmosphere where they choose whatever field they like. We should handover our children to their inbuilt abilities and aptitudes. Then they would flourish, and will not only be good humans but also good professionals. The person who possesses one personality, externally and internally, would be a strong man.

The writer is a psychologist and a polymath

Source: <https://dailytimes.com.pk/477211/comparative-attitude-in-education/>

Universities and National Development By

Rizwana Abbasi

Universities in Pakistan are suffering a great setback in the face of sweeping budget cuts by the federal government. Slashing of the Higher Education Commission's (HEC) budget has hit the universities' potential base. Do we realise that higher education institutions, research and innovations are prominent pillars of national development? If prudently governed, universities are durable and distinctive entities for the progression of any society. They are totally impartial, hub of knowledge, and centres of innovation where the passion, creativity, and idealism of great minds is nurtured to resolve complex societal problems while advancing the national growth. Universities worldwide supply great minds that are vital engines and powerful drivers of global innovation and development. In the 21st century, space for an unskilled workforce, informal economy and mediocre minds seems to be shrinking substantially in developing societies. Knowledge economy, technological growth and a digital lifestyle has outpaced the outdated paradigms to paddle through in a competitive world. New socio-economic dynamics of the world have made education institutions more relevant to societies than ever before. With that said, we cannot grapple with our national problem unless we net the state structure to scientific approaches and philosophical paradigms of statecraft.

The fundamental question arises of how to stimulate institutional transformation to reorient the potential base of universities, and the role of knowledge production and scientific research productivity in that. We need to adopt the habits and culture of a progressive nation. For this, a combination of top-down and bottom-up organisational approaches, dynamic personalities, pro-active policies, multidimensional notions of excellence and transparent governance are needed.

The ruling government should consider reshaping the mission of the HEC thereby aligning it to the national vision. The government should create a special cell that identifies challenging areas, directing the HEC to generate adoptable and impactful scientific solutions. The HEC can partner with private organisations to promote scientific excellence and maximise its resource base. Universities, think tanks and industry linkages are significant as they should work together

as partners to achieve shared national goals. Similarly, research and higher education needs to be reframed, thus incorporating them in one unit to contribute to the country's policy and society.

For this the ruling government has to upsurge the budget for research and development in order to create the best environment for research and innovation to flourish. This will fortify the universities' capacity, reorient the teaching and research culture and implement an efficient administrative structure across campuses. Notably, a good campus culture and environment can powerfully impact the thought process of the faculty and students, and at the same time can indigenously generate the impactful human resource to push the country forward. To achieve this, universities will have to initiate bold measures with a bigger appetite to absorb risks in order to foster national development. Contemporary universities have a responsibility to pursue scholarly fusion and develop a culture of academic rigour and cutting-edge knowledge entrepreneurship. They should not be considered as mere self-indulgent degree awarding factories but as valuable sources of knowledge with a wider influence and the potential to manifest technologies and ideas that can contribute to national growth. A skilled workforce, leadership growth and scientific output to meet today's national demands should be a priority. Their mission should be focused on delivering in a manner that they achieve the breadth of impact on tangible grounds by pushing the country forward.

Within this, the teaching style should be taken as the core focus on the guiding role of campus-culture activities. The universities must discard outdated teaching and learning paradigms while adhering to the modern pedagogical practices. New technologies have given rise to new methods of transforming students' minds. Our focus should be on creating master thinkers and problem solvers by injecting a wide array of skills, including entrepreneurship, team spirit, collective ideology, sense of responsibility and mission, self-confidence and motivation. Universities also need to be socially entrenched and perform their role within the socio-cultural fabric. Within this they have to take on the responsibility of inculcating moral, intellectual, physical and creative education in order to nurture students' thought process and feelings while redirecting their moral realm.

Many organisations report that the graduates they hire are deficient in basic skills such as writing, problem solving and critical thinking. More emphasis is needed

to develop healthier ways for universities to measure students' learning, not only for critical thinking and writing but to apply those at a practical level. Notably, due to manpower shortage, many departments are offering optional courses based not on the demand of students, but on the availability of the faculty. Thus many students do not feel that the courses, reading and classroom learning impacts a lot on their practical lives. Such sentiments suggest either that the courses do not in fact contribute much to the ultimate goals that universities propagate or that an unskilled or overburdened faculty is not taking sufficient care to explain the larger aims of their courses thereby connecting it to the practice.

Major emphasis should be placed on hiring, grooming and training the young faculty as organic leaders who will lead to serve the nation for rest of their lives. Instead of placing the PhD faculty chiefly devoted to teaching, their work should be reduced and they should be expected to do scientific research to grapple with the alarming challenges. All the universities should prepare graduate students to assist senior research professors in their teaching workload where these students can get help to become better instructors. Change is hard to achieve but innovation and adaptation are needed now more than ever.

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The 75-Years Legacy of IMF and World Bank By Syed Mohammad Ali

Alongside creating the UN system in the aftermath of WWII, the global community also attempted to create an international mechanism to manage the world economy and address the problem of global poverty. This year marks 75 years since the IMF and the World Bank were created, making it a good time to assess their legacy.

The IMF's basic purpose is to foster global monetary cooperation and financial stability while the World Bank takes upon itself the responsibility to create sustainable economic growth and help reduce poverty around the world. Both provide financial assistance to poorer countries through concessional lending

which often comes with advice on how developing countries can best manage their economics to achieve long-term stabilisation, growth and poverty alleviation.

The overall record of the IMF and World Bank in helping create macro-economic stability and alleviating poverty remains mixed at best. The World Bank claims that global poverty has decreased significantly in the past few decades, but others point to the vast inequalities in the world where 1% of the world's population owns half the world's wealth. In recent years, the IMF has been criticised for exacerbating the Southeast Asia financial crisis in the late 1990s, and for being unable to avert the 2008 global financial crisis.

Debt campaigners further accuse the IMF of reckless lending. The IMF has extended nearly \$93 billion in loans to developing countries with little capacity to repay them. IMF and World Bank prescriptions of austerity, a reduction of public-sector spending, regressive taxation, widespread deregulation, subsidy cuts and privatisation often do not help indebted countries emerge from the debt trap.

The case of Argentina is one example where combined IMF and World Bank policies did little to boost sustainable growth or address the root causes of indebtedness. The IMF is thus blamed for being primarily concerned with protecting the interests of creditors, increasing its own lending portfolio, rather than helping developing countries. The World Bank's external debt portfolio for low-income and middle-income countries also continues to rise. The World Bank's structural adjustment programmes, which curb public spending and promote the privatisation of essential services including the provision of health and education, have also evoked much ire.

While it now acknowledges the threat of climate change, the World Bank has been a key financier of fossil fuel projects over its 75-year existence. Climate groups are demanding that the World Bank stop funding such projects and instead exclusively support alternative-energy projects. Yet, the current President of the World Bank, hand-picked by the US, only focuses on climate adaptation and disaster response, and remains reluctant to address the underlying causes of the problem (presumably due to the domestic politics concerning fossil fuel use).

Both the IMF and the World Bank are struggling to stay relevant in a world where the challenges of climate change continue to undermine long-term prospects of economic growth, and global inequalities have become increasingly glaring. It is, however, time to pay attention to the role of these two institutions in creating some of the problems which they now aim to contend with. The imbalanced governance structures of both the IMF and the World Bank remain heavily influenced by their majority shareholders, who exert disproportionate decision-making power over these supposedly global institutions. To be truly global entities capable of addressing lingering problems of deprivation and contending with the looming threat of climate change instigated by growth-obsessed growth models, these entities need to reform their own governance structures, and revise their growth-first orthodoxy which continues to worsen global power imbalances.

A continued reliance on market-based solutions protects the interests of the moneyed elite and the elite-led private sector, but it is a very lopsided model of “development”, which many argue offers meagre trickle-down benefits.

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WORLD

NATO's Existential Crisis | Editorial

The summit that marks the 70th anniversary of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) is bringing the members to discuss new challenges. The most critical problems that the NATO members will be struggling with are China and cyber security. Contrary to the organisation's principle of "one for all, and all for one", cracks in NATO are visible. The sharp exchanges between the Presidents of the United States (US) and France tell us the deep divisions that NATO is experiencing.

While the French President Emmanuel Macron is calling the alliance "brain dead", President Trump shot back by calling the French leaders words "nasty". However, these words wars constitute just the tip of the iceberg. Considering the verbal fight that the two leaders have entered into, is there any room for overcoming the differences?

The two issues that the summit attendees will address and find a solution for include defence spending and Turkey's recent adventures in Syria and its growing ties with Russia. As far as defence spending is concerned, the US President wants the European nations to contribute more. He has been arguing for some time that the US contributions to the organisation are more than its fair share.

However, the European members see no reason to contribute more to the organisation, especially since there is no more visible threat from Russia nowadays. Containment of the then Soviet Union was more American leaders' desire than that of the Western European ones. This was the main reason that the US joined forces with the Western European nations and formed NATO. Since then till this very day, NATO has turned into an imperial watchdog. It defends US interests anywhere whenever the US wants. However, the US still has enough power in coercing the European members to increase their defence shares.

As far as Turkey's relations with the members of NATO are concerned, they are indeed strained, especially after Turkey launched a military offensive in Northern Syria against the Kurds. While the US abandoned the Kurds midway, France still feels bitter over NATO's inability to stop Turkey from going against Kurds.

Nevertheless, both Macron and Trump are united against Turkey's multi-million dollars deal with Russia to buy the S-400 missile defence system. However, the real question is whether Erdogan will give in to the pressure considering the fact that being a member of NATO does not mean membership of the European Union (EU)? Given the complexity and number of issues that the on-going summit is to deal with, it is fair to say that the organisation is experiencing an existential crisis.

Source: <https://nation.com.pk/05-Dec-2019/nato-s-existential-crisis>

Why Donald Trump Can't Pull U.S. Forces Out of Afghanistan By Peter Harris

Ten years ago, Barack Obama gave one of the most important foreign policy speeches of his presidency. In a commencement address to cadets at West Point, the President announced a surge of 30,000 additional troops into the Afghan warzone, coupled with a commitment to begin withdrawing U.S. forces after 18 months. It was a bold policy announcement, meant to accomplish two things: (1) satisfy foreign and domestic audiences that the new president was serious about tackling threats to U.S. national security, and (2) give Americans confidence that the Afghan conflict (and the wider Global War on Terrorism) would not drag on indefinitely.

Obama's surge produced some significant triumphs on the battlefield but ultimately failed to presage the beginning of the end for America's longest war. Now in its nineteenth year, the war in Afghanistan has claimed the lives of around 2,400 U.S. service members and stubbornly refuses to yield an American victory. In a cruel twist, the United States has now lost more troops in Afghanistan since Obama laid out his timetable for withdrawal than were killed in the eight years of fighting that preceded his announcement of an exit strategy.

Responsibility for ending the Afghan war now rests with another president, Donald Trump, who has joined his predecessor in pledging to bring the conflict to a close. Indeed, Trump's eagerness to end U.S. involvement in Afghanistan has led him to embrace pathways to peace that even Obama had not countenanced. Whereas Obama refused to pull U.S. forces out of Afghanistan before they had inflicted a decisive military defeat upon the Taliban and the al-Qaeda terrorists who had murdered nearly 3,000 innocent civilians on 9/11, Trump has been willing to negotiate directly with America's adversaries even though they show no signs of relenting.

Yet despite his outspoken opposition to the war and his recent decision to reopen peace talks with the Taliban, there are strong reasons to believe that Trump will follow in Obama's footsteps by failing to extricate the United States from Afghanistan. After all, it was not long into his first year in office that Trump announced an Afghan surge of his own. Trump's surge was much smaller than

Obama's—just 3,000 additional troops, bringing the total to around 14,000—but just the fact of its implementation says volumes about the political running room that Trump enjoys when it comes to pushing for a complete withdrawal of U.S. forces.

Like Obama, Trump sent reinforcements to Afghanistan with a degree of reluctance. He complained that his instinct had been to withdraw from Afghanistan (“and historically I like to follow my instincts”) but confided that, as president, he had come to see things differently. “I heard that decisions are much different when you sit behind the desk of the Oval Office,” Trump explained.

What did Trump mean by this? Most importantly, perhaps, he was referring to the copious advice that presidents receive from their military and national security advisers, almost all of whom are telling Trump—just as they cautioned Obama—that it would be risky to reduce the U.S. military presence in Afghanistan. Leave now, the argument goes, and Afghanistan will once again become a haven for terrorists who are intent on doing harm to the United States. Needless to say, warnings like these are difficult for presidents to dismiss.

Of course, the possibility cannot be discounted that Trump will defy his national security team by ordering the complete withdrawal of U.S. forces before either a military victory or a favorable political settlement have been secured. Such a move has been suggested before. But cutting the Gordian knot in this way would leave the President open to significant risks at home and abroad.

One obstacle for Trump is that his own party strongly opposes an untimely American exit from Afghanistan. Big majorities of Republican voters believe that the war in Afghanistan has kept America safer from terrorism, and the GOP-controlled Senate voted in January of this year to caution the administration against leaving Afghanistan without first defeating al-Qaeda, ISIS, and other terrorist organizations. If national security hawks such as Jim Risch (R-ID) and Lindsay Graham (R-SC) had their way, the United States would follow Max Boot's prescription of staying in Afghanistan without any concern for the duration of its stay.

It might be countered that opinion polls show some support for ending the war, and that President Trump would be rewarded at the ballot box if he pushed the

Republican establishment aside and simply gave the American people what they want. But this would put Trump at the mercy of what the political scientist V.O. Key called “latent” (future) public opinion. What will the electorate think once the Taliban is back in Kabul, Afghanistan is governed as a theocratic state, and terrorist training camps can once again operate with impunity? At the very least, voters might not look favorably upon a president who simply declared victory and left.

In September of this year, Trump reportedly came close to a peace agreement that would have ended U.S. involvement in Afghanistan. The plan had been for Trump to host the Taliban at Camp David and personally seal the deal himself, which suggests that the President still views some political advantage in styling himself as a peacemaker. Those talks were abruptly suspended, however, after the Taliban launched a fatal attack on U.S. soldiers. Domestic critics castigated the President for considering Camp David as a suitable location to host the Taliban and for pursuing a peace deal without including Afghan President Ashraf Ghani as part of the process.

Now talks with the Taliban have restarted, with the stated purpose of finding a political settlement that will allow all U.S. troops to leave the country. Trump hopes that a diplomatic victory will give him the political cover necessary for a military withdrawal. But he will have to tread carefully. If talks go awry, the President’s critics will waste no time painting him as naïve and weak on national security. If a peace agreement is forthcoming, however, he could be accused of doing a deal with the Devil and disrespecting the lives of America’s fallen. And then there is the risk that a withdrawal will be implemented but must be reversed in the face of deteriorating security conditions.

It is worth emphasizing that Trump is not a prisoner of domestic politics. He governs in vastly different circumstances to his predecessor and, as president, enjoys enormous power to shape the conversation on national security. America’s war in Afghanistan does not have to continue. It is possible to imagine it ending. Trump can make it happen.

At the same time, though, the risks of ordering a military disengagement remain high. For this reason, it is prudent to temper expectations of a U.S. withdrawal any time soon. As much as he might chafe at the idea, Trump might well come to

view staying the course in Afghanistan as the least bad option from a political standpoint—at least when compared to a peace deal with the Taliban. It would be a tragedy, of course, but one that Americans are well used to living through by now.

<https://nationalinterest.org/blog/skeptics/why-donald-trump-cant-pull-us-forces-out-afghanistan-101797?>

The Future of Afghanistan By Ihsanullah

Tipu Mehsud

The US-led NATO forces and the Afghan military forged an unprecedented alliance last month to pull an exceptionally surprising victory. The coalition troops teamed up with the Taliban to quell the rise of the Islamic State (IS) Khorasan in Nangarhar, the far-eastern corner of Afghanistan bordering Pakistan, where the militia-controlled large swaths of countryside. The concerted military offensive resulted in an almost total collapse there of the IS(K). Taliban tightened the noose on IS hideouts by choking their supply routes for weeks while the coalition air support contained its fighters' movement and the advent of fresh reinforcements. The offensive also forced over 500 Islamic State affiliates, many of them foreigners, to surrender while the remaining making their escape good.

On Wednesday, US Special Representative Zalmay Khalilzad publically endorsed the covert alliance in a tweet by acknowledging the Taliban's role in recent advances against the Islamic State in eastern Afghanistan. "The recent campaign in Nangarhar is one example. Effective operations by US/Coalition & Afghan security forces, as well as the Taliban, led to ISIS-K losing territory & fighters. Hundreds surrendered," tweeted the White House's special envoy.

The Khorasan chapter, one of Islamic State's most dreaded affiliates, first popped up in eastern Afghanistan in 2014, when dozens of Pakistani Taliban deserted there new commander after Hakimullah Mehsud was killed in a US drone strike in 2013.

A substantial decline in Taliban-led attacks across Afghanistan has been witnessed since President Trump's announcement to call off the peace talks. Washington did not ink the peace deal because the militia refused to seize its attacks as a confidence-building measure. Both are adopting a more reconciliatory attitude and the talks are again back on track.

The coalition and Afghan forces have long been battling the IS tooth and nail, including dropping the "Mother of all Bombs" on an IS hideout in Nangarhar but in vain. The tables turned on the militia when the coalition forces joined hands with the Taliban. The IS commanders were already predicting that in case of any

peace deal with the US and the Afghan government, the disgruntled adherents of the Islamic Emirate will flock its ranks.

“We are quite confident that a peace deal will prove beneficial for us in terms of gaining manpower and funds. Taliban field commanders and fighters won’t agree on it. They will not cope with the idea of a power-sharing formula. They have been fighting for years to establish an utterly pure Islamic emirate in Afghanistan. Anything less will push them to join our ranks. Dissatisfaction among Taliban field commanders has already emerged and we are aware of it,” said an IS(K) commander in August in a telegram chat.

For Taliban leadership, elimination of Daesh was a strategic imperative, no matter whom they sided with. If not eliminated before striking any deal with Washington and Kabul, the IS could have provided the opportunity to the hardline elements within Taliban to switch sides. Besides religious radicalism and discontent with the likely deal, the need to seek refuge for avoiding local tribal retribution could have also driven the hardliner in the Taliban to join IS(K). The central Taliban leadership still fears that field commanders, especially those on the frontline, may reject the peace deal with the very forces they had been fighting against for the last 18 years.

The extraordinary offensive notwithstanding, it still not certain if the IS has been weakened effectively if not eliminated fully in eastern Afghanistan. As much as Washington and Kabul seem ready to sign the peace accord, the Taliban’s internal dynamics can delay if not scuttle the process. To silence the taunt of surrender, the Afghan militia will need to show off more than a peace accord that paves the way for its mainstreaming in the political process.

Source: <https://nation.com.pk/07-Dec-2019/the-future-of-afghanistan>

As EU-US Relations Falter By Azhar Azam

President Trump's stubborn "America First" strategy not only mills him to slap tariffs on rival China's goods, but his invasive economic policy unequivocally targets products of American allies — including Japan, South Korea, Mexico, and the EU.

All of Trump's contrived measures to drive every other country down to his taxing tariff policy are yet to produce any positive signals in the US economic statistics, which posted a nine-month US trade deficit increase of \$24.8 billion or 5.4% as compared to the previous year.

Decreased exports and increased imports are not making Trump soften his hostile approach towards the entire world. Instead, it cajoles him into persisting his bitter US trade unilateralism and protectionism stance that is poised to wipe off \$700 billion from the global economy by 2020.

Trump is now mulling over the option of launching a trade investigation against the EU, to justify imposing tariffs on the bloc's exports to the US. Earlier, he missed the November 14 deadline to follow through his threat of 25% tariffs on European cars and car parts.

The move came after Washington pushed Brussels to cut tariffs on American lobsters and chemicals, but EU trade chief Cecilia Malmström rejected the US mini-deal bid, calling for a reciprocal American action for European exports. The EU is additionally critical of Trump labelling Europe a trade "foe", resounding that he supports Brexit and is the first American president to openly speak "against a united Europe".

Trump's trade war onto the EU and forthright intervention in the alliance's sovereign affairs are gradually distancing the US from some key Nato allies. The bloc is now seeking out China to work with EU on compatible issues such as climate change, WTO reforms, strengthening international peace and security and promoting sustainable development.

Echoing for a combined effort in the recently concluded 3rd EU-China CEO and Former Senior Officials' Dialogue in Beijing, the European side also petitioned China for a “comprehensive strategic partnership, advancing economic and trade relations, and promoting innovations”.

In the age of trade unilateralism and protectionism, economic relations between China and EU continue to prosper as bilateral trade increased 3.1% to reach about \$580 billion till October 2019. The increased economic collaboration will surely tone down the impacts of the trade war and rebalance the global economy.

The EU is China's largest trading partner and China is EU's second-largest. As Beijing poured \$318 billion of investments in the EU during the last 10 years, 45% more than the US, both sides are expected to sign a bilateral investment treaty next year.

In view of the EU's growing desire to reinforce its rapprochement with China, Beijing may extend its willingness to strongly implement the framed EU-China 2020 Strategic Agenda for Cooperation that emphasises working together for “peace, prosperity and sustainable development and their commitment to multilateralism”.

Additionally, the EU plans to connect Europe and Asia with Chinese help to improve the economic, social, fiscal, financial and environmental sustainability of Eurasian connectivity and interoperability, which is also a vital part of the Chinese BRI.

While the US is continuing to grill the EU across multiple fronts, China could increase its economic, strategic, political and diplomatic engagements with Europe.

As officials from China, Russia, France, Germany and Britain met in Vienna on December 6, they committed to implement the US-blasted Iran nuclear deal, which has caused the EU-Iran trade to plunge by nearly 75% from January to September.

With its allies, Beijing may utilise multilateral international forums to repel Washington's crass campaign against the global world while the EU could deepen its economic, political and strategic relations with China.

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Source: <https://tribune.com.pk/story/2115832/6-eu-us-relations-falter/>

Secular India? | Editorial

Prime Minister Narendra Modi continues to take India away from its secular roots with another attempt to oppress Muslims. India's lower house of parliament on Monday passed the Citizenship Amendment Bill (CAB) after hours of intense debate. The bill reintroduced in the assembly by Home Minister Amit Shah allows Indian citizenship to non-Muslims who came to India from Pakistan, Bangladesh and Afghanistan before 2015. Opponents of the bill say it discriminates against Muslims and violates India's secular constitution. The bill was first introduced in 2016, during Modi's first term, but lapsed due to lack of support from the ruling coalition. One of the odd outcomes of the assembly debate on the bill was Home Minister Amit Shah's full-throated defence of Christians. He noted that they were an oppressed minority in Pakistan, Afghanistan, and Bangladesh. What made it odd was that this was the first time in his political career that he has shown concern for Christians, who regularly get beaten, robbed, raped and murdered by Hindutva fanatics in India.

India has erupted in protests and the intelligentsia has issued a statement calling for the withdrawal of the bill which they fear "will greatly strain the pluralistic fabric of the country". The ruling Bahartiya Janata Party (BJP) had enough seats in Lok Sabha, the lower house of parliament, to get the bill passed. But while they are a few seats short in Rajya Sabha, the upper house, a home minister accused of murder, kidnapping and extortion, and 'disappearing' witnesses would surely be able to convince a few members to see things his way. Even the US Commission for International Religious Freedom (USCIRF) has said that the bill is a "dangerous turn in wrong direction" and has sought American sanctions against Shah and other "principal leadership" if the bill passes into law. "CAB is a dangerous turn in the wrong direction [which] runs counter to India's rich history of secular pluralism and the Indian Constitution, which guarantees equality before the law regardless of faith," USCIRF said.

Unfortunately, it is now abundantly clear that India's government cares little for what the world thinks.

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Source: <https://tribune.com.pk/story/2115049/6-secular-india/>

Forty Years of Afghan War By Dr Moonis

Ahmar

Afghanistan is the only country in modern history which has been at war for almost half a century. When the Soviet Union (USSR) militarily intervened in Afghanistan on December 27, 1979, with around 100,000 forces, bloodshed, human casualties, injuries and displacement became a usual feature there. Forty years of war in Afghanistan not only destroyed the country but destabilised Pakistan.

The armed conflict in Afghanistan was unleashed in July 1973, when Sardar Mohammad Daud, a former prime minister, with the support of Moscow, deposed the Afghan King, Zahir Shah, abolished monarchy and declared himself president. His violent death in a military coup on April 27, 1978, launched by the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA) further polarised the country as the clergy turned against the PDPA regime calling for a jihad against an "infidel" government in Kabul. As Afghanistan plunged deeper into chaos and violence during the PDPA government, the first wave of refugees crossed the Durand Line and began to launch jihad from Pakistan.

The Soviet military's intervention in Afghanistan on December 27, 1979, was the outcome of Moscow's attempt to prevent losing control of Afghanistan. From December 1979 till February 1989, the Soviet-Afghan War between the Soviet forces and Pakistan-US-backed mujahideen groups displaced millions of Afghans and caused large-scale casualties. The withdrawal of Soviet forces from Afghanistan arranged through the Geneva Accords of April 14, 1988, unleashed another phase of war between the pro-Soviet regime in Kabul and the mujahideen groups who failed to establish their own government, till the time the USSR disintegrated and Dr Najibullah's pro-Moscow regime in Kabul was toppled in April 1992.

Afghanistan remained under large-scale violence and war till the Taliban dislodged warring mujahideen groups by occupying Kabul in September 1996. Yet, peace remained fragile in Afghanistan as war between the Taliban regime and the Northern Alliance broke out which ultimately led to the Taliban's ouster after 9/11, in early October 2001. The ongoing US-led war and occupation in Afghanistan is the longest in American history. With the world commemorating 40

years of Soviet military intervention in Afghanistan it's time to analyse how the sustained level of war and violence destroyed at least two Afghan generations and left the country grappling with periodic outbreaks of violence and acts of terrorism.

There are four factors which should be examined while analysing 40 years of war in Afghanistan. First, the nature of the Afghan state which is still tribal, ultra conservative and influenced by warlordism. Factually, it is 200 years older than Pakistan as the Afghan kingdom was established in 1747 by Ahmad Shah Durrani but unfortunately it has not been able to emerge as a nation-state. As rightly stated by Amin Saikal in his book, *Modern Afghanistan: A History of Struggle and Survival*, that "rare is the country that has sustained as many blows and such hard blows, as has Afghanistan since its foundation as a distinct political unit in 1747. It is the only country that has experienced military occupation and intervention by Great Britain (twice in the nineteenth century), the Soviet Union (in the 1980s) and the United States of America (since late 2001)".

Monarchy, which was termed a buffer between antagonist forces, was abolished in July 1973, and since then Afghanistan is in turmoil. The weakening of the Afghan state and its organs created a vacuum which warlords, the Taliban and various non-state actors (NSA) tried to fill.

Second, more than the foreign military presence, the fragmentation of Afghanistan along ethnic lines is a major cause of violence and war in that country. The lack of ownership of Afghanistan by different stakeholders ranging from political parties, to the Taliban, other NSA and warlords also hinders the peace process. Unless the Afghans reclaim their land and are united in rebuilding their country, the very notion of peace and stability in Afghanistan will be a non-starter. For that the Taliban must renounce violence, agree to join the political process and contest elections as a political party so that one can expect them to be law-abiding citizens instead of trying to seize power by force. Democracy, tolerance and political pluralism in Afghanistan require a cultural transformation of the society, from tribal and highly conservative to modern and enlightened. It is an uphill task but without ensuring political awareness, moderation and tolerance, Afghanistan will not be able to change for the better.

Third, the Afghan people's social and human development is imperative for a stable and peaceful society. Since the removal of the Taliban regime by US-backed forces and the induction of Hamid Karzai as the Afghan president, billions of dollars flowed in for reconstruction but unfortunately, positive socio-economic changes failed to take place. Corruption, nepotism and the misuse of authority by those wielding power along with foreign forces deepened the plight of the Afghans.

Had financial and human resources been properly used, Afghanistan would have become stable and peaceful with poverty and social backwardness would have eradicated to a large extent. Afghanistan's economic dependence on the world can be verified from the fact that around 80% of the annual budget is funded from foreign, primarily Western sources, making the country a leaking bucket as the incoming aid evaporates either through corruption, misuse of resources or inefficiency.

Finally, Afghanistan can never stand on its own feet unless local stakeholders enter a serious peace dialogue. Strong institutions and work ethics will go a long way in stabilising Afghanistan which will undoubtedly be beneficial for peace and stability in Central, South and West Asia. The Afghan people are endlessly suffering and two generations have been destroyed in armed conflict.

The hope for peace in Afghanistan in the last 40 years has been a victim of political vendetta by Afghan leaders and the failure of diplomacy at the international level to engage the Taliban, the Afghan government and the US. In its essence, more harm has been caused to Afghanistan by its leaders than by foreign powers. If the country was attacked and occupied by the USSR and the US it was because of its internal dynamics which provided an opportunity to the two superpowers to invade.

Furthermore, no lessons were learned by the Afghans from these four decades of violence, wars and displacement as their past has been bitter, present crises-ridden and future uncertain. The US must also be held responsible for ruining Afghan lives because it failed to learn from the Soviet occupation and withdrawal, and engaged itself in war. With around 3,000 American soldiers killed and hundreds injured along with one trillion dollars spent, Washington lacks the capability to understand the region's history. None of the wars in Afghanistan

from 1979 till date ended in a victory for any party and only augmented the misery of its people. One can only hope Afghanistan is in a better shape in 2020.

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Source: <https://tribune.com.pk/story/2126021/6-forty-years-afghan-war-opinion/>

Is The World Warm Welcoming to Climate Change? By Yasir Zia

In the environment of modernisation, every person wants to breathe but what is the cost of this wish?

To find the answer to this crucial and time-sensitive question, we have to understand the catlike changes in our thinking, which ultimately lead to changes in our surroundings via our actions. If I ask a question, what will you love to have in the near future; its definite answer would be a wide range: well-furnished house of concrete, an office at the top floor of a high-rise building, where you can enjoy the view of the whole concrete city from the window, a car or a private jet to travel and access to multi-star hotels. But hardly does one think about a healthy body, fresh air, clean water, natural food and a small house in the woods. This is all about the thinking style that humans have developed in the last hundreds of years. We set GDP as a benchmark of growth rather than living standards and human wellbeing. These growth goals have ultimately manipulated our standards of living.

History claims that man started disciplined agriculture after cutting unwanted trees and in the latter half of 18th-century, man started the transformation from agriculture to industrialisation at a large scale, known to be the first industrial revolution. As rocks and forests have their specific place, people started cutting rocks in the shape of bricks and shifting into the woods. Afterwards, this phenomenon was linked to capitalism. Forests started shrinking and housing colonies began expanding with an increasing population on the earth, which is the only place where life exists. To meet the objective of high-yield from farms' use of fertilisers, use of harmful chemicals in industries to make luxury items and fancy products, and for the modern travelling, man started burning almost everything like wood, fuel, coal and natural gas, etc., which could produce energy for more growth. On the other hand, a gigantic amount of carbon emission continued on an hourly basis.

Devastating climate change started from a change in the mindset and it can only be controlled by changing our mindset again

The story did not end here. Countries started a race of development. Developed countries made dangerous weapons—from sword to nuclear warhead—for the sake of security. Under-developed and developing countries are now following their footprints to achieve that shine and glow of modernisation. Countries started wars for their political gains to sustain their developed status on this innocent and unique planet using dangerous and deadly weapons. After a huge loss and destruction of this planet, it now seems to have become difficult to continue breathing, producing food, and sustaining life. But it is not too late to rethink about our values, control our unnecessary wishes and greed.

The whole matter had started from a way of thinking and it can be controlled by aligning our thinking again. The world needs to revert towards simple lifestyle, peace, cleaning our air with new technologies, promoting nature-friendly energy production methods and producing nonorganic yet healthy food. The developed world needs to create a pool of the environmental protection fund for the developing and underdeveloped countries.

Because almost all developing countries are victims of climate change, especially the Asians, they cannot make the finance required to control this devastating climate change. The world needs a collective struggle on an emergency basis to save nature for our future generations and all other creatures on this planet. If we did not correct our knowledge and avoid redefining the terms of growth and standards of living, we cannot fight with hunger, dramatically changing weather and vanishing quality food at our home planet. We need to start huge awareness campaigns and take effective actions to stop this dangerous change in the climate. If our actions remained the same, it would not be wrong to say, ‘The world is warm welcoming climate change.’

The writer is an economic analyst

Source: <https://dailytimes.com.pk/517458/is-the-world-warm-welcoming-to-climate-change/>

Foreign Policy To Play Key Role In 2020 US Election – OpEd By Andrew Hammond

Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov on Tuesday met with Donald Trump, while the House of Representatives moved closer to impeaching the US president. The impeachment process will shape US domestic politics in 2020, but it will also increasingly bring foreign policy into focus in the election year, given the Ukrainian dimension to the affair.

There are already growing signs that the Democratic presidential candidates, who have so far mainly focused on domestic policy in debates, are dialing up their foreign policy focus. Meanwhile, the president believes that his international policy is one of the strongest reasons for his re-election in 2020.

This combined emphasis on foreign policy will mean that the 2020 campaign will be especially eagerly watched not just in the US, but right across the globe. Part of the reason for the global interest is the massive international concern about the prospect of Trump getting re-elected. This was illustrated in data released last week by Pew Global, which showed that, in a significant number of countries, domestic populaces decreasingly see the US as the ally they can most depend on. Take the example of three key US allies in Asia-Pacific. In India, there was a 12 percentage points fall between 2014 (when Barack Obama was president) and 2019. Meanwhile, in the Philippines the drop-off was 19 percentage points, and in Indonesia it was 12.

Within the US itself, it is also likely that foreign policy will be a significant issue on the minds of the electorate. This is not just because of the controversies over Trump's Ukrainian policy, but also continuing wider concerns regarding his stance on vital international allies, not to mention his unorthodox policies toward states of longstanding US concern, including Russia.

In the last US presidential election year in 2016, the very high salience of international issues in the campaign was illustrated in a separate Pew survey that found 34 percent of the population believed foreign policy, especially tackling international terrorism, was then the biggest challenge facing the country. By contrast, "only" 23 percent mentioned economic problems. That data showing a

higher salience of foreign policy compared to economic issues was very unusual in the context of the past few decades. Indeed, it resembled the first 25 years of the Cold War, from 1948 to 1972, when international security issues dominated the concerns of US voters during campaigns.

While foreign policy may not prove to be quite as important for voters in 2020 as it was in 2016, there are a significant number of reasons why international affairs will be prominent. In part, this is because Trump has — unlike many presidents in the modern era — put a very significant amount of emphasis on foreign policy in the first three years of his presidency. International affairs have been a surprisingly big feature of Trump's time in office so far, from China to North Korea and Iran to Russia, not to mention multilateral trade, from the proposed US-Mexico-Canada agreement to pulling out of the Trans-Pacific Partnership deal. This pattern looks set to continue in 2020.

The US is, for instance, hosting next year's G7, which will occupy a significant amount of White House attention. In placing so much emphasis on foreign policy, Trump has replicated a pattern of most recent second-term presidents, who have tended to increasingly look overseas after re-election. This has often been done for reasons such as the search for a legacy, and the "lame duck" factor, which sees power drain from presidents as they approach the end of their second term, as they cannot serve more than eight years.

There are at least three areas where Trump is seeking significant achievements in the coming months: Iran, North Korea and China. Take the example of North Korea, where it remains an open question whether sustained moves toward the "denuclearization" of the Korean Peninsula will ultimately prove anything more than a mirage. Trump is likely to continue his Korea gambit with election year on the horizon. This, along with his desire to cement a place in history, means the potential prize of permanently de-escalating tensions in the world's last Cold War frontier is likely to remain appealing to him.

At the heart of the apparent logjam between Washington and Pyongyang right now is not just the vagueness of the commitments agreed in Singapore. There also appears to be a fundamental difference between Pyongyang and Washington over what next steps are needed to build confidence.

It was always very likely that Kim Jong Un would be wary about making big concrete commitments, and would want to win economic and political concessions from Trump before any reduction in nuclear capabilities, let alone committing to “full denuclearization.” The next few weeks could be key, with Pyongyang putting an end-of-year deadline on significant progress being made, or it is threatening “a different path to the one promised” at Singapore.

This underlines why 2020 could be a significant year for US foreign policy. Trump could yet enter election year with a foreign policy tailwind behind his campaign, or continue to be flummoxed by challenges that have long bedeviled him, with the US populace and the world at large watching.

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Source: <https://www.eurasiareview.com/13122019-foreign-policy-to-play-key-role-in-2020-us-election-oped/>

The ‘Brexit Election’: A View From Europe

– Analysis By Dr. Frederick Kliem

With British elections looming, the question is who is likely to win, and what does it mean for Brexit. Can there be a quick and orderly separation?

In 2016 the United Kingdom (UK) electorate voted narrowly to leave the European Union (EU) in a referendum. Three years on, the UK has still not found a way out of the self-inflicted political disarray, indicative of a deep national division and the thorough misjudgement as to what it would take to disentangle the nation from the EU.

The Brexit process has been an all-consuming affair for Britain and the sooner it ends the better. Three years on, the process now sees the second general election; two prime ministers taking their leave; the two main parties divided into two camps, Leave and Remain; and so is the country itself.

Is It All About Brexit?

Boris Johnson’s controversial persona brought new dynamics to the wedged situation, but the new prime minister, thus far, seems to be having problems delivering Brexit. The House of Commons now gave the PM what he ultimately wanted: a general election on 12 December 2019 (GE19), which is a second Brexit referendum in all but name.

Granted, there are plenty of other topics up for debate. Opposition leader Jeremy Corbyn tries very hard to make this election about anything but Brexit. The Labour manifesto’s Brexit section is comparatively short and located towards the end of that document. Instead, Labour prioritises social issues and a socialist agenda: more funding for the National Health Service and minimum wage increases.

Labour proposes substantial investments in education, health, housing and environmental protection, which Tories claim to be unrealistic, and nationalising those private companies that provide public goods.

The recent London stabbing will also push internal security up on the agenda. With law and order being the Conservatives' bread-and-the-butter issue, it should politically benefit the Tories.

As expected, Johnson was quick to politicise the tragedy. He blamed the perpetrator's early release on "leftie" Labour legislation and promised a tougher attitude. Corbyn instead warned against reflexive action and generalisations, which might sit well with left-wing voters, but will look weak to others and further alienate a broader centrist voter base.

Quasi-Brexit Referendum

There can be little doubt that GE19 is a quasi-Brexit referendum. The public sees Brexit as by far the most important issue facing the country. Accordingly, Brexit dominates the political discourse and GE19 was called precisely for that reason, for PM Johnson to get a clear majority in order to "get Brexit done".

Of course, Brexit played a major role in the 2017 election, too. However, unlike then, this time there are very clear choices for those who want to outright leave, remain, or call a second referendum.

Labour is the only party that remains ambiguous about their own Brexit position. They propose to negotiate a new, softer Brexit deal with the EU, which would then be put to a legally-binding referendum asking to leave on that deal or remain.

By casting responsibility back to the people, Labour tries the balancing act of appealing to both Leavers and Remainers. This reflects internal party divisions and a leader who used to be a left-wing Eurosceptic and has recently refused to be explicit about his personal opinion. Such ambiguity does usually not go down well with voters.

While Corbyn has an interest in making GE19 about everything but Brexit, the Conservatives promise unequivocally to leave the EU as soon as possible. Brexit may have also divided the Tories, but under Johnson, it has become mostly a Leave party. Their manifesto is clear: titled 'Get Brexit Done', it promises to leave the EU in January.

Similarly explicit are the Liberal Democrats, who vow to cancel Brexit altogether with an outright majority or, more likely, support a second referendum from a minority position. The Brexit Party and the United Kingdom Independence Party (UKIP) want Britain to leave the EU immediately without a deal.

In sum, voters have as clear a choice as they could possibly have on Brexit.

A Predictable Election?

Although the Tories poll an outright majority, the gap has narrowed and the intricacies of the British “first-past-the-post” electoral system mean that popular votes do not directly translate into seats. In 2017, the Conservatives actually increased their popular vote, but lost their parliamentary majority.

Voters prefer Johnson to Corbyn, both as future PM and in terms of personal attributes. Johnson is widely seen as decisive and strong, while Corbyn is supposedly incompetent. There is also a clear upward trend in Conservative support since Johnson became PM.

And yet, polling has gained a bad reputation lately, and the electoral system makes a difference.

First-past-the-post advantages larger parties in case of clear cleavages, such as the traditional left vs. right. Brexit, however, has diluted clear lines, with Labour especially trying to appeal to Leavers and Remainers alike. Smaller parties that take an explicit stance on Brexit could win individual seats and prevent an outright majority for either large party.

A further problem is tactical voting. The Brexit Party is not contesting certain seats in order to prevent splits in the Leave vote. And Remainers who may support LibDem out of conviction may vote Labour instead in order to deny a Conservative win in particular seats.

Nonetheless, currently, the most straightforward and likely result is a Tory majority.

The View From Europe

From a European perspective, it is very unfortunate that the British people have voted to leave the EU. No matter how you spin it, Brexit is a textbook lose-lose situation. Although doomsayers' expectations of a "crashing" British economy are stark exaggerations, Brexit will weaken both the UK and the EU, and no one will be better off afterwards.

As much as it may pain some Europeans, an outright Conservative majority is in the best EU interest. Those who hope for a Johnson defeat should be careful what they wish for.

Everything but an outright Tory majority would prolong the Brexit moratorium and possibly trigger a second referendum with an uncertain outcome. This would continue the unfortunate malaise for years to come and do nothing to increase confidence in either democracy itself or the UK and EU markets. So leave with Johnson's deal, but leave.

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Source: <https://www.eurasiareview.com/11122019-the-brexit-election-a-view-from-europe-analysis/>

Implications of Indian Citizen Amendment Bill-2019 By Dr Muhammad Khan

INDIAN Parliament has finally approved the Citizen Amendment Bill-2019. It will take the shape of an Act after being signed by the President of India in the next few days and will be implemented thereafter. As per this bill, Indian citizenship will be non-Muslim illegal immigrants from Afghanistan, Bangladesh and Pakistan. This is the 4th Agenda Indian BJP led Government is implementing since it has re-assumed the power in May 2019. The 1st agenda, Indian Government implemented was undoing the Special Status of the India-occupied Jammu and Kashmir and annexing it with Indian Union as union Territory against the international law and UN resolutions. It was aimed to deny Kashmiris their basic right of self-determination. It is worth mentioning that Kashmir is a Muslim majority state and Kashmiris never wanted to be part of India. The 2nd Agenda, the Indian Government has implemented is the National Register of Citizens (NRC) in Assam state. This Act of India left 1.9 million residents, a majority of whom were Muslims without citizenship. The 3rd Act of India was the prejudiced decision of Indian Supreme Court in November 2019 about the Babri Masjid. The Supreme Court of India gave a verdict for the construction of Hindu temple on the site of historical Babri Mosque, constructed in 16th century mosque and demolished by RSS in 1992. It was a decision against Muslims and in favour of the Hindus. The 4th Agenda, implemented by India is the Citizenship (Amendment) Bill-2019.

This bill indeed, aims at “granting citizenship to non-Muslim illegal migrants from neighbouring countries and driving out Muslim “ghuspetis (intruders). The ultimate intent is to implement a nationwide-National Register of Citizens.” Once passed, it will surely protect non-Muslims and harass Muslim citizens. The process is already being implemented since BJP Government came into power in 2014. Indeed, today’s India has been converted into a Hindu State, contrary to the so-called Secular State mantra, the successive rulers of this South Asian giant have been projecting since last seven decades. The idea of converting India into a Hindu state is not only the idea of Modi and his team, led by Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) and other Hindu extremist organizations, but indeed, in the guise of secularism, Hindutva was the agenda of founding fathers of India. The Hindutva Movement, started in 1923 is indeed, “fascist in the

classical sense”. It is all about Hindu nationalism, rather the Indian nationalism; a concept of Hindu homogenised society with specific Hindu culture, an extreme form of ‘ethnic absolutism’. The prominent Indian leader, Mr Rajeshwar Singh has clearly announced that by December 2021, we “will finish Christianity and Islam” from India, since this state is for Hindus only. This movement started towards beginning of 21st Century and later on December 18, 2014, Rajeshwar Singh, declared on national television news channels that his organization had set a 2021 deadline to cleanse India of “alien Islam and Christianity”.

Rajeshwar Singh is being backed by BJP and all other Hindu religious organizations and even proponents of secularism did not stop him from doing all this. The BJP has otherwise devised a strategy of ‘Ghar Wapsi’ programme, aims at, conversion (reconversion) of all Muslims and Christians in to Hinduism. This activity is facilitated by Vishva Hindu Parishad and Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh, making use of all means which include use of brutal force like killing and other means of frightening. In fact, India is truly following the philosophy of its classical realist forefather, Chanakya (Kautilya). It is worth mentioning that Kautilya was the ideal of first Indian Prime Minister, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, who used to call him as Indian Machiavelli’. Nehru used to study his famous book; Arthashastra, which deals with power politics; as a dedicated routine. Nehru equated Arthashastra with ‘The Prince’ of Machiavelli, rather found the former more comprehensive. Today, the Indian hegemonic design in South Asia and surroundings is part of the same strategy. Within India, the Hindutva has become a major attraction for converting non-Hindus into Hinduism.

The prestigious Washington Post has truly analysed that Indian decision of sudden takeover; indeed, a reoccupation of the State of Jammu and Kashmir, aimed at ‘fulfilment of a long ideological yearning of Indian leaders to make a predominantly occupied Muslim population surrender to Hindu population and Hindu rule. “Kashmir is both a warning and a template for even the integral Indian State” where there are insurgencies for separation from Indian Union. They can be brought under Delhi’s thumb in the name of “unity.” This Indian fascism is also a warning for the regional states and the world as a whole, as it was done by Nazis under Adolf Hitler. Unfortunately, Prime Minister Modi is behaving as Hitler and his BJP (RSS) as Nazi Party of Hitler. Upon passage of this bill, the US Commission on International Religion Freedom (USCIRF) has asked for the sanctions against Indian Home Minister Amit Shah and his team members. The

bill and its passage by Indian Parliament is even being condemned with India, Rahul Gandhi, called the bill an attack on the Indian Constitution. He said, “Anyone who supports it is attacking and attempting to destroy the foundation of our nation.” The prominent Indian political leader Mr Shashi Tharoor said “The passage of this bill by Indian Parliament is against the basic principle of Indian Constitution.” He also confessed that this bill is indeed, “a victory of Muhammad Ali Jinnah’s thoughts over Mahatma Gandhi.” Let’s salute the father of the nation, Quaid-i-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah and Allama Dr Muhammad Iqbal who gave us the State of Pakistan. The international community, however, must be worried of what is happening in India, a country of 1.3 billion people.

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Source: <https://pakobserver.net/implications-of-indian-citizen-amendment-bill-2019/>

The Age of Great-Power Competition By **Elbridge A. Colby and A. Wess Mitchell**

U.S. foreign policy is, by most accounts, in disarray. Headlines—including in these pages—proclaim the death of global American leadership. Famous columnists send regular dispatches from the frontlines of U.S. President Donald Trump’s supposed campaign against the postwar liberal order. The damage to Washington’s standing in the world, we are told, is irreparable.

But step back from the day-to-day commotion, and a different picture emerges. In truth, the United States is gearing up for a new era—one marked not by unchallenged U.S. dominance but by a rising China and a vindictive Russia seeking to undermine U.S. leadership and refashion global politics in their favor.

This shift in Washington’s focus has been some time coming. Elements of it emerged, mostly in a reactive form, under President Barack Obama. The Trump administration has gone one important step further, recognizing that great-power competition warrants rebuilding U.S. foreign policy from the ground up, and it has based its formal strategy documents on that recognition. When future historians look back at the actions of the United States in the early twenty-first century, by far the most consequential story will be the way Washington refocused its attention on great-power competition. Beneath today’s often ephemeral headlines, it is this shift, and the reordering of U.S. military, economic, and diplomatic behavior that it entails, that will stand out—and likely drive U.S. foreign policy under presidents from either party for a long time to come.

THE COSTS OF INACTION

For years, American policymakers and analysts have argued about what China’s rise and Russia’s resurgence mean for U.S. interests. Since their introduction in the most recent National Security and National Defense Strategies, the words “great-power competition” have circulated widely enough to become a faddish catch phrase. But by now, the nature of the challenge, as an empirical fact, should be clear: the United States today faces rivals stronger and far more ambitious than at any time in recent history. China—seeking hegemony in the Indo-Pacific region first and global preeminence thereafter—is likely to become the most powerful rival that the United States has ever faced in its history. Russia

may fall short of being a peer competitor but has proved capable of projecting power in ways few anticipated at the close of the Cold War. Today, it is intent on resurrecting its ascendancy in parts of eastern Europe that once fell within its sphere of influence and hopes to speed up the end of Western preeminence in the world at large. Its disruptive potential lies in part in its ability, through self-interested moves, to bring about systemic crises that will benefit Chinese power in the long term.

Until recently, Washington was not giving much thought to how it could meet these challenges. Such was the extent of the United States' economic and military dominance that, for a whole generation following the collapse of the Soviet Union, neither Democratic nor Republican administrations took seriously the possibility of facing another peer competitor. Great-power rivalries were, in those heady days, a thing of the past; the very language of geopolitics was an anachronism. Other major powers were instead partners in waiting in the fight to tackle problems of the "global commons," from nuclear proliferation to terrorism to climate change.

China's and Russia's actions slowly gave the lie to this sanguine outlook. As China became pivotal to global commerce, it did not so much change its discriminatory economic practices—forced technology transfers, mandatory joint ventures, and outright intellectual property theft—as cement them. It complemented this with a military buildup of historic scale, aimed specifically at dominating Asia and, in the long run, at projecting power throughout the world, and with a massive effort to expand its influence through the Belt and Road Initiative and related projects. Russia, meanwhile, rebuilt its military, invaded Georgia, annexed Crimea, initiated a festering insurgency in eastern Ukraine, and began a systematic campaign to resurrect its military, economic, and diplomatic influence in Africa, Latin America, and the Middle East.

And yet most people in Washington long refused to acknowledge the new reality. Instead, American leaders continued to herald an "era of engagement" with Moscow and talked up Beijing's potential as a "responsible stakeholder" in the international system. The former found expression in the "reset" with Russia in 2009, just months after Moscow's invasion of Georgia, and the latter took the form of repeated efforts to deepen relations with Beijing and even an aspiration among some to establish a U.S.-Chinese "G-2" to lead the international

community. But China's brazen militarization of islets in the South China Sea and its increasing assertiveness beyond eventually forced Washington to reevaluate its assumptions about Beijing, and Russia's seizure of Crimea in 2014 put to rest what was left of the so-called reset. By the end of the Obama administration, it was clear that the United States' course was seriously off.

The resulting policy changes were no exercise in American strategic foresight; they were reactive, ex post facto adjustments. Considerable damage had already been done. Prizing the appearance of stability over the pursuit of definable national interests, the United States had for years ignored China's flagrant theft of U.S. intellectual property—not to mention government secrets—and Beijing's slow-motion takeover attempt in the South China Sea. In the hopes of recruiting Russia as a partner in upholding an international status quo that Russian President Vladimir Putin manifestly disdained, Washington had courted and unwittingly emboldened the Kremlin on its path of territorial revision while unnerving frontline NATO allies in eastern Europe. The cost for the United States was steep, with allies in East Asia and Europe beginning to doubt that Washington was willing to stand up for itself, let alone for them.

COURSE CORRECTIONS

It was time to call a spade a spade. The Trump administration, more realistic and blunter than its predecessors, did just that. "Trump," as Henry Kissinger pointed out in the *Financial Times* in 2018, "may be one of those figures in history who appears from time to time to mark the end of an era and to force it to give up its old pretenses." Dispensing with the paradigm of unipolarity, the new government created an opening to articulate a new grand strategy. In the 2017 National Security Strategy, the 2018 National Defense Strategy, and their ancillary regional strategies for the Indo-Pacific and European theaters, the United States made clear that it now saw relations with China and Russia as competitive and that it would focus on maintaining an edge over these rivals. As both then Secretary of Defense James Mattis and then National Security Adviser H. R. McMaster made clear, great-power competition would now be the primary focus of U.S. national security.

The idea behind this shift is not to be blindly confrontational but to preserve what has been the central objective of U.S. foreign policy since the end of World War II: the freedom of states, particularly U.S. allies, to chart their own courses

without interference from a domineering regional hegemon. As articulated in the Trump administration's strategy statements, that vision is deliberately ecumenical: it applies both to the Asian nations that find themselves under growing economic and military pressure from Beijing and to the federating heart of the European continent and the more loosely affiliated states on its fringes. But faced with a rising and enormously powerful China and an opportunistically vengeful Russia, the United States will realize this vision of a free and open world only if it ensures its own strength and economic vitality, maintains an edge in regional balances of power, and communicates its interests and redlines clearly.

The United States must prepare for competition against large, capable, and determined rivals.

In many respects, the U.S. Department of Defense is the furthest along in putting that agenda into practice. In its National Defense Strategy, in its 2019 Indo-Pacific Strategy Report, and through its public statements, the U.S. military has made clear that its overriding concern today is how to effectively defend the likes of Taiwan and the Baltic states against a potential Chinese or Russian attack, especially one based on a *fait accompli* strategy, which involves seizing vulnerable territory, digging in, and making any counterattack too costly to envisage. In anticipation of such attacks, the Pentagon is shifting from the playbook it has used ever since Operation Desert Storm three decades ago—slowly and methodically surging forces to a threatened area and only counterattacking after total U.S. dominance is assured—to a force that can fend off Chinese and Russian attacks from the very beginning of hostilities, even if it never attains the kind of dominance the United States was once able to gain in such places as Serbia and Iraq. The Pentagon's budget requests have slowly begun to shift accordingly. Short-range fighter jets and bulky amphibious vessels, both vulnerable to enemy attacks, are making way for stealthier long-range bombers and submarines, unmanned ships and aircraft, long-range ground-based missiles and artillery, and large stocks of precise, penetrating munitions. The military is also experimenting with how to use this new hardware—what the new force should look like, how it should operate, and where.

The shift in the economic arena has been just as dramatic. Until a few years ago, U.S. officials regularly argued that the United States could not afford turbulence in the U.S.-Chinese economic relationship. Stability with Beijing, it seemed, was too valuable to jeopardize by demanding that U.S. companies be treated fairly.

Today, the Trump administration—acting with considerable bipartisan support—is levying tariffs on Chinese imports to induce Beijing to cease its market-distorting trade practices or, failing that, to at least have the prices of those imports reflect the costs of those unfair practices for U.S. companies and workers. Some have rightly pointed out that these penalties are causing the United States' middle and working classes pain. But so, too, have China's unfair trade practices, and further inaction would have only made things worse. U.S. economic pressure, by contrast, has helped put urgently needed trade policy adjustments on the agenda.

A similar process has played out in Europe. The United States long hesitated to confront the European Union about its one-sided tariff and nontariff barriers against U.S. products, even as trade deficits mounted. Unwilling to accept that status quo, the Trump administration has tried to achieve by shock therapy what earlier successive administrations failed to obtain with finesse and gradualism. But the collateral damage of this aggressive approach has been significant, with potential spillover effects for the transatlantic relationship that risk undermining the common push against China.

In parallel, the United States is sharpening the powerful commercial tools at its disposal. The Trump administration and Congress have overhauled the Overseas Private Investment Corporation to provide alternatives to Chinese financing among the vulnerable states of both Asia and Europe. The Better Utilization of Investments Leading to Development, or BUILD, Act, which passed in October 2018, offers countries financing alternatives to the golden handcuffs of Beijing's Belt and Road Initiative. More still may follow. The bipartisan EQUITABLE Act, introduced by leading members of Congress, would require Chinese companies to follow the same disclosure rules as U.S. firms do to be listed on U.S. stock exchanges. Powerful legislators of both parties have said they will revoke Hong Kong's economic and trading privileges in the United States if Beijing violates its commitment to the region's autonomy. And U.S. officials are, at long last, actively warning other countries about Chinese telecommunications investments that could offer Beijing access to, and leverage over, their sensitive technologies.

Priorities have changed in the diplomatic arena, too. After decades of a disproportionate focus on the Middle East, the 2017 National Security Strategy

and the 2018 National Defense Strategy came as long-overdue correctives. Asia and Europe are where the greatest threats to U.S. power today lie, the documents argue, and the United States' central objective should be to keep large states in both regions from gaining so much influence as to shift the local balance of power in their favor. This is a welcome departure from every National Security Strategy since the end of the Cold War, each of which downplayed major-power competition in some way or another.

In practice, two diplomatic initiatives stand out. The first is the Trump administration's effort to balance against powerful rivals with the help of larger and more capable coalitions. In Europe, this yielded \$34 billion in increased European defense spending in the past year alone, even from a reluctant Germany. In Asia, the United States has made clear that it will defend Philippine aircraft and vessels in the South China Sea, has increased its diplomatic and military support for Taiwan, and has deepened its political and military relations with India and Vietnam—all counterparts that share Washington's apprehension about Chinese aspirations to regional hegemony.

Second, the United States is leveraging its economic and political influence in regions that it neglected until recently, ramping up its engagement and aid in several places where China and Russia have been gaining ground. It has stepped up its diplomatic presence in central Europe, the western Balkans, and the eastern Mediterranean, where the vacuum left by an absent United States allowed China and Russia to exploit local political fissures and promote authoritarian politics. In several of the countries in these regions, the United States has increased its support for good governance and the fight against corruption, introduced initiatives to counter Russian propaganda, expanded youth and cultural exchanges, and warned allies and partners about the long-term risks of aligning with Beijing and Moscow. In Asia, Washington has upped its development capacities to compete with Beijing's by founding the International Development Finance Corporation and making new financing available through the BUILD Act. The United States is also promoting good governance and anticorruption efforts in the region, particularly through the Indo-Pacific Transparency Initiative, and is publicly challenging China's treatment of its Tibetan and Uighur minorities. It is also paying more attention to Pacific states such as Micronesia, Papua New Guinea, and the Solomon Islands, which are particularly susceptible to Chinese pressure.

None of this is to diminish the importance of the day-to-day turmoil in Washington or to defend the administration's every policy. Engaging in a war with Iran, sustaining a large military presence in Afghanistan, or intervening in Venezuela, as some in the administration want to do, is antithetical to success in a world of great-power competition. And if it pushes its allies too far, Washington will risk undermining the single greatest comparative advantage it has over its rivals. Nor is the United States on course yet to compete successfully—on the contrary, the progress thus far has been uneven and halting. Nonetheless, the country now has a template for reorienting its foreign policy that enjoys bipartisan support and is likely to endure, at least in its fundamental tenets, in future administrations.

WHAT MATTERS NOW

This is where things now stand for Washington. The United States has signaled its willingness and ability to adopt a more competitive approach toward its rivals, militarily, economically, and diplomatically. At home, that course correction has enjoyed far more bipartisan support than is often appreciated; the administration's tough approach to China, in particular, has the backing of most members of Congress, Democratic and Republican. Likewise, after years of vacillation, there is finally a bipartisan consensus that the threat from the Kremlin is serious and must be countered. Abroad, Washington's new message has led to important adjustments. European allies have increased their defense outlays and maintained a united front against Russia with sanctions; U.S. defense relations with India, Japan, and Poland have warmed considerably; and multinational companies are diversifying their supply chains away from China—to name just a few examples.

Yet this is only the beginning of what is likely to be a decades-long effort. China shows no sign of giving up its pursuit of ascendancy in Asia. Moscow looks no more likely to mend ties with the West; if anything, it is deepening its partnership with Beijing. The United States, then, must prepare for a genera

In Europe, the United States already possesses a highly serviceable framework, NATO, which it needs to preserve and update to better match the scale of the challenge from China and Russia. Since the Russian land grab in Ukraine, the alliance has modified its command structures and begun to adapt its force posture, which remains trapped in the amber of 1989. But more change is

needed to deter future attempts by Russia to create faits accomplis along its border. In particular, the United States needs forces that can deploy quickly enough to contest any Russian land grab from the outset. And given how many U.S. resources will be tied down in Asia, European NATO allies will need to augment their militaries' ability to integrate with U.S. forces to blunt a Russian assault.

When it comes to galvanizing European resistance against predatory Chinese trade practices and ill-advised infrastructure partnerships, Washington's efforts have been less successful, marred in part by trade differences with Europe. Yet it is hard to overstate how indispensable transatlantic unity on this front is, and both sides would do well to resolve their squabbles. European policymakers should recognize the long-term geopolitical consequences of their asymmetric tariff and nontariff barriers and stop applying the EU's regulatory regimes in ways that target large U.S. firms while letting state-owned Chinese and Russian companies off the hook. Failure to do so will undermine the prospects of a Europe resilient to Chinese and Russian coercion. American officials, for their part, should understand that fighting to make trade with democratic allies more mutually beneficial is not as urgent a task as waging a trade war with China. The United States cannot relitigate every inequitable trade relationship at once, and presenting a unified front against China should remain Washington's overriding concern. The same holds true for U.S. economic relations with India and Japan.

The overarching purpose of this strategy is neither to decouple the U.S. and Chinese economies entirely nor to force U.S. allies and partners to pick a side (although building a low-barrier Western trade area encompassing both Asian and European allies should be a long-term U.S. objective). Instead, it is to better protect intellectual property and sensitive technologies and, by extension, to reduce China's economic leverage over the United States and other places. Canada, Japan, the Philippines, South Korea, Taiwan, states in central and southeastern Europe, and others have already felt the sting of Chinese economic coercion. Extensive integration with the Chinese economy is necessary for all states, but they must limit Beijing's ability to turn that exposure into coercive leverage—not as a favor to Washington but for the sake of their own sovereignty.

In addition, Washington should try to create some distance between Beijing and Moscow. It has long been a truism of American statecraft that it is unwise to allow

the two primary Eurasian states to partner together, yet that may be precisely what is happening today, as Russia, deeply alienated from the West, appears to be tilting toward China even at the cost of its autonomy. Moscow recently welcomed the Chinese telecommunications giant Huawei into Russia, for instance, and the two countries have deepened their engagement on energy and military matters. For now, attempts to lure Russia away from China are unlikely to succeed, so the United States will have to settle for deterrence and wait for a more propitious opening. The United States should strengthen NATO's deterrent against Russia in the Baltics and central Europe while using sanctions to punish Russian aggressive actions in places such as Syria and Ukraine. To the extent that a future interests-based détente with Russia is possible, it will be because Moscow concludes that resurrecting its Soviet-era influence by force is too costly to be worthwhile.

Even with allied help, however, the United States will not be able to achieve the kind of military dominance over China and Russia that it once had over its opponents in the unipolar era. Trying to do so would be wasteful and counterproductive. What Washington truly needs is the capacity to resist successful assaults on its allies and partners. This means providing enough defense to keep these confederates onboard. More important still, it means ensuring they cannot be occupied, especially in a *fait accompli*, or strangled by a blockade or coercion—a strategy that might be termed “denial defense.” Denying China and Russia the ability to take and hold the territory of Taiwan or one of the Baltic states will be hard, but it is feasible in today's world of precision munitions and enormously capable intelligence, targeting, and data-processing capabilities. Doing this will require forces that can weather an initial attack and help deny China the ability to seize Taiwan or Russia the ability to hold Baltic territory.

Getting there means that other commitments will have to be put on the back burner or even sacrificed. In a unipolar world, Washington might have been able to be all things in all regions, like a colossus bestriding the world, but this is wholly untenable in an era of great-power competition. Instead, Washington will have to scale back its efforts in secondary and peripheral regions. Consider the U.S. footprint in the Middle East: instead of trying to stabilize the region and uphold “global norms” there, Washington should focus much more narrowly on finding cost-effective ways to fight transnational terrorism. Likewise, it cannot be the United States' goal to transform the governments of states such as Iran;

denying them hegemony in the Persian Gulf is enough and requires much less effort and fewer resources. Gradually reducing the U.S. military's exposure and engagement in Afghanistan, Iraq, and Syria—with the help of local proxies and a greater reliance on offshore forces—will free up further capabilities.

THE END OF COMPLACENCY

Trump will continue to break china on Twitter and elsewhere, delighting some and discomfiting or enraging others. And many will continue to be transfixed by the crisis du jour in the Middle East. But all the while, the United States is entering what is likely to be a protracted struggle over who will decide how the world works in the twenty-first century. The coming era will be less forgiving of hubris and unpreparedness than were the circumstances of the recent past. Recognition of that has prompted a long-overdue reassessment of U.S. military, economic, and diplomatic priorities, which future administrations will need to carry forward.

Doing so will require painful tradeoffs and sacrifices. It will mean relinquishing old dreams of unfettered military dominance and ill-suited weapons platforms and asking greater material contributions of U.S. allies. It will also mean sharpening the U.S. technological edge in strategically relevant sectors without undermining the American commitment to international free trade and focusing much more rigorously on Asia and Europe at the expense of other regions. Returning to the somnolent complacency of years past—when the United States assumed the best intentions of its rivals, maintained economic policies that often undercut its national security, and masked dangerous shortcomings among its allies in the name of superficial political unity—is not an option. Neither is withdrawing in the hopes of sitting out geopolitical competition altogether. As in the past, the United States can guarantee its own security and prosperity as a free society only if it ensures favorable balances of power where they matter most and systematically prepares its society, economy, and allies for a protracted competition against large, capable, and determined rivals that threaten that aim.

tional effort.

To thwart China's bid for ascendancy in Asia and beyond, the United States must maintain favorable regional balances of power with yet far more urgency. Building and sustaining the necessary coalitions in Asia and Europe should be at

the heart of its strategy. To be clear, this will require more than just polite requests and reassurances. Because the United States can hardly pretend to be able to balance both China and Russia by itself, it must ask more of its allies and new partners, with insistence and real pressure if need be. At the same time, if Washington generates so much political dissonance as to undermine alliance structures from within, it will put at risk its efforts to encourage greater material contributions from its allies.

Returning to the somnolent complacency of years past is not an option.

Nonetheless, the need for greater material support is urgent. Washington's post-Cold War alliance architecture still reflects arrangements formed during the unipolar era, when the United States needed little help to underwrite the security of its partners. With a few noble exceptions, such as Poland and South Korea, Washington's allies are lightly armed, if not completely disarmed, especially compared with China and Russia. Japan will play a central role in any successful defense posture vis-à-vis China, yet its defense spending is approximately the same today as it was in 1996, whereas China's expenditures have increased by an order of magnitude. Taiwan—a place more threatened by the People's Liberation Army than anywhere else—has hardly increased its defense spending in the last 20 years. In Europe, much of the Russian threat to eastern NATO members could be alleviated if Germany fielded a mere fraction of the 15 active and ready reserve divisions it boasted in 1988. Today, Berlin can barely summon a single one. Figuring out how to induce U.S. allies to do more in an era when the United States has a more than \$23 trillion national debt and can no longer do everything itself—and doing so without putting too much strain on these alliances—will be one of the major challenges of the years ahead.

Another question is what exact form the United States' coalitions should take, particularly in Asia. The United States need not replicate NATO in the region; the point is to form a coalition that checks China's aspirations to regional hegemony. Such a coalition could be a mixture of formal alliances (Australia, Japan, the Philippines, and South Korea come to mind), quasi alliances (Taiwan), and deepening partnerships that do not involve formal security guarantees (India and Vietnam). Washington's ties to New Delhi and Tokyo will anchor the coalition, but sustaining it in the face of a powerful China will require the United States to play an active leading role. Meanwhile, the smaller and more vulnerable states of Southeast Asia will likely be the focus of the strategic competition with China.

Source: <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/2019-12-10/age-great-power-competition>

Fifty Years of OIC By Arhama Siddiq

Following decades of deliberation by Muslim scholars and statesmen, the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) was founded by a charter in 1969. Now comprising 57 nations and spread over four continents, the 50-year-old organisation is the second largest international body after the UN, and is aimed at protecting Muslim interests worldwide. It is the only international body to take Islam as the binding element and brings together all Islamic states regardless of geographic and cultural characteristics.

In the half century of its existence, the organisation has connected with international apparatuses (including every specialised UN agency), governments, as well as civil society organisations (CSOs). The OIC's activities also include long-term development projects including health, education, and agriculture.

The OIC's promise in the field of conflict mediation in the Muslim world stems largely from its "cultural competence" and religious character. This proved an advantage in Somalia where assistance from an Islamic organisation was more acceptable to the al Shabab movement, allowing the OIC to open the way to other international donors. Iraq provides another success story where the OIC's intervention in the sectarian violence following the bombing of the two holy shrines in the city of Samarra in 2006, was notably successful in bringing about social peace.

Unfortunately till now, the OIC has been long on idiom but short on action. Since its inauguration, the OIC summits have produced more than 3,200 resolutions ranging from the boycott of Israel to raising the level of economic, cultural and political cooperation among member countries. However, very few substantive resolutions have ever been implemented. Critics have highlighted the mistrust among the member states, lack of cohesion and unity, antagonistic foreign policies influenced largely by the Western world and territorial disputes as some reasons for the OIC's lack of progress.

At a time when the Muslim world is divided and in need of dire support, the OIC should be standing as a beacon of hope for it, where Muslim countries can raise their concerns and have no fear of being derided and ridiculed. On the contrary,

the organisation is slowly heading towards becoming an open bashing ground within OIC member states. An example is the 14th OIC Summit in 2019, where under the pretext of regional security issues member states openly vilified Iran.

Pakistan continues to enjoy a respectful status within the organisation. It is the only member with nuclear status and has one of the largest standing armies in the world. Islamabad has always been vocal on all OIC forums. Since the Kashmir issue captures the popular imagination of Muslim leaders globally, Pakistan has used this dynamic to pursue the Kashmir cause at this rostrum. Its success can be seen in that one of the sharpest reactions to New Delhi's 2019 decision to revoke the special status of Jammu and Kashmir engendered from the OIC which reaffirmed the internationally recognised status of the Kashmir dispute.

The momentous changes that have swept across the Muslim world over the past decade alone demand that the OIC emerge as a torchbearer for defending the dignity and rights of Muslims. It is time that the governments of OIC member states realise their responsibilities towards each other and that they have many challenges in common. Needless to say that OIC's efforts must not be limited to member states alone, but need to follow the basic principle that every Muslim is equally important. Keeping in view the rising Islamophobia as well as the rise of extremist ideologies such as Hindutva, the OIC needs to play a more proactive role to protect the rights of Muslim minorities around the world. By deepening the security cooperation, reforming its processes through capacity building and other means, as well as revising its mediation approach, the OIC will become better able to contribute to the resolution of seemingly intractable conflicts, especially in places where the Muslim community is involved.

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Source: <https://tribune.com.pk/story/2120014/6-fifty-years-oic-opinion/>

Resumption of US-Taliban Talks and Challenges Ahead By Asif Durrani

The resumption of talks between the US and Taliban, after a hiatus of three months, is indicative of hectic efforts that had gone into putting the dialogue process back on track. Pakistan played behind-the-scene role in mending the fences between the Americans and Taliban. Last week the US envoy Zalmay Khalilzad and Taliban delegation met in Doha to pick up the threads from where the two sides were about to sign a deal but cancelled at the last moment by President Trump on September 7 presumably on the killing of an American soldier.

In any case, resumption of talks is a positive development. What the interlocutors have to focus now is the ceasefire and intra-Afghan dialogue along with the earlier understanding reached on US forces withdrawal and Taliban assurances not to let Afghan territory used by extremists and terrorists. However, during the past three months' hectic wrangling it became clear that the Taliban would have to clarify their position on ceasefire. Taliban's reluctance to commit to ceasefire on the pretext that without firm withdrawal schedule from the US it would be difficult for the militia to agree does not elicit a favourable response anywhere, even in Pakistan.

Secondly, Taliban's reluctance to participate in an intra-Afghan dialogue is causing discomfort not only amongst various Afghan factions but also important international players who may play an important role for the future economic stability of the country. It appears that Taliban are already behaving as a government in waiting and would only talk to other Afghan factions as junior partners. This does not augur well for the future stability of the country.

If the Taliban think that once an agreement is reached with the US things would fall in place in accordance with their wishes and plans then they are grossly misreading the situation for variety of reasons

Thirdly, the role of women in future dispensation has not been clearly defined by the Taliban despite two unofficial intra-Afghan conferences in Moscow and Doha. Mullah Baradar's assertion that the "women rights in Afghanistan would be

observed in accordance with the tenets of Islam” has not satisfied either the women participating in the conferences or international observers, including scholars from Islamic countries. The bigger issue is that if one goes by the Taliban interpretation of Islam then Bosnia, Turkey, Malaysia or Pakistan may not fall in the category of Islamic countries.

Added to the above complexities is the Washington Post’s disclosure last week about the falsehood that prevailed during the past 18 years of American presence in Afghanistan and the optical illusion thus created for each American president about the imminent victory in the war-ravaged land. In fact, Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction (SIGAR), a governmental watchdog, has been warning in its reports about the wasteful expenditure that has gone on without accruing desired results of bringing stability or economic development in Afghanistan. The US efforts to train and equip Afghan security forces also faltered due to lack of motivation amongst the Afghan soldiers and high rate of desertion; appeasement of warlords and lack of control over the drug business further contributed to instability in the country. Expecting drug-lords and warlords to sue for peace would mean turkey voting for the Christmas.

The question is what objectives are likely to be achieved with the ongoing dialogue process. It seems a forgone conclusion that Taliban will be replacing the US in the country, especially when 28 September elections have thrown more uncertainties than strengthening President Ashraf Ghani’s bargaining position, a fact acknowledged by Trump administrations officials. This means Taliban will be the deciding factor in the ensuing peace process while other Afghan factions will have to settle for the secondary position.

However, if the Taliban think that once an agreement is reached with the US things would fall in place in accordance with their wishes and plans then they are grossly misreading the situation for variety of reasons. First, different ethnic groups in the country would remain formidable force who, during the past two decades, have been part of the ruling dispensation and created a niche for themselves in the power corridors. They are much better off politically and materially than during Taliban’s rule and are well connected internationally. Moreover, intra-tribal disputes would also play a crucial role for the future stability of Afghanistan. How they these complexities in the Afghan ethnic and tribal

structure are accommodated in the future governance of the country would be a big challenge for the Taliban.

Second, Taliban will have to make clear their stance about the system of governance. It is not enough to say that the country would be run in accordance with the principles laid down by the Quran and Sunnah. Whether Taliban would opt for parliamentary democracy would be a major question and determine the future course of political direction for other ethnic and religious groups in the country. A one-party rule as has been the case during the Taliban rule as they did not subscribe to adult franchise; for them Taliban Shura, selected by the Amirul Momineen, is the legitimate body to rule the country according to Islamic injunctions.

Third, would the Taliban be ready to allow a residue of American forces to maintain its bases and monitor terrorist activities, including Al-Qaida and Daesh/ISIS? Related to the US presence is Taliban's agreement to retain the present Afghan security personnel in the armed forces and police or induct their own cadres or assimilate Taliban cadres into the Afghan armed forces. So far the US has been sustaining the Afghan security forces; almost 90% of Afghan security forces budget is paid by the US which is approximately 5-6 billion dollars per annum. A sustained financial and equipment support of Afghan armed forces would be necessary which could be contributed by the US and other NATO allies as well as GCC countries.

Fourth, the ongoing dialogue is vulnerable to spoilers' machination whether within Afghanistan or their external supporters. Certainly, drug-barons and warlords would not favour peace returning to Afghanistan. Similarly, fringe elements in Afghan politics would be looking for external spoilers. For India, acceptance of Taliban rule would mean cessation of anti-Pakistan activities through the Afghan soil, which India is likely to resist unless counseled by the US and other international stakeholders.

Despite myriad challenges, diplomatically, Taliban are better equipped now than two decades ago. They have working relationship with Iran, China, Russia, KSA, Qatar, UAE, and major European countries as well as Central Asian states. They have also assured Afghanistan's neighbours that their movement is not outward looking and have no truck with AL Quida or Daesh/ISIS. While reassuring,

Taliban's behaviour would be closely monitored by the international community. In this regard, China, Iran and Russia, can play a crucial role in further consolidating the Afghan peace through active engagement with the future dispensation in Afghanistan. Similarly, Taliban's attitude towards other religious and ethnic groups would largely determine the contours of Afghan polity and prospects of peace and stability in the country.

For Pakistan, the best course would be to follow "positive neutrality" towards Afghan groups which would mean engaging all Afghan factions without playing favourites. The underlying lesson for Pakistan is that a peaceful Afghanistan would always be a source of strength for Pakistan irrespective of the fact as to who rules that country.

The writer is a former ambassador

Source: <https://dailytimes.com.pk/522593/resumption-of-us-taliban-talks-and-challenges-ahead/>

Trump's Impeachment | Editorial

President Donald Trump of the United States of America (USA) has been voted out by the House of Representatives due to the obstruction of Congress and abuse of power over his dealings with Ukraine. This is the third time in history that a President has been impeached in the American Parliament. While the verdict is representative of how agitated the political system is due to the election of Trump, particularly the Democrats, the bill still has to be tested in the Senate where the Republicans hold a majority.

The Democrats will need a two-thirds majority to win this case. At this point, there are 53 Republicans, 45 Democrats, and two independents who caucus with the Democrats. If at least 20 republicans vote in favour of the impeachment along with the independents, only then will Trump leave the White House. The chances of Democrats winning this debate are very less because of the majority of Republicans in the Senate along with them making this an anti-Trump movement rather than accepting Trump's anti-America decisions. Once, Trump is able to avoid impeachment in the Senate, he will be able to run in the Presidential campaign once again.

According to the latest polls by the USA TODAY/Suffolk University, President Donald Trump, leads his top Democratic rivals in his bid for a second term. The American population is very much in favour of the policies being adopted by President Trump and the average voter is willing to vote him in again. Democrats now need a stronger narrative to counter the wide-spread influence of President Trump because the current statistics show a lasting disillusionment from the Democrats. So much so that voters are willing to overlook Trump's personal mistakes in the office as long as his domestic policies are benefitting the average American.

The articles of impeachment are now expected to be sent to the Senate, where senators will consider evidence, hear witnesses and vote to acquit or convict the president. The chief justice of the US Supreme Court presides over the trial. The democrats are planning to withhold the articles of impeachment. This will allow them to set the procedures for the trial. However, it is very unlikely that the Senate Republicans will favour the Democrats. The proceedings are expected to

take place on Thursday, and in case President Trump leaves, Vice President Mike Pence will take the command of the government.

Source: <https://nation.com.pk/20-Dec-2019/trump-s-impeachment>

The Clash of Capitalisms By Branko Milanovic

Capitalism rules the world. With only the most minor exceptions, the entire globe now organizes economic production the same way: labor is voluntary, capital is mostly in private hands, and production is coordinated in a decentralized way and motivated by profit.

There is no historical precedent for this triumph. In the past, capitalism—whether in Mesopotamia in the sixth century BC, the Roman Empire, Italian city-states in the Middle Ages, or the Low Countries in the early modern era—had to coexist with other ways of organizing production. These alternatives included hunting and gathering, small-scale farming by free peasants, serfdom, and slavery. Even as recently as 100 years ago, when the first form of globalized capitalism appeared with the advent of large-scale industrial production and global trade, many of these other modes of production still existed. Then, following the Russian Revolution in 1917, capitalism shared the world with communism, which reigned in countries that together contained about one-third of the human population. Now, however, capitalism is the sole remaining mode of production.

It's increasingly common to hear commentators in the West describe the current order as "late capitalism," as if the economic system were on the verge of disappearing. Others suggest that capitalism is facing a revived threat from socialism. But the ineluctable truth is that capitalism is here to stay and has no competitor. Societies around the world have embraced the competitive and acquisitive spirit hardwired into capitalism, without which incomes decline, poverty increases, and technological progress slows. Instead, the real battle is within capitalism, between two models that jostle against each other.

Often in human history, the triumph of one system or religion is soon followed by a schism between different variants of the same credo. After Christianity spread across the Mediterranean and the Middle East, it was riven by ferocious ideological disputes, which eventually produced the first big fissure in the religion, between the Eastern and Western churches. So, too, with Islam, which after its dizzying expansion swiftly divided into Shiite and Sunni branches. And communism, capitalism's twentieth-century rival, did not long remain a monolith,

splitting into Soviet and Maoist versions. In this respect, capitalism is no different: two models now hold sway, differing in their political, economic, and social aspects.

In the states of western Europe and North America and a number of other countries, such as India, Indonesia, and Japan, a liberal meritocratic form of capitalism dominates: a system that concentrates the vast majority of production in the private sector, ostensibly allows talent to rise, and tries to guarantee opportunity for all through measures such as free schooling and inheritance taxes. Alongside that system stands the state-led, political model of capitalism, which is exemplified by China but also surfaces in other parts of Asia (Myanmar, Singapore, Vietnam), in Europe (Azerbaijan, Russia), and in Africa (Algeria, Ethiopia, Rwanda). This system privileges high economic growth and limits individual political and civic rights.

These two types of capitalism—with the United States and China, respectively, as their leading examples—invariably compete with each other because they are so intertwined. Asia, western Europe, and North America, which together are home to 70 percent of the world's population and 80 percent of its economic output, are in constant contact through trade, investment, the movement of people, the transfer of technology, and the exchange of ideas. Those connections and collisions have bred a competition between the West and parts of Asia that is made more intense by the differences in their respective models of capitalism. And it is this competition—not a contest between capitalism and some alternative economic system—that will shape the future of the global economy.

In 1978, almost 100 percent of China's economic output came from the public sector; that figure has now dropped to less than 20 percent. In modern China, as in the more traditionally capitalist countries of the West, the means of production are mostly in private hands, the state doesn't impose decisions about production and pricing on companies, and most workers are wage laborers. China scores as positively capitalistic on all three counts.

Capitalism now has no rival, but these two models offer significantly different ways of structuring political and economic power in a society. Political capitalism gives greater autonomy to political elites while promising high growth rates to

ordinary people. China's economic success undermines the West's claim that there is a necessary link between capitalism and liberal democracy.

Liberal capitalism has many well-known advantages, the most important being democracy and the rule of law. These two features are virtues in themselves, and both can be credited with encouraging faster economic development by promoting innovation and social mobility. Yet this system faces an enormous challenge: the emergence of a self-perpetuating upper class coupled with growing inequality. This now represents the gravest threat to liberal capitalism's long-term viability.

At the same time, China's government and those of other political capitalist states need to constantly generate economic growth to legitimize their rule, a compulsion that might become harder and harder to fulfill. Political capitalist states must also try to limit corruption, which is inherent to the system, and its complement, galloping inequality. The test of their model will be its ability to restrain a growing capitalist class that often chafes against the overweening power of the state bureaucracy.

As other parts of the world (notably African countries) attempt to transform their economies and jump-start growth, the tensions between the two models will come into sharper focus. The rivalry between China and the United States is often presented in simply geopolitical terms, but at its core, it is like the grinding of two tectonic plates whose friction will define how capitalism evolves in this century.

LIBERAL CAPITALISM

The global dominance of capitalism is one of two epochal changes that the world is living through. The other is the rebalancing of economic power between the West and Asia. For the first time since the Industrial Revolution, incomes in Asia are edging closer to those in western Europe and North America. In 1970, the West produced 56 percent of world economic output and Asia (including Japan) produced only 19 percent. Today, only three generations later, those proportions have shifted to 37 percent and 43 percent—thanks in large part to the staggering economic growth of countries such as China and India.

Capitalism in the West generated the information and communications technologies that enabled a new wave of globalization in the late twentieth century, the period when Asia began to narrow the gap with the “global North.” Anchored initially in the wealth of Western economies, globalization led to an overhaul of moribund structures and huge growth in many Asian countries. Global income inequality has dropped significantly from what it was in the 1990s, when the global Gini coefficient (a measure of income distribution, with zero representing perfect equality and one representing perfect inequality) was 0.70; today, it is roughly 0.60. It will drop further as incomes continue to rise in Asia.

Although inequality between countries has lessened, inequality within countries—especially those in the West—has grown. The United States’ Gini coefficient has risen from 0.35 in 1979 to about 0.45 today. This increase in inequality within countries is in large part a product of globalization and its effects on the more developed economies in the West: the weakening of trade unions, the flight of manufacturing jobs, and wage stagnation.

Liberal meritocratic capitalism came into being in the last 40 years. It can be best understood in comparison to two other variants: classical capitalism, which was predominant in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and social democratic capitalism, which defined the welfare states in western Europe and North America from World War II to the early 1980s.

Unlike in the classical capitalism of the nineteenth century, when fortunes were to be made from owning, not working, rich individuals in the present system tend to be both capital rich and labor rich—that is, they generate their income both from investments and from work. They also tend to marry and make families with partners of similar educational and financial backgrounds, a phenomenon sociologists call “assortative mating.” Whereas the people at the top of the income distribution under classical capitalism were often financiers, today many of those at the top are highly paid managers, Web designers, physicians, investment bankers, and other elite professionals. These people work in order to earn their large salaries, but whether through an inheritance or their own savings, they also draw a great deal of income from their financial assets.

In liberal meritocratic capitalism, societies are more equal than they were during the phase of classical capitalism, women and ethnic minorities are more

empowered to enter the workforce, and welfare provisions and social transfers (paid out of taxes) are employed in an attempt to mitigate the worst ravages of acute concentrations of wealth and privilege. Liberal meritocratic capitalism inherited those last measures from its direct predecessor, social democratic capitalism.

That model was structured around industrial labor and featured the strong presence of unions, which played a huge role in shrinking inequality. Social democratic capitalism presided over an era that saw measures such as the GI Bill and the 1950 Treaty of Detroit (a sweeping, union-negotiated contract for autoworkers) in the United States and economic booms in France and Germany, where incomes rose. Growth was distributed fairly evenly; populations benefited from better access to health care, housing, and inexpensive education; and more families could climb up the economic ladder.

But the nature of work has changed significantly under globalization and liberal meritocratic capitalism, especially with the winnowing away of the industrial working class and the weakening of labor unions. Since the late twentieth century, the share of capital income in total income has been rising—that is, an increasing portion of GDP belongs to the profits made by big corporations and the already wealthy. This tendency has been quite strong in the United States, but it has also been documented in most other countries, whether developing or developed. A rising share of capital income in total income implies that capital and capitalists are becoming more important than labor and workers, and so they acquire more economic and political power. It also means an increase in inequality, because those who draw a large share of their income from capital tend to be rich.

MALaise IN THE WEST

While the current system has produced a more diverse elite (in terms of both gender and race), the setup of liberal capitalism has the consequence of at once deepening inequality and screening that inequality behind the veil of merit. More plausibly than their predecessors in the Gilded Age, the wealthiest today can claim that their standing derives from the virtue of their work, obscuring the advantages they have gained from a system and from social trends that make economic mobility harder and harder. The last 40 years have seen the growth of a semipermanent upper class that is increasingly isolated from the rest of

society. In the United States, the top ten percent of wealth holders own more than 90 percent of the financial assets. The ruling class is highly educated, many of its members work, and their income from that labor tends to be high. They tend to believe that they deserve their high standing.

These elites invest heavily both in their progeny and in establishing political control. By investing in their children's education, those at the top enable future generations of their kind to maintain high labor income and the elite status that is traditionally associated with knowledge and education. By investing in political influence—in elections, think tanks, universities, and so on—they ensure that they are the ones who determine the rules of inheritance, so that financial capital is easily transferred to the next generation. The two together (acquired education and transmitted capital) lead to the reproduction of the ruling class.

The formation of a durable upper class is impossible unless that class exerts political control. In the past, this happened naturally; the political class came mostly from the rich, and so there was a certain commonality of views and shared interests between politicians and the rest of the rich. That is no longer the case: politicians come from various social classes and backgrounds, and many of them share sociologically very little, if anything, with the rich. Presidents Bill Clinton and Barack Obama in the United States and Prime Ministers Margaret Thatcher and John Major in the United Kingdom all came from modest backgrounds but quite effectively supported the interests of the one percent.

In a modern democracy, the rich use their political contributions and the funding or direct ownership of think tanks and media outlets to purchase economic policies that benefit them: lower taxes on high incomes, bigger tax deductions, higher capital gains through tax cuts to the corporate sector, fewer regulations, and so on. These policies, in turn, increase the likelihood that the rich will stay on top, and they form the ultimate link in the chain that runs from the higher share of capital in a country's net income to the creation of a self-serving upper class. If the upper class did not try to co-opt politics, it would still enjoy a very strong position; when it spends on electoral processes and builds its own civil society institutions, the position of the upper class becomes all but unassailable.

As the elites in liberal meritocratic capitalist systems become more cordoned off, the rest of society grows resentful. Malaise in the West about globalization is

largely caused by the gap between the small number of elites and the masses, who have seen little benefit from globalization and, accurately or not, regard global trade and immigration as the cause of their ills. This situation eerily resembles what used to be called the “disarticulation” of Third World societies in the 1970s, such as was seen in Brazil, Nigeria, and Turkey. As their bourgeoisies were plugged into the global economic system, most of the hinterland was left behind. The disease that was supposed to affect only developing countries seems to have hit the global North.

CHINA'S POLITICAL CAPITALISM

In Asia, globalization doesn't have that same reputation: according to polls, 91 percent of people in Vietnam, for instance, think globalization is a force for good. Ironically, it was communism in countries such as China and Vietnam that laid the groundwork for their eventual capitalist transformation. The Chinese Communist Party came to power in 1949 by prosecuting both a national revolution (against foreign domination) and a social revolution (against feudalism), which allowed it to sweep away all ideologies and customs that were seen as slowing economic development and creating artificial class divisions. (The much less radical Indian independence struggle, in contrast, never succeeded in erasing the caste system.) These two simultaneous revolutions were a precondition, over the long term, for the creation of an indigenous capitalist class that would pull the economy forward. The communist revolutions in China and Vietnam played functionally the same role as the rise of the bourgeoisie in nineteenth-century Europe.

In China, the transformation from quasi feudalism to capitalism took place swiftly, under the control of an extremely powerful state. In Europe, where feudal structures were eradicated slowly over centuries, the state played a far less important role in the shift to capitalism. Given this history, then, it is no surprise that capitalism in China, Vietnam, and elsewhere in the region has so often had an authoritarian edge.

The system of political capitalism has three defining features. First, the state is run by a technocratic bureaucracy, which owes its legitimacy to economic growth. Second, although the state has laws, these are applied arbitrarily, much to the benefit of elites, who can decline to apply the law when it is inconvenient or apply it with full force to punish opponents. The arbitrariness of the rule of law in

these societies feeds into political capitalism's third defining feature: the necessary autonomy of the state. In order for the state to act decisively, it needs to be free from legal constraints. The tension between the first and second principles—between technocratic bureaucracy and the loose application of the law—produces corruption, which is an integral part of the way the political capitalist system is set up, not an anomaly.

Since the end of the Cold War, these characteristics have helped supercharge the growth of ostensibly communist countries in Asia. Over a 27-year period ending in 2017, China's growth rate averaged about eight percent and Vietnam's averaged around six percent, compared with just two percent in the United States.

The flip side of China's astronomic growth has been its massive increase in inequality. From 1985 to 2010, the country's Gini coefficient leapt from 0.30 to around 0.50—higher than that of the United States and closer to the levels found in Latin America. Inequality in China has risen starkly within both rural and urban areas, and it has risen even more so in the country as a whole because of the increasing gap between those areas. That growing inequality is evident in every divide—between rich and poor provinces, high-skilled workers and low-skilled workers, men and women, and the private sector and the state sector.

Notably, there has also been an increase in China in the share of income from privately owned capital, which seems to be as concentrated there as in the advanced market economies of the West. A new capitalist elite has formed in China. In 1988, skilled and unskilled industrial workers, clerical staff, and government officials accounted for 80 percent of those in the top five percent of income earners. By 2013, their share had fallen by almost half, and business owners (20 percent) and professionals (33 percent) had become dominant.

A remarkable feature of the new capitalist class in China is that it has emerged from the soil, so to speak, as almost four-fifths of its members report having had fathers who were either farmers or manual laborers. This intergenerational mobility is not surprising in view of the nearly complete obliteration of the capitalist class after the Communists' victory in 1949 and then again during the Cultural Revolution in the 1960s. But that mobility may not continue in the future, when—given the concentration of ownership of capital, the rising costs of

education, and the importance of family connections—the intergenerational transmission of wealth and power should begin to mirror what is observed in the West.

Compared with its Western counterparts, however, this new capitalist class in China may be more of a class by itself than a class for itself. China's many byzantine forms of ownership—which at the local and national levels blur the lines between public and private—allow the political elite to restrain the power of the new capitalist, economic elite.

For millennia, China has been home to strong, fairly centralized states that have always prevented the merchant class from becoming an independent center of power. According to the French scholar Jacques Gernet, wealthy merchants under the Song dynasty in the thirteenth century never succeeded in creating a self-conscious class with shared interests because the state was always there ready to check their power. Although merchants continued to prosper as individuals (as the new capitalists largely do nowadays in China), they never formed a coherent class with its own political and economic agenda or with interests that were forcefully defended and propagated. This scenario, according to Gernet, differed markedly from the situation around the same time in Italian merchant republics and the Low Countries. This pattern of capitalists enriching themselves without exercising political power will likely continue in China and in other political capitalist countries, as well.

A CLASH OF SYSTEMS

As China expands its role on the international stage, its form of capitalism is invariably coming into conflict with the liberal meritocratic capitalism of the West. Political capitalism might supplant the Western model in many countries around the world.

The advantage of liberal capitalism resides in its political system of democracy. Democracy is desirable in itself, of course, but it also has an instrumental advantage. By requiring constant consultation of the population, democracy provides a powerful corrective to economic and social trends that may be detrimental to the common good. Even if people's decisions sometimes result in policies that reduce the rate of economic growth, increase pollution, or lower life

expectancy, democratic decision-making should, within a relatively limited time period, correct such developments.

Political capitalism, for its part, promises much more efficient management of the economy and higher growth rates. The fact that China has been by far the most economically successful country in the past half century places it in a position to legitimately try to export its economic and political institutions. It is doing that most prominently through the Belt and Road Initiative, an ambitious project to link several continents through improved, Chinese-financed infrastructure. The initiative represents an ideological challenge to the way the West has been handling economic development around the world. Whereas the West focuses on building institutions, China is pouring money into building physical things. The BRI will link partnered countries into a Chinese sphere of influence. Beijing even has plans to handle future investment disputes under the jurisdiction of a Chinese-created court—quite a reversal for a country whose “century of humiliation” in the nineteenth century was capped by Americans and Europeans in China refusing to be subject to Chinese laws.

Many countries may welcome being part of the BRI. Chinese investment will bring roads, harbors, railways, and other badly needed infrastructure, and without the type of conditions that often accompany Western investment. China has no interest in the domestic policies of recipient nations; instead, it emphasizes equality in the treatment of all countries. This is an approach that many officials in smaller countries find particularly attractive. China is also seeking to build international institutions, such as the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank, following the playbook of the United States after World War II, when Washington spearheaded the creation of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund.

Beijing has another reason to be more active on the international stage. If China refused to advertise its own institutions while the West continued to advance the values of liberal capitalism in China, large swaths of the Chinese population could become more attracted to Western institutions. The current disturbances in Hong Kong have failed to spread anywhere else in China, but they do illustrate real discontent with the arbitrary application of the law, discontent that may not be confined to the former British colony. The blatant censorship of the Internet is also deeply unpopular among the young and educated.

By projecting the advantages of its political capitalism abroad, China will reduce the appeal of the Western liberal model to its own citizens. Its international activities are essentially matters of domestic survival. Whatever formal or informal arrangement Beijing reaches with states that embrace political capitalism, China is bound to exercise increasing influence on international institutions, which in the past two centuries have been built exclusively by Western states, to serve Western interests.

THE FUTURE OF CAPITALISM

John Rawls, the consummate philosopher of modern liberalism, argued that a good society ought to give absolute priority to basic liberties over wealth and income. Experience shows, however, that many people are willing to trade democratic rights for greater income. One need simply observe that within companies, production is generally organized in the most hierarchical fashion, not the most democratic. Workers do not vote on the products they would like to produce or on how they would like to produce them. Hierarchy produces greater efficiency and higher wages. "Technique is the boundary of democracy," the French philosopher Jacques Ellul wrote more than half a century ago. "What technique wins, democracy loses. If we had engineers who were popular with the workers, they would be ignorant of machinery." The same analogy can be extended to society as a whole: democratic rights can be, and have been, given up willingly for higher incomes.

In today's commercialized and hectic world, citizens rarely have the time, the knowledge, or the desire to get involved in civic matters unless the issues directly concern them. It is telling that in the United States, one of the oldest democracies in the world, the election of a president, who, in many respects in the American system, has the prerogatives of an elected king, is not judged of sufficient importance to bestir more than half the electorate to go to the polls. In this respect, political capitalism asserts its superiority.

The problem, however, is that in order to prove its superiority and ward off a liberal challenge, political capitalism needs to constantly deliver high rates of growth. So while liberal capitalism's advantages are natural, in that they are built into the setup of the system, the advantages of political capitalism are instrumental: they must be constantly demonstrated. Political capitalism starts

with the handicap of needing to prove its superiority empirically. It faces two further problems, as well. Relative to liberal capitalism, political capitalism has a greater tendency to generate bad policies and bad social outcomes that are difficult to reverse because those in power do not have an incentive to change course. It can also easily engender popular dissatisfaction because of its systemic corruption in the absence of a clear rule of law.

Unlike liberal capitalism, political capitalism must be permanently on its toes. Political capitalism needs to sell itself on the grounds of providing better societal management, higher rates of growth, and more efficient administration (including the administration of justice). Unlike liberal capitalism, which can take a more relaxed attitude toward temporary problems, political capitalism must be permanently on its toes. This may, however, be seen as an advantage from a social Darwinist point of view: because of the constant pressure to deliver more to its constituents, political capitalism might hone its ability to manage the economic sphere and to keep on delivering, year in, year out, more goods and services than its liberal counterpart. What appears at first as a defect may prove to be an advantage.

But will China's new capitalists forever acquiesce to a status quo in which their formal rights can be limited or revoked at any moment and in which they are under the constant tutelage of the state? Or, as they become stronger and more numerous, will they organize, influence the state, and, finally, take it over, as happened in the United States and Europe? The Western path as sketched by Karl Marx seems to have an ironclad logic: economic power tends to emancipate itself and to look after, or impose, its own interests. But the track record of nearly 2,000 years of an unequal partnership between the Chinese state and Chinese business presents a major obstacle to China's following the same path as the West.

The key question is whether China's capitalists will come to control the state and if, in order to do so, they will use representative democracy. In the United States and Europe, capitalists used that cure very carefully, administering it in homeopathic doses as the franchise slowly expanded and withholding it whenever there was a potential threat to the property-owning classes (as in Great Britain after the French Revolution, when the right to vote became even more tightly restricted). Chinese democracy, if it comes, will likely resemble

democracy in the rest of the world today, in the legal sense of mandating one vote per person. Yet given the weight of history and the precarious nature and still limited size of China's propertied classes, it is not certain that rule by the middle class could be maintained in China. It failed in the first part of the twentieth century under the Republic of China (which held sway over much of the mainland from 1912 to 1949); only with great difficulty will it be reestablished with greater success 100 years later.

PLUTOCRATIC CONVERGENCE?

What does the future hold for Western capitalist societies? The answer hinges on whether liberal meritocratic capitalism will be able to move toward a more advanced stage, what might be called "people's capitalism," in which income from both factors of production, capital and labor, would be more equally distributed. This would require broadening meaningful capital ownership way beyond the current top ten percent of the population and making access to the top schools and the best-paying jobs independent of one's family background.

To achieve greater equality, countries should develop tax incentives to encourage the middle class to hold more financial assets, implement higher inheritance taxes for the very rich, improve free public education, and establish publicly funded electoral campaigns. The cumulative effect of these measures would be to make more diffuse the ownership of capital and skills in society. People's capitalism would be similar to social democratic capitalism in its concern with inequality, but it would aspire to a different kind of equality; instead of focusing on redistributing income, this model would seek greater equality in assets, both financial and in terms of skills. Unlike social democratic capitalism, it would require only modest redistributive policies (such as food stamps and housing benefits) because it would have already achieved a greater baseline of equality.

If they fail to address the problem of growing inequality, liberal meritocratic capitalist systems risk journeying down another path—not toward socialism but toward a convergence with political capitalism. The economic elite in the West will become more insulated, wielding more untrammelled power over ostensibly democratic societies, much in the same way that the political elite in China lords over that country. The more that economic and political power in liberal capitalist systems become fused together, the more liberal capitalism will become

plutocratic, taking on some features of political capitalism. In the latter model, politics is the way to win economic benefits; in plutocratic—formerly liberal meritocratic—capitalism, economic power will conquer politics. The endpoint of the two systems will be the same: the closing ranks of a privileged few and the reproduction of that elite indefinitely into the future.

Source: <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/united-states/2019-12-10/clash-capitalisms>

Modi's Path Towards India's Destruction By **Syed Qamar Afzal Rizvi**

INDIAN Prime Minister Narendra Modi's recent move to drive the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) through Parliament of India has ignited nationwide remonstrance that has often turned violent. Given that the exercise relies on extensive documentation to prove that their ancestors lived in India, many Muslim citizens fear that they could be becoming stateless. The big question that stirs the mind of many Muslims is: Who will be regarded as an Indian citizen? And who will be considered an illegal foreigner? The communal segregation and apartheid regime is being introduced via this divisive and polarized citizenship bill.

Opponents of the said bill say the law is exclusionary and violates the secular principles enshrined in the Constitution of India, as well the UN's Charter of human rights. They justifiably argue faith should not be made a condition of Indian citizenship. The bill provides citizenship to religious minorities from Pakistan, Bangladesh and Afghanistan. The government, led by the Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), says this will give sanctuary to people fleeing religious persecution. Let's be clear: The law isn't truly about protecting the region's religious minorities. Instead, it challenges India's secularism by making religion part of the basis for citizenship. Whilst the top leaders of the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) deny that the bill discriminates against Muslims, the BJP's President Amit Shah has repeatedly indexed his desire to crack down on Muslim immigrants. "A Bharatiya Janata Party government will pick up infiltrators one by one and throw them into the Bay of Bengal," he said in April, referring to Muslim immigrants from Bangladesh. Speaking in the state of Jharkhand earlier this month, he repeated himself: "I assure you that before the national election in 2024, I will throw them all out."

It goes needless to say that euphorically Premier Modi's extraordinary political success (apparently under fire) reflects both his deeply-rooted ideological instincts and his quest for utter opportunism. Having crushed the Congress Party in May's election, he thinks himself as an inevitable force to India's future while becoming the Indian leader for another five years in power, and few obstacles in his path. But the current divisive developments highly suggest that Modi is

sowing seeds of India's social-political and constitutional destruction. There can be no doubt about where that path is leading. The legislation, warns the noted scholar Pratap Bhanu Mehta, is a giant step towards converting a constitutional democracy into an unconstitutional ethnocracy. The National Register of Citizens (NRC) has already left nearly two million people at risk of arbitrary detention and statelessness in India's northeast state of Assam. In August, Assam completed the NRC following repeated protests and violence by Assamese groups against ethnic Bengali settlers who they said were affecting the cultural, ethnic and economic rights of Assam's original inhabitants.

The proposed law violates India's international obligations under international law to prevent deprivation of citizenship on the basis of race, colour, descent or national or ethnic origin as found in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and other human rights treaties. The 1992 Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities establishes the obligation of countries to protect the existence and identity of religious minorities within their territories and to adopt the appropriate measures to achieve this end. Governments are required to ensure that people belonging to minority groups, including religious minorities, may exercise their human rights without discrimination and in full equality before the law. Notwithstanding the fact that India's broader naturalization laws remain in place, these amendments will have a discriminatory effect on people's access to a nationality", Jeremy Laurence, a spokesperson with the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), said on Friday. A Muslim political party along with lawyers and rights groups have challenged the law in India's Supreme Court, arguing that it violates the country's secular constitution. The UN Human Rights Office says it hopes the justices will consider whether the law is compatible with India's international human rights obligations.

Today, India faces worldwide criticism and denunciation of its new law. After the citizenship law's approval, a State Department spokesperson said, "The United States urges India to protect the rights of its religious minorities in keeping with India's constitution and democratic values." Sam Brownback, the US envoy on religious freedom, voiced respect for India's institutions. However, he said the United States was "concerned" with the citizenship bill, and called on India to "abide by its constitutional commitments." The US Commission on International Religious Freedom called for sanctions on India if the CAB passed, calling the bill

a “dangerous turn in the wrong direction.” The US, UK, and France have issued travel advisories for their citizens travelling to India.

Needless to mention, the new laws are also the culmination of the long-held view by hard-line Hindu fanatics that India’s constitution needs replacing. Muslims, they believe, are descendants of Hindus who were forcibly converted. According to the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh, the RSS, a forerunner of the BJP, so too are Christians. In true form, BJP leaders have been using inflammatory and dehumanising language to describe Muslims. Home Minister and BJP President Amit Shah has described them as “termites” and claimed the NRC would be used to “remove them”. One could reasonably think that it is a dangerous time to be in India, especially for those who have had believed in the idea of India after the partition with Pakistan, and the successive generations that mistakenly thrived on that idea. The idea of a nation chartering on the principles of cultural and religious diversity— of people from different regions, of different religions, and of different castes and colours are at risk. Now under the Modi’s regime, the Hindu right-wing in India is busy trying to change the social fabric of the nation and turn it into a Hindu nation — run by the upper-caste Hindus. The prime objective for them is to gain traction by changing the constitution.

—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/modis-path-towards-indias-destruction/>

News Stories That Made Headlines Around The Globe in 2019 By Farwa Naqvi

Dawn.com takes a look at the global events that shaped the outgoing year.

From elections in the world's biggest democracy to the impeachment of the United States president, the year 2019 has been an eventful one for the entire world.

Protests gripped cities across the globe at different times for various reasons; in India, citizens came out against the Hindu-nationalist government for passing a discriminatory bill; in Hong Kong, residents demanded democracy from China's ruling Communist Party; and in Iran, people protested against a 200 per cent increase in fuel prices.

Populist leaders faced resistance, not only from their opponents but from the next generation of rulers: the youth. Terrorist attacks at religious sites forced the world to address the pressing issue of rising Islamophobia while a mass movement called attention to undeniable affects of climate change.

Here, Dawn.com takes a look at the global events that shaped the outgoing year.

Christchurch and Easter Sunday attacks

In March, the world was shaken when a right-wing terrorist entered two separate mosques in New Zealand's quiet city of Christchurch and opened fire at worshipers, killing almost 50 people.

The attack, that took place during Friday prayers, was livestreamed by the attacker on Facebook. The incident was immediately termed as a terrorist attack by New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern, forcing the world to talk about Islamophobia in Western countries and discuss measures needed to be taken to ensure protection of minorities.

A month later, nearly 300 worshipers were killed in devastating bomb attacks on two churches in Sri Lanka on Easter Sunday. The government said that the attacks were carried out by a local militant group National Thowheeth Jama'ath.

The horrific attacks led to anti-Muslim riots, prompting the government to impose a nationwide curfew that lasted four months.

Big elections and bigger promises

The mammoth Indian elections were watched closely as Narendra Modi, after a campaign fueled by nationalist sentiments, succeeded in returning to power. The Hindu-nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) won a landslide victory despite a declining economy and increasing unemployment in the country.

Months after assuming power again, Modi's government, emboldened by the overwhelming majority, passed the highly controversial Citizenship (Amendment) Act (CAA), which makes it easier for all religious minorities from Pakistan, Afghanistan and Bangladesh to gain Indian citizenship. It does not apply to Muslims.

The bill is in line with the party's election promise to weed out "foreign infiltrators". Modi's right-hand man Amit Shah, while campaigning for the 2019 elections, had vowed to expel "termites" from the country. It was not the first time BJP had adopted this position.

In 2016, during an election campaign in Assam, the BJP had promised to expel immigrants who cannot prove their citizenship. Keeping true with that vow, a National Register of Citizens (NRC) was published in August this year from which almost two million people — mostly Muslims — were left out. Most of the people who were left out had migrated from then East Pakistan in 1971.

These moves raised concerns over BJP government's anti-Muslim policies and a US federal agency called for sanctions to be imposed on Amit Shah.

Due to widespread protests and deteriorating law and order situation, especially in the Guwahati city of India's northeastern state Assam, London and Washington issued travel warnings for the state. Furthermore, Japan Prime

Minister Shinzo Abe postponed a summit that was scheduled to be held with Modi in Gawahati.

Kashmir stripped of its autonomy

The BJP government in August unilaterally repealed Article 370 of the Indian constitution, stripping occupied Kashmir of its special status and imposing a strict curfew and communications blackout in the region, which has been in place for more than four months. Businesses were shut down while residents were scared of sending children to school. More than 4,000 arrests were made without charges and reports of horrific torture of Kashmiri residents emerged during the lockdown.

The move drew a strong reaction from Pakistan, who pushed the issue on global platforms in order to direct the world's attention towards human rights abuse in the region. Multiple US congress members tabled resolutions against Indian actions in the occupied region, demanding an end to the human rights violations, much to the chagrin of the BJP government.

The Kashmir issue was taken up by the UN Security Council for the first time in 50 years while the alarming possibility of a genocide of Muslims during the lockdown was also raised by human rights groups as well as Pakistan.

This was also the year when a US president, during Prime Minister Imran's trip to Washington, made an unexpected offer to act as mediator between India and Pakistan over the Kashmir dispute. Donald Trump's offer, which he reiterated multiple times, was welcomed by Pakistan and turned down by India.

Trump's turbulent year in office and impeachment

After a year of will they, won't they, the US House of Representatives on Dec 19 voted in favour of Trump's impeachment and charged him with abuse of power and obstruction of Congress, making him the third US president to be impeached.

Trump has been accused of trying to enlist a foreign government, Ukraine, to investigate a discredited theory that Democrats conspired with Ukraine to meddle

in the 2016 US elections, as well as his political rival Joe Biden, abusing his power as president. Biden is a contender for the Democrat presidential nomination for the 2020 elections, for which Trump is also running.

Trump and his Republican party members deny the allegations, but Democrats insist that the incumbent US president is “a threat to national security”.

This was not the only challenge Trump faced this year. In December last year, he shutdown the government when the Senate refused to approve the \$5.7 billion Trump demanded to build the wall at the US-Mexico border. The shutdown was lifted on Jan 25 this year after Trump and congressional leaders agreed to a deal. It was the longest shutdown in US history, lasting a record 34 days.

In April, the US Department of Justice made public the Mueller report, compiling Robert Mueller’s findings in an investigation into charges that the US president had colluded with Russian hackers who meddled in the 2016 elections. Mueller exonerated Trump of collusion allegations but did not wipe away charges of obstruction of justice due to the latter’s efforts to derail the investigation.

Despite domestic challenges, Trump foreign policy remained controversial and confrontational. This year saw Trump accept Israel’s sovereignty over Golan Heights, declare Iran’s Revolutionary Guards a terrorist force, and continue to slap tariffs on Chinese goods despite ongoing talks.

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Protests grip the globe

Widespread demonstrations in Hong Kong attracted global attention after thousands of people took to the streets to protest against an unpopular bill, which would allow extradition to mainland China and had the support of Beijing. Due to the protests, Hong Kong's leader Carrie Lam withdrew the bill, but that did not put an end to the movement. Students took to the streets, demanding democracy and freedom, and received the support of the international community.

Initially, the protests were peaceful but with time, protesters increasingly clashed with the police who used rubber bullets and tear gas shells to contain the people. One student died in the clashes.

Anti-government protests were also held in Iraq, Lebanon and Iran, where people came out on streets to demonstrate against corruption, weakening economy and unemployment.

In Iraq, citizens took to the streets to protest against the government, accusing it of corruption amid increasing unemployment. More than 400 people died in clashes between police and protesters in several cities, including the holy cities of Najaf and Karbala. By the end of November, the Iraqi prime minister Adel Abdel Mahdi stepped down after top cleric Grand Ayatullah Ali al-Sistani voiced his support for the protests.

Lebanon's premier Saad Hariri resigned

as well after protesters refused to backdown. The Lebanese protested against sectarianism and corruption that they said was being supported by those in government. President Michel Aoun named former education minister Hassan Diab as the prime minister after gaining a simple majority of the 128-member parliament.

In Iran, massive protests were held after a sharp spike in petroleum prices. Though the government denies it, Amnesty International has said that more than 200 people had died in the riots.

Climate activists take to streets

This year, the global community's attention was drawn towards climate change and its devastating effects by 16-year-old activist Greta Thunberg, who delivered an emotional speech at the United Nations Climate Action Summit in September.

Marches were held across the world, including Pakistan, as citizens urged leaders to take immediate and serious measures to avert climate change

About 21 climate activists were arrested in London when they announced to launch a peaceful civil disobedience movement, as well as in other European countries where protesters tried to disrupt traffic and block roads.

Two prime ministers, election and a looming Brexit

Brexit kept the United Kingdom occupied from the beginning of this year. In January, the House of Commons served then premier Theresa May a historic defeat by rejecting a deal which she had arrived at with the European Union after tough negotiations.

She persevered and tabled the deal again before the parliament in March, weeks before the country was meant to leave the EU, only to be defeated again, this time by 149 votes. The 'leave' deadline was extended from March 29 to April 12 and then again to October 31. She faced a third defeat in May after which she announced her resignation and was replaced by Boris Johnson.

Johnson took dramatic measures to get the parliament to agree to leave the EU by October 31, one of which included suspension of the government for over a month. He was still forced to seek a delay in the 'leave' deadline, which was extended until January 31, 2020. Failing to convince the parliament, he called for snap elections in December and won with an overwhelming majority.

On December 20, the parliament approved Johnson's Brexit deal, the first step toward fulfilling his election pledge to deliver Britain's departure from the EU by January 31.

The uncertainty surrounding Brexit kept investors at tenterhooks as the pound lost value in international markets. Economists feared that a no-deal Brexit — which Johnson was keen on if the parliament did not agree to a divorce deal — would send shock waves through the world economy and send financial markets into a roil.

US-Saudi-Iran: a love-hate triangle

Tensions between traditional rivals Saudi Arabia and Iran worsened in September when drone attacks on the former's two major oil plants, cutting off half of the Kingdom's output. The attacks were claimed by Iran-aligned Yemen rebel Houthi group but both the US and Saudi Arabia blamed Tehran for the assault.

The Trump administration slapped more sanctions on Iran and announced that it would deploy additional troops in the Middle East as Saudi Arabia called for action. The developments led to soaring oil prices as the world feared an armed conflict.

In order to help defuse tensions, Prime Minister Imran Khan offered to mediate between the two countries to help reach a peaceful solution and in October, visited both countries.

Saudi Crown Prince Mohammad bin Salman, however, dismissed the possibility of war with Iran, saying that it would gut the world economy, in an interview late in September. Iran, too, expressed readiness to hold talks with Saudi Arabia with or without a mediator.

Peace deal after 5 years of war

After five years of a devastating war between Saudi Arabia and Yemen's Houthi rebels — which resulted in the world's worst humanitarian crisis in Yemen and killed around 100,000 people — both parties agreed to negotiate a peace deal.

The announcement of a peace deal came after Saudi Arabia brokered a power sharing agreement between Yemen's internationally recognised government and southern separatists and was welcomed by the global community.

On November 26, it was reported that the Saudi-led coalition had freed 200 Yemenis as part of the peace deal. The Houthis welcomed the move and called upon the coalition to release all war prisoners. In September, the Houthis had released scores of detainees they had rounded up and held for years in rebel-controlled territory.

Though the war has not been called off by either side, human rights organisations hope the deal would put an end to the conflict.

Pak-India at brink of war

Relations between Pakistan and India hit their lowest point in February when a Kashmiri youth blew up an Indian paramilitaries convoy in occupied Kashmir's Pulwama district, killing more than 40 soldiers. The Indian government pointed fingers towards Pakistan and vowed to "ensure [Islamabad's] complete isolation from the international community".

On February 26, an Indian aircraft violated Pakistan's airspace through the Muzaffarabad sector and ejected its payload in a forest near Balakot, felling a few trees, on its return after Pakistan's armed forces responded.

The Indian army claimed to have "struck the biggest training camp of Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM) in Balakot" and killed "a large number of JeM terrorists". The unsubstantiated claims were rejected by Pakistan and remain unproven.

The next day Pakistan Air Force undertook strikes across the LoC from Pakistani airspace, following which two Indian aircrafts violated Pakistani airspace once again. Both the planes were shot down and one pilot was arrested.

Taliban talks: on-again-off-again

The US, with assistance from Pakistan, continued to hold peace talks with Taliban in order to end a long-drawn war. However, both US and Pakistan were unable to convince the Taliban to make the Afghan government a party to the talks, even after it came to power after a historic election.

The talks also had an impact on US' ties with Pakistan; in July Prime Minister Imran Khan went to Washington on his maiden trip as premier where he was well-received by Trump despite his earlier anti-Pakistan rhetoric.

Just as the US and Taliban closed in on a deal, however, Trump shocked the world in September by calling off a secret summit with Taliban meant to be held at Camp David after a US soldier was killed in a car bombing in Kabul.

The talks were resumed later and are underway.

Source: <https://www.dawn.com/news/1523319/news-stories-that-made-headlines-around-the-globe-in-2019>