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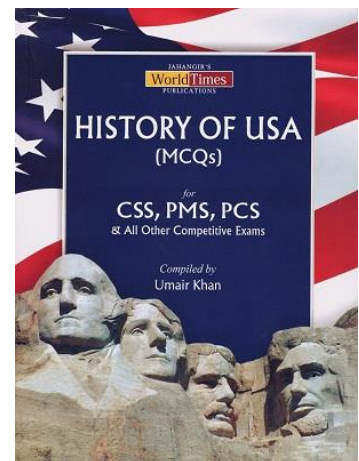
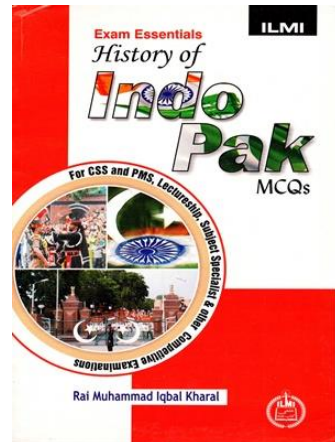
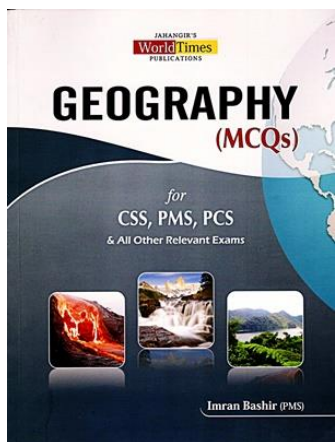
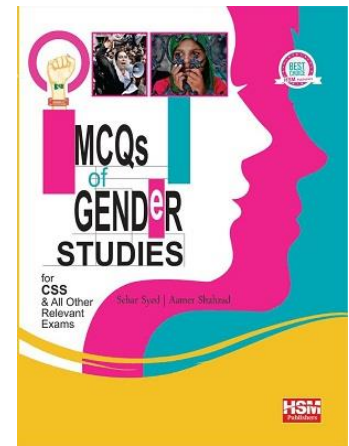
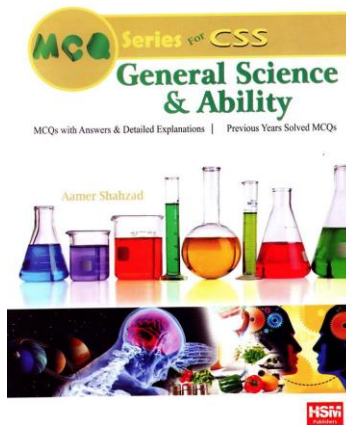
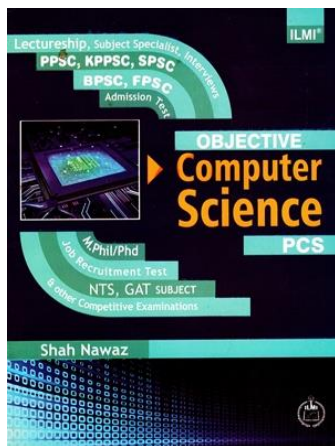
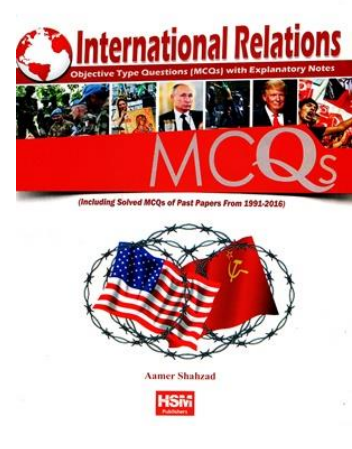
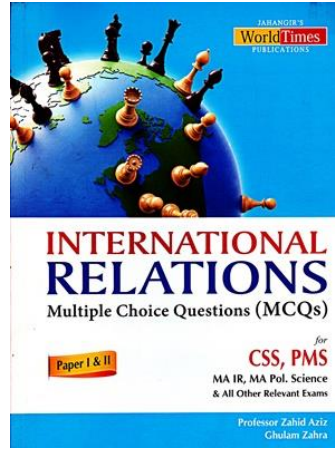
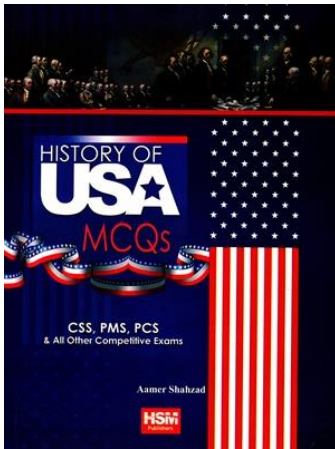
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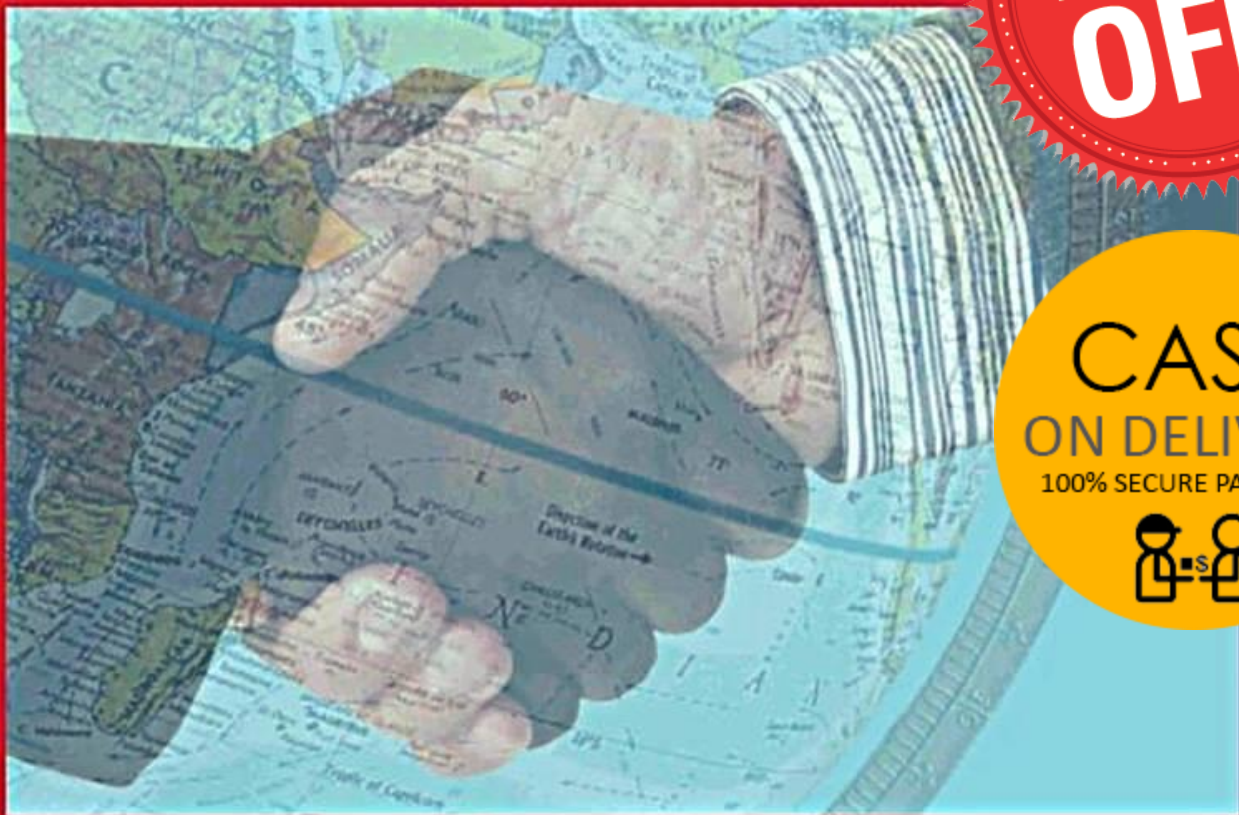
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PAKISTAN

'K' is for Kashmir By Munir Akram

WHILE celebrating the nation's 70th independence anniversary, we cannot forget that the 'K' in Pakistan's name — Kashmir — is not (yet) part of our country. The men, women and children of India-held Kashmir (IHK) are even now engaged in a heroic David and Goliath struggle for freedom from India's brutal occupation and oppression. Pakistan has done very little to support them.

An equitable solution to the Jammu and Kashmir dispute will not be easy. However, for political, strategic, moral and legal reasons, Pakistan cannot resile from its position on Kashmir.

By any objective criteria, Kashmir should have been part of Pakistan. The Kashmiris demonstrate each day their desire for integration with Pakistan. Pakistan has a political and moral obligation to support their aspirations and the political vision that inspired its own creation.

Some among Pakistan's elites appear to have lost the will to support the occupied territory's struggle.

Pakistan is a party to the UN Security Council resolutions prescribing a UN-supervised plebiscite to enable the people of Jammu and Kashmir to exercise their right to self-determination. It is thus legally bound by this commitment.

Kashmir is the source of the rivers that feed the Indus Valley. Water is an existential issue. Control over this life source cannot be legally surrendered to India.

Kashmir is India's Achilles heel. Its massive military deployment in Kashmir diminishes India's capacity for aggression against Pakistan. Its brutal suppression of the Kashmiris erodes India's moral and political claim to regional domination and great power status. The leverage which Kashmir provides Pakistan to achieve an 'equal' relationship with India should not be unilaterally discarded.

Unfortunately, in the face of India's growing power and the pressure exerted on Pakistan through the campaign against 'Islamic terrorism', some among Pakistan's elites appear to have lost the will to support Kashmir's struggle for self-determination and seem ready to accept the status quo in Kashmir.

The much-touted peace plan negotiated with India during the latter years of the Musharraf government was no more than a dressed-up acceptance of the status quo. It may have

proved to be even worse since it envisaged joint India-Pakistan 'administration' of both sides of Jammu and Kashmir, thus conceding that India has a legitimate presence in Kashmir. Moreover, since the 'problem' — insurgency and resistance — is in Indian-occupied Kashmir, why would Pakistan give India an 'administrative' role in Azad Jammu and Kashmir? The mischief that India could play there is not difficult to imagine. New Delhi could insist that the northern territories be included as part of the area being jointly administered. It could seek a role in the management of the Karakoram Highway and attempt to disrupt this sole and strategic road link between Pakistan and China. (It is not surprising that the plan was rejected by Syed Geelani, the one Kashmiri leader who has been the most vigorous and consistent in his support for Kashmir's integration with Pakistan.)

Unfortunately, intimidated by the US and India, the succeeding PPP and PML-N governments shied away from actively supporting the Kashmir cause.

However, in a welcome signal, both the new prime minister and foreign minister have expressed support for the Kashmiri cause in their maiden statements to the media.

Indeed, the present moment, when regional power equations are in flux and the Kashmiris have launched a popular indigenous struggle for freedom, may be opportune for Pakistan to promote a coherent strategy designed to halt India's oppression, reassert the legitimacy of the Kashmiri freedom struggle, and intensify international pressure on India to accommodate Kashmiri rights and aspirations.

Pakistan should firstly support several objectives which the Kashmiris themselves need to achieve: reunification and rejuvenation of the Hurriyat parties; selection of a deserving successor to the indomitable but aging Syed Geelani; delegitimising the puppet government in Srinagar; possible formation of a 'shadow' government; organisation of an 'independent' referendum (like the Iraqi Kurds) in Kashmir pending the UN plebiscite.

Second, to regain legitimacy, the composition and profile of the Kashmiri resistance has to change. Its leadership must come mainly from new and younger Kashmiris untainted by association with any proscribed terrorist group.

Third, the projection of the Kashmiri struggle and India's oppression must be significantly improved in the mainstream and social media. This is vital to achieving the strategy's objectives.

Pakistan should initiate an active and sustained diplomatic campaign to exert international pressure on India. This campaign could include:

One, formal submission of the proposal to send a UN commission to investigate human rights violations in IJK. If India blocks a visit, Pakistan can ask for an offsite report.

Concurrently, Pakistan should seek endorsement for a UN resolution calling for an end to Indian firing on peaceful demonstrators; inhuman treatment of Kashmiri children and youth and women; curfews; media blackouts; emergency laws; and the arbitrary detention of Kashmiri leaders.

Two, a formal proposal in the UN Security Council and General Assembly to adopt measures to prevent another Pakistan-India war, including: formalisation of the 2003 LoC ceasefire; expansion of the UNMOGIP and its deployment on both sides for comprehensive monitoring of the ceasefire; withdrawal of heavy artillery from LoC positions; exchange of solemn mutual assurances by Pakistan and India not to resort to force and not to interfere and intervene against each other, including through the sponsorship of terrorism.

Three, a complaint to the International Court of Justice accusing India of violating the Genocide Convention.

Four, approach the UN Security Council to implement its resolutions on Jammu and Kashmir by appointing a special envoy to promote demilitarisation of both sides of Jammu and Kashmir and to review and update the modalities for the organisation of a UN-supervised plebiscite there.

Pakistan's active promotion of the Kashmir cause will not provoke a war, and it need not divert Pakistan from economic development. Even if Pakistan's proposals are not adopted in UN forums, their submission and discussion will exert diplomatic pressure on India and ease the suffering of the Kashmiri people. It may even convince India to seek a dialogue and a modicum of normalisation with Pakistan.

The writer is a former Pakistan ambassador to the UN.

Source: <https://www.dawn.com/news/1352648/>

Trump is not the only problem in dysfunctional PAK-US relationship By Touqir Hussain

PUBLIC criticism of Pakistan in the US has become muted. And there was no mention of Pakistan in Donald Trump's State of the Union message. But that does not mean bilateral tensions have eased, especially as the recent terrorist incidents in Afghanistan are likely to refocus attention on Pakistan and raise questions about the Trump strategy.

President Trump's New Year Day tweet and his subsequent decision to suspend nearly \$2 billion in US security assistance had rested on many faulty assumptions, about the history of US-Pakistan relations, the internal dynamics of Afghanistan, and the complexities of the war. Mr Trump said what many critics of Pakistan, in the military, Congress, intelligence organisations, and the strategic community, had been saying for some time though less offensively.

At the heart of this flawed view by the US leadership and the foreign and defence policy establishment are the systemic issues in the making of American foreign policy, and the constant challenge of reconciling politics and policy. There is not much Pakistan can do to understand the system. But we should at least try to understand why it is that Washington thinks Pakistan was cooperating with it only for aid and its withdrawal could force a policy change.

This US is looking to punish Pakistan while still engaged with it.

The central problem with the Pak-US relationship is that it has always lacked a strategic consensus. Each side was using the other to advance interests of its own that impacted negatively on the interests of its partner. Both benefited from their alliance but not without a cost. There being no strategic reason for a long-term commitment to Pakistan, the US exited as soon as the need for Pakistan was met, and punished it for policies that went against US interests. Pressler sanctions are a case in point.

The trouble is that the Pakistani leadership never really tried to understand American policies nor did it define or frame the relationship in the larger interest of the country, certainly not since the days of Ayub Khan which is the last time Washington actually helped Pakistan. Subsequent leadership, civilians and military alike, got addicted to the relationship for reasons of aid and their political survival to the point of the country's interests being sacrificed. Washington knew and exploited it.

Much damage was done during the time of presidents Zia and Musharraf. Zia was desperate for Washington's embrace as he needed legitimacy and economic aid, and his constituency, the army, sought military assistance. The US connection ended up fulfilling exactly the objectives he had in mind. After a decade of isolation, sanctions and threats, Washington returned to Pakistan in 2001. It made a correct assessment that Pakistan's leadership, isolated and lacking legitimacy like Zia before, would be keen to get aligned with the US for the rewards that come with it. And Pakistan was shortchanged yet again.

In time, the Pakistani leadership too came to play the same game with Washington. That is why not long after their post 9/11 re-engagement the relationship started fraying as the attempts by the two sides to take advantage of each other made it difficult even for the transactional relationship to work.

Unlike the previous engagements when at least one interest or another of each side was being served while they lost in other areas, this time neither sides had satisfaction on any major count. Pakistan suffered horrendous damage from the spillover of the Afghanistan war, and the US thought its aid was not serving the purpose for which it was being given. So for the first time in the history of their ties, Washington was looking to punish Pakistan while still engaged with it. That is the central tension in the relationship now.

Pakistan should have levelled off with the Americans right from the start, laying down red lines on what it could do and what it would not, and tried to find convergence in interests and policies where it could. Instead, the leadership for the fear of losing aid apparently opted to misrepresent their policies and made promises they could not deliver. In the process Pakistan let all valuable cooperation it gave to the US and the sacrifices it made go unappreciated.

If the focus remains on aid, the bilateral conversation will continue to be to Pakistan's disadvantage. Pakistan needs to isolate the aid factor from the dialogue. Then it can speak from a position of strength, with all the leverage on intelligence and security cooperation, ground and air lines of communication, and other support to the Afghan war effort. The aim should be to make ties interests-based not aid-driven. Is aid more important than national interests? Pakistan is getting there but not quite.

The writer, a former ambassador, is adjunct faculty Georgetown University and Maxwell School of Syracuse University.

Published in Dawn, February 6th, 2018

Source: <https://www.dawn.com/news/1387623/not-just-trump>

Pakistan can afford to display greater flexibility towards the US rather than India.

By Munir Akram

PAKISTAN is living through trying times. It confronts simultaneous threats from India and the US. The Trump administration has decided to coerce Pakistan's compliance with its demands to 'eliminate' the alleged Afghan Taliban safe havens in Pakistan. Puffed up by the US endorsement of its regional ambitions, revelling in the Pakistan-US tensions, and unable to suppress the latest popular revolt in occupied Kashmir, India has intensified its political and military pressure on Pakistan. Meanwhile, Pakistan's domestic politics are in turmoil and the nation virtually leaderless to face the twin external challenges.

The threat from India is grave and existential. India says its daily violations of the Line of Control (LoC) are meant to 'punish' Pakistan for its support to the Kashmiris. Besides India's loose talk of 'surgical strikes', 'limited war' and a 'Cold Start' attack, the Indian air chief has asserted that he could 'identify and destroy' Pakistan's nuclear weapons and the Indian army chief has expressed readiness to attack across the border and 'call Pakistan nuclear bluff'. These irresponsible threats deserve global denunciation.

Pakistan must clearly convey to India that any military adventure will result in a conflict with disastrous consequences. Pakistan should also advise the Security Council and all major powers of the dangers inherent in the Indian ceasefire violations and military threats. It could propose the enhanced presence of UN Observers on both sides of the LoC. In particular, Islamabad should caution the US against encouraging such dangerous Indian belligerence.

Pakistan can afford to display greater flexibility towards the US rather than India.

Indian pressure will not be relieved by one-sided Pakistani concessions on Kashmir or other issues. Apart from possibly compromising Pakistan's vital interests, any sign of weakness on Pakistan's part will, as history attests, further intensify Indian rhetoric and pressure.

In comparison, the US pressure on Taliban/Haqqani 'safe havens' — though misguided — has limited strategic implications for Pakistan in the long term. Whatever the outcome of the new US strategy of enhanced force, sooner or later, the Americans will have to leave Afghanistan. Minus the foreign presence, geography and the ethnic composition of Afghanistan's population will ensure Pakistan's influence in that country.

Thus, to break the nexus between US and Indian pressure, Pakistan can afford to display greater flexibility towards the US rather than India. New Delhi's objectives are strategic and permanent; the US demands on Afghanistan — no matter how misguided, and whether it wins or loses — will be ultimately temporary in nature.

Indeed, if Pakistan's leaders had acted with alacrity and clarity at the inception of the Trump administration, a broad understanding on mutual cooperation in Afghanistan could have been evolved with the US. Even now, Pakistan should try to secure agreement on a broad framework of Pakistan-US cooperation on Afghanistan, including the following elements:

- full Pakistan-US cooperation against the militant Islamic State group and its associates (similar to past cooperation against Al Qaeda);
- a negotiated political solution to the conflict between Kabul and the Afghan Taliban;
- action by the US-led coalition to eliminate the Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP)/Jamaatul Ahrar (JuA) and Balochistan Liberation Army safe havens in Afghanistan; and
- respect for Pakistan's sovereignty and its legitimate interests in Afghanistan.

The core issue of contention between Pakistan and the US — the alleged Afghan Taliban safe havens in Pakistan — needs to be addressed openly and boldly. There are sound reasons why Pakistan finds it difficult to accommodate America's demand that it act against (capture or kill) Afghan Taliban, particularly the Haqqani network leaders. First, it is unclear as to what is meant by 'safe havens': insurgent staging posts, training camps, or a mere personal presence, such as in Afghan refugee camps?

Second, elimination of Taliban leaders will remove the very people with whom peace needs to be negotiated. A leaderless insurgency cannot conclude a peace agreement (as revealed in Syria and Libya).

Third, Pakistani action against the Taliban leaders will bring the Afghan civil war to Pakistan's soil. A nexus between the TTP/JuA and the Afghan Taliban would be disastrous for Pakistan. In any case, only a few Taliban leaders may be eliminated by Pakistanis actions. Corruption, drugs trade and Afghan infighting impinge more seriously on the security environment in Afghanistan.

The Pakistan authorities, however, appear to be acting in a policy vacuum. The foreign ministry's recent announcement that 27 members of the Afghan Taliban and Haqqani group had been 'handed over' to Kabul was inconsistent with its policy stance. Such contradictory postures may create the worst of both worlds for Pakistan: they will not appease the US; but could evoke the hostility of the Afghan Taliban.

Similarly, Islamabad naively played into Afghan propaganda by receiving its NDA chief and interior minister who came to complain about Pakistan's 'complicity' in the recent Kabul attacks without offering a shred of evidence for their outlandish allegations.

The best way to avoid a confrontation with the US is for Pakistan to persuade the Afghan Taliban to join negotiations for a peaceful settlement. Despite Trump's statements, US officials reportedly have assured that they want talks with the Taliban. For their part, by participating in such talks, the Taliban would secure a legitimate political status as a negotiating partner. Such talks could be pursued in more than one format and bring Russia, Iran and Turkey into the process.

Despite Pakistan's best endeavours, and sensing its confusion and weakness, the US may feel emboldened to take further coercive steps against Pakistan including political and economic sanctions and unilateral drone strikes and special operations on Pakistan's territory. Pakistan should be ready to respond to such steps.

While making tactical compromises, Pakistan's strategic aim must be to secure, eventually, the full withdrawal of US-Nato forces from Afghanistan, given the Indo-US strategic partnership and the imputed threats to CPEC and Pakistan's nuclear capabilities.

As Sun Tzu wrote in the Art of War: "Invincibility lies in the defence." Pakistan's strategic aims, both in the east and the west, are defensive. Although Pakistan may be militarily weaker than the US or India, its nuclear weapons capabilities provide a guarantee against external coercion and aggression.

Source : <https://www.dawn.com/news/1387110/trying-times>

Significance of energy security By Malik

Muhammad Ashraf

Energy security in the modern era of industrialisation is considered the life blood of the economies. It is about development, sustainability of development process and enhanced standards of life. No country in the world can conceive of economic progress and prosperity and the accompanying clout that it gets in managing the international affairs without achieving energy security. Consequently all the countries aspiring to join the club of developed nations put lot of emphasis on energy security. Even the already industrialised nations lay great emphasis on developing new sources of energy to cater for their future needs.

The year 2017 may not have been so auspicious politically but it surely was a year of surmounting the burgeoning energy crisis that not only badly affected the economy but also caused difficulties to millions of households across the country. The current power generation capacity reached 16477 MW as against the existing demand of 14017 MW, enabling the government to announce an end to load-shedding. The credit for this achievement surely goes the PML (N) government. The government claims that the amount of energy produced during the last four years is more than produced during the last 66 years. And there is enough evidence to prove that claim.

It is an irrefutable reality that the PML (N) government gave top priority to tiding over the energy crisis and has verifiably accomplished the task within a record period of four years. The process of tackling the energy crisis started with the most prudent decision to import LNG and consequently the signing of an agreement with government of Qatar in February 2016 for the import of 3.75 million tons of LNG per year for a period of 15 years. To handle the import of LNG the government built two terminals at Port Qasim with the help of a consortium of private sector. The second terminal was inaugurated by the Prime Minister in November 2017. Pakistan was importing 600 million cubic feet of LNG through its first terminal and with the second terminal becoming operational the total volume of LNG import per day would increase to 1.2 billion.

The importance of the agreement for import of LNG can be better understood by having a look at the ground realities in regards to power generation in Pakistan. Presently more than 50% of the total energy mix of Pakistan including hydel power, fossil fuel, nuclear and renewable, is based on natural gas. Pakistan 's constrained demand for natural gas is 6000 MMFCD against a supply of 4000 MMFCD and the unconstrained demand for natural gas is estimated to be 8000 MMFCD. Over the last ten years production of gas in Pakistan has remained stagnant at 4000 MMFCD and the new gas discoveries have barely kept pace with natural depletion of existing gas fields. In view of the difficulties in completing the trans-regional gas pipeline projects like TAPI and IP, import of LNG was

the only solution to the energy needs till such time there is a substantial change in the energy production mix and shift towards renewable energy resources.

LNG imports from Qatar reportedly are meeting 20% gas requirements of the country. In terms of impact, it is estimated that it would help in the generation of 2000 MW of electricity at a much cheaper rate; it has already revitalised the fertiliser and other industries, almost eliminated gas load shedding for the domestic consumers besides reviving the fortunes of the CNG industry which almost faced extinction before the PML (N) government took over.

Presently the re-gasified LNG is being distributed through the existing distribution networks of SSGPL and SNGPL but in the long-run a separate network will be constructed for the purpose as the existing network is not capable of coping with the increased demand for gas. An agreement with Russia has been signed for the construction of a gas pipeline between Lahore and Karachi costing \$ 2 billion. The government has also completed 90% work on the construction of another pipeline from Karachi to Lahore which hopefully would become operational in the near future. LNG, as is evident from the foregoing facts and the likely increase in its demand as envisaged, is poised to play a role of game changer as far as production of power and running the industries is concerned. The decision to import LNG was not only timely but a visionary step notwithstanding the cynical attitude of the detractors of the government and the political elements essentially hostile to it.

The PML (N) government inherited an economy which was in complete shambles and the country was in the grip of a very severe energy crisis. However, it is satisfying to note that it has exhibited unruffled and unflinching commitment tackle the energy crisis and has made discernible and productive efforts to winch the country out of this debilitating situation, which marred the socio-economic development of the country during the last decade.

Apart from import of LNG for energising the closed power units, the government also strived to surmount the energy crisis through other sources by setting up new power generation units. Under the CPEC power producing projects with an accumulated power generation capacity of 10,640 MW will be completed by 2017-18. Another 6645 MWs of early harvest project in the energy sector are also on the actively promoted list.

The commitment and dedication with which the P L (N) government has focused on ending energy shortages in the country is beyond reproach. The hall mark of the government strategy in regards to power generation is and has been more emphasis on renewable energy resources and increasing their contribution in the energy production mix. Setting up of projects based on indigenous coal to produce electricity, conversion of the existing plants to coal based entities and reliance on solar and wind energy are the

steps in this regard. This would surely reduce the production costs and the provision of electricity to the domestic and industrial consumer on cheaper rates than at present. The country surely is moving towards energy security which is an essential and indispensable ingredient of socio-economic progress.

In the long term there are also plans for producing 30,000 MW of electricity for future needs and sustaining the process of development which is likely to be unleashed with the completion of all projects envisaged under the CPEC.

Source : <https://nation.com.pk/09-Feb-2018/significance-of-energy-security>

A non-participatory democracy By Umair

Javed

IMAGINE a group of citizens living in a densely populated lower middle-income neighbourhood in Lahore. Chances are that they will face any or all of these municipal failures: trash piles in a public space or in an empty plot; a dysfunctional sanitation system; an unpaved or patchy street; and non-functioning street lights. How would they go about resolving such collectively encountered problems?

One response would be to wait patiently for a bureaucrat in the municipal administration to take notice and divert some funding to their area. This could take anywhere between a year to never. Another would be to hope someone in their vicinity is a) well-connected, and b) able to lobby and redirect political attention through the local MPA/MNA, or since 2016, through a local Union Council representative.

This particular mechanism is likely to be most effective in competitive constituencies around election time when politicians become more attentive to voter concerns. In interim periods, political contact and responsiveness nosedives, as demonstrated by a survey conducted by the Institute of Development and Economic Alternatives in Lahore. Only 17 per cent of male respondents in their sample, and a shockingly low 3pc of female respondents, reported any contact with any political party worker in the four years after the 2013 general election.

The wilful secession of participatory rights is a pervasive feature of a number of domains in Pakistan.

The two pathways described are not abstract theorising; they constitute lived reality in vast swathes of a city of 11 million people. At a supply-side level, they point to two basic issues: the first is the outdated and highly opaque architecture of municipal governance, wherein little fiscal and administrative powers are devolved to elected local governments. In the functioning of an array of provincially controlled (and overlapping) bureaucratic bodies, most notably the behemoth Lahore Development Authority, citizen contact, cognisance, and responsiveness are the first few victims.

The second issue is the lack of organised contact between political parties and regular citizens, which undermines the former's primary responsibility as aggregators and articulators of the latter's interests. Pakistan's parties demonstrate low levels of organisational capacity for such basic functions, which is one reason for both their episodic lapses into crises and the prevailing low levels of trust in political elites and processes.

There is, however, a demand-side component to this dysfunctionality. A third pathway to resolving municipal service-delivery issues at the neighbourhood level would have been collective action of some kind. This could take the shape of residents making monetary contributions towards resolving the issue on their own, or mobilising collectively to place sustained pressure on service-delivery concerns through associational platforms (such as a neighbourhood residents' body).

Existing evidence from other contexts tells us that the odds of timely and efficient solutions through collective action are greater than a reliance on the salience of one or two well-connected individuals and the ephemeral generosity of elected representatives.

The participatory angle of politics and governance is largely missing in a city like Lahore. Part of this is certainly traceable to the bureaucratic and political context in which citizens find themselves. As mentioned earlier, parties are weak and poorly organised, while governance is centralised and bureaucratic. Such autocratic contingencies have helped perpetuate a weak associational culture, where the idea of coming together and forming platforms to resolve a collectively encountered problem is often not on the table.

This inadequacy is found across both high- and low-income groups. For poorer citizens, the calculus involved in collective action play a deterring role. The opportunity cost of time spent organising and mobilising is often very high, thus increasing a reliance on individual brokers and patrons for problem-solving needs.

However, even in Lahore's middle- and high-income areas, where residents have both time and financial resources, participatory activity is highly curtailed and often limited to mosque and bazaar committees. This pales in comparison to urban India, where middle-class citizens utilise associational platforms for mobilising around environmental and service-delivery concerns. One major example from across the border is the ubiquitous Resident Welfare Associations (RWAs), which have proven to be influential shapers of the urban planning process and are now emerging as important nodes of managing services.

There are few parallels to the RWAs or similar bodies in a city like Lahore. The vast majority of middle- and high-income citizens have entered into a bargain with benevolent despots — ie housing society developers (such as Bahria and DHA), where they forgo their voice and participatory rights in exchange for improved, private municipal services. This works particularly well at the start, when there are few pressures on services and developers are eager to establish their brands. However, when services begin to falter, citizens are left without a formal platform that allows for grievance articulation and redress.

While the discussion so far has focused on municipal services, the wilful secession of participatory rights is a pervasive feature of a number of domains in Pakistan. Another strong example of this was the parental reaction to an increase in high-cost private school fees a couple of years ago. For decades, two generations of parents and school owners were willing to keep each other at arm's length as long as their basic bargain for above-average quality education in exchange for a fee challan was intact. As soon as the relationship faltered, however, parents were left with no option but to run to the government for regulation. This sub-optimal outcome could have been avoided if in the preceding years parents had pushed for increased involvement in the affairs of schools run on their money.

Demand-side weakness not only has adverse consequences for service delivery, it also contributes to the weak foundations of a democratic system. Associational culture, community participation, and mobilisation are central aspects of any healthy democracy, and given their absence, it is easy to see why democracy in Pakistan remains prone to crises.

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Source: <https://www.dawn.com/news/1388804/a-non-participatory-democracy>

Why we need continuity of democracy By Dr Raza Khan

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This is the election year in Pakistan and for the second time on the trot an elected dispensation is apparently going to complete its constitutional tenure. This is an unprecedented development in our checkered political history. However, there has been a widespread debate in the public sphere regarding the need of a democratic political system and its benefits. While a lot of questions could be raised on the quality of democracy and governance in the country, there can be no denying the fact that howsoever weak and substandard democracy may be, the system needs to continue as there is no other viable option for the state and people.

Democracy is a process and a culture. This process would go and the culture would get entrenched and flourish when at the structural level the umbrella is there to protect it and provide it a conducive environment to grow. However, when at the structural and systemic levels the political system and governance is not democratic it is well nigh impossible that the process of democratisation would catalyse and the culture of democracy would thrive.

The fundamental issue with the non-flourishing of democracy in Pakistan has been the incompatibility of its social structure with the essence and values of a democratic culture. The nature of social structure, which comprises the social institutions, social values, social roles and social statuses, of Pakistan is largely undemocratic. Democratic culture has its peculiar values which inter alia include equality, equity, justice, freedom and individualism (together creating a culture of merit, inventiveness and amity). Against this backdrop having a democratic political system is important. It is under this systemic structure that a democratic structure could be anticipated to evolve.

The social structure is profoundly and extensively tribal and ultraconservative. Such social structure primarily functions on the institutionalisation of traditional authorities and primordial ties. That is the fundamental reason that symbols of traditional authorities like Khan, Malik, Chaudhry, Wadera and Sardar on the one hand and imam on the other have been dominating the society through their societal power and influence to the exclusion of the masses, and their consciously and freely-elected democratic and liberal leaders. In this scenario, liberal leadership would have a fair chance of play if the democratic political institutions are there and sustainable. On their part, members of the traditional authorities and elites have been successful in manipulating the democratic political system and have

had prevented the evolution of a democratic structure by infiltrating and dominating the institutions of democracy like parliament, political parties and elected governments.

Thus the very institutions of democracy which could otherwise have been a guarantee of flourishing of democracy in Pakistan have served as stumbling blocks for the evolution of democracy. Still Pakistani people and democrats have no other option but to stick to the democratic political system as it is the best mechanism to produce forward-looking, visionary, non-traditional leadership. Such leadership is critically needed for two fundamental objectives of the state and society: to provide multi-dimensional security to the citizens and to ensure all encompassing development of the people and society. This includes economic, political, ecological and human security as well as social, economic, infrastructure and human development.

Institutions of a tribal culture intrinsically operate on the principle of inequality and top-down flow of power and authority. Therefore, the values of a tribal culture, like that of Pakistan, are incompatible rather in conflict with the values of democracy. A society like Pakistan which is based on tribal principles where equality and equity are hard to be attained or ensured, whereas democracy functions on the very principle of equality to all members of society and citizens of the state. For instance, every member of society and citizen of the state have only one vote to exercise and are expected to have equal opportunity of social and economic mobility. At least in letter the Pakistani political system, which is outwardly democratic but inwardly not, operates on the principle of one-person-one-vote but most of the people cannot use vote freely either because of the pressure of the respective traditional authorities or bonds or because of their lack of education and information. Resultantly, the government which gets elected is based on what German political-thinker-cum-sociologist Noelle Neumann called 'loud minority' while the majority become 'silent'. This theoretical democratic base of the Pakistani political system is indeed good because it at least provides the framework for the evolution of a democratic system and culture. Therefore, this needs to be sustained as the system does have a self-rectification mechanism. The present political system must continue as this would increase the capacity of the politicians and citizens to govern. Any derailment of democracy would further entrench the power of institutions like bureaucracy without any inhibition.

As the state and its people have been encircled by forces that are undemocratic and conservative, the way forward is continuity of the political system with the intelligentsia also having to play a pronounced role instead of working for personal interests.

Source : <https://tribune.com.pk/story/1630772/6-need-continuity-democracy/>

Is Pakistan a failing state BY YASMEEN AFTAB

ALI

Pakistan is tethering on virtual non-governance springing from weak institutions at the cost of corruption of different hues by individuals who are posted at top slots more because of whims than being qualified for the position appointed to. In the given circumstances, any positive outcome in the forthcoming elections alone is not possible. Elections are a means to an end and not an end in itself. The country's democratic progress is hampered by the politician themselves where families are ruling the roost to the exclusion of any other quality.

One of the greatest missteps has been the decision of Pakistan to accept US aid in exchange from becoming her ally under the mantle of Prime Minister Liaqat Ali Khan, making her reliant on aid rather than being economically independent. This economic reliability has led to losing independence in making foreign policy decisions based on national interests. The outcome of an early dependence on economic aid led to Pakistan agreeing to and training of Mujahedeen to counter Soviet Union in Afghanistan. One major reason for failure of Pakistan's foreign policy has been the fact that it has remained static, failing to evolve with changing geopolitical developments. The other has been the inability of policy makers to balance out relationships with different regional and global players by putting all eggs in one basket. Earlier it was US now it is China. Putting all eggs in one basket is a fatal error irrespective of whose basket it is.

Pakistan lacks a coherent, long-term view on issues which reflects in its poor diplomatic efforts — if any. Governments come and governments go, the thrust towards issues involving nations remains even — of course needing periodic assessment based on emerging situations. War in neighbouring Afghanistan is weakening Pakistan as a modern state, rather than focusing on using diplomacy as a tool to develop better relations in the region as well as internationally makes her muddle her way through emergency situations more on ad hoc basis than based on any long-term strategy. The longer the war in Afghanistan continues the more it will weaken Pakistan. International relations must be based on national interests. There are no permanent friends or permanent enemies. With Afghanistan, Pakistan has been unable to revisit her policies initiated in the Cold War era. The ground realities now are different. Different policies or a combination of policies are needed to redefine the relationship.

Over population has led to lower standard of living. The lesser the education, lesser the income, the more the members per family. Often one earning hand is responsible for feeding seven or eight mouths

Pakistan's domestic policies are in a woeful state. From needs of small farmers, to quality of seed provision and their affordability, to upgrading of marketing of goods from producer to market where middleman walks away with major chunk of profits, old and dated methods of farming, low yield per hectare; the issues are widespread and need urgent attention.

Pakistan has failed to evolve a uniform system of education. The private schools catering to different income groups, the government-run schools to the lower echelon of the society and parallel to these two systems is the madrassa system. Increase in madrassas reflects upon failure of state to provide decent education to its people. The importance becomes magnified for those who cannot afford one themselves and choose the option of madrassa education. As the state stepped back from focusing on its priorities, madrassas stepped in and gained space to fill the gap. The students graduating from these seminaries are completely oblivious to the subjects that can win them good places in the employment market such as business, law, economics et al. Their applicability usually remains restricted to set ups like the madrassas they graduate from and/or the people who run them.

There is no long term planning either to analyse development of need based industries, fields and areas over time to then develop manpower in line with the nation's need. The result is young people with degrees in a field that are over saturated and not enough quality people in areas where needed.

Corruption at all levels in Pakistan is a prominent deterrent for investors in businesses that can boost economy. This malady rides from top down. Disqualified prime minister is presently facing case(s) by NAB for disclosure of offshore assets. The wide spread corruption owes to lack of implementation of laws rather than lack of laws. Whether it is land administration, police, taxation system customs administration, and public procurement... the list is long and is corrupt practices high.

Energy crisis that has caused huge set back over years to businesses and made lives of common people a living hell has bedeviled the country. Old systems, loss of electrify along the line, is just the tip of the iceberg.

Over population has led to lower standard of living. The lesser the education, lesser the income, the more the members per family. Often one earning hand is responsible for feeding seven or eight mouths.

Production and sale of fake medications is another area where big bucks are being made. Law and order situation is in shambles.

Unfortunately for all the cumulative failures, no one is ready to accept the buck. No one wants to be responsible in spite of enjoying the perks of a position. People actually get away with ludicrous statements like Nawaz Sharif stating at a public gathering organised by his Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) regarding Kashmir Solidarity Day at the Muzaffarabad University College Ground, “They ruined my plans for the development of Kashmir, had I not been disqualified I would have eliminated poverty from the region.” One may ask what plans he made or came to light during his four years of current tenure alone. Even today, it is his party in power. Exactly what’s stopping him to make the plans a reality?

End Note: “The political institutions of a society are a key determinant of the outcome of this game. They are the rules that govern incentives in politics. They determine how the government is chosen and which part of the government has the right to do what. Political institutions determine who has power in society and to what ends that power can be used. If the distribution of power is narrow and unconstrained, then the political institutions are absolutist, as exemplified by the absolutist monarchies reigning throughout the world during much of history.

Source ; <https://www.pakistantoday.com.pk/2018/02/13/is-pakistan-a-failing-state/>

Pakistan's Strategic Partnership: China vs.US

By Aymen Ijaz

The recent visit of Obama to India has raised a significant question for Pakistan to review its foreign policy goals and prioritize its national and regional interests i.e. China vs. US?

The fast growing Indo-US ties have urged Pakistan to remind Washington that it also has a powerful strategic ally in the region i.e. China. The second visit of Obama to India as US President, guaranteeing nuclear concessions and NSG waiver to a non-signatory of NPT, gaining access to Indian market economy, offering \$4 billion loans and investments, inking 10 year defence agreement and reiterating its support for India's ambitions to seek permanent membership of UNSC clearly reflects discriminatory policy of US towards Pakistan. Notwithstanding Pakistan's enormous contribution to US led war on Terror, US has never shown satisfaction rather demanded from Pakistan to do more.

Pakistan has been a key strategic ally of US in GWOT. It has suffered for more than a decade to fight Al-Qaeda. The exact number of Pakistani casualties in this war is hard to calculate. The Pakistani soil has become battlefield for terrorists and extremist elements due to this US-led war. Pakistani military remained engaged on both internal and external fronts simultaneously. Military operations were launched in tribal areas of Pakistan to eliminate the menace of terrorism. On the other hand when US troops are being withdrawn from Afghanistan, it is feared the US may repeat its policy of leaving Pakistan in lurch as was done after Soviet-Afghan war. It goes beyond saying that US can ill afford to overlook the geo-political importance of Pakistan, particularly after the withdrawal of NATO forces from Afghanistan. Pakistan provides an access route to Central Asia and Europe which is key to the furtherance of US activities in these regions. Contrarily, instead of playing a balanced role in South Asia US has exacerbated the situation by manifesting its clear tilt towards India. It is high time for Pakistan to revisit its strategic partnership with US. And an alternative to it, Pakistan must seriously mull over reaching out to other powers like China and Russia.

China and Pakistan are time tested friends sharing long history of exemplary relationship. Both the countries have mutual economic and security interests. Pakistan is relying on China for its vast investment in energy, trade sector and its support on Kashmir issue at international forums. While China deems Pakistan as an important ally to counter balance Indian and US influence in the region. Besides this it needs Pakistan to counter regional terrorism and to gain access to Middle East- Indian Ocean via Gwadar Port. Moreover, the Silk route running through Pakistan is best suited for China to reach Central Asia and Europe. Pakistan and China have been co-operating in sectors of defense, energy, infrastructure, health and technology. Both have joint ventures like Gwadar Port and proposed Pak-China Economic Corridor. China has never been skeptical about

Pakistan's relations with US or its growing ties with Russia. Similarly, China's commercial and economic co-operation with India has never irked Pakistan. There has been a deep seated mutual confidence and understanding between the two states since inception. US and India has always viewed the relations between the two with concern and undue suspicion. For US, the emergence of China as a global power is radiating serious threat to its national interests, the containment of which appears to be its core objective.

On Indian side as well, China's strategic alliance with Pakistan has not been welcomed. India considers Pakistan as its arch rival since its establishment. Pak-India holds baggage of bitter past experiences and inter-state conflicts. Similarly Indo-China relations have been mired by long standing border disputes and hegemonic war to seek the status of global and regional power. India's desire to secure UNSC permanent membership is also not acceptable for China. India is also threatened by China's "String of Pearls Strategy". In the light of flourishing Pak-China relations, India feels apprehensive and has diverted its alliance towards Japan, Russia and particularly US. In the last decade, Indo-US relations have shown convergence of security, geo-political and economic interests in the region. The rise of China is a mutual threat for both. Both the states have strategic defence and nuclear co-operation. US foresees active Indian role in Afghanistan after its troops withdrawal. India is also important for US to tackle regional terrorism and to pursue its Asia Pacific Pivot policy and Indo-Pacific strategy. India also provides market for high value US exports and investments. India's goal to achieve deeper economic integration with countries in Pacific Rim and to secure its policies in Indian Ocean has also led to strengthening of Washington-Delhi alliance.

In the context of evolving Indo-US relations and their strong regional alliance, Pakistan must rethink about its partnership with US. In the changing dynamics of global politics and power structure, Pakistan has to diversify its foreign policy, strategic vision and diplomacy. It is said that we can change friends but we cannot change neighbours. Fortunately, China is our immediate neighbor and long lasting friend and by improving our strategic partnership with China we can achieve better national, regional and global interests as compared to US.

Source : <http://www.ipripak.org/pakistans-strategic-partnership-china-vs-us/>

Indo-Pak peace: it takes two to tango By Dr. Rizwan Zeb

Gurmeet Kanwal is a leading strategic thinker of India and is a regular participant in a number of regional and international initiatives discussing Indo-Pakistan strategic stability issues. His recent book 'Sharpening the Arsenal India's Evolving Nuclear Deterrence Policy' is a must read for all interested in making sense of the evolving India's nuclear policy and how it might look in the years ahead.

On February 1, Hindustan Times published his op-ed 'It is time for Pakistan Army to give peace with India a chance'. Had this op-ed appeared on April 1, this scribe would have taken it as a joke and a poor attempt at imitating Stephen Leacock. In his article as the title indicates, he has graciously advised the Pakistan Army chief to rise to become a statesman and give peace with India a serious consideration. To plead this case, he highlighted the following: "For more than 70 years now, the Pakistan army has been waging a low-intensity limited war against India at the Line of Control (LoC), ostensibly to complete what it calls the "unfinished agenda of the Partition" — the merger of Jammu and Kashmir with Pakistan. ... The GHQ will find that hostility with India over seven decades has yielded no dividends. ... The Balochis (I assume GK meant Baloch, Balochi is the language Baloch speak. RZ) are fighting for their independence, despite the military jackboot riding roughshod over their human rights and dreams. The Shia-Sunni sectarian divide appears unbridgeable and creeping Talibanisation is posing new threats. Pakistan's economy is in the doldrums and, with the \$54 billion China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) in full swing, the country is heading for an inevitable debt trap. ... The international community is apprehensive of the likelihood of a few of Pakistan's nuclear warheads falling into jihadi hands through subversion. Given the extent of radicalisation of the Pakistan army, even more worrisome is the possibility of a jihadi-led coup from within the army. The consequences of such a coup are likely to be horrendous — both for the region and the international community. ... India has shown immense strategic restraint in the face of the gravest of provocations to keep the level of conflict low lest it hurts its economic growth." He concludes "The leadership of the Pakistan army must realise that there is no point in continuing to pursue a fundamentally flawed policy. ... Since conflict has not paid dividends, it is time to give peace a chance. If Pakistan were to stop supporting radical extremism, put an end to cross-border terrorism and extend the hand of friendship, India will reciprocate with enthusiasm. General Bajwa can rise to the occasion like a statesman, or fall by the wayside as another also-ran like many of his predecessors." (Gurmeet Kanwal, "It is Time for Pakistan Army to give peace with India a chance," Hindustan Times, 1 February 2018)

All this, my dear readers, is not surprising at all. This is yet another attempt to blame Pakistan for everything that is wrong between India and Pakistan. New Delhi believes that in the prevailing international environment, Islamabad is under tremendous pressure internationally and that the power configuration at the national, regional and international levels favors India and it is time to do things according to its own terms. A significant number of Indian strategic thinkers are of the view that Pakistan is a failed state and the country is under a strong military grip and there is no likelihood that it would loosen up any time soon in the near future. Since the arrival of PM Modi on the scene, India has increased its anti-Pakistan campaign and rhetoric. Blaming Islamabad for not responding positively to Modi's positive gesture, Indian narrative mentions Modi's invitation to PM Sharif at his inauguration and visit to Lahore to attend a marriage ceremony completely ignoring PM Modi's and his national security advisor's stance and active support for TTP and the Baloch separatists. The barrage of extremely aggressive, provocative and gratuitously reckless statements from the Indian army and air force chiefs regarding Pakistan are another indication of this duplicity as well as a growing civil-military tussle in India.

Since assuming the office of the prime minister of India, Modi has blown cold and hot. It could have been argued that Modi's New Delhi has finally decided how it wants to deal with Pakistan, but then the Indian side disclosed to the Indian media that the National Security Advisors of India and Pakistan are in contact and have secretly met in Thailand. What is happening here, especially when the Indian armed forces chiefs are making extremely provocative statements? Are they on board with the Indian civilian leadership's contact with Islamabad? Islamabad has its own narrative. On February 14, 2018, Pakistan's Defence Minister Khurram Dastgir stated "India had not only wasted the opportunity for normalization of ties with Pakistan, but was also restricting space for peace lobby through its aggressive anti-Pakistan rhetoric." He added that India's current government's continuous hostile, anti-Pakistan stance has drastically reduced the space for any advocate of peace. Adding "India must answer for state-sponsored espionage against Pakistan." Given that "Living evidence in person of Kulbhushan Jadhav is in front of the world," and that Pakistan is still waiting for justice to be done on the 42 Pakistanis that were murdered on the Samjhota Express in 2007." So far, peace remained elusive because both follow different approaches: Islamabad wants to resolve the conflicts; New Delhi wants to manage the conflicts. Both sides need to move beyond their original positions and the preconditions they attach to a dialogue. Another important factor in the success or otherwise of this process would be the Indian illusion that they are "bargaining from a position of strength".

For India to rise as a global player and for the stable and prosperous Pakistan, peace between the two is a must. Indian strategic community needs to realize that playing to the gallery only strengthens hawks and that it takes two to tango.

Source : <https://nation.com.pk/19-Feb-2018/indo-pak-peace-it-takes-two-to-tango>

Can we redefine a foreign policy that's reached a dead end? By Touqir Hussain

THESE are the best of times and the worst of times for Pakistan's foreign policy. At one end is the dangerous security environment with the Afghan war radiating instability in the region and beyond, and militant groups posing a danger inside Pakistan.

At the other is China's ambitious strategic outreach, the opening up of Central Asia, and a globalised economy that is fostering trade, investment and regional economic cooperation. In between, the emerging geopolitics cuts through both worlds.

There are thus exceptional threats and opportunities for Pakistan. We have not seen the present level of Indian hostility since perhaps the days of the Indian National Congress's opposition to the idea of Pakistan.

The US is exploring punishments that go beyond sanctions. And Afghanistan is colluding with India to engage in acts of subversion and terrorism inside Pakistan.

But through its professional army and nuclear capability, Pakistan is strong enough to deter Indian aggression, and is capable of confronting any challenge from Afghanistan. And with its well-tested diplomacy Pakistan can withstand pressure from the US.

Why do these countries then continue to loom large in our daily lives as a threat numbing our thinking of alternatives to our present security paradigm that limits foreign policy?

Can we redefine a foreign policy that's reached a dead end?

Yes, security should have high priority for any country that has not found deterrence but exclusive focus on security comes at a price.

If you have found a solution it is time to concentrate on the aspirations of the people for a better quality of life. Otherwise, you will continue to pursue extra security that you do not need, at a much higher cost, and to the people's detriment.

There is a whole new world of economic opportunities around us. Indeed, there is a world beyond CPEC which does not exhaust the benefits that Pakistan's resources and excellent geopolitical location offer. In fact, the new geopolitics makes us valuable to all, only if we have a creative foreign policy.

We must rethink our foreign policy beginning with an honest question: are we providing others with a rationale for hostility? Pakistan's perceived links with militant groups and the Afghan Taliban are unfortunate.

There are serious internal security challenges and genuine complications in relations with India, Afghanistan and the US. Pakistan cannot befriend them unilaterally but have we tried? The reality is that the old paradigm of relating to these countries and the new world of economic opportunities have collided.

Afghanistan is being destabilised and is using India to hit back. We do not need to fight India in Afghanistan. India is there because it serves Kabul's purposes. It is Afghanistan that Pakistan needs to worry about. An unstable Afghanistan means an unstable Pakistan which in turn jeopardises CPEC and Pakistan's future.

We need to understand that a covert purpose of India's unremitting hostility is to induce Pakistan to cling to those very policies that have inflicted harm on the country so that it can isolate itself.

Lastly, if we want to have no worry about our nuclear assets being seized by the US we should gear all our policies to strengthen Pakistan's stability and economic future. Nobody can touch these weapons then. There have been international concerns about their fate in case the country descends into chaos. Prove them wrong by letting your stability do the talking.

How do we bring about a change in foreign policy? The foreign policy-making mechanism that virtually gives a veto to the security establishment on policies on India, Afghanistan and the US cannot preside over change.

These policies reinforce the civil-military imbalance but it appears that the civilian rulers feel that the price of this equation is worth paying since their own way of running Pakistan is no better.

It is time to find a new way of bringing about a change in outlook. What is in evidence is enormous talent within the country. There are academics, journalists, authors (many of them internationally acclaimed), retired public servants — civil and military — who all have shown extraordinary knowledge of foreign affairs.

The need is to form a commission of some of these eminent people. Let them work for six months, mull over issues, and interview various segments of society including legislators, leaders of public opinion, educators, serving and retired officials in the foreign and defence policy establishment, and business community.

The commission should come up with a critique of existing policies and recommendations for change to be fully publicised by the media. Even if it does not lead to a policy change, the public would become aware of alternatives to the present foreign policy that seems to have reached a dead end.

Source : <https://www.dawn.com/news/1390503/new-choices>

Can the three pillars of the state coexist in harmony **By Irfan Husain**

WHILE ducking for cover from the barrage being aimed at the political system by the judiciary, one yearns for the good old days when courts avoided passing judgement on cases of an overtly political nature.

Now, it may appear to some that the role of the Supreme Court as the ultimate appellate authority has become secondary to the more ambitious job of setting the whole country right. Never mind that their lordships may not have the expertise or, indeed, the time, to supervise their well-intentioned reforms.

And although the constitutional mandate to take on the executive's role may not be available, the suo motu provision to crack the whip over politicians and bureaucrats is often used. In a country where poor governance is the norm, this is not always a bad thing. However, when the judiciary strikes down laws passed by parliament, many see it as overreach.

When the Panamagate scandal was first referred to the SC, I had predicted that it would refuse to hear it. My reasoning was that any judgement would have a winner and a loser: in this case, either Imran Khan or Nawaz Sharif. Neither is known for his grace in defeat.

Had the verdict disqualified Imran Khan, I can't imagine him bowing his head in humility and thanking their lordships for their sagacity. He would have been out there, breathing fire and fury, and threatening yet another lockdown of Islamabad. Now, of course, being the beneficiary of the verdict, he can afford to praise the SC, and denounce Nawaz Sharif for daring to criticise the controversial judgement that has disqualified him.

But beyond disqualifying Nawaz Sharif, the SC is seen to have extended its overreach to striking down an act of parliament that permitted a disqualified member of the house to lead a political party. This is a new phase in judicial activism that has already seen judges assume vast executive powers.

Can the three pillars of the state coexist in harmony?

Regular readers of this column will know that I hold no brief for Nawaz Sharif; in fact, I have been highly critical of his leadership over the years. But I have supported democracy consistently, and when there is a clash of institutions — as there is now — our shaky system is threatened.

At the heart of this ongoing confrontation is the rivalry between Imran Khan and Nawaz Sharif. The former is hungry for power, but even he can see that defeating the PML-N in Punjab is proving harder than he had anticipated. He is thus driven to extra-political means to win the top prize. In the view of many, this includes drawing the military and the judiciary into the fray.

Nawaz Sharif, on the other hand, has seen his popularity rise by playing the victim card. His public meetings have been well-attended, while his rivals have struggled to fill the chairs at theirs. Rather than crumbling before a series of judicial blows suffered by their leader, his base has rallied to him.

Unfortunately, by agreeing to hear the Panamagate case, the SC unleashed a series of unintended consequences. By now some are beginning to question if the SC was indeed a neutral arbiter in the recent series of controversial judgements. But this was inevitable: in any high-stakes legal battle of a profoundly political nature, the verdict is bound to change the status quo for better or for worse.

The new political scenario before us is of the ruling party nursing a powerful sense of grievance against the judiciary. Chief Justice Saqib Nisar has pronounced that while parliament is supreme, the Constitution is on an even higher pedestal. But in reality, the Constitution was drafted and approved by parliament. Sceptics assert this was not conventional wisdom when taking an oath on Musharraf's PCO.

As things stand, the probability of the PML-N forming the next government is pretty high. While Imran Khan's series of own goals in his personal and public life have contributed to his party's current low ebb, the reality is that Nawaz Sharif remains a very popular leader in Punjab.

But after Nawaz having perceived that he was dubbed a mafia don, can their lordships tolerate him for another five years? As it is, Nawaz Sharif has accused the judiciary of having paralysed the executive, and of having struck down a law passed by a sovereign parliament. Can the executive, judiciary and parliament — the three pillars of the state — now coexist in harmony?

After decades of being blamed for granting legitimacy to military dictators, and sending an elected prime minister to the gallows, the SC obviously wants to move on and put these dark blemishes behind it. But the best way to do this is to improve the working of our courts at every level, and not by seeking the limelight offered by high-profile political cases.

Source : <https://www.dawn.com/news/1391388/judicial-overreach>

Trump, Pakistan, and Kashmir By Fahad Shah

Will a shift in the U.S.-Pakistan relationship affect India-Pakistan relations and Kashmir?

On the first day of 2018, the president of the United States, Donald Trump, took to Twitter to intimate a change in his country's policy toward its long-time ally Pakistan. A day later, the White House confirmed a \$255 million military aid cut to Pakistan, followed by the cutting of \$1.3 billion in annual aid to the South Asian nuclear power, which has been the United States' partner in the now 17-year-long Afghanistan war. The move had many connotations for South Asia, in general, but particularly for Pakistan, which has been in conflict with its neighbor India over many issues — mainly the status of Kashmir.

India and Pakistan have never really been at peace since their birth after the partition of British India in 1947. The conflict started with their conflicting claims over the Muslim-majority princely state of Jammu and Kashmir, commonly known as Kashmir. Both countries control parts of the region with a de facto border — the Line of Control (LoC) — dividing the two sides. The LoC has lately been tense and the two countries have been exchanging mortar shells and bullets, resulting in the deaths of dozens of their soldiers and civilians. Within the Kashmir valley too, violence has only increased.

Pakistan has received more than \$33 billion in aid since 2002 from the United States and now the freeze of more than \$2 billion total in U.S. aid has turned relations bitter. "We can confirm that we are suspending national security assistance only, to Pakistan at this time until the Pakistani government takes decisive action against groups, including the Afghan Taliban and the Haqqani Network," U.S. State Department Spokesperson Heather Nauert told reporters last month.

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According to the Center for Global Development, the United States gave nearly \$67 billion to Pakistan between 1951 and 2011. As the relationship between the United States and Pakistan turns sour again, an impact on the India-Pakistan relationship looks inevitable, with implications for the Kashmir dispute eventually. But Tony Dalton, co-author of *Not War, Not Peace: Motivating Pakistan to Prevent Cross-Border Terrorism*, told *The Diplomat* that it is difficult to make good predictions about how the downturn in U.S.-Pakistan relations might manifest in the region.

"Tensions in Kashmir (firings over the LoC, attacks on Indian military bases, civil unrest) have many determinants that are mostly internal to India and Pakistan, whereas

Afghanistan clearly features inter-state competition. It would not surprise me to see more attacks on Indian-affiliated locations in Afghanistan in the future,” said Dalton, who is also co-director of the Nuclear Policy Program at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace in Washington D.C.

U.S. Grows Closer With India, Pakistan Looks East

Dalton also points out that the United States and many other countries in the region are “keen to facilitate India’s rise.” Pakistan’s leaders have long observed that the United States has turned toward India, which also has interests in Afghanistan and has been investing in the war-torn country. Recently, Pakistan’s National Security Advisor (NSA) Lt. Gen. (retired) Nasser Khan Janjua warned that nuclear war in South Asia was a real possibility and accused the United States of “following the Indian policy on the longstanding Kashmir dispute.”

At the core of current geopolitical dynamics in the region is a power struggle in South Asia. Janjua claimed in Islamabad that, as part of U.S. policy to “counter Chinese influence in South Asia, Washington is conspiring against [the] China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) along with the Indians.” CPEC, which includes investments of over \$60 billion, passes through the part of Kashmir controlled by Pakistan; India opposes the corridor due to its claims over the region.

Dhruva Jaishankar, a fellow in foreign policy at the Brookings Institution’s India office in New Delhi, says that the United States has at various points in time tilted toward Pakistan instead or attempted — as in the 1990s — to play the role of mediator. “Deteriorating U.S.-Pakistan relations today, specifically frustrations in Washington with Pakistan’s inability and unwillingness to stem its support for terrorist groups, has opened up some opportunities for India,” said Jaishankar.

He says that China is investing more in Pakistan as part of CPEC. However, the investment coming into Pakistan is probably only slightly higher than Chinese investment into India. Jaishankar notes that the “biggest impact of all this has been psychological.”

“Many in Pakistan believe they have a new form of support from Beijing, which has emboldened Islamabad in its engagements with both Washington and New Delhi. Whether there are substantive reasons for this newfound confidence remains to be seen,” he notes.

Today, India is getting closer to the United States and Pakistan is looking east. Pakistani Defense Minister Khurram Dastgir, in a recent interview with the Financial Times, said that Islamabad is now deepening its relationship with Russia and China as well as Europe, which he called “a regional recalibration of Pakistan’s foreign and

security policy.” The shift, as Dastgir said, is because of the “unfortunate choice” the United States continues to make in seeking out India to contain China.

Some experts believe that this could nevertheless be beneficial for Pakistan’s new foreign policy. One former Pakistani diplomat, Arif Kamal, in an email interview, tells The Diplomat that the bulk of U.S. assistance to Pakistan has been “transnational” in the military domain. “The Trump era disconnect of assistance is disadvantageous for both. However, if the cut persists, it can only serve as a ‘blessing in disguise’ for Islamabad and hasten [the] diversification of sources of its supplies,” noted Kamal.

Such a development could lead to an intensification of the conflict between India and Pakistan and further escalation of violence. As Dalton notes, in the past, the United States was seen as “a useful and credible party to help tamp down crisis or conflict,” but now changes in the U.S.-Pakistan relationship have “eroded trust in Islamabad that the U.S. would be a neutral outsider in a future crisis.”

Impact on the Kashmir Dispute

The current crisis between India and Pakistan remains centered on Kashmir. Their dispute leaves the civilians in the area living in a highly militarized zone, facing continuous violence.

U.S. policy over Kashmir has constantly been that India and Pakistan need to solve the issue bilaterally. The only way out is to engage in talks and those have been at a standstill for years. But Kamal, the diplomat, points out that Pakistan is ready to wait rather than give way to the other side “in view of the rejectionist India[n] stance on the normalization process.”

“Islamabad will continue to uphold Kashmiris’ right to self-determination, though maintaining a high graph of support to its ‘Kashmir constituency’ and without any militaristic underpinning,” he says.

The long-running conflict between the two sides over Kashmir has cost tens of thousands of civilian lives, with many estimating that as many as 70,000 civilians have died in last 29 years. Since the 2016 civilian uprising in the Kashmir valley, there has been a rise in young boys joining militant groups and even attacking Indian forces’ installations.

The violence has reached such a level that last month the United States issued an advisory to its citizens, cautioning them against travel to Jammu and Kashmir. In August 2017, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi had said that “not the gun, nor bullets” would lead to a breakthrough, but instead that “a solution will be reached through dialogue.” But this month, after a militant attack on an Indian army camp in Jammu,

Indian Defense Minister Nirmala Sitharaman told reporters that “Pakistan will pay for this misadventure.”

The dynamics in Jammu and Kashmir and along the LoC, says Jaishankar, are partly independent of the larger regional dynamics involving the United States, China, and others. “Taken together, developments in Jammu and Kashmir, the continuing stalemate in Afghanistan, the new role of China, and domestic political dynamics in both Pakistan and India do not augur well for India-Pakistan engagement in the medium-term future,” he added.

Looking back at history, outside powers have not had much success mediating in the Kashmir dispute; not even the United Nations is able to do much. Washington in particular has not been very useful as a mediator on this issue, notes Noor Mohammad Baba, a political scientist. He says that the United States hasn’t been active in Kashmir so recent trends won’t make much difference for the Kashmir conflict. “[T]hey [the United States] have accepted the problem but they can’t enforce a solution on Kashmir; they can only persuade,” he says.

“The Americans will not say that Kashmir is not an issue; they will not go out of their way to keep eyes closed against terrorism. Even if they do, it wouldn’t make much difference. When the U.S. was very close to Pakistan, and had problems with India, both were weak — the Americans were interested but only to persuade both countries,” says Baba.

Kashmir At the Center

China’s growing relationship with Pakistan has balanced the India-Pakistan power equation, but the dynamics of U.S.-India relations are being closely watched in the region. As economic concerns have always driven and shifted the foreign policy of countries, it remains to be seen how India, Pakistan, the United States, and China will look at the growing violence in Kashmir and its regional impact.

According to Dalton, the determinants of conflict in and around Kashmir have more to do with domestic politics in India and Pakistan than with the role of external powers in the region. “If there is another Kargil [war], who might India and Pakistan turn to if they sought outside crisis mediation? [It’s] not clear that the U.S. could play this role anymore,” he observes.

It remains an open question what kind of role the United States might play in the larger peace process between India and Pakistan. In the meantime, the two countries continue to stand alert against each other, without the possibility of any productive talks on Kashmir — a region in pain that is in dire need of attention and calm.

Fahad Shah is a journalist and editor of The Kashmir Walla magazine and writes on politics, foreign policy and human rights. He is the editor of anthology Of Occupation and Resistance: Writings from Kashmir (2013).

Source : <https://thediplomat.com/2018/02/trump-pakistan-and-kashmir/>

Nuclear conflict: Pakistan, India increasingly reliant on mediators By Our Correspondent

ISLAMABAD: With nuclear-tipped hostile neighbours Pakistan and India shying away from direct engagement and wary of direct conflict, the two countries will be increasingly reliant on powerful mediators with their own vested interests in the region.

This was stated speakers at a roundtable discussion on “Brokering Peace in Nuclear Environments: US Crisis Management in South Asia” organized by the Center for International Strategic Studies in Islamabad on Wednesday.

Dr Moeed Yusuf, the associate vice president for Asia programmes at the US Institute of Peace (USIP), discussed the implications of third party involvement in crises between regional nuclear powers such as India and Pakistan.

With his book, Brokering Peace in Nuclear Environments: US Crisis Management in South Asia, to exploring the effects of the presence of nuclear weapons on the behaviour of global powers such as the United States as they try to influence the behaviour of regional nuclear rivals, Dr Yusuf presented his model of crisis management.

Called ‘brokered bargaining’, he pointed out that global contemporary concepts of deterrence are based on the Cold War — pivots to superpowers such as the US and Soviet Union rather than the involvement of stronger third parties.

In South Asia, however, the situation was rather different. US involvement in the crises between India and Pakistan since the 1998 nuclear tests has been consistent.

Dr Yusuf propounded that such involvement will become inevitable going forward.

“Pakistan must be prepared to deal with this reality,” he said.

He went on to suggest that India and Pakistan will be compelled to engage with the US and even other strong regional powers such as China to achieve their crisis objectives through these intermediaries rather than contemplating direct conflict in a nuclear environment.

These third-party states, he hoped, will be interested in ensuring crisis de-escalation given their concerns about a nuclear war between India and Pakistan.

In this context, Dr Yusuf was of the view that it was not necessary that the US would back India or that China would continue to support Pakistan in a crisis situation.

Dr Yusuf applied this framework to known conflicts in South Asia, and specifically to Kargil, the 2001-2002 standoff, and the Mumbai attacks, and explained how all the actors conformed to the model.

Source:<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1629049/1-nuclear-conflict-pakistan-india-increasingly-reliant-mediators/>

Free media and corruption |Editorial

Berlin-based anti-corruption watchdog Transparency International has ranked Pakistan 117 out of 180 countries in its annual Corruption Perception Index (CPI), giving the country a score of 32; the same as last year. Meaning that the country's ranking has dropped just one spot since 2016.

With the score still below 50 — Pakistan is still considered highly corrupt. According to Transparency International, graft is more likely to occur in countries where the media is not free and limitations on free speech exist. And here in Pakistan, we recognise the link between independence of the fourth estate and our improved CPI ranking since the 1990s. Back in 1995, when this Index was first published — we ranked 39 out of 41 countries.

Yet much more needs to be done. For while we are home to a vibrant media industry — curbs still prevail when it comes to free speech. And, often, these are imposed violently. Pakistan comes in at number seven on the Committee to Protect Journalists' (CPJ) Global Impunity Index (GII), which aims to rank countries where journalists and media persons can be targeted with little or no consequence. According to the media watchdog, at least 21 journalists have been murdered in Pakistan in the past decade; with prosecution occurring in just two instances. Indeed, two cases stand out; both from 2016. First, Shabbir Siham was charged with violating the Anti-Terrorism Act by authorities in Gilgit Baltistan for writing a column criticising the regional legislative assembly. Second, Daulat Jan Mathal was booked for publishing “anti-state material” for his role in editing a publication that supported national autonomy for GB. This underscores how the authorities exploit the pretexts of combating terrorism and protecting the national interest to censure journalists in this country.

Towards this end, Transparency International recommends that regimes and civil society alike focus on laws covering access to information. There was some progress in this regard back in August 2017 when Pakistan passed the Right of Access to Information Bill. While this gives the citizenry the right to peruse records of government authorities — those pertaining to the armed forces remain inaccessible. Furthermore, the ‘value’ of this bill is up for debate given that only 58 percent of Pakistanis are literate.

In short, this country is still treated as a playground for the corrupt. Back in August 2017, Prime Minister Abbasi contended that the PML-N government had set a precedent for graft-free free governance; a mere month after the Supreme Court sent his predecessor packing on fraud-related charges. Yet fast-forward to today and the

Auditor General of Pakistan this month found discrepancies worth Rs300 billion in the accounts of the Punjab government. These included Rs27 billion in excess payments for the controversial Lahore Orange Line Metro Project. We therefore hope that the next government gets its priorities right and does more to protect the rights of civil society and media workers. Bluntly put, we need a set-up that walks the walk rather than simply talking the talk. For the people of Pakistan have heard it all before.

Source : <https://dailymtimes.com.pk/207105/free-media-corruption/>

Foreign policy blues! By Wajid Shamsul Hasan

THE other day I was asked a question by a student here what is Pakistan's foreign policy. I asked him to rephrase the question: does Pakistan have a foreign policy or not since to have a foreign policy is one thing, whether we have one or not is another issue. Before I could comment on the first or the other, supplementary question that followed was regarding 'failures and follies' of our foreign policy and the urgent necessity to discuss them as the need of the hour.

Indeed, there are no two views and the way we have messed up our foreign policy, the need of the hour is for Parliament to discuss it threadbare especially following the arbitrary decision of the government to rent out its troops for the defence of a foreign country. Humbly I believe a foreign policy is a set of parameters that a country evolves to safeguard its geo-strategic interests, have an effective authority of the state within and in securing its borders making them inviolable. When a country ceases to have control over its borders, its claims to sovereignty become questionable. Lastly, in the affairs of diplomacy it has to remain riveted to the fact that in the conduct of bilateral relations or any other, there is no such thin as permanent friendship—whether it is higher than Himalayas or deeper than the seven seas—permanent is a country's geo-strategic interests only and nothing else. And there is no room for compromise on it.

After General Ziaul Haq's anti-Bhutto coup in 1977 everything took a nose dive. Foreign Office ceased to have any role in framing of foreign policy; everything was delivered to them from the strategists and warlords of Aabpara. Instead of national interests, he believes in his own legitimacy from foreign masters and self dividends. After great deal of struggle by Benazir Bhutto, PPP and other democratic forces Pakistan did return to

truncated democracy in 1988 after Gen Zia's divine fall from the sky. As Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto did try her best to be independent but extra-constitutional forces were much too powerful and her government did not last more than 20 months.

Foreign policy continued under the straightjacket of Aabpara and to this day it continues as such—a sort of jigsaw puzzle. Former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif tried to assert himself but he had too many skeletons in his cupboard that got released and are now haunting him forcing a denouement on his political career. He had no foreign policy and no foreign minister. For more than four years he did not think that Pakistan needed a foreign minister. Many thought that Prime Minister felt confident that he alone was capable of handling it or he thought that there was none in his party capable of running Foreign Ministry. However, people like me who have had the pleasure of dealing with Foreign Office over many decades, at least understood better why he did not have a foreign minister. Since there was no foreign policy so why have a foreign minister—was simple logic.

The other explanation also sounds valid. Since the Foreign Policy had openly sifted into the domain of the Army Chief why have a foreign minister. Throughout the tenure of General Raheel Sharif as COAS major foreign policy decisions were taken by him. Poor Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif— whenever he tried to move forward to break ice with India, something untoward happened to subvert it carrying the message to him that he is not an angel to tread in that hot zone. No doubt we have a foreign minister now and Khawaja Asif is seen to be such by his frequent visits abroad including 4-day recent visit to Russia. Perhaps singular feather in his cap is delay in the implementation of US motion to put Pakistan on the terror financing watchlist. Although the American move had overwhelming support, Chinese helped u to have it deffered. For how long it all depends on our capacity to extend de facto VIP status to Hafiz Saeed and his organisations doing some other questionable business under the cover of charity.

There couldn't more lethal indictment of Pakistan's foreign policy than the fact that despite being a corner stone of American foreign policy for decades at the end of the day we are target of worst hostility from the American President who seems to be master of creating uncertainties across the world. It is not only Americans who are bitterly hostile to us, our immediate next door neighbours too are not very friendly. Cross border violations on the LoC no more seem to summer affair, internal death toll, blinding of the youth with pellets and heating up of the overall environment are so alarming that even Secretary General of the UN has readily offered his mediation. Relations with Afghanistan too are dicey. In this context Americans and Afghan government think that Pakistan is involved hand and glove with the subversive activities of Haqqani Network and Taliban. About relations with Iran, the less said the better.

Our deployment of troops in Saudi Arabia has actually catapulted us in the midst of sectarian Middle Eastern cross firing. Only friendly neighbour that we have is China. Time and again it has been standing by us. However, one must not under emphasise its growing economic interests within Pakistan stretching much too far beyond its borders. Its stakes are too high and so far it does not have a history of getting involved militarily in case of aggression. The corner stone of our foreign policy — our relations with Washington—have ended in a tomb stone. While we don't know if we have a foreign policy or not, our diplomats keep on hinting of Pakistan seeking new alignments—probably the pointer is towards Russia. However, in the present imbroglio policy planners—if any—must realise that Pakistan's geo-strategic situation and its wobbly internal situation with apprehensions of sectarian implosion— do not permit it to take sides against Iran or to be involved in what is considered a sectarian alliance. How should Pakistan extricate itself from this Catch-22 trap is to debate foreign policy in a joint session of Parliament and follow the collective wisdom of the elected representatives of the people rather than individuals. Being the only nuclear Muslim state it must exert its pressure on both Saudi Arabia and Iran to let Pakistan mediate to pull their chestnuts out of fire.

Source : <https://pakobserver.net/foreign-policy-blues/>

ECONOMY

Taxation and the common man | Editorial

Death and taxes are proverbially two of the certainties of life, except that for the majority of Pakistanis the former remains a certainty while the latter is either avoidable or negotiable. A recent Bloomberg report says what has been known for many years — that less than one per cent of the people of Pakistan eligible to pay taxes actually do. The figure has featured in virtually every report on Pakistan issued by the IMF or the World Bank in the last 20 years as well as practically every other donor or lender. Much spluttering and windbagery follows by successive governments along with a raft of empty promises to do better in the future. They never have.

The latest cunning stunt to squeeze taxation out of the people of Pakistan is to use the national identity database to build profiles of potential taxpayers — and then give them a squeeze. It is hoped to plug leakages — probably not — encourage correct property valuation — definitely not — lower individual tax rates — unlikely — and offer an amnesty programme — which has never worked in the recent or far past. With the tax to GDP ratio of about 12 per cent and among the lowest in the world the government will now face the same stiff resistance that it has faced in the past — stonewalling business and corporate sectors and a cloak of invisibility adopted by anybody or entity that has a measurable expenditure.

The people of Pakistan are going to be asked to account for their wealth; and considering the example set by any number of conniving politicians of late there is little incentive to account for anything. The most obvious of paper trails can be brazenly denied as has been ably demonstrated and most tax-eligible citizens could not give a hoot for the ballooning current account deficit that expanded to about 60 per cent or \$7.4 billion over the last six months of 2017. Doubtless the sages at the Sustainable Policy Development Institute in Islamabad are having difficulty containing their mirth. Comparisons with the survival possibilities of a snowball in hell are perhaps being bandied about. And the chances of the plan succeeding? Zero.

Source : <https://tribune.com.pk/story/1629814/6-taxation-common-man/>

Lagging behind on financial front | Editorial

Centralised planning of the national economy is a hugely complicated exercise, marrying vision and goals to the existing circumstances and future requirements, setting realistic output targets based on sound economic analysis, availability of accurate statistical data, and above all, political will and drive. The Five Year Plans of the Soviet Union (1928-32) and People's Republic of China (1958-61) were the stepping stones that transformed these two then backward nations from wretched poverty into modern industrial giants, though at great human cost, but then the architects behind them were Joseph Stalin and Mao Zedong. In fact, all production targets of the USSR's First Five year Plan were achieved in just four years and three months!

But in Pakistan's case, with none of the above conditions being met (especially the leadership element) regression and not progress is the sour harvest reaped in its 11th Five Year Plan (2013-18), as the Planning Commissions' internal evaluation reveals government failure in meeting all crucial financial, production, structural and social sector goals across the economic spectrum, even in key areas as power generation, that hold electoral appeal. Considering the country's enormous natural resources and human potential, gigantic inputs of the CPEC, the massive foreign borrowings since 2013, this dismal performance points first and foremost to gross mismanagement and neglect, an inability or unwillingness to manage the dull detail of administration that dedicated leadership entails. The litany of shortfall failures includes among others, average GDP growth (4.4 instead of target of 5.4 percent), agriculture (2.1/3.5 percent), industrial output (5.1/6.3 percent), services (5/5.8 percent), large-scale manufacturing (4.3/6 percent), national savings to GDP ratio (13.1/21.3 percent), Exports (\$20.4 billion/\$29.5 billion), while the only areas showing dubious 'growth' are the alarming Current Account deficit (4/1.2 percent), fiscal deficit (5.5 percent of GDP/3.5) and Imports (\$53.5 billion/\$51.1 billion), while social sector targets such as childbirth, infant and child mortality, literacy rate, potable water access, though showing relative improvement, all miss the bull's eye. Pakistan's economic 'Great Leap Forward' will only be possible with harnessing resources diligently, careful thought and brainstorming, reform-minded ministers, adherence to laid-down policies, and transparency.

Source : <https://www.pakistantoday.com.pk/2018/02/16/lagging-behind-on-financial-front/>

Special economic zones under CPEC By **Hassnain Javed**

Industrial revolution had initiated in the 18th century but the world had to wait till 1959 to witness the establishment of first modern SEZ in Shannon, Ireland. As of 2006, International Labour Organization's (ILO) database reported 3,500 zones in 130 countries and today one can find more than 4300 SEZs around the globe and the number is increasing rapidly. The reason behind this growth is the substantial development that comes with the establishment and successful operation of a SEZ. There is no specific definition of a SEZ; some call it a place where foreign companies enjoy tax benefits, other know it as an area near port for export purpose while remaining consider it as a vehicle to attract FDI; all these descriptions are correct. Countries use SEZs as a tool for industrialization. A number of examples exist in the world from Asia to Latin America that illustrate how SEZs play a vital role in economic growth; however not all the SEZs get miracles like Shenzhen in China. Out of all the countries developing SEZs, China has been the most successful. China has gained immense progress through SEZ ventures. According to an estimate, SEZs, all over the world, have created approximately 66 million jobs out of which 30 million are exclusively located in China.

Special Economic Zones or SEZs are considered significant specifically for the industrial development of a country. Industrial development provides the firm standing on which any country can hope to reap long term economic benefits. At the same time it is important that the SEZs are based on the export oriented business/trade development. SEZs are the specific regions identified and demarcated with the sole aim of bolstering economic activity. The aim is achieved through offering various incentives to the foreign investors such as tax and duty exemptions. This idea is now being practiced all across the globe in various countries and is contributing greatly to their respective economic growth.

Pakistan today, under CPEC, has entered the Industrialization phase. Even though in the past, Pakistan was mindful of establishing these zones and tried to establish the SEZs but the attempts were not particularly successful back then. Nonetheless Pakistan does already have some successful industrial clusters and estates in Sialkot: surgical goods Cluster; Gujarat: ceramic/pottery industrial cluster; Faisalabad: readymade garments manufacturing cluster; Khyber PakhtunKhwa (KPK): marble Cluster; Hattar Industrial Estate (KPK): food and beverage, textile, crockery, chemical industry; and Gujranwala: tannery/leather industrial cluster. However this time along with the renewed conviction, Pakistan can rely on the vast personal and successful experience of China in the establishment of SEZs under the ambit of CPEC. China's own SEZs which number almost around 1800, speaks volume of its sound success in this domain. Since 1980's it has

garnered enough skill, practice and knowledge of the requirements for setting up of these economic zones. Pakistan can also and must utilize this experience of China in ensuring the success of its prospective economic zones.

So far nine SEZs have been identified to be established soon. One each in Punjab, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Baluchistan and Islamabad, two in Sindh and one each in FATA, Azad Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan. Governing structure for these zones is provided in the SEZ Act 2012 and the Board of Investment (BoI) has established “CPEC-SEZ” Cell for facilitating stakeholders on the matters relating to CPEC and Special Economic Zones. Not only can Pakistan learn greatly from China but should also focus on cultivating domestic capacity in the areas of vocational education, agriculture, water management, automobile technology, electrical appliances, and disaster management etc.

Pakistan is eventually set to embrace around 37 SEZs under CPEC. Four SEZ sites were identified in Punjab. Punjab-China Economic Zone and Quaid-i-Azam Apparel Park SEZ are in Sheikhupura while M-3 Industrial City and Value Addition City are in Faisalabad. In Balochistan, nine places were identified for SEZs: Bostan Industrial Zone, Dasht Industrial Zone, Turbat Industrial Zone, Industrial Zone at the Junction of Qilla Saifullah, Zhoband Loralai, Gwadar Industrial Estate, Lasbela Industrial Estate, Dera Murad Jamali Industrial and Trading Estate and Winder Industrial and Trading Estate. In Sindh, four sites were identified for SEZs. These are China Special Economic Zone at Dhabeji in Thatta, China Industrial Zone near Karachi, Textile City and Marble City. Two of these projects were considered in Thatta: China Special Economic Zone, Dhabeji (priority) and Ketu Bandar. The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government requested the establishment of SEZs in 17 places under the CPEC. These include economic zone at Karak, Nowshera, Bannu, Jalozai, Rashakai, Risalpur, Chitral, Buner, Swat, Batagram, Jahangir, Mansehra and Gadoon Amazai. Others include Hattar Phase VII Industrial Zone, Ghazi Economic Zone and Gomal Economic Zone in Dera Ismail Khan. Moqpondass SEZ will be established in Gilgit-Baltistan. In Azad Jammu and Kashmir, Bhimber Industrial Zone will be the priority project while Muzaffarabad SEZ will be the alternative. In Fata, the only SEZ will be Mohmand Marble City. ICT Model Industrial Zone will be established in Islamabad while an industrial park will be developed on Pakistan Steel Mills’ land in Port Qasim near Karachi.

It’s a fact that at the moment Pakistan doesn’t have a manpower proficient enough to operate Chinese technological tools and machineries. Also there is not yet much information available about the nature of labour that will be employed in this project. It is expected that China can provide rigorous training to the local Pakistani workforce and make them skilled enough to use the advanced technology. Not only will it generate domestic employment opportunities but will directly contribute to the sustainable development of Pakistan, which of course is one of the eventual goals of the CPEC. Both China and Pakistan need to work towards bringing more transparency and clarity in this

regard. The final framework should be based on equivalent and balanced opportunities for all the stakeholders.

Last but not the least, for these SEZs to deliver successfully it is important to have a secure foreign investment. For that purpose not only certain economic incentives are to be offered but the provision of basic utilities such as gas, water, electricity are to be ensured too. In this regard the federal governments have already agreed to supply these amenities to the economic zones. Additionally the workable environment should be made available where the security concerns should be at the minimum. The success of economic zones also depends on the socio-economic conditions of adjacent areas. In case of Pakistan, the local employment opportunities and capacity building should be the main focus that should be achieved with the mutual consultation and understanding between both China and Pakistan.

Moreover, Industrial cooperation under CPEC will help us to attract those labour intensive industries and jobs that will definitely change the destiny of Pakistan. This looks difficult but is not something impossible to achieve. In 1979 before economic reforms in China, China's GDP per capita was lower than Pakistan. However, presently China stood at US \$ 8069 while Pakistan is still stuck between US \$ 1400 to 1500. As mentioned earlier China's support in the CPEC is the key to Pakistan's success. China has all the experience that Pakistan needs at the moment. The need of the hour is to keep all the differences aside and leave no stone unturned to make CPEC as an exemplary economic between China and Pakistan for the rest to follow.

Source : <https://nation.com.pk/19-Feb-2018/special-economic-zones-under-cpec>

CPEC: Facts vs fiction | Editorial

MULTI billion China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) has entered the second phase which will see increased industrialization in the country. Since the inception of the project, certain doubts and aspersions were created on the mega project including by some foreign elements inimical to it but it is a matter of satisfaction that there now exists complete consensus on the execution of the project dubbed as game changer not only for Pakistan but the entire region.

Considering it important to remove any misperception in the media and the people about the project, Pakistan-China Institute in cooperation with the JS Global on Monday launched a research report 'The Reality of China-Pakistan Economic Corridor Project: Facts Vs Fiction providing a factual insight of the project whilst rebutting certain myths about the project. Whilst enumerating that the project will strengthen industrial base and increase its exports, the report very pertinently points out how the project will change perception of Pakistan as being an investor friendly nation and act as an effective counter weight to the Indian pressure. The project has been described as a vote of confidence in the future of Pakistan and a way forward for the country's future prosperity. There is no denying the fact that the mega corridor project which has already helped address most of our energy woes is all set to change entire landscape of the country through revolution in the manufacturing and industrial sectors. Indeed shifting of Chinese industries to the special economic zones will not only provide our industries to take benefit from their expertise and technology but also provide vast and open market to our goods abroad and enhance competitiveness in the local market. We really appreciate Pakistan-China Institute for taking a very timely initiative and sifting the facts from the fiction. We expect this will enable the people especially the intelligentsia and analysts to make their analysis keeping in view the facts and ground realities. Earlier, we have also seen the Parliamentary Committee on CPEC under the chairmanship of Mashahid Hussain Sayed doing a tremendous work towards building national consensus on the project and we hope such efforts at the parliamentary level will continue in future as well to reap the full benefits from the CPEC and foil any conspiracy coming its way. Addressing the launching ceremony of research report, the remarks of Chinese Ambassador to Pakistan Yao Jing were very categorical who stated that any problems coming in the way of the CPEC will be addressed collectively. Given the challenges faced by the country on the economic front, we hope that efforts will be further geared up for the early completion of CPEC related projects as it will help the country stand on a sound footing.

Source : <https://pakobserver.net/cpec-facts-vs-fiction/>

EDUCATION

Manifestos and education By Faisal Bari

QUITE soon, political parties will, hopefully, start thinking of their manifestos and the key messages they want to send to their voters ie what the parties stand for, and what they would like to achieve if they are elected and brought to power. Education, as per history and tradition, will get some space in their manifestos.

Article 25-A, the right to education for all five- to 16-year-olds in the country, was added to the basic rights section of the Constitution in 2010 as part of the 18th Amendment, but eight years later we have still not done the basic work needed for implementing 25-A. Maybe, political parties should think about committing to the implementation of 25-A in letter and spirit if they win and come to power.

Traditionally, whenever education has been mentioned in manifestos, it has usually been done so with reference to a) increasing education financing to a certain percentage of GDP, b) curriculum reform, c) role of national language and medium of instruction, d) multiple examination systems and the need (or not) to introduce uniformity, and so on.

A key priority needs to be planning for the implementation of Article 25-A.

All of these are indeed important issues and should be focused on. But what is missing from the discussion is an overall frame in which these issues, and others, need to be embedded. Without a framework, conceptual as well as practical, it is almost impossible to see how we can set targets for ourselves, measure performance and see if promises have been kept or not.

As we are coming closer to the elections, parties have started 'celebrating' what they have accomplished in various areas, including education. The three main parties, in power, in the bigger provinces, are telling us that they have raised education budgets a lot, have increased teacher salaries and grades, have improved teacher recruitment and deployment policies, have provided a lot of infrastructure facilities, and have improved examinations and even the curricula.

In addition, scholarships have been given, laptops and tablets distributed, nutrition and transport programmes piloted. Think of a possible reform, and these provinces have tried and/or implemented them. And there are some results that can be seen as well —

enrolments at the primary level have responded a little. The evidence vis-à-vis learning outcomes is not clear though.

But if one were to ask if any provincial government thought through how it is going to implement Article 25-A (and in what time frame), the answer would be a big fat 'no'.

Compulsory education laws have been passed in some places and drafted in others. But that has been more or less the extent of the progress made. The rules of business and regulations needed for implementation of compulsory education laws have not been made and/or have certainly not been implemented.

None of the provinces have conducted a serious exercise to ascertain what it would take, in terms of financial and human resources and the time frame, to be able to implement Article 25-A. Given that 25-A is in the basic rights section of the Constitution and is the responsibility of the state ("The State shall provide free and compulsory education to all children of the age of five to 16 years..."), should it not be one of the foremost responsibilities of provincial governments to work on actionable plans for implementing 25-A? If education efforts, by parties, are serious, how do we reconcile these with the almost complete ignoring of 25-A?

Out of 37,000 primary schools in Punjab, more than half are still two-room schools. Punjab has only 15,000-odd middle and high schools in the province. There are still areas that do not have any high school for girls for miles. Khyber Pakhtunkhwa still has districts that do not have a single high school for girls. The situation in interior Sindh is no different. Learning outcomes, across Pakistan, leaving aside the small high-fee private school sector, are generally very poor.

As parties start thinking about manifestos for the next election, a key priority needs to be planning for the implementation of Article 25-A.

Simple messages of doubling education budgets or even quadrupling them will not do. Promises of universal education, without costing and implementation strategies/plans will just be 'cheap talk'. Promises of a uniform schooling system for all, when 40 per cent of the enrolled children attend private schools and millions of children are still out of schools, mean nothing. Promises about language, when the state has no effective control over what is going on in the education sector, are mere aspirations.

Political parties need to do much more than what they have been doing so far. They need to do some solid work before they talk of education in their manifestos, if they are serious about the sector. But if the idea is to string along voters, as has been the case in the past, vague promises might still do.

Will any party be brave enough to promise that they will be able to implement Article 25-A fully in the next five years? Or even get there halfway? This would, indeed, be a real promise that could be monitored and followed up on. We would be able to see how many five- to 16-year-olds are in schools, and we would be able to monitor, through the many examinations we now conduct, how well or poorly the children are learning.

Manifestos of political parties, to date, have tended to talk in general terms, especially when it comes to education. Post 18th Amendment, given the inclusion of 25-A in the basic rights section, and the devolution of education to the provincial level, general promises are of little or no help in gauging the commitment of a particular party towards education.

We have a very concrete goal that is now enshrined in the Constitution of the country. Will political parties, this time, care to state their commitment to education in clear and unambiguous terms?

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Source : <https://www.dawn.com/news/1391176/manifestos-and-education>

Terrorism

Anti-terrorism (Amendment) Ordinance, 2018 | EDITORIAL

Pakistan can still surprise the world. And sometimes even in a good way. This is one such occasion. For nine years after the Mumbai attacks — Hafiz Saeed has been officially linked to terrorism. Hallelujah.

But this being a hard country the move came about last week when President Mamnoon Hussain, quietly and behind-the-scenes, promulgated the Anti-terrorism (Amendment) Ordinance, 2018. Meaning that as of now: all individuals and entities outlawed by the UN carry the same designation here in Pakistan.

This is an extremely significant development and the government should be supported towards this end. It is more than likely that the US de-linking of Lashkar-e-Taiba from the list of terrorist outfits that we were to go after to receive military assistance from Washington had a role to play. For free from the public perception of simply kowtowing to American pressure — the civilian leadership found the breathing space to manoeuvre.

Yet it is extremely telling that this didn't go to Parliament and was only announced this week as a done deal. The government had, after all, been vocal in requesting the courts to refrain from releasing Hafiz Saeed from house arrest; to no avail. Similarly, it had reportedly opposed the military establishment's initial overtures to take part ownership of the controversial militant-mainstreaming project.

All of which means that Pakistan is not out of the woods yet. Admittedly, in the short-term, the change in our anti-terror law will likely strengthen our position ahead of the upcoming Financial Action Task Force (FATF) pow wow. But we will have to wait and see how the security apparatus will steer this process. After all, Saeed is a well-known protégé and the most high-profile of so-called 'reformed' assets; apart from a certain former Army chief who has seemingly developed a newfound respect for the democratic process except, of course, when it comes to the un-small matter of pending charges against him. Not only that, Saeed was due to contest this summer's general elections from the MML platform; in Nawaz Sharif's old 'hood no less.

To be sure, the proscribing of the LeT strongman represents a minor shift whereby the civvies are taking charge of security matters. How far this process leads to a mega clean up of Pakistan's polity remains to be seen. Already, there have long been murmurings from retired generals urging the de-linking of the Kashmir issue from the broader issue of cross-border terrorism in the global imagination. And LeT has been said to be fighting India over that disputed territory for some three decades. In fact, it is also believed that Osama Bin Laden put down part of the initial seed money. Then there is the question of how the deep-state still sees the battle for Kashmir as essential to Pakistan's very survival given that the area represents the key to securing long-term access to precious water resources.

Much can happen between now and when Pakistanis go to the polls. The Army may or may not come out of the barracks in broad daylight. Just as the security establishment may or may not impact the electoral process. Though, to be honest, we think the days for such chicanery are through. What will be telling is if a petition is swiftly filed before the higher judiciary seeking to reverse this presidential amendment. And if this does come to pass, the way in which due process is meted out will indicate whether or not there is intra-state consensus on the recent decisions.

Needless to say, Pakistan stands to gain by complying with the international protocols and commitments on terrorism. It will improve its international image and also rid the country of a skewed jihadist culture.

Source :<https://dailytimes.com.pk/201250/anti-terrorism-amendment-ordinance-2018/>

Testing the Legal Limits of the War on Terrorism **By Stephen I. Vladeck**

The Case of an American Held in Iraq

As a Testing the Legal Limits of the War on Terrorism residential candidate, Donald Trump vowed to pursue more aggressive detention and interrogation policies for terrorism suspects. He supported sending detainees to Guantánamo Bay (“We’re gonna load it up with some bad dudes, believe me”) and torturing suspects (“Don’t tell me it doesn’t work—torture works”). Yet for all of Trump’s bluster, his administration’s actions on those matters have proved decidedly modest. For example, an executive order signed by Trump in January generally preserved the status quo for the 41 foreign citizens still in U.S. military custody at Guantánamo, none of whom were sent there by Trump. For better or worse, the Trump administration has shown little interest in pushing the boundaries of who may be held, and under what conditions, in conjunction with the ongoing armed conflict between the United States and al Qaeda and its affiliates.

Yet despite the administration’s reticence, those limits are being tested by a lawsuit that has flown largely under the public radar. Known as *Doe v. Mattis*, it involves an unnamed American citizen who allegedly fought alongside the Islamic State (also known as ISIS) in Syria and who has been detained by the U.S. military in Iraq since September 14, 2017. It raises questions that go to the core of U.S. counterterrorism policy: Has Congress authorized the government to use military force against ISIS? Even if it has, can such force be used against American citizens? And the case has posed an even more fundamental question: For how long can the U.S. government manage to detain one of its own citizens without giving a legal rationale for doing so by impeding the courts’ ability to entertain such a lawsuit? If the tortuous path the case has taken so far is any indication, the answer is not reassuring.

AUTHORIZING ENDLESS WAR

One week after the 9/11 attacks, President George W. Bush signed into law the Authorization for the Use of Military Force, the statute that, to this day, provides the principal source of the U.S. government’s domestic legal authority to use military force against terrorists. Although the AUMF is often characterized as declaring war on terrorism, Congress was, in fact, far more nuanced. It empowered the president to use military force only against “those nations, organizations, or persons he determines planned, authorized, committed, or aided the [September 11 attacks], or harbored such organizations or persons.” Thus, the AUMF raised, but did not answer, two enormous legal questions: Which nations, organizations, or persons would fall within its aegis? And,

less obviously, could the U.S. government use military force against American citizens? (The Non-Detention Act, a 1971 statute enacted partly in response to World War II—era internment camps, requires specific authorization from Congress before the government can detain its own citizens.)

In 2004, the Supreme Court took a half step toward answering the latter question when it concluded in *Hamdi v. Rumsfeld* that the AUMF did authorize the military detention of a U.S. citizen who had been captured during active combat in Afghanistan while fighting alongside the Taliban against U.S. forces. But *Hamdi* is a notoriously narrow ruling. As Justice Stephen Breyer (who cast the key vote in favor of the government in that case) wrote in 2014, *Hamdi* said nothing about detention of people (Americans or foreigners) captured outside Afghanistan, or whether, even assuming their initial detention was lawful, there were any legal constraints on how long the government could hold them.

Hamdi also did not address what has become the dominant question surrounding the AUMF: just how far beyond al Qaeda and the Taliban its authority stretches. Both the Bush and Obama administrations argued that Congress had authorized military operations against any “associated force” of al Qaeda, a reading that, by the middle of 2016, meant that the AUMF had been used to authorize 37 distinct military campaigns in 14 different countries. But that interpretation has never been blessed by the Supreme Court, and even if it is a fair reading of the 2001 statute, it doesn’t encompass ISIS, a group that broke from al Qaeda and thus can’t be said to have “entered the fight alongside” it, part of the official definition of “associated force” used by the Obama administration.

Instead, the United States has based its campaign against ISIS on the notion that the organization is a “derivative group” of al Qaeda and therefore within the ambit of the AUMF, much as a splinter group that broke off from Nazi Germany at the end of World War II would have been covered by the 1941 U.S. declaration of war against Germany. It’s not an implausible argument, but it’s also not self-evident (indeed, Congress separately declared war against each of Germany’s co-belligerents during World War II). That’s why, for the better part of the last four years, a bipartisan array of politicians, policymakers, and commentators (including President Barack Obama himself) have called for a new AUMF that would specifically identify those groups and individuals against which the United States may use military force and which would respond to the ways the antiterrorist campaign has changed since 2001. But despite widespread rhetorical support, such proposals have stalled in Congress, both because the devil is in the details and because there has been no pressing legal imperative for such a clarification. Thanks to *Doe v. Mattis*, that may soon change.

THE CASE OF JOHN DOE

At the heart of the case is John Doe, a dual citizen of the United States and Saudi Arabia who was allegedly fighting on behalf of ISIS in Syria in September 2017 when he turned himself in to the Syrian Democratic Forces, a U.S. ally. The SDF promptly handed Doe to the U.S. military, which transported him to Iraq, where he has since been detained at an undisclosed location as an enemy combatant.

On October 5, the American Civil Liberties Union filed a habeas petition on Doe's behalf. Although the ACLU had no relationship with him (and had no idea who he was), it argued that, because the government refused to identify Doe (and, therefore, allow lawyers to contact family members who could authorize such a suit), someone had to be allowed to ascertain whether Doe wanted to challenge the legality of his detention. The government objected, arguing that the ACLU was trying to bootstrap its way into court, and that even if Doe had a right to judicial review at some point he didn't have it yet, because the government was still deciding what to do with him. On December 23, exactly 100 days after Doe was transferred to U.S. custody, D.C. federal district judge Tanya Chutkan agreed with the ACLU and ordered the government to allow ACLU lawyers access to Doe. Two weeks later, the ACLU reported back that Doe did indeed want to challenge his detention and that he wanted the ACLU to represent him.

With that procedural underbrush cleared, Chutkan may now finally be poised to decide the key question: whether the 2001 AUMF allows the use of military force against ISIS. Moreover, even if she rules that it does, Doe's status as a U.S. citizen will complicate the matter, because it's possible that, thanks to the Non-Detention Act, a clearer statement of Congress' intent is required for the government to detain an American. Thus *Doe v. Mattis* could prompt Congress to finally revisit the AUMF and reassess the entire legal framework for U.S. counterterrorism policy.

For months on end, the U.S. government has detained one of its own citizens without having had to provide any legal rationale for doing so.

Perhaps wary of such a decision's potential impact, the Trump administration has apparently been hard at work trying to moot the case by arranging to transfer Doe to foreign custody—possibly, given his dual citizenship, to Saudi Arabia. On January 23, Chutkan ruled that the government had to provide Doe and the court with 72 hours' notice before transferring him, in case there were legal grounds on which Doe could object. The government is appealing that ruling (the appeal will be argued on April 5), but unless it is overturned, it seems likely that the district court will have to settle the merits of Doe's detention, one way or the other.

AN UNSETTLING PRECEDENT

In one sense, then, the true significance of *Doe v. Mattis* remains to be seen. It is still an open question what, if anything, the court will say about the AUMF's applicability to ISIS

and those fighting on ISIS' behalf and whether, before the case gets that far, it settles the circumstances in which U.S. citizens suspected of terrorism can be transferred to foreign custody.

Yet Doe has already set an important and disturbing precedent. For months on end, the U.S. government has detained one of its own citizens without having had to provide any legal rationale for doing so, let alone one that could win in court. In ordinary criminal cases, the Supreme Court has long held that an individual must be presented before a neutral magistrate within 48 hours of his or her arrest. Two days may not be long enough for citizens captured on foreign battlefields, but Doe will shortly enter his sixth month of military detention without even a preliminary ruling from a federal judge as to its legality.

It's easy to be unsympathetic to the plight of an American who left home to fight for ISIS in Syria. But without the judicial review that the government has spent the last six months impeding, what's to say that that's what really happened? And what's to stop the government from pushing the boundaries even further next time? No matter what happens in John Doe's case, the government's ability to stall the legal process may be its most significant—and troubling—legacy.

Source: <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/united-states/2018-02-12/testing-legal-limits-war-terrorism?cid=int-fls&pgtype=hpg>

Are Afghan Taliban invincible? By Kamran Yousaf

It would be an understatement to say that the Afghan Taliban are on the ascendancy. Make no mistake, the US-led military campaign to crush the insurgency in Afghanistan has completely failed. Despite pumping in billions of dollars, ferocious military power and half-hearted attempts for peace talks, the threat of Taliban once again taking control of Afghanistan looms large. The spate of recent terrorist attacks in Kabul has clearly shown the vulnerability of the Afghan government. A recent BBC survey and the quarterly report by the US Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction. Both studies have illustrated that how insurgents slowly but surely stretching their influence in large parts of Afghanistan. The British state-run broadcaster in its assessment, based on the ground situation, has concluded that the Taliban are now openly active in 70% of Afghanistan, a stark reality that both the Afghan government and the Trump Administration would not want to face. The inroads the Taliban have made since 2014 were also spectacular given the fact that they achieved all this success mostly in post-Mullah Omar period. Since their spiritual leader's death, there had been assessments that the Taliban might split. Also his successor could not survive long after US eliminated Mullah Mansur in a drone strike in Balochistan. Yet, the Taliban during this troubled period expanded their influence even beyond their traditional southern stronghold into eastern, western and northern parts of the country.

For the United States and Afghanistan, the critical factor behind the Taliban's success in battlefield is Pakistan's alleged support to the insurgents. No wonder the recent string of terrorist attacks in Kabul prompted the Afghan government to point a finger at Pakistan. The Afghan spy chief claimed that Pakistan was handed 'undeniable evidence' showing that attacks were planned on its soil. Pakistan said it would look into those details shared by Afghanistan.

Pakistan's purported support to the Afghan Taliban and the Haqqani network may be a factor but can never be the major reason behind the Taliban's rapid advances. It is a legitimate question to ask as to why would insurgents need a Pakistani space when they are now present in 70% of Afghanistan. The Taliban might have needed Pakistan's support and its space soon after they were dislodged from power after the US invasion of Afghanistan in the wake of 9/11 attacks in 2001. But not anymore.

The key factor that both Afghanistan and the US seldom dwell on is the public support for the Taliban movement. Without popular support, the Afghan Taliban could not have sustained the 17-year-long US military might and have now become nearly invincible.

Many terrorist attacks the Taliban carried out on the government installations had often been linked to the inside job.

Why the Taliban enjoy mass support despite their violent campaign? To understand this paradox, I recently got a chance to interact with a few Afghans, who live in a refugee facility in Haripur. Many of them I spoke to often travel to Afghanistan and their assessment was that a majority of Afghans feel more secure and safe in Taliban-controlled areas. The Taliban are also popular among non-Pakhtuns. For example, Abdul Wahab is a Turkmen Afghan but he finds the Taliban better than the “corrupt Afghan government.” Ehsanullah, another refugee, while endorsing Wahab’s stance said the fact that the Taliban gained upper hand simply because the Afghan government, backed by the US, failed to offer an alternative that could satisfy a large segment of the Afghan society.

In short, common Afghans have little faith in the beleaguered government in Kabul, something that allowed the Taliban to gain a foothold in the war-torn country. Bitter it may sound, many Afghans also view the US as an occupying force and part of the problem and not the solution. Finally, the Trump administration’s heavy military strategy to weaken the Taliban before any peace talks is doomed already as insurgents are powerful than ever before!

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Source: <https://tribune.com.pk/story/1626532/6-afghan-taliban-invincible/>

WORLD

How Sharp Power Threatens Soft Power By Joseph S. Nye Jr.

The Right and Wrong Ways to Respond to Authoritarian Influence

Washington has been wrestling with a new term that describes an old threat. “Sharp power,” as coined by Christopher Walker and Jessica Ludwig of the National Endowment for Democracy (writing for ForeignAffairs.com and in a longer report), refers to the information warfare being waged by today’s authoritarian powers, particularly China and Russia. Over the past decade, Beijing and Moscow have spent tens of billions of dollars to shape public perceptions and behavior around the world—using tools new and old that exploit the asymmetry of openness between their own restrictive systems and democratic societies. The effects are global, but in the United States, concern has focused on Russian interference in the 2016 presidential election and on Chinese efforts to control discussion of sensitive topics in American publications, movies, and classrooms.

In their National Endowment for Democracy report, Walker and Ludwig argue that the expansion and refinement of Chinese and Russian sharp power should prompt policymakers in the United States and other democracies to rethink the tools they use to respond. They contrast sharp power, which “pierces, penetrates, or perforates the political and information environments in the targeted countries,” with “soft power,” which harnesses the allure of culture and values to enhance a country’s strength. And democracies, they argue, must not just “inoculate themselves against malign authoritarian influence” but also “take a far more assertive posture on behalf of their own principles.”

Today, the challenge posed by Chinese and Russian information warfare is real. Yet in the face of that challenge, democratic governments and societies should avoid any temptation to imitate the methods of their adversaries. That means taking care not to overreact to sharp power in ways that undercut their true advantage. Even today, that advantage comes from soft power.

THE STAYING POWER OF SOFT POWER

In international politics, soft power (a term I first used in a 1990 book) is the ability to affect others by attraction and persuasion rather than through the hard power of coercion and payment. Soft power is rarely sufficient on its own. But when coupled with hard power, it is a force multiplier. That combination, though hardly new (the Roman Empire rested on both the strength of Rome's legions and the attractions of Rome's civilization), has been particularly central to U.S. leadership. Power depends on whose army wins, but it also depends on whose story wins. A strong narrative is a source of power.

Soft power is not good or bad in itself. It is not necessarily better to twist minds than to twist arms. Osama bin Laden neither threatened nor paid the men who flew aircraft into the World Trade Center—he had attracted them with his ideas. But although soft power can be used to evil ends, its means depend on voluntarism, which is preferable from the point of view of human autonomy.

Hard power, by contrast, rests on inducements by payment or coercion by threat. If someone puts a gun to your head and demands your wallet, it does not matter what you want or think. That is hard power. If that person is trying to persuade you to freely give up your wallet, everything depends on what you want or think. That is soft power.

Sharp power, the deceptive use of information for hostile purposes, is a type of hard power. The manipulation of ideas, political perceptions, and electoral processes has a long history. Both the United States and the Soviet Union resorted to such methods during the Cold War. Authoritarian governments have long tried to use fake news and social disruption to reduce the attractiveness of democracy. In the 1980s, the KGB seeded the rumor that AIDS was the product of U.S. government experiments with biological weapons; the rumor started with an anonymous letter to a small New Delhi newspaper and then was propagated globally by widespread reproduction and constant repetition. In 2016, an updated version of the same technique was used to create "Pizzagate," the false rumor that Hillary Clinton's campaign manager had abused children in a Washington restaurant.

Sharp power, the deceptive use of information for hostile purposes, is a type of hard power.

What's new is not the basic model; it's the speed with which such disinformation can spread and the low cost of spreading it. Electrons are cheaper, faster, safer, and more deniable than spies. With its armies of paid trolls and botnets, along with outlets such as Russia Today (RT) and Sputnik, Russian intelligence, after hacking into the e-mails of the Democratic National Committee and senior Clinton campaign officials, could distract and disrupt news cycles week after week.

VIEW FROM ABROAD: The coming US-China war **By Irfan Husain**

THE Doomsday Clock was recently reset to two minutes to midnight, indicating the dangerous times mankind is passing through currently. This is a notional device that measures the time we have left to live on this planet, but on a scale that stretches back to the emergence of Homo sapiens. According to scientists, this is the scariest moment in history since 1953 when the Cold War was at its height.

Although the dangers we face include rapid climate change, population increase in some of the poorest parts of the world, and increasing armed conflicts, Donald Trump's elevation to the presidency of the United States has not helped matters. His bellicose tweets and testosterone-fuelled pronouncements have rattled friends and foes alike. Just over a year ago, he announced:

"The US must greatly strengthen and expand its nuclear capability until such time as the world comes to its senses regarding nukes..." And when aides tried to downplay the statement, saying the US was not starting an arms race, Trump said in an interview: "Let it be an arms race. We will outmatch them at every pass and outlast them all."

During his presidency, Barack Obama had announced plans to modernise America's nuclear arsenal at a cost of \$1.2 trillion. Trump's nuclear doctrine has the same budget, but includes smaller nuclear bombs that could be used on the battlefield. This would be a game-changer in US strategy as it would lower the nuclear threshold, and make escalation to a full-scale thermonuclear exchange more likely. In fact, Washington has objected to Pakistan's development of small tactical nukes precisely for this reason.

But the US is not alone in spending vast sums to upgrade and expand its nuclear arsenal: Russia and China are doing the same thing. North Korea is in the midst of a much-publicised programme to miniaturise its warheads so they can be mounted on its missiles. India and Pakistan are both building up their stashes of nuclear weapons. Israel, although never having admitted to building nuclear bombs, is known to have at least 200 warheads.

And yet the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) obliges signatories with nuclear capability to reduce, and ultimately eliminate, their arsenals. There was a period when the US and the USSR actually reduced the number of warheads each had, but now with tensions rising, the talk is about upgrading these weapons of mass destruction.

Another problem is that diplomacy has been increasingly sidelined by military power as a conflict-resolution tool. Even after Iran's nuclear programme was mothballed following years of negotiations, Trump has reopened this chapter by demanding more concessions from Tehran. After this breach of trust, who will rely on Washington's word?

But a more urgent issue here is the American concern that it may soon no longer be the world's sole superpower. After the meltdown of the Soviet Union in 1991, Washington had got used to the idea that it was the world's most powerful state and would henceforth call the shots around the globe. Abandoning diplomacy for hard power, Washington proceeded to become the bully on the block. A quarter century ago, it was unquestionably far stronger than any of its putative rivals. It still is, but the gap is diminishing as the Chinese economy expands and modernises, and Russia emerges as a regional competitor. Even little North Korea can challenge the might of the United States.

Recently, there has been much talk of something called the Thucydides Trap. Named after the Greek historian who analysed the causes of the 30-year Peloponnesian War between Sparta and Athens that devastated Greece 2,500 years ago, the theory explains why the conflict began. According to Thucydides, Athens had witnessed a recent flowering of its arts, economy and military power, growing more confident as a result. Sparta, the pre-eminent power in Greece, felt threatened by the rise of Athens, and both states formed alliances to bolster their defences. When two of these allies went to war, both Sparta and Athens were sucked into the conflict.

The First World War had similar beginnings: when Germany embarked on a major military expansion programme that included building a large fleet of battleships, Britain feared that its far-flung empire would be threatened. This led it into a network of alliances in Europe that was then countered by Germany. Once these allies went to war, Germany and Britain felt obliged to join in. Four years of bloodshed later, Europe was devastated, its treasure drained, and the flower of a generation buried in killing fields from France to Russia.

In today's context, the Thucydides Trap is relevant to China's rise, and resulting American insecurity. But as Xi Jinping, the Chinese president, recognises, this can be a self-fulfilling prophecy. In a speech in the US a couple of years ago he said:

"There is no such thing as the so-called Thucydides Trap in the world. But should major countries time and again make the mistakes of strategic miscalculation, they might create traps for themselves."

Academics analysing data from the rise of challenges to the status quo over the last five centuries have concluded that out of 16, four were peacefully resolved while 12 caused wars. So the odds on hostilities breaking out between China and the US are depressingly

high at 4-1. Luckily, China is a cautious power that has tried to tread a fine line between openly challenging America, and asserting itself in the region.

But there are hawks in the US who recognise that if China becomes too powerful, it will be harder to contain later on. Meanwhile, Washington has built military bases around China and engaged in alliance-building from India to Australia to hamstringing Beijing. It will take tact and diplomacy to overcome existing tensions, but there is little evidence of either in today's White House.

Source : <http://www.dawn.com/news/1387333/view-from-abroad-the-coming-us-china-war?preview>

The Surprising Success of Putinomics By Chris Miller

Behind Putin's Formula for Holding Onto Power

Putin Watches Russian Economy Collapse Along with His Stature,” blared a headline in Time in late 2014. Yet three years have passed since the price of oil crashed in 2014, halving the value of the commodity that once funded half of Russia’s government budget. That same year, the West imposed harsh economic sanctions on Russia’s banks, energy firms, and defense sector, cutting off Russia’s largest firms from international capital markets and high-tech oil drilling gear. Many analysts—in Russia as well as abroad—thought that economic crisis might threaten Vladimir Putin’s hold on power. It doesn’t look that way now.

Today, Russia’s economy has stabilized, inflation is at historic lows, the budget is nearly balanced, and Putin is coasting toward reelection on March 18, positioning him for a fourth term as president. Putin has recently overtaken Soviet leader Leonid Brezhnev as the longest-serving Russian leader since Joseph Stalin. Economic stability has underwritten an approval rating that hovers around 80 percent. Putinomics made it possible for Russia’s president to survive repeated financial and political shocks. How did he do it?

Russia survived the twin challenges of the oil price crash and Western sanctions thanks to a three-pronged economic strategy. First, it focused on macroeconomic stability—keeping debt levels and inflation low—above all else. Second, it prevented popular discontent by guaranteeing low unemployment and steady pensions, even at the expense of higher wages or economic growth. Third, it let the private sector improve efficiency, but only where it did not conflict with political goals. This strategy will not make Russia rich, but it has kept the country stable and kept the ruling elite in power.

That said, does Putin really have an economic strategy? A common explanation of Putin’s longevity is that he survives because Russia’s oil revenues keeps the country afloat; Russia’s economy is known more for corruption than for capable economic management. But the Kremlin could have adopted different economic policies—and some of the alternatives would have made it harder for Putin to sustain his hold on power. They might also have left Russians worse off. Consider what Russia looked like in 1999 when Putin first became president: a middle-income country in which oil rents constituted a sizeable share of GDP. A country led by a young lieutenant colonel committed to using the security services to bolster his power. A president who claimed the mantle of democratic legitimacy in part based on his ability to force big business and oligarchs to follow his rules, whether by means fair or foul.

This could well describe Chavista Venezuela, still governed by an autocratic regime, still dependent on declining oil revenues, and still failing to build an economy based on rules rather than political whim. The difference is that the Chavistas spent recklessly during the oil boom while presiding over a mismanagement-induced collapse in oil production and, now, painful shortages of consumer goods created by poorly conceived price controls. According to World Bank estimates, Venezuela was wealthier on a per person basis than Russia in 1999. No longer.

Surely no one could have reasonably expected Russia to turn out like Venezuela today? In fact, in 1999, some observers thought Venezuela was better placed to prosper. At the time, credit rating agencies judged it safer to lend to Venezuela's government than to Russia's. The economic problems we currently associate with Venezuela—consumer good shortages, runaway inflation, and military-enforced food requisitions—were the story of Russia's twentieth century. There was little reason in 1999 to think that this sorry history would not persist into the twenty-first century. Today, however, few people compare Russia and Venezuela. That is because the two countries' lieutenant colonels had very different strategies.

The Kremlin's skill in mustering and distributing resources explains why the Russian elite has maintained power for nearly two decades and how it has deployed power abroad with some success. Many oil-fueled dictatorships squander their oil revenues on Ferraris and on Fendi handbags. Russia's ostentatious oligarchs have certainly accumulated their share of British football teams and hundred-million-dollar yachts armed with missile defense systems. But unlike its own spendthrift 1990s, Russia during the 2000s saved hundreds of billions of dollars during the good years, stowing resources in reserve funds for use when oil prices fell. If the Kremlin's economic policy was as simplistic as is often portrayed—as a series of thefts and errors lubricated by oil revenue—its rulers would not still hold power even as they wage two foreign wars.

The Kremlin's aim in economic policy has not been to maximize GDP or household incomes. Such a goal would have required a very different set of policies. But for the Kremlin's objectives of retaining power at home and retaining the flexibility to deploy it abroad, the three-pronged strategy of Putinomics—macroeconomic stability, labor market stability, and limiting state control to strategically important sectors—has worked.

Start with macroeconomic stability. Russia is a relatively rare kleptocracy that gets high marks from the IMF for its economic management. Why? Since the beginning of Putin's time in office, he and the Russian elite more generally have prioritized paying down debt, keeping deficits low, and limiting inflation. Having lived through devastating economic crashes in 1991 and 1998, Russia's leaders know that budget crises and debt defaults can destroy a president's popularity and even topple a regime, as Boris Yeltsin and Mikhail Gorbachev both discovered.

When Putin first took power, he devoted much of Russia's oil earnings to paying back the country's foreign debt ahead of schedule. In the current crisis, Russia has slashed spending on social services to ensure that the budget remains close to balance. In 2014, oil and gas earnings constituted around half of Russia's government budget. Today, oil trades at half the 2014 level, but thanks to harsh budget cuts, Russia's deficit is around one percent of GDP—far lower than in most Western countries. Putin has supported Russia's central bank as it has hiked interest rates, which has limited inflation but also stifled growth. The Kremlin's logic is that Russian people want economic stability above all else. Russia's elites, meanwhile, know they need stability to retain their hold on power. To ensure macroeconomic stability, the Kremlin has implemented a harsh austerity program since 2014, but there have been few complaints.

The second prong of Putin's economic strategy has been to guarantee jobs and pensions, even at the expense of wages and efficiency. During the economic shock of the 1990s, Russian wages and government pensions often went unpaid, causing protests and a collapse in President Boris Yeltsin's popularity. When the recent crisis hit, therefore, the Kremlin opted for a strategy of wage cuts rather than allowing unemployment to rise. Consider the difference in most Western countries. After the 2008 crash, unemployment spiked in the United States, but people who weren't laid off did not experience sharp salary cuts. In Russia, by contrast, unemployment increased by barely one percentage point. But in 2015, wages fell by nearly ten percent. Business owners, who control their firms only with the Kremlin's consent, got the message. Wage cuts were tolerated, but factory closures or mass layoffs were not.

This is far from an efficient policy, given that many Russians still work in Soviet-era factories that are in decline and have no hope of revival. In economic terms, it would be better to move these workers to more productive firms. But doing so is politically impossible given the layoffs it would require. Most sectors of the Russian economy face political pressure to employ unneeded workers, even if they don't pay them much. This fits the Kremlin's political calculus: Russians don't usually protest salary cuts, but layoffs and factory closures will bring them onto the streets. Social policy is governed by the same logic. In the past, Russian pensioners have rallied to demonstrate against pension cuts. And so the government underfunds health and education but keeps pensions steady—evidence that the Kremlin values pensions' contribution to political stability more than it regrets the extent to which poor schooling impairs medium-term growth.

The third prong of Putinomics is to let private firms operate freely only where they do not compromise the Kremlin's political strategy. The large role that oligarch-dominated state-owned firms play in certain key sectors is justified in part by their willingness to support the Kremlin in managing the populace by keeping unemployment low, media outlets docile, and political opposition marginalized. The energy industry, for example, is crucial to the government's finances, so private firms have either been expropriated or wholly

subordinated to the state. Steel firms are less important, but they, too, must avoid mass layoffs. Service sector firms, such as supermarkets, have no such political role. “When it comes to politics,” supermarket magnate Sergei Galitsky has explained, “I sit down on the sofa and grab some popcorn—or sometimes I crouch down in order not to get shot.” Bosses of energy firms cannot afford to ignore politics. Usually they are the ones shooting. Given these political constraints, what hope does Russia’s private sector have of improving efficiency or driving economic growth? Some, but not much. This, too, fits the Kremlin’s logic. Growth is good, but retaining power is better.

Source: <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/2018-02-07/surprising-success-putinomics?cid=int-fls&pgtype=hpg>

Trump's Troubling Nuclear Plan By Adam Mount

How It Hastens the Rise of a More Dangerous World

Like President Donald Trump, the Pentagon's new nuclear policy document sees a dark and threatening world. It argues that potential U.S. adversaries such as China, North Korea, and Russia are rapidly improving their nuclear capabilities and gaining an edge over the United States. But rather than laying out a plan to halt this slide into a more dangerous world and working to decrease reliance on nuclear weapons, the Nuclear Posture Review (NPR) hastens its rise by accepting the reasoning of U.S. adversaries and affirmatively embracing nuclear competition.

The central claim of the Nuclear Posture Review is that the United States must expand its reliance on nuclear weapons to protect the country and its allies—a complete reversal of the Obama administration's effort to reduce reliance. To this end, the NPR proposes not only replacing an aging nuclear arsenal but further “supplement[ing]” it with two new missiles. It expands the circumstances in which the United States would consider employing nuclear weapons to include the ambiguously termed “non-nuclear strategic attacks” against infrastructure.

The review also includes a litany of other measures that could usher in a future in which nuclear competition is commonplace: increasing capacity to produce plutonium pits in case the United States urgently needs to expand its arsenal dramatically; training conventional forces to fight alongside nuclear ones; improving the readiness of the 150 or so nuclear weapons stationed in Europe for what had been symbolic reasons; and a new distrust of arms control measures, to name a few.

Uncharacteristically, the review contains several clumsy, contradictory, and misleading statements. For example, it gives opposing standards for deciding when the 1970s-era B83 1.2 megaton gravity bomb should be retired. Even prior to the review's release, there were concerns that Trump's retaliatory stance would raise the possibility of a disproportionate use of nuclear force, such as against a cyberattack. General Paul J. Selva, the nation's second-ranking military officer, was forced to deny such claims as “fundamentally untrue.” (However, in expanding the nuclear mission to include the poorly defined category of “non-nuclear strategic attacks,” the document invites such an interpretation.) This kind of confusion surrounding the issuance of nuclear threats is frankly unacceptable, especially for an administration that also sends careless statements about its nuclear posture over Twitter.

One chart is so anxious to show that U.S. adversaries are advancing faster than the United States that it lumps together a range of dissimilar systems from the large Russian arsenal, the small Chinese arsenal, and the tiny North Korean arsenal. It lists highly advanced systems together with ones that have been indefinitely delayed, and even includes North Korea's unproven missiles. When it comes to the United States, the chart omits myriad ongoing programs that have sustained and improved the world's most capable nuclear force, as well as all of the upcoming programs to replace these systems with new ones.

On top of a pledge to carry out the Obama administration's plans to "sustain and replace" nearly every system in the nuclear arsenal, the review calls for two "supplements": a new option for a low-yield sea-launched ballistic missile (SLBM) and a new sea-launched cruise missile (SLCM) in lieu of the missiles removed from the fleet in the 1990s. Both are necessary, the NPR argues, because they "will help counter any mistaken perception of an exploitable 'gap' in U.S. regional deterrence capabilities." Yet the review validates this perception by scrambling to fill that gap, stating that new flexible low-yield options are "important for the preservation of credible deterrence against regional aggression." The statement weakens the credibility of U.S. strategic forces and signals to China, North Korea, and Russia that they should expect a low-yield strike to be met with a reciprocal and limited response (which they could consider an advantageous exchange).

No matter their yield or delivery method, nuclear weapons will never be seen as a credible deterrence to the kind of low-level aggression at which Russia and North Korea have proven adept.

Moreover, by taking this position, the NPR implicitly accepts the Russian belief that the lower yield of these weapons makes them more credible and more acceptable to use in regional wars. This is wrong for three reasons: first, even "low-yield" nuclear weapons are thousands of times more destructive than the largest conventional ones and risk contaminating huge swaths of allied or enemy territory; second, it is not at all clear that an adversary would be able to quickly ascertain that a nuclear detonation was a "low-yield" strike; and third, even if it could, it may not obligingly limit its response. Under such a theory, if Russia were reckless enough to carry out a small nuclear attack, the United States would have to shock it into restraint through nuclear retaliation. In relying on nonstrategic weapons for deterrence, the NPR exhibits the same mistaken logic that it worries is taking hold in Moscow.

The review neglects to make a compelling case for the necessity of its proposed systems. The claim that deploying a new SLCM could prompt Russia to retire its banned ground-launched cruise missiles is laughable. In general, generic language about "mistaken perceptions" is a thin justification for an expensive and potentially destabilizing new system. Just as the Air Force has struggled to make the case for why a new air-launched

cruise missile is needed, the NPR fails to demonstrate that there are missions that cannot be performed by the existing systems and thus, that there is a need for new ones.

The review self-consciously insists that it “is not intended to, nor does it enable, ‘nuclear war-fighting.’ ” Yet the arguments about nonstrategic weapons and the capabilities of the proposed “supplements” enable the use of nuclear weapons in a limited regional war. The low-yield SLBM is apparently designed to promptly strike small and mobile targets such as an enemy’s mobile missile launcher or forward command post. If used this way, ballistic missile submarines, which were previously used for strategic deterrence, would also be able to perform battlefield missions.

Overall, the NPR reflects an outdated and simplistic view of deterrence. It argues that nuclear weapons provide unrivaled deterrent effects, so more options mean more deterrence. Today’s military planners, however, have a far more complex and nuanced understanding of deterrence. They plan to employ a range of capabilities across different domains to create a strategic effect appropriate to the specific threat. In some circumstances, issuing a nuclear threat may be necessary to deter an attack. Yet in other situations, it may be more credible and more compelling to threaten to defend against an attack or to impose unacceptable costs in the cyber-domain, in space, with sanctions, or with conventional weapons. No matter their yield or delivery method, nuclear weapons will never be seen as a credible deterrence to the kind of low-level aggression at which Russia and North Korea have proven adept.

This is part of the reason why the Obama administration sought to reduce reliance on nuclear weapons: if an objective can be met with conventional weapons it will be a more credible threat than a nuclear one. Yet the 2018 NPR explicitly says that “non-nuclear forces...do not provide comparable deterrence effects.” This says to our allies, “Don’t be assured by our conventional cooperation; demand nuclear commitments.” And it says to our adversaries, “Don’t be deterred by our conventional posturing; we are serious only when we make a nuclear threat.”

The tension between conventional and nuclear force also arises in the review’s approach toward funding the arsenal. Top defense officials have stated frankly that the Pentagon does not have a plan to pay the expected \$1.7 trillion to update and operate the arsenal over the next 30 years. That figure will create serious tensions in a Pentagon wrestling with a dizzying array of other priorities: raising the readiness of U.S. forces, building new fleets of aircraft carriers, fighters, and attack submarines, and investing more funds in future research. Yet rather than attempting to solve the problem with cost the NPR dismisses it, declaring that nuclear weapons are “an affordable priority” comprising “a small fraction” of the defense budget. The fact remains that every dollar spent on a nuclear “supplement” is one that cannot be devoted to strengthening the service members who provide essential deterrence deployed around the world every day.

Each of the NPR's failings derives in part from the structure of the review process itself, which considers nuclear weapons in isolation from other elements of American power. As a result, the document reads less like a strategy of how best to deter threats to the United States and its allies and more like a piece of advocacy for nuclear weapons—a self-conscious defense of their utility, affordability, and an effort to expand their mission. It is less a Pentagon policy document than a memo from a powerful lobby.

Future administrations would be better served by conducting a “deterrence posture review,” to explicitly consider the cost implications of its recommendations and to develop a strategy that uses all effective capabilities to deter aggression. This effort would encourage planners to integrate different levers of American power in their deterrence planning rather than to privilege one over others.

Yet the most significant problem with Trump's Nuclear Posture Review is the slanted view it holds of the world and the obsolete theory of deterrence and war fighting that it promotes, which is so poorly suited to today's threats. Rather than working to reduce nuclear dangers, the nation's nuclear policy now reflects the reasoning of U.S. adversaries and readily follows them into a more dangerous world.

Source: <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/2018-02-02/trumps-troubling-nuclear-plan?cid=int-now&pgtype=hpg®ion=br1>

India: Asia's radioactive elephant? By Naveed Ahmed

Amidst hawkish statements, India test-fires ICBM Agni-V with a purported range of 5,000 kilometers. Miscalculations amidst over-confidence can start a war, which may turn nuclear within hours



Washington deems Delhi as a responsible nuclear state (though it still remains out of the NPT) and advocates her membership of nuclear suppliers group while already easing its way through the Missile Technology Control Regime and Wassenaar Arrangement. India seems to disagree and repeatedly proves herself otherwise. From nuclear accidents to openly supporting cross-border insurgencies, and conducting 'surgical strikes' to military chief' spelling out unclear threats, it has done it all.

This time, it was India's Army Chief General Bipin Rawat who told a press conference on Wednesday, "We will call the (nuclear) bluff of Pakistan. If we will have to really confront the Pakistanis, and a task is given to us, we are not going to say we cannot cross the border because they have nuclear weapons. We will have to call their nuclear bluff." The statement came in the backdrop of reportedly four secret meetings between Pakistan and India's national security advisors to ease tensions aside from off-and-on telephonic contacts. Nonetheless, India has been directly targeting Pakistani posts along the LoC, prompting a similar response. Both sides are suffering fatalities of troops at higher rates.

The heightened cross-LoC incursions are aimed at softening of Pakistan's front lines to realize India's cold start doctrine.



Global nuclear aggravation

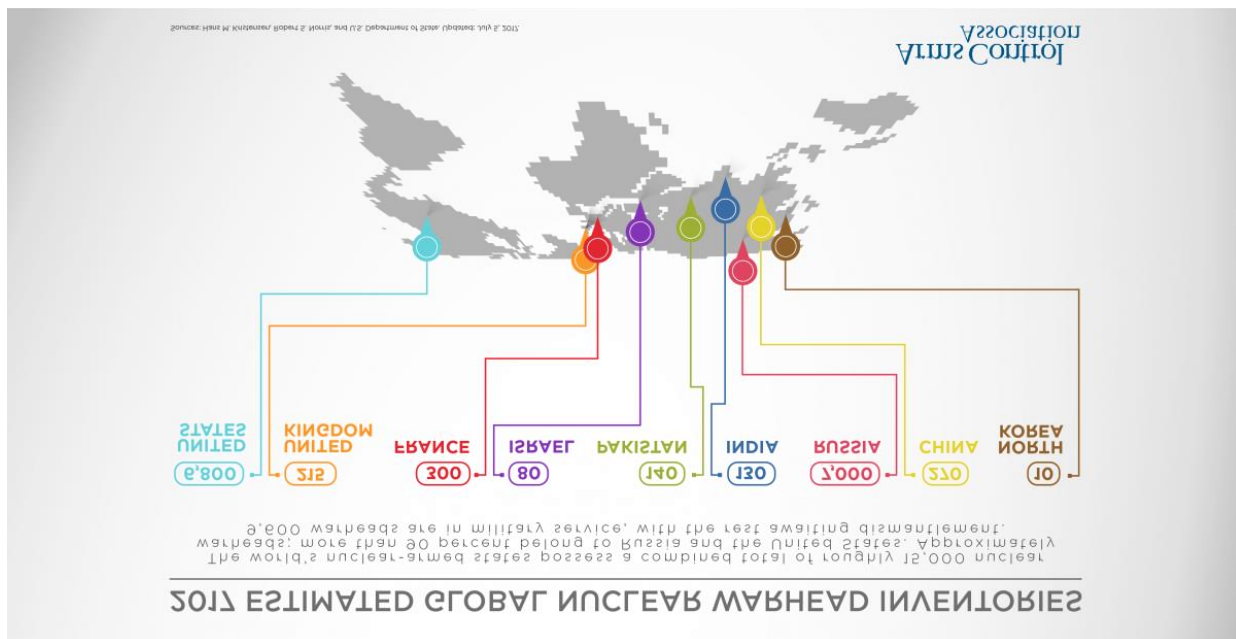
From Iran to North Korea and all the way to the American state of Hawaii, there exists a live wide-open nuclear arena for any state to observe and learn from. Last week was particularly newsworthy for news relating to nuclear weapons or for that matter, nuclear weapon states. Three instances are worth detailed deliberations. Interestingly, all of them have some cause to reflect on India's hawkish or foolhardy rhetoric via-a-vis Pakistan and China.

Firstly, North Korea held talks with the rival South despite high-pitched nuclear rhetoric and posturing and agreed to participate in February's winter Olympics. Not only will the nuclear neighbor send a large contingent of players but also a cheering squad and a performance-art troupe. With the presence of Pyongyang's players in Seoul, the prospects of North's attack naturally become minimal. Both expressed readiness to continue the talks. They are even mulling over fielding a joint ice hockey team.

Secondly, the Cold War era sirens echoed in the Pacific islands of the US State of Hawaii, after a message of missile threat went out erroneously on Saturday. Soon after North Korea's nuclear-capable intercontinental ballistic missile test, Hawaii had tested a one-

minute Attention Alert Signal (steady tone) followed by a one-minute Attack Warning Signal (wailing tone) in December after due intimation to the public to avoid panic. The Mayday text message of Saturday read, “Missile threat inbound to Hawaii. Seek immediate shelter. This is not a drill.” In the context of the threat and preparations underway, the alert was doubtlessly believed, prompting the residents to stock food supplies in shelters. Reviving post-Pearl Harbor and Cold War-era fears, the botched ballistic missile warning lasted for about 38 minutes until a denial was relayed repeatedly. “There is no missile threat or danger to the State of Hawaii. Repeat. False Alarm.” The episode has obvious relevance for South Asia’s tense neighbors.

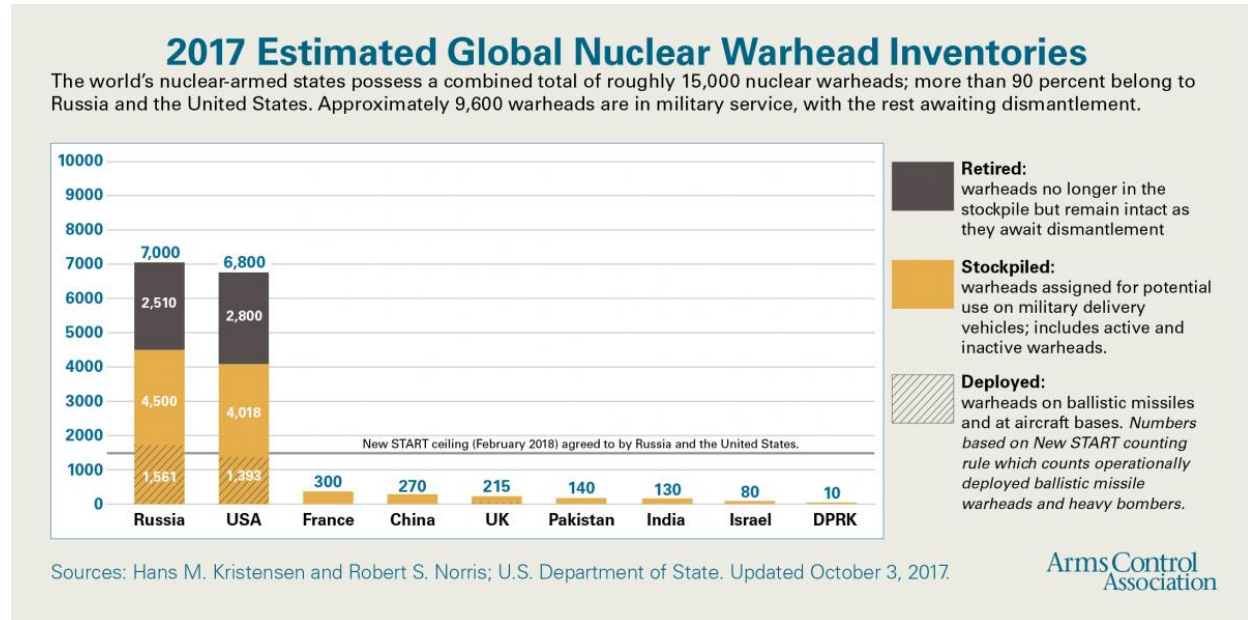
The third and rather less significant development was America’s nuclear-related Iran sanction-waiver for another year. The nuclear agreement stands intact and Tehran remains under global watch for crossing the NPT-assigned enrichment limits once. In sharp contrast, non-NPT member India gets to enjoy the privileges of a de jure nuclear-weapon state.



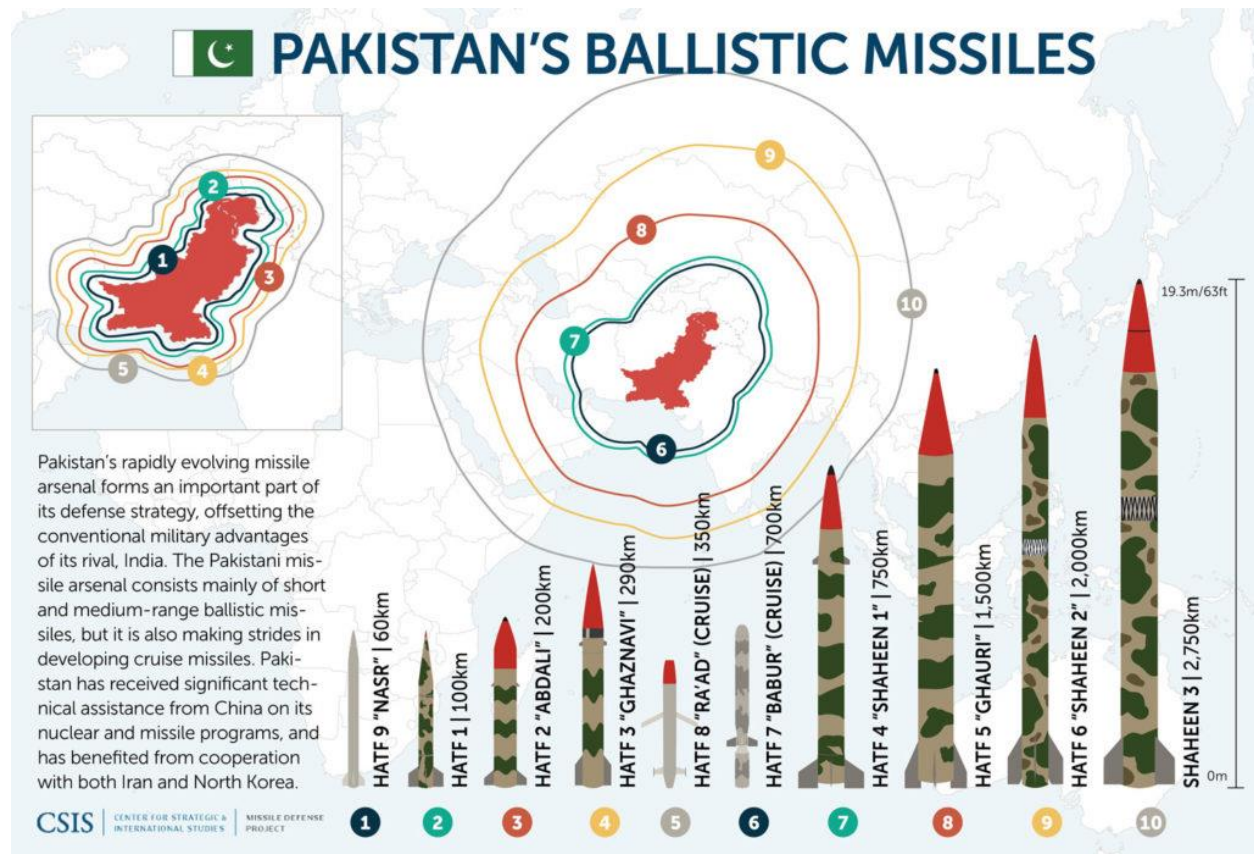
The desperation of nuclear fanatics

Despite its history of maintaining nuclear weapons since 1945, the United States faltered many times in assessing and responding the perceived threat. Luckily within minutes after receiving the false alarm text on cell phones, the US military establishment had sufficient redundancies to declare the missile threat a hoax. Had the threat been real, the response would have been swift and multi-pronged. Worth mentioning here it is that Pyongyang and Hawaii are separated by 4,500 kilometers, providing precious reaction time before receiving the deadly payload. Such stark ground realities find little heed from the likes of General Bipin Rawat. Carried away by the jingoism, they deliberately ignore certain basic

ground realities such as geographical proximity, meaning minimal flight time for missiles to hit the targets or fighter jets to enter the rival airspace. Then, also comes into question mutual vulnerability from nuclear fallout, though it largely depends on the weather at the time but still less consequential for Pakistan than India.



Strategic thinking and planning in Pakistan have evolved along the doctrine of defensive-offense while India has increasingly taken the opposite route. Interestingly, the perception across the eastern border is to the contrary. Will Islamabad possess some differential surprises to the advancing enemy? Pakistan requires ingenious strategy and weapons to deny access to a four-time larger aggressive neighbor.



Not just Bipin, but Indian Air Force Air Chief Marshal Birender Singh Dhanoa also boasted in October that his pilots have the capability to locate and eliminate nuclear and other strategic targets in Pakistan. He was also speaking with reference to Pakistan tactical nuclear weapons.

Delusional after recent inductions of military wherewithal and deepening of ties with the US, Modi-led India has appeared desperate to put the Cold Start doctrine (CSD) to test. General Bipin made the first such claim last year on January 4, his fifth day after the controversial appointment as army chief. He either sounds like Pranab Goswami or an ambitious politician playing to the BJP-RSS crowd. Personifying themselves as Mahabharata's fictional warrior heroes, Modi, Ajit and the military general are upping the ante against a real and no less deadly enemy.

Ironically, mutually-assured destruction of population emerges as a deterrent against nuclear war. Neither is there any mass awareness nor preparedness in the wake of an attack and the day after. "Mr Nayar, if you ever drive us to the wall, we will use the bomb. You did it to us in East Bengal. We won't waste time with conventional weapons. We will come straight out with it," Dr Abdul Qadeer Khan had told the famous Indian journalist in a rare 1984 interview. Nothing has altered so drastically against Pakistan for Dr Khan's assertion to become irrelevant.

On February 21, 1987, General Ziaul Haq traveled to Delhi to personally deliver the very same message to Rajiv Gandhi while the 80,000-strong Indian military awaited the premier's order to attempt crossing the international border. The war was averted then.

With the current hot-headed leadership in India, sanity may not prevail in Delhi. Miscalculations amidst over-confidence can start a war which may turn nuclear within hours. To avert the verbal brashness translating into suicidal actions, the big five and EU must take note of General Bipin and Air Marshal Dhanoa's menacing words. Like Kim-Jong un, India's generals' fascination for war (read nuclear war) has grown with time and expanding the relationship with the US and stockpiling of imported hi-tech military arsenal from the west.

North Korea's trigger-happy leader – whose New Year message comprised threat of a nuclear war – does not boycott sports fixtures with the arch-rival neighbor but his Indian counterpart sure does. Like his pals in India and DPRK, Donald Trump fancies a nuclear attack as much. The Indian leader, civilian and military alike, don't spare a thought for the enemy's second-strike capability about which Zia spoke over three decades ago. No air defense system, American, Israeli or Russian, is failsafe or foolproof. So told Daryl Kimball, director of the Arms Control Association, to *The Atlantic* after the Hawaii false alarm: “. . . there is no fail-safe against errors in judgment by human beings or the systems that provide early warning.”

Source: <https://en.dailypakistan.com.pk/opinion/india-asias-radioactive-elephant/>

The World After Trump By Jake Sullivan

How the System Can Endure

The warnings started long before Donald Trump was even a presidential candidate. For at least a decade, a growing chorus of foreign policy experts had been pointing to signs that the international order was coming apart. Authoritarian powers were flouting long-accepted rules. Failed states were radiating threats. Economies were being disrupted by technology and globalization; political systems, by populism. Meanwhile, the gap in power and influence between the United States—the leader and guarantor of the existing order—and the rest of the world was closing.

Then came Trump's election. To those already issuing such warnings, it sounded the death knell of the world as it was. Even many of those who had previously resisted pessimism suddenly came to agree. As they saw it, the U.S.-led order—the post-World War II system of norms, institutions, and partnerships that has helped manage disputes, mobilize action, and govern international conduct—was ending for good. And what came next, they argued, would be either an entirely new order or a period with no real order at all.

But the existing order is more resilient than this assessment suggests. There is no doubt that Trump represents a meaningful threat to the health of both American democracy and the international system. And there is a nonnegligible risk that he could drag the country into a constitutional crisis, or the world into a crippling trade war or even an all-out nuclear war. Yet despite these risks, rumors of the international order's demise have been greatly exaggerated. The system is built to last through significant shifts in global politics and economics and strong enough to survive a term of President Trump.

This more optimistic view is offered not as comfort but as a call to action. The present moment demands resolve and affirmative thinking from the foreign policy community about how to sustain and reinforce the international order, not just lamentations about Trump's destructiveness or resignation about the order's fate. No one knows for certain how things will turn out. But fatalism will become a self-fulfilling prophecy.

The order can endure only if its defenders step up. It may be durable, but it also needs an update to account for new realities and new challenges. Between fatalism and complacency lies urgency. Champions of the order must start working now to protect its key elements, to build a new consensus at home and abroad about needed adjustments, and to set the stage for a better approach, before it's too late.

A RESILIENT ORDER

In a world where the major trends seem to spell chaos, it is fair to place the burden of proof on those who claim that the current order can continue. Yet well before Trump, it had already demonstrated its capacity to adapt to changes in the nature and distribution of power. Three basic factors account for such resilience—and demonstrate why the emphasis now should be on protecting and improving the order rather than planning for the aftermath of its demise.

First, most of the world remains invested in major aspects of the order and still counts on the United States to operate at its center. The passing of U.S. dominance need not mean the end of U.S. leadership. That is, the United States may not be able to direct outcomes from a position of preeminent economic, political, and military influence, but it can still mobilize cooperation on shared challenges and shape consensus on key rules. In the years ahead, although Washington will not be the only destination for countries seeking capital, resources, or influence, it will remain the most important agenda-setter.

Some context is important. The U.S.-led order was built at a unique moment, at the end of World War II. Europe's and Asia's erstwhile great powers were reduced to rubble, and a combination of dominance abroad and shared economic prosperity at home allowed the United States to serve as the architect and guarantor of a new order fashioned in its own image. It had not just the material power to shape rules and drive outcomes but also a model many other countries wanted to emulate. It used the opportunity to build an order that benefited itself as well as others, with clear advantages for populations at home and abroad. As the international relations scholar G. John Ikenberry has put it in this magazine, the resulting system was “hard to overturn and easy to join.” The end of the Cold War and the fall of the Soviet Union served to reinforce and extend American preeminence.

This precise state of affairs was never going to last forever. Other powers would eventually rise, and the basic bargain would one day need to be revisited. That day has arrived, and the question now is, do other countries want a fundamentally different bargain or simply some adjustments? A comprehensive 2016 RAND analysis found that few powers display an appetite for dismantling the international order or transforming it into something unrecognizable. And while Trump's election has forced countries to contemplate a world without a central role for the United States, many still view the president as an aberration and not a new American normal, especially given that the United States has bounced back before.

Even China has concluded that it largely benefits from the order's continued operation. Around the time of Trump's inauguration, breathless reports interpreted Chinese President Xi Jinping's comments on an open international economy and climate change

as indicators that China planned to somehow take over for the United States. But what Xi was really signaling was that China does not want near-term radical change in the global system, even as it seeks to gain more influence by taking advantage of the vacuum left by Trump. And to the extent that Beijing has set out to construct its own parallel institutions, particularly when it comes to trade and investment, thus far these institutions largely supplement the existing order rather than threatening to supplant it.

Other emerging powers chafe at certain features of the order, and some seek a more prominent place in institutions such as the UN Security Council. Yet rhetorical flourishes aside, they, like China, talk in terms of reform rather than replacement—and their continued participation sends a similar message. For example, leaders of the major emerging powers eagerly accepted U.S. President Barack Obama’s invitation to join the first Nuclear Security Summit, in 2010; less eagerly but still willingly, they joined the global sanctions regime against Iran’s nuclear program. Richard Fontaine and Daniel Kliman of the Center for a New American Security quote a Brazilian official who captured a broader sentiment among emerging powers: “Brazil wants to expand its room in the house, not tear the house down.” And indeed, Brazil has taken on a leading role in defending important aspects of the order, such as the multistakeholder system for Internet governance. Emerging powers’ quest for a greater voice in regional and global institutions is not a repudiation of the order but evidence that they see increasing their participation as preferable to going a different way.

FROM DOMINANCE TO LEADERSHIP

The second factor accounting for the order’s resilience is that the United States has managed the transition from dominance to leadership more effectively than most appreciate. Over the past decade, U.S. diplomacy has facilitated a shift from formal, legal, top-down institutions to more practical, functional, and regional approaches to managing transnational issues—“coalitions of the willing” (in the real, non-Iraq-war sense of the term). This shift has not only expanded the prospects for shared problem solving; it has also made the rules-based order less rigid, and therefore more lasting.

Consider climate change. Formal legal structures, such as the Kyoto Protocol, which failed largely because the United States refused to participate and emerging powers were exempt, have given way to less formal structures, such as the Paris climate accord. Unlike Kyoto, Paris achieved broad-based participation because its substantive commitments are voluntary and states have flexibility in how to meet them. It can survive a temporary U.S. withdrawal because other countries had already factored their targets into their national energy plans and because the United States can meet or exceed its own targets even without the help of Washington (points Brian Deese, a former climate adviser to Obama, has made in this magazine).

On nuclear proliferation, formal Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty review conferences have not advanced the ball on new legal norms. But during the negotiations that led to the Iran nuclear deal, the P5+1 (the five permanent members of the UN Security Council plus Germany) joined together to develop a rules-based plan to address a major global proliferation problem. The resulting agreement, the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, involved practical commitments from the negotiating parties but also incorporated key international institutions—the International Atomic Energy Agency and the Security Council—for oversight and enforcement. And although Trump may eventually withdraw from the agreement, the broad participation and buy-in that it achieved, and the fact that it is working as intended, have thus far constrained him from doing so, despite his claim that it is “the worst deal ever.”

On trade and economics, although universal rule-making in the World Trade Organization has stalled, “plurilateral” and regional initiatives of various shapes and sizes have proliferated, from the East African Community to Latin America’s Pacific Alliance. The United States is not party to some of these platforms, but it has helped promote them with technical and diplomatic support. Viewed from this perspective, Beijing’s establishment of the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank is largely in line with the “variable geometry” that the United States has encouraged. (Washington erred in resisting the AIIB rather than working to shape its standards.) And on global health, the World Health Organization has recognized the need for more flexible arrangements to deal with major health crises, including public-private partnerships, such as the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria and Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance. Meanwhile, various emerging regional and subregional arrangements are playing larger roles in local problem solving.

One could add other examples to the list, but the point is this: the overall trend toward practicality and flexibility, encouraged by the United States, has generated more resilience in the rules-based order. For one thing, more practical and flexible approaches are better suited to handle the diffuse and complex nature of transnational challenges today. For another, the rest of the world can continue to participate even when the United States pulls back. The new structures are designed to extract greater participation and contributions from a greater number of actors in a greater number of places—even when the most important of those actors temporarily relinquishes its leadership role.

There is a concern about whether this trend will water down rules. But the record so far suggests this is not the case. For example, the 11 nations currently pursuing the Trans-Pacific Partnership without U.S. participation might produce a trade agreement with weaker labor or environmental provisions than those in the U.S.-brokered version, which the Trump administration withdrew from last year. But those provisions would still represent an improvement over existing rules, and a new baseline against which future rules would be measured. Nor is this broader trend mutually exclusive with action in the UN system. The rise of informal mechanisms of cooperation has not detracted from basic

global standard-setting on issues such as civil aviation. To the contrary, the informal and the formal can be mutually reinforcing. Progress conceived in smaller formats outside the UN system can help catalyze universal action.

BINDING TRUMP

Finally, although Trump has created a temporary vacuum of global leadership and keeps raising questions about his basic fitness for office, he has thus far been unable to do the level of systemic damage in foreign affairs that he threatened on the campaign trail. He has—again, thus far—been constrained by Congress, by his own national security team, and by reality.

Consider the U.S. alliance system, a central feature of the U.S.-led order. Trump continues to deride U.S. allies as free riders. But Washington's policy toward its alliances in both Europe and Asia has been marked more by continuity than change. Trump's advisers have helped ensure that, as have outside advocacy and congressional oversight. And European leaders have sought to sustain the alliance, despite their misgivings about Trump, by working around him. Similarly, whatever the administration's desire to ease pressure on Russia for violations of Ukraine's territorial integrity—a foundational norm of the rules-based order—Congress overwhelmingly approved new sanctions, tying Trump's hands. (The administration subsequently surprised most observers by announcing that it would provide lethal assistance to Ukraine, a move pushed by top members of Trump's national security team.)

Perhaps most important, Trump has found that whatever his contempt for the rules-based order, he needs it. Here he follows a line of American politicians who have chafed at perceived limits on U.S. freedom of action but ultimately recognized that the order protects and advances U.S. interests. To counter North Korea, he needs both strong Asian alliances and a working relationship with Beijing (contrary to everything he said during the campaign). To defeat the Islamic State (also known as ISIS), he needs the allies and partners that made up the coalition, built during the Obama administration, that helped eject ISIS from Mosul and Raqqa. Trump has therefore been forced to embrace elements of the order he would rather dismiss.

Trump's own lack of focus has helped. The international relations expert Thomas Wright is correct to warn that "since World War II, the foreign policy of every administration has been defined by the character and opinions of its president," not anybody else. And Trump's worst impulses may yet win out, with disastrous consequences. But unlike his predecessors, Trump has displayed relatively little interest in translating his impulses into consistent policy actions. That can potentially allow the system around him, including voices outside government, to play a more powerful constraining role than usual.

ORDER BEGINS AT HOME

The system's resilience should not be the end to a comforting story; it should be the starting point of a badly needed effort to reinforce and update the international order and address the real threats to its long-term viability. That must begin with the most serious challenge today: growing disillusionment with some of its core assumptions. This disillusionment has been stoked by forces of nativism and illiberalism, but it is rooted in the lived experience of many who have seen few promised benefits flow to them.

The United States built the order on three foundational propositions: that economic openness and integration lead to greater and more widely shared prosperity; that political openness, democratization, and the protection of human rights lead to stronger, more just societies and more effective international cooperation; and that economic and political openness are mutually reinforcing. All three propositions are now contested.

As the political scientists Jeff Colgan and Robert Keohane have argued in these pages, the link between globalization and shared prosperity is no longer clear. The current international economic system is "rigged," in their telling, and a new set of rules is needed to better advance the interests of middle classes around the world. Meanwhile, a growing reaction in the West treats global integration as a threat to national identity and economic vitality.

On the merits of the open political model, democracy is now on the defensive—from within, thanks to self-inflicted wounds and the gathering strength of populist political parties, and from without, thanks to what the National Endowment for Democracy calls the "sharp power" of authoritarian states, a mix of strategies to undermine political pluralism and open elections. Russian President Vladimir Putin's interference in the U.S. presidential election likely helped secure Trump's victory, and in the years ahead, Russian "active measures" and Chinese influence operations will continue seeking to destabilize democratic systems.

And when it comes to the interaction between economic and political reform, the Chinese Communist Party has been trying to prove—including to receptive audiences in developing-world governments—that economic openness is perfectly compatible with a closed political system. Unlike the Soviet Union, which relatively few aspired to emulate, China offers what many see as an attractive alternative. Xi has described his country's model as a "new option for other countries." Audiences in Africa and Asia, and even some in Europe, are paying attention.

These trends preceded Trump, and they are now being compounded by new threats to democracy, including a wholesale assault on the very idea of truth. But they are not irreversible. The year 1989 did not bring the end of history in one direction; neither did 2016 in the other.

The liberal part of the rules-based international order has always been imperfect and will remain so. As Ikenberry has pointed out, the current order is actually a blend of the traditional Westphalian system (founded on state sovereignty) and a more liberal variant that emerged first with British hegemony in the nineteenth century and then deepened under U.S. leadership in the twentieth. This combination has always involved an uneasy balance between sovereignty and noninterference, on the one hand, and universal values and multilateral cooperation, on the other. A shift in emphasis toward the former does not spell the end of the entire order.

The liberal part of the rules-based international order has always been imperfect and will remain so.

Moreover, the developments of the past two years—Brexit, Trump’s election, the rise of right-wing parties in Europe, foreign interference in democratic politics—have served as a wake-up call. There are new and urgent conversations in Western democracies not just about how to resist pressure from abroad but also about how to address social and economic dislocations at home and the distributional consequences of globalization and automation. Whether this brings about a genuine recovery of strength for liberal democracy over time remains to be seen. But there are promising signs. Trump’s excesses have generated energetic efforts to push back against them. In Europe, the EU has proved more cohesive, and its economic foundation stronger, than most anticipated, and although populist movements continue to make some progress, they have also met considerable resistance (as the French far-right candidate Marine Le Pen discovered). Democratic nations have not lost the wherewithal to manage and alleviate the strains of authoritarian populism. If the West can succeed in restoring some of the appeal of the democratic model, the weaknesses and contradictions in the authoritarian model—which, after all, rests on the systematic suppression of basic human freedoms and is usually accompanied by debilitating corruption—will come back into sharper focus. In this regard, the major disconnect between Beijing’s outward projection of confidence and its deep insecurity at home is telling.

TROUBLE FROM WITHOUT

Along with weaknesses within the West, the order is facing challenges from without, starting with renewed great-power competition. Indeed, the Trump administration’s National Security Strategy explicitly makes competition—in opposition to order—an organizing principle. It taunts previous administrations for seeing great powers as “benign actors and trustworthy partners” and assuming that “competition would give way to peaceful cooperation.” But the Trump team is wrong to frame this as an either-or proposition. As a prescriptive matter, abandoning the postwar order is a strange concession for a status quo power to make, since the order’s existence is a major competitive advantage. Defending it, and mobilizing its assets, is essential for contending

with Russia and China. And as a predictive matter, it is by no means inevitable that great-power competition will upend the order in the foreseeable future. To understand why this is the case, it's necessary to distinguish between the two primary great-power competitors.

Russia under Putin does want to undermine U.S. leadership, as well as the cohesion of Washington's democratic allies. But so far, the Kremlin has proved to be more of a spoiler than an existential threat. Yes, Putin brazenly violated Ukraine's territorial integrity, but he was met with a common transatlantic response that kept him from pulling Kiev back into Moscow's orbit, as well as with new NATO forward deployments to resist further Russian aggression. Yes, Putin's intervention in Syria assisted Syrian President Bashar al-Assad's butchery on an industrial scale and gave Russia a brokering role there, but that has not translated into a broader role as security manager for the region, and it likely never will. And on the global level, Russia simply does not have the power to decisively shift the course of international trade and investment regimes or scuttle multilateral efforts to deal with such challenges as climate change. That will be increasingly true going forward, given Russia's fragile economy and unfavorable demographic trends. The United States has to avoid the trap of underestimating Putin, but also the temptation to overestimate him.

China is a different story. It has far greater capacity to upend the global order—but will be cautious in attempting to do so in the near term. For all of Xi's rhetoric, China cannot be expected to replace the United States at the center of a newly constituted order. As the China scholar David Shambaugh has noted, Beijing remains a "partial power." Its basic global strategy has been to act, to borrow a phrase from the former U.S. official Robert Zoellick, as amended by Hillary Clinton as secretary of state, as a "selective stakeholder," picking and choosing which responsibilities to take on based on a narrow cost-benefit analysis. This strategy proceeds from the assumption that the United States will remain the burden bearer of last resort.

China will clearly seek greater influence in the operation and evolution of the order. Other emerging powers will, too. That will require adjustments by both the United States and emerging powers, but not something fundamentally new.

That still leaves the question of whether China's competitive posture in its region will over time translate into a more fundamental global challenge—especially if Beijing succeeds in building a sphere of influence in East Asia. That China aims to change the balance of power in Asia, reducing the United States' role and increasing its own, is evident in its military buildup, its activities in the South China Sea, its coercive economic diplomacy, and the expansion of its influence through such efforts as the Belt and Road Initiative. And the Trump administration is helping in this cause, by neglecting Asian security and economic institutions.

But the United States and its partners have plenty of cards to play. The demand for an enduring U.S. presence in Asia, from key treaty allies and others resistant to Chinese hegemony, will likely block any aspirations Beijing has for an Asian Monroe Doctrine, or anything close to it. Even in areas where China has made significant strides, such as the South China Sea, the United States and its partners still have the capacity to protect regional prerogatives and global norms such as freedom of navigation and unimpeded lawful commerce. Ultimately, a return to an effective Asia strategy, anchored in Washington's historical alliances and contemporary partnerships, could sustain the U.S. role in Asia and manage regional competition while promoting global cooperation with Beijing.

Finally, the paroxysms of violence across the arc of instability from North Africa to South Asia have led some observers to conclude that disorder in the Middle East could threaten the entire global order. But Middle Eastern instability has been a feature, not a bug, of the system since the fall of the Ottoman Empire after World War I. In just one 30-year stretch—the period from the early 1970s to the first decade of this century—the region saw the Yom Kippur War, the Lebanese civil war, the Iranian Revolution, the dawn of the modern age of terrorism with the siege of Mecca, the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, the Iran-Iraq War, the first Lebanon war, two Palestinian intifadas, the Persian Gulf War, the war in Iraq, and a Yemeni civil war.

Today, it is true that the combination of weak state structures, violent ideologies, and Iranian-Saudi competition has transformed a number of local conflicts into a regional crisis. In addition to the horrific human toll, this has had the spillover effects of sending refugees flowing to Europe and inspiring jihadist attacks across the West. At the same time, the United States is no longer as willing or able to play the external role it played before, for reasons relating to both the supply side (reduced U.S. willingness to invest resources, especially troops) and the demand side (reduced regional enthusiasm for U.S. involvement). Yet the roiling waters of the Middle East have not swamped the whole system. U.S.-led efforts against ISIS have rolled back the biggest threat to the international community, the existence of a terrorist state in the heart of the Middle East. Europe is learning to manage the refugee crisis. And despite Tehran's advances on several fronts, the basic power politics of the region tilt toward the eventual emergence of an uneasy, sometimes messy balance between Iran and its proxies on one side and a Saudi-led Sunni bloc on the other. Effective statecraft can help manage, contain, and reduce regional instability over time.

A WINDOW OF OPPORTUNITY

None of this is an argument for complacency. In Washington, checking Trump's destructive instincts requires constant work, which will only get harder as he looks more often to the global stage to score points. And the internal constraints often come down to a few individuals who could easily be replaced by less responsible voices. Internationally, the difficulties are accelerating, not abating, among them the technology-driven challenge to state supremacy itself. The resilience of the rules-based order offers just a window of opportunity to get things right. It will eventually close.

Many of the most crucial steps require that the United States get its own house in order, which would create more fertile ground for consensus building on national security. But there is also a clear task for foreign policy leaders, in both parties: to strengthen and adapt the postwar international order so that it responds to current needs and reflects new realities but still secures a central U.S. role. That will require new ideas and productive advocacy to ensure that globalization delivers more widely shared prosperity. It will require effectively managing strategic competition with Russia and China by protecting U.S. prerogatives without descending into all-consuming rivalry or outright conflict. And it will require convincing governments and citizens around the world that in spite of the current president, a strong majority of Americans remain committed to working closely with other nations to secure shared interests through common action and rules.

A temporary American absence is survivable; sustained American absence is not.

A temporary American absence is survivable; sustained American absence is not. In the long run, the international order will still need leadership, even in the best-developed areas of international cooperation. Who is going to make sure that countries increase their emissions reductions under the Paris accord when the next round of pledges comes in 2023? Who is going to pull the world powers together to execute a follow-on agreement to the Iran nuclear deal? American leadership is even more critical in emerging areas where the rules have not yet been developed or where previous solutions no longer work. How will updated trade and investment arrangements account for the endurance of state-managed economies, the changing nature of work, and rising income inequality? What should be done to counter trends in state fragility that could lead to even more profound migration flows in the future? What new norms will govern cyberspace and artificial intelligence?

The world cannot count on undifferentiated collective action. Nor can it count on China, which has neither the instincts nor the inclination to take on such a role in the foreseeable future. The United States is the only country with the sufficient reach and resolve, and something else as well: a historical willingness to trade short-term benefits for long-term influence. It has been uniquely prepared to accept a leadership role of an international

order in which it feels as though the maxim from Thucydides' famous Melian Dialogue is often inverted: the strong suffer what they must and the weak do what they can.

All of this underscores the United States' window of opportunity. Taking advantage of this window does require getting past the current presidency, which is why Trump must not be handed another term. The difference between one and two terms of Trump might not be 1x versus 2x, but more like 1x versus 10x. For one thing, Obama needed two terms to get to the ideas he campaigned on in 2008, and if the same proves true for Trump, his second term could be cataclysmic. For another, his reelection would confirm that Trumpism is in fact the new normal in the United States, not an aberration, causing other countries to take more decisive steps to rearrange their relationships and commitments. It would be an especially severe blow to the long-term health of U.S. alliances; many of the United States' friends would more seriously contemplate following through on German Chancellor Angela Merkel's comment about going their own way. On the other hand, the election of a new president in 2020 would say something quite different—and allow the United States to resume its leadership role.

The U.S. foreign policy community should prepare for this world after Trump. It is tempting to conclude that all hope is lost. That conclusion, however, is not only unproductive; it is also wrong. In every dimension—from technology to security, development to diplomacy, economic dynamism to human capital—the United States' advantages are still significant. The opportunity remains to reconstitute the old consensus on new terms.

Source: <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/2018-02-13/world-after-trump>

Quickened crusade for Afghan peace |

EDITORIAL

The tireless and seriously Afghan peace-minded COAS embarked Tuesday on another Kabul visit to attend a conference with top US and Afghan commanders, the Chief of Defence Conference, in speeded up concerted efforts to bring about resolution of the long-festered Afghan war, whose security ramifications are becoming complicated and ominous by the day, while the Afghan people wallow in unending misery, poverty and insecurity. The neighbouring country has also displayed maturity by persisting with such joint engagements, despite recent deadly terror attacks in Kabul, inevitably blamed on Haqqani network and provocatively on Pakistan. Still, these intense, fast-tracked efforts for a genuine and lasting peace acceptable to all stakeholders are a good omen, indeed talks are the only option, as ill-counselled military 'surges' have come and gone without concrete and meaningful results.

Pakistan has enough on its plate militarily on the eastern border where an implacable foe is ratcheting up tensions on the LOC and Working Boundary and issuing grave threats, economically because of its debt-ridden and poorly-performing economy, and politically as it faces a crucial national election this year and is going through a maddeningly uncertain internal situation. The so-called Afghan National Unity government too is riven with dissensions, it is neither national, with its writ being confined to Kabul, and that too precariously, nor united, while its army, overall, remains a constant source of concern as regards professionalism and morale. So, whatever the American sole superpower's hedging, hidden agenda or ulterior motive (Pakistan's nuclear-missile programmes, 'grey listing') for dragging on the overlong Afghan impasse with no end in sight, Pakistan and hopefully Afghanistan appear determined, indeed desperate, to bilaterally establish a basic framework leading to a compromise solution and an honourable peace, with the possible input of friendly 'guarantor' countries. Though the high-level meetings of Pak-Afghan Joint Working Group held in Kabul on February 3 and Islamabad on February 10 made only guarded progress, the intention and right-mindedness are there, and these small steps can lead to a quantum jump towards lasting regional peace and prosperity. Continued talks, cooperation and solidarity, and not the old petulant blame game, will win through.

Source : <https://www.pakistantoday.com.pk/2018/02/14/quickened-crusade-for-afghan-peace/>

The de-globalisation drive By Hussain Tariq

Analysts and political scientists have sometimes talked about cycles of history. Even without delving deep into political theory and its constructs, a discerning mind can totally decipher that post 9/11 post 2007-8 capital crunch world has entered into a different phase. This phase is different from what we had seen in post-World War II world. The champions of liberalism yield less influence, and realpolitik and nationalistic values seem to be order of the day.

America that had generally been characterised as a left wing polity has taken up a totally new form. In the 20th century, despite its occasional spurts of interventionism, the US foreign policy generally had a philosophical angle. Highly concerned about its soft power, and being torchbearer of initiatives such as the Marshall Plan and Washington Consensus, at least on the surface US cared about the world. The foreign policy ideals were largely those that had been propagated by Woodrow Wilson in his famous fourteen points, in the wake of World War 1. However the US of today displays belligerence, challenges the very ideals that form the foundation of the United Nations Charter, has taken up the slogan America First, has decided immigrants are not her problem, has pulled out of Trans Pacific Partnership, is continually threatening to scrap the JCPOA and NAFTA; and the list continues...

What is it? The influence of Trump? Is America running a one man show? The answer is no. The rise of Trump to power marks something deeper, something frightening. It marks the rise of nationalism and a desire for de-globalisation in the US. Trump challenged the domestic and foreign policy status quo, and people voted for him. Hence the rise of Trump is a verdict by American people themselves that it is time to return to America's isolationist and nationalistic past. A revival of Monroe Doctrine has taken place, this time not limited to the Americas alone.

In this age of hyper-nationalism and an era when the world has started feeling the need to revert to a multi-polar system, it is time for Pakistan to carefully calibrate its options

However, why are we discussing shifts in US policy to determine the cycles of history? Henry Kissinger in his seminal book Diplomacy has stated, "Almost according to some natural law, in every century there seems to emerge a country with the power, the will, and the intellectual and moral impetus to shape the entire international system in accordance with its own values." And in the current time, it is America!

Nationalist fervour is very visible all over the world. The rise of Modi in India, the survival of Putin for so many years in Russia, China's ambition to assert its greatness all over the world, the speeding up of North Korea's nukes – all mark the rise of nationalism and paranoia on the part of states to strengthen themselves against potential aggression by other members of the international community. UK pulling out of European Union signals toward a revival of British Nationalist approach; in France, Emmanuel Macron won the day but there was a considerable number of people who still supported Le Penn; Japan, US and South Korea continue to ensure security of the Korean Peninsula but pacifists in Japan repeatedly raise concern over why Japan should be bothered about the security of South Korea; Mohammad Bin Salman in Saudi Arabia is bound to re-shape Gulf dynamics. And it continues; and endless list of red flags!

In this age of hyper-nationalism and an era when the world has started feeling the need to revert to a multi-polar system, it is time for Pakistan to carefully calibrate its options. Historically, Pakistan has chosen to align itself to a superpower, rather than form the part of traditional balance of power politics. Is Pakistan doing the same once again? Or aligning with China opens it up to new alliances including that of Russia and possibly with other members of SCO? And most importantly where do we see ourselves in the race of nationalism? Probably someone like Musharraf with Pakistan First would have been the ideal fit in this era. Unfortunately democracy has forgotten to produce any such nationalist. The nationalists that we see in Pakistan talk about provincial nationalism.

However, with the current political instability in-house, does Pakistan have what it takes to survive in this race of protecting nationalist agenda? Too bogged down in its internal musical chairs among various political parties and various institutions as well, apparently Pakistan has forgotten a vital principle; Survival of the Fittest.

Let's see what the world turns to in the upcoming years, and how well can Pakistan become a part of this world.

Source : <https://www.pakistantoday.com.pk/2018/02/15/the-de-globalisation-drive/>

US move at FATF: Lawmakers term resolution against Pakistan a failure of govt **Tanoli**

ISLAMABAD: Lawmakers from both treasury and opposition benches in the National Assembly on Thursday termed the US efforts to push Pakistan on the watchlist of the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) a failure of the government and success of Indian narrative to isolate Pakistan.

A meeting of the FATF member states is due on February 18 in Paris, where the organisation – an intergovernmental body that sets global standards for fighting illicit finance – could adopt a motion against Pakistan. The resolution is submitted by the US, the UK, France and Germany.

The Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf's (PTI) Shireen Mazari on a point of order said it is the failure of Pakistan's foreign policy that a resolution is being moved against Pakistan. The resolution against Pakistan has been submitted by the US, the UK, France and Germany.

"The government has no foreign policy and its entire focus has been on 'mujhay kion nikala.' Pakistan has failed in its diplomacy and it could not present counter narrative against India," she said.

US pushes motion to put Pakistan on global terrorist-financing watchlist

According to Mazari despite arrest of an Indian spy Kulbhushan Jadhav, Pakistan could not tell the international community that it is India which is involved in terrorism and not Pakistan.

"Indian narrative against Pakistan is prevailing across the world. Once we come on the watchlist then we will be in a deep trouble. The government must explain its stance on this important matter on the floor of the parliament," she demanded.

The Pakistan Peoples Party's (PPP) Naveed Qamar, who was chairing the sitting due to absence of the speaker and deputy speaker, demanded that the foreign or interior minister brief the assembly on the issue today [Friday].

Minister for Inter Provincial Coordination Riaz Hussain Peerzada told the house that both foreign and the interior ministers were on foreign tours and the Minister for Parliamentary Affairs Shaikh Aftab Ahmad would brief the house. The PPP's Shazia Marri said the point raised in the house concerned the entire country and had nothing to do with the point-scoring.

The Pashtoonkhwa Milli Awami Party (PkMAP) chief Mehmood Khan Achakzai said no government minister bothered to tell the people of Pakistan about this issue. "It is the right of the house that the foreign office tells it what is happening," he stated.

He also talked about the matter related with the Senate's election and said the world is laughing at them for 'the race is on for grabbing a seat in the Senate on payment.' The PTI's Shafqat Mehmood said to eliminate this element his party had suggested direct election of the Senate.

Initiating debate on the president's address to the joint session of the parliament, Leader of Opposition Khursheed Shah said supremacy of the parliament should be ensured and all institutions must perform their duties within their constitutional domain.

Pakistan says taking steps to curb terror financing, money laundering

"It will not be a good omen if the judiciary starts performing functions of the executive," he said, adding that supremacy of the parliament can be ensured if all parliamentarians including the prime minister and the ministers give adequate time to the proceedings of the house.

He regretted that the country is facing a number of challenges on the external front but these challenges are not given due attention. Shah said Pakistan has all the potential to become a developed country provided its resources are exploited judiciously and properly.

He also talked about the issues being faced by farmers of sugarcane and higher prices of petroleum products in the country. He said inflation during the current regime has increased by 100 per cent and Pakistan has taken a loan amounting to Rs7000 billion during the past four and half years.

"The loan per person which stood at Rs74,000 during the tenure of the PPP's government has swelled to Rs125,000 per person," he added.

Shah also talked about literacy issues in Pakistan and said a single teacher over teaches five classes of the students. According to him Pakistan's population will swell to 200 million by 2030.

He also talked about environmental issues in Pakistan and said that there must be five trees against a single person but instead to grow more trees, the trees are being cut.

He said the militant organizations are taking part in elections, politics and terrorism while the USA for which Pakistan sacrificed a lot is not ready to give visas to Pakistanis.

“The Indian premier came to attend wedding of the granddaughter of the former prime minister Nawaz Sharif,” he said and then addressing the treasury benches asked: “Had the former PM invited anyone from among you on this wedding ceremony.”

He said Sharif also held secretly meetings with an Indian businessman.

Law Minister Bashir Mehmood Virk said Indian PM had paid the visit without permission while the former premier had not invited lawmaker of PML-N to avoid excessive expenses.

Here Mazari asked as how a foreign premier could pay a visit without permission. Virk replied that he had meant that the Indian prime minister had paid visit without invitation.

The house later passed a resolution asking the government to ensure that no nationality or cultural identity is specifically linked to the portrayal of terrorism or any other socio-cultural vice. The resolution was moved by the PTI’s Shehryar Afridi.

Source : <https://tribune.com.pk/story/1636033/1-us-move-fatf-lawmakers-term-resolution-pakistan-failure-govt/>

What the FATF? By KK Shahid

One way or the other, Pakistan is hogging all the eyeballs in the ongoing Financial Action Task Force (FATF) meeting in Paris. Pakistan now has the enviable honour of being the first country that has been the target of a motion passed by four different countries.

A group featuring US, the UK, Germany and France is unique – especially when the subject of their interest happens to be Islamabad – and is the corollary of intense lobbying. On the contrary, Pakistan couldn't muster any support from the Muslim countries on this particular front – not even those that have been funding the very groups that have put Pakistan in danger of being put on the grey-list.

What Pakistan did do, however, is get President Mamnoon Hussain Monday to issue the Anti-Terrorism Ordinance 2018 to amend the Anti-Terrorism Act (ATA) 1997, which extends a nationwide ban to the United Nations' list of terrorist groups.

The development means that Lashkar-e-Taiba and its affiliate Jamat-ud-Dawa, among the 27 outfits on the UN list, have now been declared as terror groups in Pakistan, with the group's chief Hafiz Saeed being designated a terrorist in the country.

This was done literally the same week as the fatf meeting was to begin – because subtlety indeed is Islamabad's foreign policy forte. It manifested similar diplomatic deftness when Hafiz Saeed was put under house arrest ahead of last year's fatf meeting, only to be released by a Lahore High Court order in November – three months before this year's meet.

The ringleader in upping the counter-terror ante on Pakistan is the US, which under the Trump regime has put words to what was long believed by the Obama regime – but only echoed within chambers of open secrets.

Trump himself has been calling Pakistan 'sponsor of terror' since his election campaign, which after becoming the president transformed into the less outrageous, but equally damning, provider of 'safe havens to terrorists'. This has been firmly underlined in his South Asia policy passed in August and the Happy New Year that he wished Pakistan on Twitter.

There is the question over Islamabad's tacit support for the Haqqani Network and Afghan Taliban, which was the subject of repeated allegations after hundreds were killed in two deadly Kabul attacks last month. The answer being obvious to anyone mildly acquainted with the networking along the Af-Pak border.

However, at the top of the pile in the Hafiz Saeed linked groups, which continue to yoyo between Islamabad's action to appease global pressure and the military establishment's push to maintain their utility in some form.

As things stand, the establishment has been trying to mainstream Hafiz Saeed's groups in the shape of the Milli Muslim League, while the civilian leadership has been ostensibly trying to take action against them, in the shape of the pending MML application at the Election Commission of Pakistan, which still hasn't granted the party an election symbol.

Since the Lashkar-e-Taiba conglomerate is Kashmir bound, and is hence the regular butt of Indian vitriol, means that the establishment has been able to sell the narrative – through their stooges – that take action against these groups is in Indian interests, or worse, 'dictated by New Delhi'.

As the broken record goes, action against any of these jihadist groups – Kashmir or Kabul bound – is in no one's greater interest than Pakistan's. That it needs fatf and its financial threats – a repeat of 2009-2015 – to acquiesce to taking action, that it benefits the most from, is testament to the shambles that Pakistan's foreign and security policy has been, virtually since its inception, but especially since the past five decades.

At the Munich Security Conference (MSC) in Munich on Saturday, Army Chief Gen Qamar Javed Bajwa said "we are harvesting what was sowed forty years back". Considering that the harvesting began simultaneously with sowing, which has continued unabated for these forty years, underlines the masochistic consensus that Pakistani policymakers have had with regards to ensuring the shambles that it continues to find itself in.

Source : <https://nation.com.pk/20-Feb-2018/what-the-fatf>

Indo-Iran cooperation | Editorial

This weekend, India and Iran signed agreements, including Tehran leasing to New Delhi operational control of part of the Iranian east coast port of Chabahar for 18 months. Shahid Beheshti port – phase one of the Chabahar port – is not too far away from Gwadar and creates a new transit route between India and Afghanistan. India will also gain access to Central Asian markets bypassing Pakistan.

In their historic meeting Indian Prime Minister Modi and the Iranian president Rouhani vowed to expand their economic ties. The construction of the Chabahar-Zahedan rail link was also announced as it would boost regional connectivity and energy trade.

But the economic cooperation and the port-sharing have larger strategic ramifications as well. India's interest in Afghanistan is clearly at work something that the Pakistani authorities have been trying to avert for long. With growing Iranian cooperation India is trying to overcome the disadvantages of geography and neutralise Pakistan's key influence in the region. India has invested more than \$2 billion into Afghanistan since the Taliban were toppled in 2001.

While India's official aim to help achieve stability to war-torn Afghanistan to ensure that anti-Indian militants don't find a haven in Afghanistan, there is also the ambition to counter Pakistan and keep it under check on the western borders. PM Modi made these aims clear by citing 'common interests' in keeping terrorism, extremism, illegal drug trafficking and organised crime under check. The overemphasis on the word terrorism that is also India's position at all international forums indicates where the new alliances are headed.

Indo-Iranian cooperation is not a new development. India has been a major buyer of Iranian oil and gas, and has kept its trade ties intact despite the international sanctions imposed on Tehran between 2012 and 2016. There have been delays in contracting but this relationship is vital for India's energy needs for sustained economic growth. A key threat to this relationship relates to India's strategic partnership with the United States and given Trump administration's move to revise nuclear deal with Iran, this will be a test for India's diplomatic and strategic community.

For Pakistan, this should be a wake-up call necessitating a policy review as the country's neighbours are entering into pacts that not only exclude Pakistan but also could potentially upset its strategic calculations. We hope that Islamabad and Rawalpindi are thinking creatively and not complacent in view of these significant developments.

Source :<https://dailytimes.com.pk/204450/indo-iran-cooperation/>

Trump is running a high-risk economic experiment **By Heather Long**

US PRESIDENT Donald Trump is beginning his second year in office with a high-risk strategy: juicing the US economy at a time when it already looks pretty healthy. As his latest budget, released last Monday, makes clear, Trump wants growth of three per cent — or more — a year for the next seven years, a feat that hasn't happened since Ronald Reagan was president in the 1980s.

Most economists say Trump's economic dream is virtually impossible. The latest Survey of Professional Forecasters, for example, doesn't predict growth will hit 3pc at all in Trump's first term.

The United States is in a different place today than it was three decades ago, many say. The population is much older now, making it more difficult to sustain higher growth, especially without additional immigration or some sort of technological revolution that would make American workers the most productive they have been since the 1960s.

Increasingly, Wall Street banks and independent economic researchers are starting to flag doubts about the health of the Trump economy, further fuelling the belief that a downturn could hit in 2019

But Trump doesn't like being told no. He's made a career out of defying the odds, and his "Trumponomics" recipe of cutting taxes and hiking spending is meant to spur so much additional business investment that productivity can hit record levels. In theory, that would then boost growth and wages further.

His budget predicts the longest expansion in US history, with moderate inflation and unemployment falling to 3.7pc in 2019, the lowest level since 1969. Some economists, however, say the more likely result is growth picks up for a year or so and then a downturn hits. By then, the US government would be even deeper in debt with less money to spend to revive the economy.

"This is a joke," said Marc Goldwein, senior policy director at the Committee for a Responsible Federal Budget. "I would love if we had 3pc growth for two years, let alone seven years, but we have an aging population and there is no plausible story I can tell where we're on a path towards sustained economic growth at that level."

Friction over these contrasting views of how Trumponomics is likely to play out is causing some of the stock market whiplash. There's broad agreement that this year looks good. There's a lot of disagreement about what comes in 2019 and beyond.

"The stock market gyrations we're seeing now might be a foreshadowing of some kind of downturn," said Kristina Hooper, chief global strategist at Invesco. "It seems likely before the end of 2019, we will probably see some kind of economic slowdown."

Increasingly, Wall Street banks and independent economic researchers are starting to flag doubts about the health of the Trump economy, further fuelling the belief that a downturn could hit in 2019. The thinking is that the economy is likely to overheat, forcing the Federal Reserve to have to hike interest rates quickly to prevent inflation, where prices rise rapidly on everything from rents to food to gas. Once the Fed starts pumping up rates, business and consumers are likely to pull back their spending.

"2018 is likely to be as good as it gets," said Paul Ashworth, chief US economist at Capital Economics. "The slowdown may not necessarily come in first half of 2019, but maybe the second half as there's a bigger drag from tighter monetary policy and the fiscal stimulus wears off."

In a further strike on the Trump economy, Goldman Sachs said the president's deregulation push is having little to no effect on the economy. "Overall, our results suggest that non-financial deregulation has had a limited impact on the economy to date," the bank wrote in a report over the weekend.

Goldman's research follows on the heels of a Morgan Stanley report last week that looked at what 556 companies are likely to do with their tax savings. The survey found 43pc intend to fatten dividends and share buybacks. The next most popular use of the tax money is likely to be mergers (19pc said this). Only 17pc anticipate more capital spending and only 13pc think higher wages are likely. A Bank of America survey in August of over 300 companies found similarly pessimistic expectations for how the tax savings would likely be used.

Trump is counting on much of the tax savings going towards business investment. If business spending doesn't pick up, there's even less likelihood of years of great growth. Capital spending did pick up last year and small business confidence is at its highest levels since the Reagan era, but that optimism has to continue to fuel investment.

On the upside for Trump, growth came in stronger than the experts anticipated last year. Americans are feeling the uptick. The latest Quinnipiac University Poll found that 70pc of Americans rate the economy as "excellent" or "good", the highest rating since the poll started asking this particular question in 2001. And for the first time in his presidency,

more Americans credit Trump with driving the economic gains than former president Barack Obama.

But moods can shift quickly, especially if bond yields start rising and the stock market sells off for a prolonged period of time.

Trump's budget projects a lot more debt in the coming years, an oddity at a time of healthy growth when governments typically try to get their budgets back in line. Independent groups like the Committee for a Responsible Federal Budget anticipate the deficit will hit \$1 trillion by next year, a record level at a time when unemployment is so low. The Trump Administration isn't quite that high, but even it anticipates a \$873 billion deficit this fiscal year and \$984bn in 2019.

Trump has abandoned his promise to balance the budget in the next decade. Instead, his latest budget runs a deficit every year. "This is a step in the wrong direction," said Doug Holtz-Eakin, president of the right-leaning American Action Forum and an economic adviser to GOP politicians.

Even with the large cuts Trump proposes for many programmes that aid the poor, he still isn't able to balance the budget. In fact, the budget released Monday has \$2.7 trillion lower revenue over the next decade than his first budget projection in May did, a seeming admission that the tax cuts would struggle to produce enough revenue to offset the costs.

"Their budget effectively assumes that tax cuts don't pay for themselves," said Jason Furman, a Harvard professor who was head of President Obama's Council of Economic Advisers.

Mick Mulvaney, Trump's budget director, argues the government would bring in more money because of the tax cuts than it would have without them.

"As long as we've got GDP growing fast ... the deficit will be going down," said Mulvaney, who used to champion balanced budgets as a congressman.

The Trump administration is on track to return to levels of borrowing not seen since the crisis. While demand from China, Japan and elsewhere in the world is still strong for US government bonds, it's a gamble. If foreign governments slow down their purchases, yields would likely spike.

Source : <https://www.dawn.com/news/1390285/trump-is-running-a-high-risk-economic-experiment>

Syria's nightmare | Editorial

EVEN after seven years of a brutal civil war, there appears to be no light on the horizon for the Syrian people.

Over the past few months, it seemed as if the levels of violence had dipped following 'de-escalation' efforts and parallel peace parleys backed by different world powers and the UN.

However, the lull was illusory as over the past few days, there has been a serious uptick in bloodshed in the Arab country.

In the Eastern Ghouta suburbs of Damascus, the Syrian government has been carrying out a relentless assault to recapture one of the last major areas held by the rebels.

Though Bashar al-Assad's regime, aided by Russian airpower, says it is battling 'terrorists', the assault has taken an unacceptably high civilian toll.

The UN secretary general has termed Eastern Ghouta "hell on earth", with over 300 civilian casualties.

Elsewhere, in Afrin near the Turkish border, the situation is equally critical, as Turkish troops have crossed the border to battle Syrian Kurdish militants.

The Kurds have called upon the Syrian government to help repel the Turks, and in the past few days, there has been plenty of tough talk from both Ankara and Damascus.

Meanwhile, earlier this month, Israel — long a destabilising force in the region — attacked multiple targets in Syria after one of its jets was shot down by Damascus for violating Syrian airspace.

It would not be an exaggeration to say Syria is one of the most volatile and complicated regions in the world today.

It was long feared that the civil war — which from the very start featured heavy external involvement — would expand into a larger regional conflict.

Today, it seems we have reached that grim stage; as the Iranian deputy foreign minister told the BBC on Thursday, fears of a regional conflagration sparked by the Syrian conflict are very real.

With the international order in disarray and multilateral diplomacy lacking impact, is it only a matter of time before a new regional conflict in the Middle East materialises?

Source : <https://www.dawn.com/news/1391168/syrias-nightmare>

The world has a right to know about Trump's war powers By David A. Andelman

A key question of who has the right to declare war — Donald Trump or Congress (as the US Constitution demands) — is quietly playing out these days, largely out of sight.

The outcome of this potentially monumental dispute could keep the world safe or plunge it into sudden and unexpected conflict — with catastrophic consequences.

Since 9/11, American presidents have been operating under the assumption that they could effectively take the nation to war with virtual impunity. Now, Donald Trump has tried to enshrine this concept in a secret memo without any approval by Congress.

Senator Tim Kaine (D-VA) unveiled the existence of the memo earlier this month, when he asked Secretary of State Rex Tillerson to release the document. So far, neither Tillerson nor Congress has responded.

Kaine said he was “concerned that this legal justification may now become precedent for additional executive unilateral military action,” and singled out “an extremely risky ‘bloody nose’ strike against North Korea.”

The memo is only the latest act by Trump that would appear to give him all but unfettered authority beyond his whim or declaration to take the US into a conflict.

The fear is that a thoroughly erratic president could, in a moment of pique order, or even as a distraction, embark on an adventure that would set the nation and the world on an irreversible course that Congress would be powerless to halt.

The still-undisclosed powers contained in the Trump memo could spark unanticipated skirmishes like the ambush in Niger last October, leaving dead Americans in their wake.

At the other end of the spectrum, they might unleash events that could lead potentially to a nuclear holocaust.

The President has already opened the question of whether he'd violated the limit of his war-making powers by his military actions in Syria.

Last April, following evidence of the use of chemical weapons against his own people by Bashar al-Assad, Trump ordered a strike by 59 Tomahawk cruise missiles that seemed to have had little lasting effect beyond solidifying Russian support of the Syrian dictator.

Trump's action was in sharp contrast to that of President Obama, who threatened to launch a strike on Syria for similar use of such weapons but backed off at the last minute in the absence of congressional authorization, which he recognized he was most unlikely to receive.

In each case, the presidents had set up a "red line" which, if the enemy crossed it, would be met by a sharp military response.

I'm heading up a project at the Center on National Security of Fordham Law School on red lines and their anatomy — when they might be effectively used and when they are grossly misused. Obama's refusal to react to Syria's abuse of chemical weapons called into question the red line he had established, a line that Assad leaped across with impunity since he was met with no military response.

This may well have led Assad to believe he could cross such a red line again, but did not count on Trump's willingness to act on his own authority to attack, with little thought to his constitutional limitations.

In fact, the issue is vastly more complex.

Bruce Ackerman, Sterling Professor of Law and Political Science at Yale, observed in an interview that the issue of such red lines and presidential authority to attack dates back to Thomas Jefferson and his action against the Barbary Pirates in 1801.

More recently, and pertinently, we have an example from 1973, when Congress passed the war powers resolution. At that time, in reaction to Richard Nixon's expansion of the Vietnam War, Congress spelled out in some detail just what rights the President has to mount an offensive operation — effectively 60 days to send in troops, then in the absence of Congressional approval, another 30 days to withdraw.

One key issue is when this 60-day period begins. Ackerman, and many other legal scholars, hold that "hostilities begin when there is an imminent danger."

In the critical case of North Korea, Ackerman contends the clock started when President Trump declared the existence of such a danger in a speech to the United Nations last

September 19, which would mean his opportunity to bloody Kim's nose, without Congressional approval, ran out on November 18.

Of course, if the North Korean despot were to launch his own offensive attack on any American facility or territory, all such restraints are instantly removed and Trump would have the right to respond, as he has threatened, with full "fire and fury."

Enter, now, the secret memo that may give Trump broad authority to act on any whim, a document to which only a small cadre in his administration are privy.

The timing is especially acute, as the nation's intelligence chiefs told a Senate hearing Tuesday that Kim Jong-un was planning more missile and nuclear weapons tests this year — though likely no direct offensive against the US.

The concern of an increasingly broad spectrum of Trump opponents is that the President has been effectively setting up a succession of red lines that could lead to him suddenly and unilaterally declaring had been crossed.

There have been threats to China in the South China Sea; Iran and its spreading influence in the Middle East; and in the case of North Korea, a "bloody nose" to teach Kim Jong-un a lesson. Any of these could quickly develop into full-blown nuclear war.

What this means is that Trump's war powers memo, appropriately scrubbed for any classified "sources and methods," needs to see the full light of day, deserves a full national debate and discussion, even Congressional action.

It is bad enough that the President has virtually unfettered access to the nuclear launch codes. Any other means of inflicting an ill-advised "bloody nose" must be restrained at all costs if the nation and the world is not to be plunged into an irreversible conflict of catastrophic proportions on an ill-advised whim.

Source :<https://us.cnn.com/2018/02/20/opinions/trumps-war-power-andelman-opinion/index.html>

Trudeau's India trip is a total disaster, and he has himself to blame By Barkha Dutt

HOW did Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, the world's favourite liberal mascot — a feminist man, with movie-star good looks, a 50 per cent female cabinet and a political lexicon that has replaced “mankind” with “peoplekind” (making millions swoon) — end up looking silly, diminished and desperate on his trip to India this week?

Trudeau's eight-day India expedition has been an absolute fiasco.

Hours before meeting with Prime Minister Narendra Modi, his journey hit a dead end when the Canadian high commissioner invited a Sikh extremist named Jaspal Atwal to a dinner to honour Trudeau in Delhi. Atwal was found guilty of trying to kill an Indian minister in 1986; he was also blamed for an assault on Ujjal Dosanjh, the former premier of British Columbia.

By the time Atwal's invitation was rescinded — Trudeau called it “unfortunate” — Atwal had already posed for photographs with Trudeau's wife, Sophie, in Mumbai, as well as with other members of his entourage.

“It's a disaster,” Vishnu Prakash, former Indian high commissioner to Canada, said. “I am convinced Trudeau was blindsided. Whoever drew up the list screwed up and dealt him a fait accompli. But it is also symbolic of how Khalistanis have penetrated the system.”

Since Trudeau won the election in 2015, the 1980s have returned to haunt Indo-Canada ties. Sikh secessionists who supported a separate country (Khalistan) unleashed a bloodbath in the state of Punjab in the '80s. Indira Gandhi, then prime minister, sent the army to purge the Golden Temple (the holiest place of worship for Sikhs) of militants who were hiding inside. She was assassinated by her own Sikh bodyguards, followed by anti-Sikh riots in which more than 3,000 were killed. In 1985, the Air India jumbo jet 'Kanishka' flying from Montreal to Delhi was blown up by Sikh terrorists, leaving 329 people dead.

Knowing all of this, Trudeau still attended a Khalsa parade in May, where many of these militants were feted. So, his India trip was already mired in tensions when the Atwal snafu broke. Then, Canadian media released more photographs showing an apparent familiarity between Atwal and Trudeau back home. Nearly half a million Sikhs live in Canada and account for 1.4 per cent of the population. Trudeau was such a favourite among them that he is jokingly called Justin Singh. Now he has competition. Jagmeet Singh, who recently took over the reins of Canada's New Democratic Party, is considered

left of Trudeau's left. He even refused to condemn the terrorist who blew up the Air India plane.

"Trudeau's India trip from the outset was playing to a diaspora gallery back home, one in which he has been studiously ambiguous on the Khalistani ties of some of his Liberal Party's Sikh Canadian supporters," said Vivek Dehejia, a professor at Carleton University in Ottawa. "But for those who are lukewarm on Trudeau, this will reconfirm their impression that the rock star image hides feet of clay, and that he has been undone by his own cleverness in trying to massage the diaspora vote back home yet appear statesman-like here in India. That facade has crumbled."

Given the seriousness and the sensitivities at stake, it was infuriating to watch Trudeau sashaying out, doing Bhangra, at the same Canadian reception this week that was at the heart of the storm. You could feel the collective groan of Indians: please. Stop. Enough Already.

I confess, from afar, I used to be a Trudeau fan-girl. But after this trip, I've changed my mind. Trudeau has come across as flighty and facetious. His orchestrated dance moves and multiple costume changes in heavily embroidered kurtas and sherwanis make him look more like an actor on a movie set or a guest at a wedding than a politician who is here to talk business. Suddenly, all that charisma and cuteness seem constructed, manufactured and, above all, not serious.

"He seems more much more convinced of his own rock-star status than we ever were," said one Indian government official, who preferred to remain anonymous.

Indians are also wondering, what is Trudeau doing here for so long? Doesn't he have a country to run?

The length of Trudeau's stay may help explain why the trip started on a discordant note. Government sources said India urged Canada to cut the trip shorter or to at least sequence it differently. India wanted to start the trip with political talks before Trudeau played tourist. The Canadians disagreed. Also, the Canadians expected Modi to accompany Trudeau to his home state of Gujarat, just as he had done with Shinzo Abe, Xi Jinping and Benjamain Netanyahu. India declined.

"There was a disconnect between Canada's expectations, which had very little basis, and what we were ready to do," said Vishnu Prakash, pointing out that 200 heads of state have visited India in four years. "Receiving leaders at the airport is an exception. And the Canadians should know — Modi has only gone to Gujarat with those leaders he has personally invited there."

The frostiness with which Trudeau has been received is quite telling in a country where “Atithi Devo Bhavah” — “the guest is equivalent to God” — is usually the philosophy toward hospitality. Modi meets the Canadian prime minister on Friday, the sixth day of Trudeau’s India tour, and the only half-day of his sojourn that officially counts as “work”.

Most people agree that the Modi government has shown impressive toughness in setting the terms and in offering bipartisan support to the opposition leader, Captain Amarinder Singh, who governs the Sikh-dominated Punjab. Singh first accused Trudeau of backing Sikh separatists. Singh’s media adviser Raveen Thukral said that Trudeau gave a “categorical assurance that his country did not support any separatist movement in India” and drew parallels with Quebec, saying that he “had dealt with such threats all his life and was fully aware of the dangers of violence”.

Sounds good. So next time you come to India, Prime Minister Trudeau, do try and leave the terrorists — and the wedding kurtas — at home.

Barkha Dutt is an award-winning Indian TV journalist and anchor with more than two decades of reporting experience. She is the author of *This Unquiet Land: Stories from India’s Fault Lines*.

Source : <https://www.dawn.com/news/1391351/trudeaus-india-trip-is-a-total-disaster-and-he-has-himself-to-blame>

What Indian presence in Chabahar means By **Dr Raza Khan**

The agreement between India and Iran to hand over operational control of a section of the Iranian seaport of Chabahar to New Delhi is a significant strategic development. The port is located just 90km away from the Pakistani deep-seaport of Gwadar. The most important feature of the Iranian seaport is that it can serve as a transit route for India to trade with Iran, Afghanistan and Central Asia sidestepping Pakistan. For years, New Delhi has been eyeing its presence in Chabahar for economic and strategic reasons. India could not desirably increase its trade with Afghanistan and Central Asia as Pakistan has been reluctant to allow India overland access to Afghanistan and beyond through its territory. For Pakistan giving economic concessions to a strategic rival, India, without getting any worthwhile financial gains is against its national interest. Noticeably, in the age of geo-economics with stress on economic globalisation, inter-regional and intra-regional and cross-regional economic integration and interdependency, Pakistan considers its geostrategic interests more important! After getting operational control of a part of Chabahar port, India would be able to increase its trade with Iran, Afghanistan and Central Asia manifold.

Its successful endeavours to have operational control of Chabahar seaport would be extensively beneficial in economic terms. However, the location of the seaport plus the timing of getting control of Chabahar compels one to think that a regional power like India must have solid strategic reasons to have presence there. In particular, India's anti China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) stance and activities makes one suspicious of the mere economic justifications of taking operational control of Chabahar. India and China are growing trading partners but for all intents and purposes are strategic rivals having territorial disputes.

Ostensibly, CPEC is a pure economic project but India thinks of it as a design by Beijing to have a strategic advantage in the region particularly the Indian Ocean. Strategic apprehensions have been forcing India to somehow get control of Chabahar in order to offset Chinese presence and reduce its strategic advantage in Gwadar.

By giving India operational control over Chabahar, Iran may have again strained its relations with Pakistan, which had been growing in recent months after years of cold mistrust. China, an important trading partner of Iran, would also not appreciate India's presence in Chabahar. In President Donald Trump's South Asia policy, India is of significant importance. Washington considers India as cornerstone of 'stability' in the region. Pakistan and China think the US wants to see Delhi's hegemony in the region.

Thus the US thinks of India's role in the context of 'hegemonic stability,' an important theory of international relations. Along with India, Tehran thinks it could dominate Afghan trade and provide an alternative route of integration of South and Central Asia. This strategy aims at bypassing Pakistan. Pakistan has already lost a sizable portion of its exports to Afghanistan. A key reason for this declining Pak-Afghan trade is that after part of the Chabahar port has been made operational much of Afghan trade has got diverted to Iran. Tehran may not have overtly opposed Pakistan but it has had its reservations on Islamabad's role in Afghanistan which it thinks has been against Iranian interest in Afghanistan. This is despite the fact that Iran for the last few years has had developed working relations with the Afghan Taliban. The regions, in which Iran, Pakistan and India are located, could benefit from Chabahar and Gwadar if the two seaports reinforce each other instead of competing for economic and strategic advantage(s). The future of the inhabitants of the regions of Central and South Asia as well as the wider Middle East hinges on regional economic integration and the opportunities this may generate.

Source : <https://tribune.com.pk/story/1643924/6-indian-presence-chabahar-means/>

Failures of US, Afghan forces | Editorial

With no seriousness being shown in engaging the warring factions for a political dialogue, situation is fast worsening in Afghanistan with each passing day. In recent times, there have been an increased number of terror attacks and in the latest series of attacks and suicide bombings on Saturday, about 30 people mostly soldiers were killed and more than a dozen wounded. In the biggest attack, Taliban stormed an army base in the Western province of Farah killing at least 24 soldiers.

The attacks once again exposes structural weaknesses of the Afghan security forces also badly hit by desertions and corruption to handle the complex security situation. Afghan soldiers have taken what the UN describes as 'shocking' casualties since international forces ended their combat role at the end of 2014, though troop casualty figures are no longer released. Just over the past one month or so, a luxury hotel, military compound and a crowded street have been attacked in the Afghan capital, claiming the lives of more than 130 people with city remaining on high alert fearing further violence. Amidst this serious situation the Afghan government, probably under the US pressure, contacted the Qatar government to close Taliban's office there. Though the office since its establishment seven years ago has not produced any positive results to take forward the peace process, yet shutting it down at this time reflects that the Afghan government lacks the will to sit across the Taliban — who according to latest BBC reports control about seventy percent of territory in Afghanistan. In addition, the IS (Daesh) has also made its inroads in the country despite presence of US contingents.

As was anticipated, Trump's policy aimed at focusing more on military solution, is taking the matters towards worse much to the miseries and disappointment of Afghan people who over the last many decades only have seen intense bloodshed and violence. Indeed, there is no military solution to the Afghan conflict, something repeatedly stressed by Pakistan, and both the US Administration and the Afghan government will have to tread the path of peace process if they are really interested to give the Afghan people a healing touch. While Pakistan, China and Russia have always shown willingness to support and facilitate the peace process in the war torn country, it is also time for Washington to revisit its policy. Murree process had succeeded in bringing the Taliban to the table for serious negotiations but those inimical to peace sabotaged the process for their own vested interests. Nonetheless, we have no doubt in saying that the warring factions can again be wooed back to sustainable dialogue provided there is willingness and sincerity of purpose for peace. Blame game or making others a scapegoat for own failures will not help but further complicate the matters.

While it is important that Pakistan, Afghanistan and the US remove their mutual misunderstandings through consultations, it is time to revive the QCG with the spirit to take forward the reconciliation process without any expediency. The path will be long and tedious but undeniably there is no other option to restore peace in the lives of Afghan people and defeat terror monsters such as IS. By announcing confidence building measures and showing restraint on the military front, the vital peace process can move forward with success.

Source : <https://pakobserver.net/failures-us-afghan-forces/>