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Compiled By Shahbaz Shakeel

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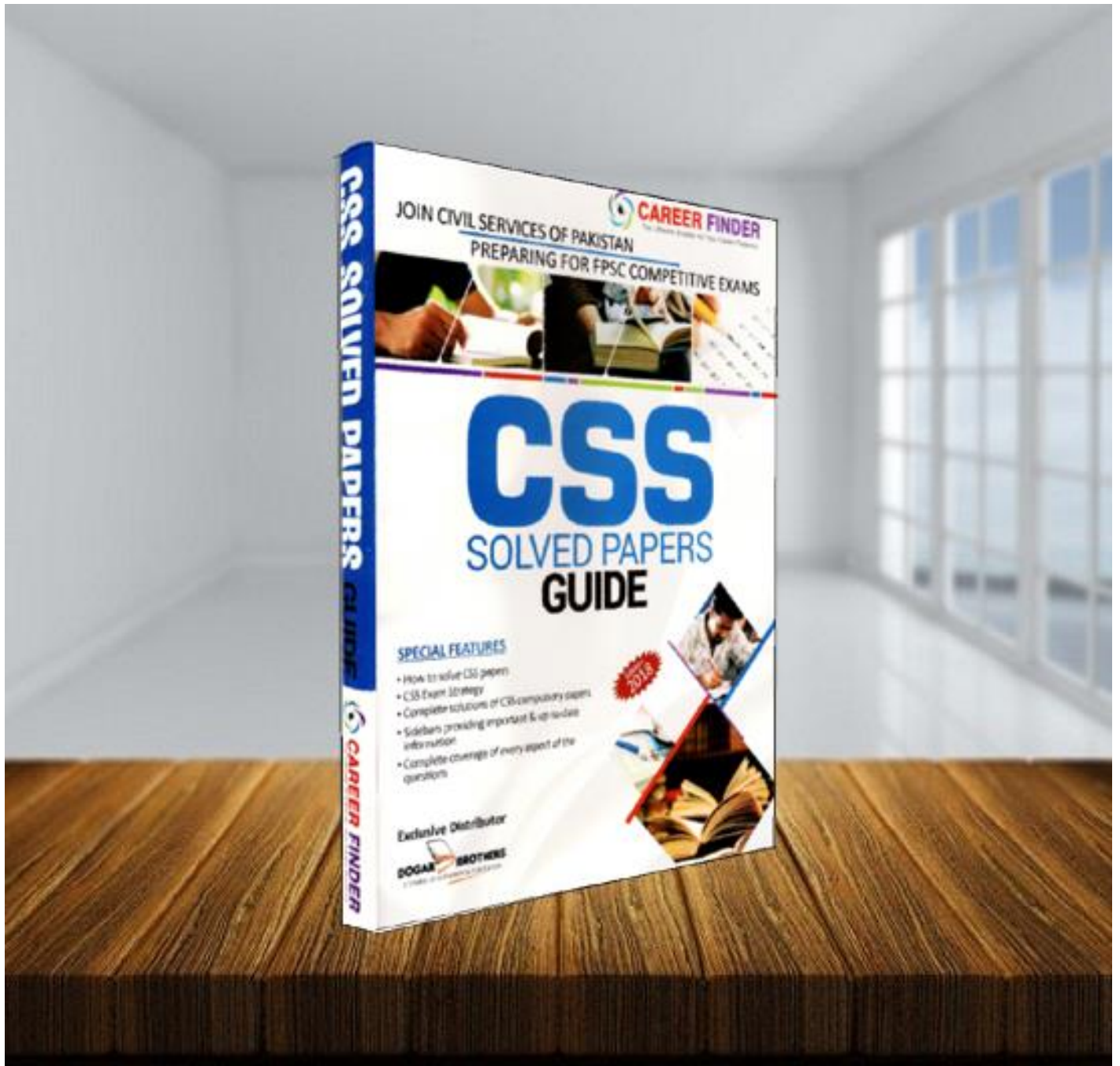
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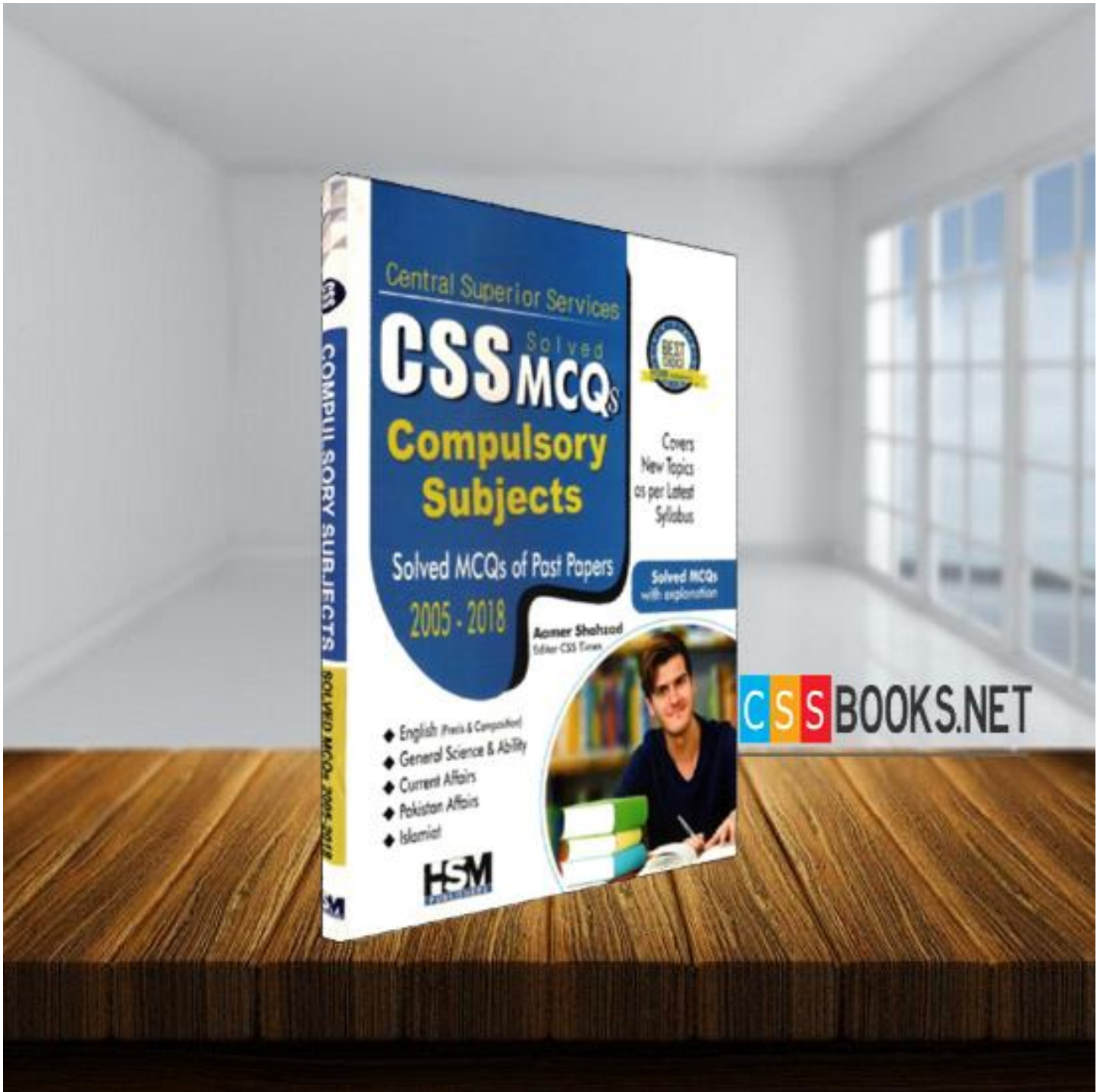
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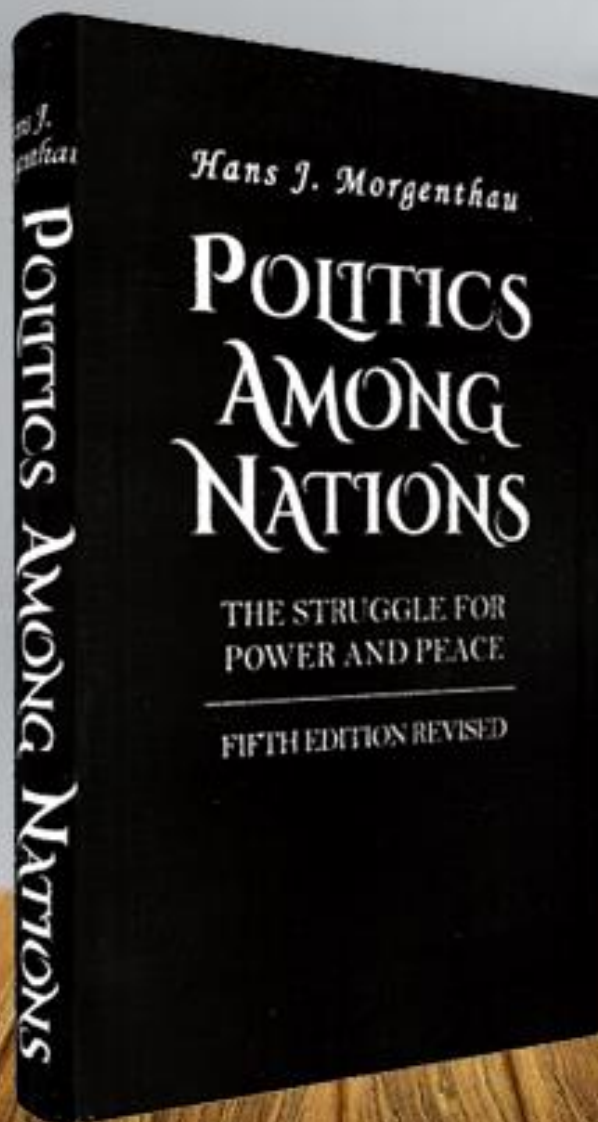
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PAKISTAN

Water Crisis: Treading Carefully | Editorial

THE water crisis in the country is undeniably alarming. Serious action is required and long-term solutions will almost certainly include a combination of increased storage capacity and better utilisation of water already available in the system. Given the urgency of the problem, it is perhaps welcome that all institutions of the state are beginning to emphasise the gravity of the water crisis and the need for innovative solutions. But for effective interventions the right institutions of the state must address specific problems. Water storage and management are clearly an area of expertise and constitutional responsibility of the executive. Other state institutions ought to aid and encourage the executive in finding timely and comprehensive solutions to the national water crisis. It is quite possible that is what Chief Justice of Pakistan Saqib Nisar has in mind with his recent remarks about dams being a large part of the solution to the water crisis and funds for building two large dams being raised through loan recoveries that banks may have waived earlier. But great caution is needed at the intersection of the law, finance and water.

On the issue of loan recoveries from businesses and allegedly politically connected wealthy individuals over the decades, it is possible that undue favours by state regulators may be unearthed in an exhaustive financial analysis. Yet, it is perhaps relevant to keep in mind the origins of the matter that the Supreme Court has again taken up with urgency. According to media reports, the current probe by the court can be traced back to hearings initiated by former chief justice Iftikhar Chaudhry in 2008 regarding loan write-offs during the regime of Gen Pervez Musharraf. The era of judicial interventions under Mr Chaudhry is almost universally regarded as highly controversial and, in the case of economic decision-making, is believed to have caused untold losses to the public exchequer. While fat cats and rogue businessmen should be pursued fearlessly, it is important that the foundations of the economy not be rocked in misguided pursuits. It is hoped that the superior judiciary will proceed with caution, keeping front and centre the constitutional separation of powers and the authority of the executive.

In the area of water policy, the enormous social, economic and political dimensions of policy interventions ought to make the judiciary even more cautious. Funding, building and maintaining dams and managing water flows are areas where the executive not only has constitutional authority but the greater expertise among the institutions of the state. Yet, the next federal and provincial governments ought to recognise the severity of the water crisis in the country and make it a priority to find national solutions to the water crisis. It has become apparent that inaction by the country's political leadership can invite outside interference. Surely, then, the next elected governments ought to make water a national priority.

Published in Dawn, July 2nd, 2018

Source: <https://www.dawn.com/news/1417418/water-crisis-treading-carefully>

NSG Expansion And The Indo-Pak Angle By **Ali Raza**

It is a well-known fact that nuclear technology can not only be used for development of nuclear weapons, but also for peaceful purposes that can contribute in ensuring the development of countries. Therefore, the fact that various states feel the need to acquire nuclear technology is not surprising.

At the same time, the international community also acknowledges that certain states may have designs to use the nuclear technology for making weapons. This is evident from the nuclear test conducted by India at Pokhran, despite its repeated proclamation, spread over a period of almost three decades, that it would use nuclear technology for peaceful purposes only. It is important to remember that this particular test not only compelled Pakistan to acquire nuclear weapons, but also triggered an arms race in the region, which is still going on.

To extend the benefits of nuclear technology to humanity, the international community has taken into consideration two primary factors i.e., prevention of the proliferation of nuclear weapons, and ensuring extension of benefits of nuclear technology to humanity. Therefore, the international community has developed treaties and binding commitments. These are commonly referred to as the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Regime (NNR). The Nuclear Supplier Group (NSG), with Nuclear Non Proliferation Treaty (NPT) as its corner stone, is considered as one of the most important and credible component of the International NNR. Since it was initiated, NSG has served the aforesaid two purposes designed by the international community, and has attained credibility in this regard. This fact was also acknowledged by the President of Swiss Confederation Ms Doris Leuthard in the 27th Plenary Meeting of NSG, held on 22-23 June 2017. She applauded the efforts of NSG in curbing the proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.

Both India and Pakistan want a seat at the NSG. The interesting fact is that both the states are neither signatories of NPT, nor members of the Nuclear Weapon Free Zone. However, the US, in pursuit of economic incentives, acquired an India-specific NSG waiver

Those familiar with the rationale behind the constitution of NSG understand that there are certain pre-requisites for a state to become a part of this group. To qualify, a State should either be signatory of Nuclear Proliferation Treaty (NPT) or it should become member of Nuclear Weapon Free Zone.

The applications for membership in NSG were submitted by the two nuclear states of South Asia, i.e., India and Pakistan in the year 2016. The interesting fact is that both the states are neither signatories of NPT, nor members of Nuclear Weapon Free Zone. However, the credibility of NPT was compromised when United States, in pursuit of economic incentives, acquired an India specific NSG waiver. The US' India-centric approach raised serious reservations from the International community over the criteria to enter the NSG.

The competition between these two states to become a member of NSG started after the joint statement of President Bush and Indian Prime Minister in 2005 regarding US — India Nuclear Co-operation Initiative and after U.S obtained India specific waiver from NSG. Further, the member states of NSG are also affirmative about devising a criterion that could enable the states, which are non-signatory to NPT, to enter into the group for availing the benefits of nuclear technology.

This approach of the member states of NSG, and also keeping in view the aspirations of the two nuclear rival states, led to intense debate about the two major groups i.e., those who intend only India to enter the NSG, and those who argue for a criteria-based approach instead. China, along with some other countries, strongly opposed the idea of a country specific approach. The Spokesperson of Chinese foreign ministry expressed that such a solution should be adopted that would be non-discriminatory, applicable to all states that are not signatory to NPT, and which must not undermine the core values of NSG as well as the integrity and effectiveness attached to NPT.

On the other hand, the formula coined by the Ambassador of Argentina Rafael Grossi, famously known as Grossi-Song formula, clearly favours entry of only India to the group. For example, among various points proposed by him, one is the separation of civil and military nuclear facilities and other is the signing of additional protocols of IAEA. The formula proposed by Grossi was subject to objections by various states such as China, Brazil, Turkey, New Zealand, Italy,

Austria etc. The objections raised vary from lack of transparency, selective engagement, to lack of impartiality. It is being maintained by the said states that the said proposal is a violation of the spirit of NSG and the norms underlying the Nuclear Non Proliferation regime.

If, for the sake of arguments, the Grossi-Song formula is implemented, it would have the following implications: one, the sanctity attached to the credibility of NSG would seriously be at stake, two, it would also be detrimental to the importance of NPT being the nucleus of NSG, three it could trigger an arms-race in South Asia, and could be detrimental to the strategic stability of the region, and fourth, it could put India in an advantageous position over Pakistan, especially when India is clearly violating the norms of Non Proliferation Regime, and constantly increasing its stock pile of nuclear weapons.

However, Indo-Pak's quest to join NSG was met with cold feet from member states during the 27th plenary meeting, during which participating governments reaffirmed their full support and effective and strict implementation of NPT. Yet it was agreed by the participating governments that every aspect of implementation of 2008 statement of Civil Nuclear Cooperation with India would be considered. These two facts appear to be contradictory, as on one hand the participating governments express their commitment to strictly adhere to the meaningful compliance of NPT, and on the other hand, these states have agreed to consider every possibility of implementation of 2008 of Civil Nuclear Cooperation with India. International community must take serious note of the acknowledgement of central role of NPT by Ms Doris Leuthard in curbing the proliferation of nuclear weapons by NSG. Participating governments should proceed with the matter of entry of India into the group with utmost care, and in a manner that the spirit of NPT is not violated. Therefore, a criteria based approach seems the most viable option that lies ahead for member states to expand NSG.

Published in Daily Times, July 8th 2018.

Source: <https://dailytimes.com.pk/264193/nsg-expansion-and-the-indo-pak-angle/>

A Pak-Afghan Water Treaty? By Mashhood Hassan Azam Awan

The Indus River Basin is shared by four countries: Pakistan, India, Afghanistan and China. The water sector in this region faces certain challenges including the depletion of natural resources and inefficient use of water. The region's current population is 237 million and is estimated to increase to 319 million by 2025, and to 383 million by 2050.

Kabul River, a tributary of the Indus water system, runs through Afghanistan and Pakistan. It is 700 kilometres long and emerges in the Sanglakh Range of the Hindu Kush mountains in Afghanistan, ultimately emptying into the Indus River near Attock in Pakistan. It is shared by upper-riparian Afghanistan and lower-riparian Pakistan. The river contributes 25 MAF to the economy of Pakistan. There is a possibility of Afghanistan withholding the water during sowing seasons and releasing it during wet seasons.

Afghanistan needs a modern water infrastructure for its agricultural and urbanisation needs. Its 2008 development agenda indicated building of dams as an integral part of the developmental programme.

Pakistan sees Afghanistan's close ties with India as a security threat. The former is an agrarian economy; the agricultural sector makes for 22 percent of its GDP and 42 percent of its labour force is engaged in this sector. The construction of dams by Afghanistan on Kabul River will affect the lower-riparian region's economy. This controversy, if not resolved, has the potential to make Pakistan's western borders unsafe too. India is supporting the construction of 12 dams on the river. By providing finance for these dams, India can gain influence on Afghanistan's water policies.

To many observers, Afghanistan is emerging as a democratic state in South Asian politics. It lacks a sound water infrastructure and needs to develop one as it is a genuine need.

There is no Pak-Afghan treaty on the sharing and use of water from River Kabul, like the Indus Waters Treaty between India and Pakistan on the use of water

from the Indus water system. In the absence of a treaty, matters between co-riparian states are regulated through international laws. Studying the customary international laws, conventions, declarations and rules, and the classic work of international experts, revealed one principle that: co-riparian states, especially upper ones, must let the water flow into the downstream areas unaffected, both qualitatively and quantitatively.

Along with the Madrid Declaration, 1911 – on using international watercourses for purposes other than navigation – the general principles of international law and teachings of highly qualified experts also stress upon this norm. An analysis of the existing rules, viz the Helsinki Rules on the Uses of Waters of International Rivers, 1966; Berlin Rules on Water Resources, 2004; and the UN's Convention on the Law of the Non-navigational Uses of International Watercourses, 1997, all highlight certain principles.

These principles include: i) equitable distribution of shared watercourses; ii) commitment not to cause 'substantial injury' to co-riparian states, iii) all basin states shall, while managing the waters of an international drainage basin in their respective territories, have due regard to 'the obligation not to cause significant harm to other basin states'; iv) each basin state is entitled, within its territory, to a reasonable and equitable share in the beneficial use of the waters of an international drainage basin...without causing substantial injury to a co-riparian state.

The largest area of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province lies around the Kabul and Swat rivers. Most of Peshawar, Charsadda and Nowshera are irrigated by River Kabul, through distributory channels. Damming by Afghanistan may create huge live water storages upstream, enabling it to temper with the flow of water to lower-riparian Pakistan. This will cause a dearth of water, thereby adversely affecting Pakistan's agrarian economy. Despite the World Bank and USAID supporting the idea of Pakistan and Afghanistan signing a treaty in 2006, and the US Congress issuing a report, on how water scarcity could fuel dangerous tensions, in 2011, the matter continues to remain unresolved.

Decidedly, there is a deficit of trust between Afghanistan and Pakistan, which is very likely to turn into a controversy leading to a trans-boundary water dispute.

This could trigger armed clashes between them too. There is already talk about countries going to war over water issues in the future.

International treaties are the primary source of international law. In case of a dispute, if there is no treaty between the states, it becomes difficult for the victim state to seek redress from any international forum, including the International Court of Justice and International Court of Arbitration. Treaties are taken for granted as a safe and sound modus operandi at the international level to resolve trans-boundary disputes between countries.

The Indus Waters Treaty of 1960 is the best model. It simultaneously covers three subjects, viz legal: norms on sharing and the use of water from a single basis by co-riparians; technical: norms of hydrology, irrigation and engineering science, and politico-economic: hydro politics, hydro-electricity generation and agriculture through irrigation.

Thus, the Indus Waters Treaty may be used as a basic model to figure out new frameworks for sharing and using River Kabul . In this respect, further guidance can be sought from international laws. The Indo-Pak factor in relation to Afghanistan needs to be set apart. The reality is that a matter between Afghanistan and Pakistan alone hence, needs to be taken up accordingly. To develop a modern water infrastructure is the genuine need of Afghanistan for its economic welfare.

It is essential for both of Afghanistan and Pakistan to have a bilaterally-arranged settlement on the sharing and use of the Kabul River's water. In light of the parameters set out in the Indus Waters Treaty, subject to the canons of the international law regime, a new workable model can be figured out to resolve any water issue that may arise between the two countries. By following these parameters the issue can be prevented from becoming a problem. The treaty will further provide an in-built mechanism of dispute resolution as well. This arrangement is necessary for regional peace and prosperity.

Political will on either side of the border, and the World Bank, will be needed to bring Afghanistan and Pakistan on the negotiating table to find out a viable solution to this rift.

Source: <https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/339335-a-pak-afghan-water-treaty>

India's Diplomatic Dilemma in SCO By

Muhammad Asif Noor

The 18th Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) Summit was held in the coastal city of Qingdao in China's Shandong province this June, where Pakistan and India joined in for the first time as permanent members, which also include China, Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan.

This development was momentous; on the one hand, their accession has enhanced the position of the organisation in the international community as two more nuclear power states have joined its ranks, while on the other hand, it provides a stage for both countries to deal with the issues pertaining to their common border and the region as a whole.

It is imperative that the summit is used as a way to tackle these issues, in order to empower the SCO further, and it is heartening to see that there is already a consensus on jointly eliminating all the emerging threats from the region.

The presence of both China and Russia will have a huge influence on the organisation, as the SCO is not SAARC, and India cannot claim to be the primary power within the group.

Here, India will need to share the power dynamics with two global powers, which will help keep their actions in check. However, that has not stopped India from trying to exert some authority, as they were the only nation to openly oppose the BRI project, as per the 17 page Qingdao Declaration that was released at the end of the Summit. In his summit address, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, stressed the need to "respect sovereignty" in dealing with infrastructure projects.

He also signalled his country's objection to a portion of the Belt and Road Initiative, specifically the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor, which passes through Azad Jammu and Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan. New Delhi claims these regions are part of the greater Kashmir, and are disputed territories, a charge which Pakistan and the Kashmiris strongly reject.

This development raises one main question. How can India continue to oppose this mega project, when every major country in the region is a part of it. The economic advantages are too high to ignore and the situation is further complicated by India's growing friendship with the US. Both nations have joined hands on a number of projects for building strategic and security ties, yet this cannot last when on the other side India is also trying to form alliances with Russia and China. This diplomatic challenge might prove to be quite a conundrum for New Delhi to solve, and it has the potential to isolate them in the long run as well.

Unveiled in 2013, BRI is linking Southeast Asia, Central Asia, Gulf Region, Africa and Europe, and includes both sea and land routes. Chinese investment is estimated to be \$126 billion, and even though some countries are sceptical about the project, over 80 countries and international organisations have signed agreements of cooperation with China, agreeing to be part of this project.

Apart from this new emerging trend of economic and regional integration, since India and Pakistan first joined the SCO as observer states back in 2005, political dynamics around the world have undergone a change as well. Both countries are currently at the lowest ebb of their relationship, and several incidents, including the chaos in Kashmir have further led to the deterioration of their already shaky association with one another, leading India to vow to isolate Pakistan internationally.

India is facing similar challenges with China, which include the recent border backlash, India's involvement in the war on trade between China and USA, and their recent isolation at the SCO summit. On the one side they are sticking to their policy of opposing CPEC, but on the other side they are desperately trying to utilise the routes that the BRI will open up to the markets in Central Asia, Russia and even Europe.

Once again the great dilemma that faces India is exposed, and on top of all these problems, there also remains India's desire to be the hegemon in Asia; a prospect that seems unlikely considering China's current progress, which is being supplemented by BRI.

Even though India's opposition to CPEC did not come as a surprise, there is no doubt that they, as well as Pakistan, are more than willing to abide by the SCO charter. As a result, both countries recently sent their military personnel to participate in joint-military exercises

Even though India's opposition to CPEC did not come as a surprise, there is no doubt that they, as well as Pakistan, are more than willing to abide by the charter of the SCO.

We must also remember that both countries recently sent their military personnel to participate in joint military exercises. Who could have ever thought that these two arch rivals and heavily armed, nuclear nations would ever conduct military exercises together?

It was their desire to respect the wishes, and the directives of the SCO that resulted in this momentous occasion. However, it will be interesting to see just how far both states are willing to go in order to continue working in collaboration with each other. Growing connectivity, economic development and military cooperation in the region will only lead to peace, prosperity and security, and both India and Pakistan will have to realise that in order to function in such an environment, they will eventually have to cooperate with one another, no matter what.

The writer is Secretary General, Pakistan Shanghai Cooperation Organisation Friendship Forum

Published in Daily Times, July 12th 2018.

Source: <https://dailytimes.com.pk/266257/indias-diplomatic-dilemma-in-sco/>

Key Challenges For Next Government By Dr Salman Ahmed Shaikh

THE next government is going to have a tough task of managing the macroeconomic problems of the country, both on the fiscal side as well as the external sector. Public debt has risen steadily, while the tax base has not widened as much as was needed. Exports have not picked up, while the imports have escalated. As a result, a huge trade deficit stands. The institutional and structural problems have also worsened. We have narrow tax base, greater reliance on indirect taxes and meagre spending in education and health than on debt servicing and defence. Both the hardware in the form of public infrastructure and software in the form of rule of law, effective governance and skillful and healthy human resource remain in precarious situation.

On the other hand, there are some signs of improvement in improved school enrollment and development of public infrastructure related to highways, motorways and public transport in some pockets. A good efficient public transport system is vital for the environment, labour force participation, real estate development, normalization of real estate prices, retail business success, cities' expansion and diversification of business and official hubs. However, human capital development is even more important as it is the means as well as end of development. The ills faced by the economy actually have roots in bad governance, corruption and weak institutions. Economic policies alone can only superficially drag and drop few variables. But the structural and institutional change requires an all-encompassing effort to root out corruption, ensure complete justice and then governance will be better and policies will work. Foreign and even domestic investment cannot rise without solving structural and governance problems.

To meet the fiscal challenges, the government's effort to expand the tax net by amnesty scheme and by creating a fiscal and commercial disincentive for non-filers is a necessary step. A little relief has come in the form of additional revenue collection from the tax amnesty scheme. Widening tax base requires strong measures to demotivate and dis-incentivize tax evasion, but it also requires building public confidence in institutions and policies through effective governance. Austerity measures to control expenses on bureaucracy, ministries

and official travelling and events might not do much in saving large chunk of public money, but it will go a long way to signal commitment and build people's confidence. If the tax base and collection can increase, there can be less reliance on domestic borrowing. Thus, banks will have the incentive to provide financing to the real sector. Another option that can be explored is to tax banks heavily on their investment income and lightly on income from financing provided to the real sector. In the current scenario, Islamic banks have a better finance to deposit ratio (66.9 percent) despite their small size as compared to overall industry (51.4 percent) as at end-March 2018.

Coming to the external sector challenges, despite rupee depreciation and introducing import controls, the trade balance seems hard to contain. The inelasticity of imports and highly elastic demand for low value-added exports is the reason why influencing imports and export price is not impacting the trade balance as much as we expect. On the other hand, the rupee depreciation is going to make external debts and imports more expensive. Heavy reliance on expensive imports is going to bring in inflation. To meet the external sector distress, the three most important non-debt sources of foreign exchange available are exports, remittances and foreign investment. Firstly, foreign investment requires energy, security, skilled human resource and infrastructure. Despite a sizable middle-class consumer base, the supply side challenges do not provide enough incentives for foreign investment. Due to these supply-side challenges, even the domestic industries have sluggish investment with many factories shutting down or relocating their production facilities. With the increased supply of energy resources and improved security situation, it is hoped that a business-friendly environment can be provided sustainably.

Secondly, remittances will face challenges with Pakistan remaining in FATF grey list, the ongoing crisis in the Middle East, difficulty in migration to European and Western countries and stringent employment conditions in Saudi Arabia and Malaysia as they face tough fiscal space for further investment in construction. To maintain and even improve remittances, the diplomatic and foreign policy needs to engage in fruitful discussion for providing easy employment and business visa, especially with countries whose products we are importing. Thirdly, the export enhancement requires speedy disbursement of tax refunds and negotiating i) free trade agreements for better market access, ii) easy provision of multiple entry business visas and iii) low cost and efficient bilateral

quality certification mechanism which reduce the non-tariff barriers for Pakistani exporters. The exporters themselves need to improve product quality, packaging and branding, gain acceptable quality certifications and explore untapped markets in Central Asia and Africa.

Finally, the macroeconomic and public policies need to be ably supported by academia. The business schools also need to emphasize on entrepreneurship. Some business schools have made an effort to establish business incubation centres. Commercialisation of skills and ideas is important so that the skilful human resource we produce do not merely serve foreign lands as employees rather they should be able to contribute by providing commercial services in the local economy as well as exporting it. The Youth Business Loan scheme needs to expand and support other low cost businesses. If a single young person can be provided a soft loan for purchasing a car worth 1.5 million for ride hailing services, many other service oriented businesses can also be funded which have even better employment creation potential beyond the loan beneficiary alone. India's IT-related exports have touched USD137 billion per year, which is almost six times the size of Pakistan's total exports. IT services exports can be enhanced further without depending much on land, mobility, capital and infrastructure.

— The writer is Assistant Professor at SZABIST, Karachi.

Source: <https://pakobserver.net/key-challenges-for-next-government/>

From Crisis to Consensus By Shakil Durrani

The efforts being made to open the debate on the Kalabagh Dam are laudable. There are undoubtedly some problems. But these aren't challenges that are insurmountable.

We know that the federating units have distinct water needs. But there is a need to move ahead. Given our exploding population, which now stands at 208 million and continues to grow at over two percent annually, decisive decisions cannot be postponed much longer. The only way to do this is by developing a consensus among the main political stakeholders. This, in turn, requires extensive bargaining. Though such deliberations take place behind closed doors, they must be carried out with an open mind. In other words, a painstaking policy of 'give and take' is required.

In Harvard's Kennedy School, an imaginative business model for major water-sector development projects is taught in environment-related classes. This consists of 'the WTO balancing the WTA'. Sponsors of a project extend a 'willingness to offer', consisting of financial and environmental terms, to develop the project and then await the response of those affected through their 'willingness to accept' the offered terms. After repeated flows, the terms are mutually refined till equilibrium is achieved when the WTO is equal to the WTA. The project is then ready to be developed.

A similar but informal model operates in Pakistan as well. All major water issues are resolved through objective, fair and professional negotiations. Examples of this abound. The people of Mirpur fiercely opposed the construction of Mangla Dam in the mid-1960s and then again in the early 2000s when the Mangla Dam Raising Project came to the fore. Their concerns were addressed through a painstaking dialogue before any work could commence. Sadly, their requirement of 116 cusecs of irrigation water from Mangla Lake has still not been allowed by the very provinces that have benefitted from Mangla Dam.

The Tarbela, Ghazi Barotha and Neelum-Jhelum projects were also confronted with serious concerns. Discussions on these issues never ceased. With time,

these matters were resolved by open-minded bureaucrats, politicians and professionals.

Unfortunately, political accommodation in our polarised land is normally difficult to achieve. Yet, the political leadership at the centre and in the four provinces successfully came up with the Water Accord in 1991 through a consensus that was reached after weeks of 'give and take'. This was perhaps Pakistan's finest hour. In July 2010, another fine-hour comet returned when the Council of Common Interests unanimously approved the construction of the Diamer-Bhasha Dam (DBD).

The prime minister and the four provinces fully endorsed Wapda's presentation on the project. But since then, eight years have been wasted for no good reason. Meanwhile, the unnecessary inclusion of the run-of-the-river Dasu Dam by the government and the World Bank has pushed the crucial DBD on the backburner. People often ask why DBD hasn't been built when the provinces unanimously agreed to it while there is some contention over other dams. They have a point.

The provinces have concerns of their own. Some want water reservoirs built while others have reservations. For example, the southern part of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa needs water as it has only been able to cater to one-third of its food crop requirements. With the merger of the tribal areas with KP, this deficit is likely to rise further.

Balochistan is even more food-deficient. However, both provinces will benefit extensively from the addition of three newly-proposed water storages. KP will receive about two million acre-feet of additional water while Balochistan will obtain almost one-and-a-half million acre-feet. These provinces will then become food-secure.

Let's consider three truths about the site of the Kalabagh Dam. First, this is the only place that can store the 18 million acre-feet of water from River Kabul. Second, most of the monsoon rainwater can only be stored in this site. Third, the extent of the Kalabagh reservoir (which is at an elevation of 915 feet) would in no way pose any flooding in Nowshera as the latter is 35 feet higher than Kalabagh's maximum water elevation.

With Tarbela in place and DBD under construction, the mighty Indus would finally be tamed. The floods in the Peshawar Valley were normally caused by River Swat. Now, with the construction of the Munda-Mohmand Dam on River Swat, the annual floods in Hashtnagar and Nowshera would be a thing of the past. Work on this dam is due to start soon thanks to the generous provision of funds from the French government in 2011.

Serious negotiation is, therefore, required to develop new water storages. Striving for a consensus should be the key factor and all the main players must get involved. Success will only be achieved if the major issues are addressed.

Permanent guarantees of provincial water rights, as per what was agreed in 1991, must form the basis for future project construction. Let's not forget that Sindh and Punjab have been contesting water rights since 1901. Some smaller provinces have apprehensions that as the population expands in the upper parts of the country, their water rights could be jeopardised. The Water Accord of 1991 needs to be fully incorporated in the constitution and made justiciable.

Issues pertaining to seawater intrusion in the Indus Delta and the rise in ocean water due to global warming remain valid and must be considered by impartial professionals. About 200,000 acres of land have already been encroached upon by the sea. To ensure that seawater intrusion remains in check a constant flow of about eight million acre-feet of water must be guaranteed annually for the delta.

Furthermore, a series of dykes, embankments and adjustable mechanical gates need to be constructed along the coast to protect the land. These are likely to cost a great deal of money and should be funded through a charge on the net hydel profits from future dams. It is unfair to palm off this obligation to the coastal provinces. Net hydel profits should be paid to the provinces in proportion to the losses sustained due to the project.

The full cost of water as an input must be recovered at its economic value. This alone would prevent its misuse. At this stage, the abiana charge cannot even recover the salary cost of the department. Sailaba irrigation practices have to be stopped. Moreover, the cultivation of deltaic crops, like sugarcane and rice, ought to be discouraged through higher volumetric water charges.

New storages would also provide an addition of another five to six million acre-feet of freshwater to Sindh. For this, cultivable land is required. It would be appropriate to announce beforehand that new land allotments will only be made to Sindh's locals, particularly those with limited land holdings. People outside Sindh would be ineligible for land allotments. The katcha irrigation area along the river should have its water and land use regularised and paid for. The 'katcha' farmers currently pay nothing for the water they consume.

The area that suffered the most due to the Indus Waters Treaty was Bahawalpur as its people weren't fully compensated for the water that was denied to them from the Sutlej and Bias rivers. The first charge on Punjab's water from the new reservoirs should, therefore, be for the Bahawalpur region.

Sindh also needs to focus on lowering the high levels of saline waters beneath the soil. Canal lining in some reaches and water treatment for the reuse of saline water for irrigation in Sindh would save almost two million acre-feet of water. Wapda's pilot project on the subject, which was started in 2012, also needs to be reactivated.

The writer has served as the chief secretary of GB, AJK, KP and Sindh and was the chairman of Wapda and the Pakistan Railways.

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Source: <https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/342948-from-crisis-to-consensus>

Human Rights in Kashmir | Editorial

The main reason India has been able to get away with its brutal occupation of Kashmir for over seven decades is that it has enjoyed the protection of global superpowers – first the Soviet Union and now the US. Even when the UN General Assembly passed resolutions calling for a referendum in Kashmir or decrying human rights abuses in the occupied territory, they would always be vetoed in the Security Council. This has emboldened India to the point where it feels it should never be held accountable for its actions in Kashmir. Earlier this year, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights put out a relatively mild report on India's human rights record, focusing on the excessive use of force by Indian security forces in Kashmir and the use of rubber pellets, which have blinded hundreds of people. Not only did India immediately reject the report, it is essentially accusing the OHCHR of a conspiracy by baselessly claiming that the report was influenced by a biased Canadian citizen of Pakistani origin. The UN agency has categorically rejected that assertion and expressed its disappointment at India's rejection of the report and its refusal to address the worries it raises.

The UN report strived so hard to be even-handed that it even equated concerns about human rights in Indian-occupied Kashmir and Azad Kashmir – despite the situation in both regions being very different. Pakistan, however, has gladly accepted the report and has long called for international observers to be invited to Kashmir. India's ploy has always been to denounce the home-grown Kashmiri liberation movement as terroristic in nature and backed by Pakistan. Now that the scale of its abuses is so apparent that even the UN cannot ignore it, it is resorting to unfounded accusations of bias. That India is claiming a Pakistani hand in the drafting of the report shows just how far it is willing to go to discredit anyone who criticises its human rights record. This report alone was never going to lead to a change in Indian attitudes since it still enjoys the protection of the US at the UN. But it could have led other countries to start speaking out against the occupation and that is something India is not prepared to tolerate. If anything, India has stepped up its campaign of violence in Kashmir since the publication of the report. It has killed over a hundred civilians this year, regularly imposes curfews and shuts down internet and mobile services. The international community has long turned a blind eye to this violence but the UN report and India's outrageous

reaction to it should help everyone realise how untenable its behaviour has become.

Source: <https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/343829-human-rights-in-kashmir>

Melting Glaciers | Editorial

NEWS coming in from Gilgit about the potential formation of another glacial lake in Ghizer district should give pause to the big plans being made in nearby areas. Further details are awaited as proper damage assessments are carried out, but it is now known that a glacial lake in Ishkoman valley is increasing in size and had already flooded an area of 10km at the time of writing; meanwhile water continues to pour in. With an extraordinary heatwave in the area this summer, the melting of the Barsuwat glacier has been more rapid than normal, and the debris that blocked the mouth of the river has caused a large lake to form above it. The lake now poses a danger to those living along its perimeter, and significantly, also to downstream areas that include Gilgit, because if it grows and bursts the blockage, it will send a torrential flood of muddy water and heavy debris hurtling down the river.

As time passes, more such dangerous situations should be expected in the mountainous north of the country. Chitral district has already seen multiple glacial lake outburst floods in recent years, most significantly in 2015 when large parts of the district were destroyed by them. According to a UNDP estimate, more than 3,044 glacial lakes have already formed in Gilgit-Baltistan and KP, of which 33 are considered hazardous. Now another one has emerged in a key location, potentially posing a risk to an important city like Gilgit. With all the plans being made in this area for future transit trade, the importance of paying closer attention to climate and environmental hazards cannot be overstated. There can be much debate on the steps required in the long term to manage these risks, but for now immediate attention should be given to Ghizer district to release the waters that are building up and prevent the lake from becoming so large that it destroys livelihoods on a large scale and increases the risk to populations downstream.

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Democracy in Pakistan By Hasan Aftab

Saeed

Past, Present And Prognosis

People have all sorts of views on the institution of democracy as a way of running a society. To some, it leads to a government of the people, by the people, for the people. To others, the best argument against it is a five-minute conversation with the average voter. I don't intend to delve into the pros and cons of the abstract concept of democracy as a socio-political system, nor discuss how it has been practically implemented in various parts of the world. I merely intend to talk about the health of democracy in Pakistan and its prognosis.

Regarding the health of the democratic experiment in the Islamic Republic, I have good news as well as bad. To start with the good: there's no immediate, or even long-term, threat to our democracy whatsoever. Here I must acknowledge that in holding this opinion I represent a tiny minority, considering the widespread concern, anxiety, distress and consternation on the part of an overwhelming majority of public intellectuals, journalists and commentators regarding the well-being (or otherwise) of democracy.

Of course, this difference of opinion could easily be explained away by saying that democracy is an elusive ideal that any society can at best approach; and which is never fully realised – and this sort of explanation would be in line with the spirit of academic tolerance in vogue these days – but I will resist the temptation. No, it's not a matter of seeing the glass half-full or half-empty, because as far as I am concerned the glass itself is non-existent – the question of whether it's half- or quarter-full should only arise when there's a glass to begin with. Which brings me to the less pleasant task of announcing the bad news I referred to earlier: There's no such thing as democracy in Pakistan; and there never was. And if one can be certain of one thing, it's that anything that is non-existent can never be under threat from any quarter.

Mind you, I take no delight in claiming this. I would love to be a part of a prospering democracy as much as the next guy, but one thing that I would love even more is not to yield to hallucinations, however pleasant.

As Gary Miller pointed out long ago, the man who clears the trash from in front of your house does a useful job – doesn't he? – despite the obvious fact that he doesn't put anything in its place

What we have always had in Pakistan (barring military dictatorships) – and still have – is at best a crude form of majoritarianism, which leads to 'democratic' authoritarianism hardly much better than the military variety. For sloganeering, casting and counting votes every five years, and coming out of polling booths with a triumphant look on one's face is just one part of democracy. If we had anything like democracy, we would see political parties themselves being democratic – not just regarding the party heads, but also in terms of inclusivity of members in policy and decision-making. If we had anything like democracy, we would see political parties getting rid of their own nefarious characters before the courts turned their attention to them. If we had anything like democracy, responsibility and answerability on the part of the political leadership wouldn't be conspicuous by their absence.

If we had anything like democracy, politics wouldn't be the exclusive prerogative of the rich elite. If we had anything like democracy, we wouldn't constantly see hardcore criminal activities disappearing in the smokescreen of 'civilian supremacy' and 'constitutionalism'. If we had anything like democracy, we wouldn't be subjected to such shameless displays of unbridled greed and blatant conflicts-of-interest. If we had anything like democracy, we would see its unmistakable fruits in the form of widespread safety, prosperity, and egalitarianism; instead of merely being on the receiving end of sermons extolling democracy's virtues. Above all, we would see democracy presented as a means of ensuring well-being and prosperity of the masses; and not advertised (and widely believed) as an end in itself.

I know that I am leaving myself exposed to the standard retort of challenging me to bring something better than whatever goes by the name of democracy. Churchill in 1947 had famously quoted an anonymous source to the effect that democracy was the worst form of government except for all those other forms that had been tried from time to time. This ('Do you have an alternative?') has ever since been the pet rejoinder to any and all criticisms of democracy. I hereby admit that I don't have any alternative to 'democracy'. That said, I disagree with

the notion that unless one brings a royal suit one is not entitled to point out that the emperor is stark naked. As Gary Miller pointed out long ago, the man who clears the trash from in front of your house does a useful job – doesn't he? – despite the obvious fact that he doesn't put anything in its place. I believe the same can be said of any kind of trash.

A very happy Election 2018 to you!

Source: <https://www.pakistantoday.com.pk/2018/07/23/democracy-in-pakistan-7/>

National Challenges Beyond 25th July By **Senator Rehman Malik**

25th July is getting important with every passing day. Let us see what would be our treatment to this prime day of our history. Will all the voters show respect to this prime day by coming out of their houses to vote, instead of planning holiday and going for picnic?

Let us hope that this day will be considered as a day to secure the future of our generation as more participation means casting of more votes which mean increasing the numerical strength of votes for the contesting candidates.

This would mean increase of average turnout of 45% of past three general elections to at least more than 90 %. This increase in numerical number will bring more collective wisdom to elect a more suitable candidate who can perform their national duties in the most befitting manners and to the expectation of the entire nation.

The present challenges facing Pakistan post 25th July are not likely to tend towards improvements but likely to further deteriorate unless we elect honest and educated capable members for both NA and PAs. It would happen only if the voters make fair choice based on merit on 25th and not to vote under the tutored influence.

Now why I say that we need legislators with high leadership qualities is because they are the one who are going to be policy makers which will drive our country from the challenges briefly discussed below.

Economic challenge: Pakistan is currently confronting multiple challenges which vary in intensity. Some of the challenges are seemingly multi-dimensional and complex in nature which certainly will take many years to overcome. The ever-rising inflation, increasing unemployment, shrinking GDP and diminishing exports level are the major obstacles which restrict the ability of Pakistan to have a well-developed and flourishing economy. The biggest challenge to be encountered by the new government is Pakistan's external debt and liabilities which have soared to a record \$91.8 billion plus \$67Billion from China for CPEC showing an

increase of over 50% or nearly \$31 billion in the past four years and nine months. Our national assets have gone under combined loss of Rs. 705 billion from 2013 – 2016 with PIA under Rs. 45 billion, PSM (Pakistan steel Mills) under Rs. 177 billion and Pakistan Railway with Rs. 60 billion of loss annually.

The external debt and liabilities of \$91.8 billion plus \$67 billion as of March-end suggest that the figure may touch \$170 billion very soon as the country faces grave challenges in meeting growing external financing requirements. Pakistan is scheduled to make some bullet debt and interest payments in the last quarter (April-June) of the current fiscal year. With a population of over 190 million, around a mere 1 percent of the Pakistani citizens are tax payers.

The other big challenges are the loss-making public sector enterprises (PSEs) that continue to bleed. These have suffered a cumulative loss of Rs 3.746 trillion over the last five years. The challenge for the new government is to work on the shortfalls left behind by its predecessors.

Internal Security: The new Government must be prepared for even bigger internal security challenges this year after elections as Daesh, has raised new serious security challenge for Pakistan. The emergence of Daesh in close proximity to Pakistan has raised new internal security challenges. TTP militants have relocated themselves in Afghanistan and Daesh is establishing a footprint in Afghanistan near the Pakistani border, which can be seen as a real potential of spill over into parts of Pakistan.

Foreign policy: Pakistan is being isolated because of its poor foreign policy that has resulted in the current situation. We have failed to score allies even though there was huge opportunity to do so. Foreign policy cannot be seen in isolation, for it is only a reflection of a country's domestic policy and we have been really unfortunate to have been deprived of a logical foreign policy as well as a foreign minister for the past 5years.

Kashmir issue: Today India and Pakistan are two independent countries on the map of the world but Kashmir issue is still unresolved. Kashmir is the unresolved agenda of partition and till today the people of Kashmir lack freedom. The paradise on earth is every day tainted with bloodshed and the voice of innocent people is being suppressed through bullets and pellets of Indian Army. The new

government, through an appropriate foreign policy, is supposed to be smart enough to get resolve the Kashmir issue. It's a way forward for the new Government at this point to allocate more manpower and resources to enhance its diplomatic efforts through a comprehensive Kashmir policy.

Energy Crises: Energy crisis has been haunting our country for past many years but unfortunately no Government has ever come up with a reasonable and constructive plan to cope with it. It would be a bigger challenge for the new Government to take out the country from this prolonged and poorly managed crisis. We have now reached to 7000 MW electricity shortfall which now is triggering extra unscheduled load shedding in several parts of the country.

Water crises: Water is another major challenge for the upcoming government and it cannot be ignored. According to a recent report by IMF, Pakistan is ranked third among the countries facing intense water crisis and might run dry by 2025.

The main reason behind this acute shortfall is that India has recently blocked water flow from India to Pakistan putting it under survival challenge.

The Chief Justice of Pakistan, Justice Saqib Nisar has done a great service to Pakistan by ordering and supervising early construction of Bhasha dam to save the country going dry. I had written an article upon this on-going crisis issue on 9th June 2018, in which I had proposed three suggestions and I hope the next government will follow my advices and the solution given in the said article

FATF grey list: India in its efforts to isolate Pakistan has not even abstained from lobbying with US as, in November 2017 India lodged a complaint with FATF to put Pakistan name on FATF's blacklist upon baseless and false charges. It sent a Secretary-level delegation to Moscow on Jan 31 not to support Pakistan. The Indian media reported that in his recent visits to Gulf countries, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi also asked them not to support Pakistan at the FATF. Our incompetent government could not safeguard the position of our country in front of the world as it has been grey listed as a corrupt and terrorist state with FATF. The new government is supposed to make every possible effort to remove the charges of corruption and terrorism off our country.

The above challenges are real threat to our country as the economic situation is inching us towards the bankruptcy. We need able and educated and honest leadership to deal with these challenges.

The casual attitude towards 25th July by the voters would not be able to block the dishonest politician hence every voter has to dedicate this day for the national cause to see a prosperous Pakistan beyond 25th July.

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The Unending Indo-Pak Conflict By

Busharat Elahi Jamil

In this esteemed work, Stanley Wolpert shares his 60-years' worth of personal experiences regarding relations of India and Pakistan. He starts with his first visit to India on the sad demise of Mahatma Gandhi in 1948.

He analyses the role of Lord Mountbatten in the partition, particularly his debate on a "single federal dominion" and Muslim League's stance for an "Independent Pakistan".

Wolpert criticises Lord Mountbatten, the last Viceroy of India, as British administration appointed Sir Cyril Radcliff for the partition of the Punjab and Bengal. Mountbatten did not share the Radcliff Award with not only the native Punjabis and Bengalis but also the Governors of both provinces. Furthermore, British troops left India in spite of these critical law and order situations. These are the key reasons for historically one of the largest migrations turning into massive bloodshed, particularly in Punjab.

The writer's views on the post-partition Kashmir issue is informative. He highlights Nehru's version account of the 1948 war, who said that it was "... a regular war" with Pakistan

Stanley highlights the political tussles of the INC and AIML (All India Muslim League). He admires the charismatic personality of Mr Jinnah saying that he "devoted the last decade of his life, and that of British India, to proving that his League commanded the support of the majority of India's Muslim population, whom he claimed wanted their own separate nation-state of Pakistan...".

The demand of Sikhistan by the Sikhs was refused by Viceroy. Furthermore, Bengalis' demand of Bangladesh for Bengali Hindus and Muslims made the situations worse. According to the June 3 Plan, Sir Cyril Radcliff was appointed as the chairman of the Boundary commissions for Punjab and Bengal. The author discusses shortly the joint venture of Mountbatten and Radcliff, particularly the partition of the Punjab and how Radcliff changed Boundary Award to give the geo-strategic benefits to India according to the desire of INC

leadership. This partition increased the miseries of both newborn states like the division of the areas, gigantic issue of refugees' settlement and rehabilitation. This unjust partition created the Kashmir issue, which later on became the reason of the first war between India and Pakistan.

In the second part, Wolpert highlights the Kashmir issue as the significant reason for disturbance and Indo-Pak wars. He ranked the Kashmir issue as the flaming point between India and Pakistan. The historical and geographic introduction of the Kashmir valley is marvellous and informative. The socio-political and geographical history of Kashmir under Alexander, Sultans, Mughals and British eras is elucidated precisely.

The writer's discussion of post-partition Kashmir issue (war) is informative. He highlights Nehru's version in 1948 on Kashmir war that it was "... a regular war" with Pakistan. The stances of India and Pakistan in the UN and the UN Security Council's steps to solve the skirmish and ceasefire are penned appropriately. The author specifically discusses the foreign policy of both the countries over Kashmir issue.

This event led the situations towards a horrifying war between India and Pakistan later in 1965. The author traces first the political grounds of this war and initiates the discussion from the placement of Ayub's coup in 1958. Nehru considered Ayub a "lackey of Washington" as martial Ayub had visited the US for training in 1957. While during his visit, he also went to Texas and Virginia, headquarters of the CIA.

Stanley discusses the historical and political importance of East Pakistan with its socio-political causes of separation and the formation of Bangladesh. The author precisely focuses on the elections of 1970 as one of the reasons for the partition of Pakistan in December 1971. Bhutto and Yahya Khan were not even expecting "the idea of turning their entire country over to Bengalis, however, whose language neither of them spoke, and whose small, dark-skinned physiques neither of them believed worthy specimens of Pakistani stature".

Wolpert briefly illustrates the socio-political situations after the bloodied partition of Pakistan in 1971. He discusses how Bhutto later gathered his nation and decided to remove the tints of defeat from India. Bhutto and Indira finally signed a

peace treaty at Simla in July 1972. Bhutto stepped ahead towards a new Pakistan launching a nuclear programme for a strong Pakistan. “Zulfi thought of himself as a combination of Napoleon and Mao”. However, the whole shrewdness of Bhutto came to an end when he put Zia into power.

Wolpert noted and considered Zia’s appointment as a “fatal mistake” and a “wild choice” of Bhutto. Benazir called him “the devil” and many others “a dark horse”. In 1977, Zia enforced martial law and eliminated Bhutto’s rule, and later Bhutto was hanged in 1979. This assassination of Bhutto produced a certain sense of distress and abhorrence among the moderate stratum against Zia. On the other hand, author precisely highlights the Afghan War, the role of Zia and the military aid by President Carter and recognition as the cold war’s “frontline ally”.

In the last phase of the book, the author concludes the extraction of Russian troops from Afghanistan and the focus of Pakistani ISI on Kashmir issue to “liberate it” from Indian occupation. He ascertains that the last period of Indira Gandhi was a hegemonic era because she had high morale due to the establishment of Bangladesh and 1974 atomic tests. So the Kashmir war was not just a war of liberation but also a war of political and power tactics between India and Pakistan.

Steadily, the Kashmir issue escalated the tension between India and Pakistan. In May 1998, India and Pakistan tested nuclear bombs and became nuclear powers. In response, world’s politics, particularly the US, focused on the stern issue of Kashmir and its magnitude on South Asia. Nawaz Sharif and Atal Bihari Vajpai’s meetings in Lahore remained useless. Stanley furthermore highlights the reference of Kargil Confrontation in 1999 and political claims of BJP regime.

The author increasingly moulds the discussion towards Afghanistan and the 9/11 attacks because this event shifted the paradigm of world politics entirely. After this attack, Afghanistan and Pakistan were impugned as the nurseries of terrorism. The blame game concerning terrorist attacks and a new wave of terrorism damaged the Indo-Pak relations during early decade of 2000. Wolpert, particularly in reference of Pakistan, discusses the stances of ruling political elite blaming each other smashing the image of the country.

In the end, Stanley Wolpert concludes and covers the whole discussion by proposing various solutions of the Kashmir conflict and the issues between India and Pakistan. He further admires the political efforts of India, Pakistan and Kashmiri leadership under the US-led involvement to resolve the tension in Kashmir.

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The Population Bomb By Sabur Sulehria

Unbridled population growth is one of the biggest challenges in today's Pakistan. Yet, there are no credible attempts at any level in Pakistan to tackle the issues posed by a rising population. From an economic, environmental and development perspective, our population is growing at an untenable rate.

Successive governments in Pakistan never recognised the growing population as a serious question at all. The population crisis in our society is mostly viewed in a narrow sense even though the subject warrants a much broader understanding.

Let's consider the following facts: the population growth rate of Pakistan stands at 2.4 percent annually, which is among the highest in the world. The population of Pakistan has now gone to 212.7 million from 33 million in 1951 – almost seven times increase in 66 years. The population of the size of Norway (5.3 million) is added to Pakistan annually.

Although there hasn't been any serious debate over the rising population beyond mere rhetoric at the policymaking level, certain narratives inform official and academic discourses in Pakistan. As in the rest of the world, the liberals attribute the population explosion in Pakistan as the root cause of unemployment and poverty. The conservatives are against the very idea of population control and consider it to be purely Western – and, thereby, un-Islamic. The left disagrees with both views.

However, the fact is that the above assertions seem to be misplaced and a tad judgmental. We can partially agree with the leftist discourse that the growing population isn't the sole cause of poverty. We must also remember that poverty has more to do with the type of development model and wealth distribution that is applied by a particular state.

China, for instance, is hugely populated. But poverty and inequality are less rampant in the country than they are in India. However, the mainstream leftist narratives that ignore the population crisis as a problem are also highly problematic from an ecological viewpoint and a planning perspective. Therefore,

an unchecked population growth is economically unsustainable because it is environmentally unsustainable.

Let's consider Pakistan's water crisis in this context. This environmental catastrophe, which erupted out of the unsustainable population growth and a lack of corresponding planning/development, is beyond words. It is widely known that the water crisis, which has generated such vernacular terms as the 'tankers mafia' in the urban centres of Pakistan, is an even bigger threat to the agro-economy and the country's political stability.

It is obvious that the demand for water is likely to grow with an increase in the population. The rivers in Pakistan are gradually drying up and the underground water level is going down drastically. Glaciers in the northern region of Pakistan have also started showing signs of regression due to ecological changes. The growing water crisis is not only taking its toll on the agro-economy and our climate, it is also a threat to political stability.

The often ill-informed debate on Kalabagh Dam is symptomatic of this threat to the cohesion of our federation. However, at the heart of this debate is a water crisis aggravated by population growth. Even if there is a popular, democratic, left-wing government in power, it cannot solve the water crisis.

Let's consider the case of housing and mega-development projects. There is no doubt that mega development projects, particularly those that have been implemented by the Sharifs in Punjab, are problematic from a development viewpoint. Even beyond Punjab, many development projects have altered the ecological system in Pakistan. An ecological crisis has resulted in many species migrating to other regions. Furthermore, the existence of many species is constantly under threat. Meantime, millions of acre of fertile agricultural land in Punjab have been converted into planned and unplanned housing societies and slums.

Yet, many mega-projects are needed to provide a decent living standard to every citizen. Even if, theoretically, environmentally sustainable housing projects are launched, natural resources will be consumed. Technology can offer some tangible solutions. But how do we deal with waste?

Waste isn't just produced by the urban population, but is also created through hospitals and industrial activities. According to an Al-Jazeera report from 2014, Pakistan produces 20 million tonnes of annual waste and it is growing at 2.4 percent annually. Karachi alone generates 9,000 tonnes of waste every day.

However, the climate question and population bulge should also be considered in a global context. According to a World Bank report, there are three billion urban residents globally and 1.2 kilogrammes of waste is produced per kilogrammes per day. It amounts to 1.3 billion tonnes worth of annual solid waste. By 2025, there will be 4.3 billion urban residents globally. Every person will be generating 1.42 kilogrammes/capita/day of waste. Annually, there will be 2.26 tonnes of solid waste. At some stage, the earth may also run out of its capacity to absorb the ever-increasing quantity of human as well as industrial waste.

The land consumption for accommodating housing projects, in turn, generates food insecurity. All the above aspects require us to take the population question into account, even if we have an economic system and development model that is based on social justice.

The population crisis can be addressed through either a coercive approach or a voluntary approach. China had successfully applied the coercive approach through its one-child policy. But this will neither work in Pakistan nor is it worth recommending from a humanist viewpoint. As far as the voluntary approach is concerned, the West, particularly Europe, has successfully managed the desired results through this strategy.

However, this approach has a great deal to do with women's empowerment. The term 'women's empowerment' implies at least an entitlement to education, access to jobs, and the right to decide one's own fate. It is assumed that a literate and financially independent woman is less likely to have a large family. Although women's empowerment in a country like Pakistan is a tall order, it is the way forward to stabilise the population. The mere education of women, let alone other rights, can contribute to a declining number of births in a country like Pakistan.

Syed Akbar Zaidi, a noted Pakistani economist, argues that women with no education have a fertility rate of 5.7 whereas women with secondary education

have a fertility rate of only 3.6. In his book, 'Issues in Pakistan's Economy', he further argues that the status of women is also linked to economic development. As growth and development take place, the contribution of women towards the economy increases and their status improves. The likely result is a fall in the population growth rate. However, women's empowerment is not the only magic key. A welfare system offering universal pensions as well as other factors play an instrumental role in checking population growth.

Although population growth isn't the only factor that contributes towards environmental and ecological changes, it does produce many pressures. Taking steps to guarantee women's empowerment is the suitable way forward to address these issues. Let's hope the next government does something meaningful to protect the environment and ensure women's empowerment.

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Foreign Policy Plan | Editorial

A DOMESTIC agenda has long dominated the PTI's politics, but as the party prepares to assume power for the first time at the federal level it will need to turn its attention to matters of foreign policy and national security too.

In a welcome move, then, the incoming prime minister Imran Khan spent a portion of his victory speech on Thursday addressing what kind of relations Pakistan would seek and maintain with its neighbours and global powers under his government.

The views expressed by Mr Khan were sensible and aspirational in a positive manner. Perhaps most importantly, Mr Khan began his comments about foreign policy by recognising that for Pakistan to achieve its social and economic potential it must be at peace with its neighbours in the region.

A foreign policy and national security agenda rooted in such an outlook could help Pakistan overcome some of the chronic problems that have held it back from playing a significantly positive and mutually beneficial role in the region and beyond.

Of particular interest are surely Mr Khan's comments about three countries that Pakistan has complicated and strained relations with: Afghanistan, the US and India. Even as a foreign policy neophyte, at least in terms of leading a national governing party, Mr Khan is likely aware that the gap between sentiment and action is substantial.

Nevertheless, to hear a first-time governing party's leader speak warmly about long-term aspirations such as an open border with Afghanistan can help set the right tone for his interactions with that country's leaders and may indicate a willingness to try and reset the civil-military imbalance in the foreign policy and national security arenas domestically.

Peace in Afghanistan is an urgent regional priority, and Mr Khan's support for a peace process is welcome. In terms of relations with the US, of which Mr Khan has frequently spoken critically in the past, the PTI supremo was more modest in

his goals, but arguably rightly cast the immediate fate of Pakistan-US relations as tied to peace in Afghanistan. Mutually beneficial and balanced relations, as Mr Khan said he will seek with the US, are worth pursuing.

Inevitably, Mr Khan's comments about India in his speech have drawn significant interest nationally and internationally. Expressing a commitment to seeking better ties with India on a reciprocal basis has put Mr Khan in the mainstream of national politics.

Despite the sometimes heated campaign rhetoric, there is a consensus among all major national political parties that ties with India must improve — a consensus that is invaluable and is arguably missing from Indian politics today.

Explicitly linking the fight against poverty to regional trade was also an important assessment by Mr Khan as was his criticism of the Pakistan-India blame game. India should pay heed to Mr Khan's offer to go the extra mile to address all issues, including the Kashmir dispute.

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Election 2018: A Change in the Making By

Dr Muhammad Khan

AS a result of General Election-2018, Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf (PTI) has attained maximum seats in National Assembly and absolute majority in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) Assembly. Similarly, PTI has secured a heavy mandate (second) in Punjab and Sindh Province. Its allies, Balochistan Awami Party (BAP) has emerged as the biggest party in the Provincial Assembly of Balochistan. These elections were contested by PTI with the slogan of change with youth acted a backbone. It is a very welcoming change in Pakistan after decades and the masses are celebrating this victory with lot of fervour and enthusiasm. It is a departure from traditional politics, the family politics and the exploitative system, Pakistan had since decades.

The former ruling party; Pakistan Muslim League (N) and Pakistan People Party remained second and third at the victory stand. There is a consensus from independent opinion makers and international observers that, elections were free and fair. However, PML (N) and PPP had their reservations over the results, since they lost the mandate. This always happen in Pakistan, once a political party loses, it accuses the other for rigging and manipulation or else support of agencies. The Election Commission of Pakistan, the Law Enforcement Agencies and above all the Interim Government deserve special congratulations for managing this election in least possible time.

The worst propaganda came from Indian media and Indian officials. Indian media has tried to portray the PTI victory in Pakistan as a great threat to India and region. This is in the background that, India had invested on Nawaz Sharif, therefore, they feel upset over the loss of PML (N). "Several Indian media outlets are claiming that victory of PM hopeful Imran Khan can create serious problems for India in the region. Going step ahead, they accused Imran Khan of using anti-Indian slogans to garner support for Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf (PTI)." Very funny, the India media also accused Imran Khan as the supporter of 'banned militant outfits'.

This is a very immature move on part of a country, which consider itself as the biggest democracy and secular and disrespecting the people's mandate of other

countries. It speaks of immaturity on part of Indian leadership and its media. Indian media has not question the role of Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), the real militant Indian outfit, which brought BJP into power in 2014 elections. Indian Premier, Narindra Modi is an active member of RSS and today, everyone in the world is afraid of Hindu Talibanisation in India. RSS has an ideology of Hindutva; “an ideology seeking to establish the hegemony of Hindus and the Hindu way of life.”

This terrorist outfit has unleashed a reign of terror against Muslims, Sikhs and Christians in entire India. How can Indian media and its official’s point their fingers towards Pakistan, a nation which has combated the terrorism, sponsored and financed by India through its spying network, RAW. Indeed, India needs to concentrate on terrorism, which RSS is promoting and sponsoring in and around India. Besides, India has to stop sponsoring the terrorist organizations like; TTP, BLA, ISIS and other sub-nationalists in Pakistan. India has been conspiring against Pakistan through people like Kulbhushan Jadhav, the serving Indian Naval Officer, on deputation to RAW.

PTI is otherwise a very liberal political party in Pakistan. Its manifesto for election 2018 is; ‘road to a new Pakistan’ is justice and humanity stressing on; education and health through reforms. It seeks peace and social justice for everyone in Pakistan. Besides, it “envisages some 10m jobs and no less than 5m low-cost housing units. It vows to bring back to Pakistan looted wealth and revive at least 100 industries.” Yes, PTI will crackdown all corrupts and terrorist outfits; operating, funded and sponsored by Indian RAW. This bothers India and Indian supporters in Pakistan and that is why, India is crying over the victory of PTI in Pakistan. Despite its commitment of combating terrorism, Pak Army provided full support to Election Commission of Pakistan during the conduct of General Elections-2018. Pak Army deployed over 370,000 troops for the safety and security duties during these elections. Indeed, remaining in the confines of the Constitutional limits of Pakistan, Pak Army supported the continuation and strengthening of the democracy in Pakistan as its promise and as per provisions of Constitution. Masses presented flowers to the men of Pak Army, deployed on election duties. The Army Chief, General Qamar Bajwa deserves a special appreciation for his vision and support in the conduct of General Elections-2018.

For the PTI, the task ahead is going to be tough and convoluted, as the country is facing multiple problems. Economically, it is at the verge of default, with lowest foreign currency reserves ever in the history. Dollar vs Rupee ratio has reached to poorest level (\$1= 130 Rupees). Over the years, its Industry has been ruined and local investors have moved their assets out of the country. There has been no foreign direct investment (FDI) in last one decade. Besides, the governance system in the country has been at its worst, with corruption, nepotism and bribery at the rise. It has become extremely difficult for a common man to meet its both ends.

The PTI Government will have to formulate a consensus policy as already hinted by its Chairman. The policy should be nationalistic and all encompassing; taking into consideration the domestic and external factors. For a smooth sailing, the new Government will have to avoid a confrontational policy with its political opponents as well as with national institutions. Protection of life and property of all citizens of Pakistan, financial revival, establishment of merit system and provision of basic necessities to everyone should be the first priority of the new government. Besides, the new government will have the daunting task of improving the image of the country at international level.

— The writer, Professor of Politics and International Relations, is based in Islamabad.

Source: <https://pakobserver.net/election-2018-a-change-in-the-making/>

Fixing The Justice System | Editorial

Chief Justice Mian Saqib Nisar's acceptance of failure to fix the justice system as per expectations of the people is a welcome development. While addressing a gathering on Saturday, the Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) admitted that he may have failed to put his own house in order. The first step to resolve an issue is admitting that there is a problem to begin with. Many political observers were of the opinion that the CJP seems eager to act against misdoings in other institutions, but does not seem to have a plan for eliminating the loopholes in Pakistan's justice system.

As per the latest statistics from the Law and Justice Commission of Pakistan, 38,539 cases are pending with the apex court, 293,947 with the five high courts and 1,869,886 cases with the subordinate judiciary of the four provinces and the federal capital. No steps have been taken to ease the sufferings of the citizens who have to wait for years to get their cases heard. Justice delayed — as they say — is justice denied.

Moreover, there have been several instances where the judiciary was not able to side with the weak. Several miscarriages of justice were witnessed and the black sheep in the lawyers' fraternity who use their influence to protect criminals are yet to be held accountable. Recently, law student Khadija Siddiqui's attacker was freed by the Lahore High Court (LHC) in a legally-flawed judgement, allegedly because the accused's father, an influential lawyer, tried to manipulate the proceedings of the court. Although the CJP took notice of the acquittal, the problem of lawyers using their influence to escape from the law remains under-discussed. Since the CJP has now accepted that all is not well in the judiciary, he should do something about hindrance in delivery of justice to the public and corruption within the legal profession. Making justice accessible to the common man should be a priority.

Much has also been said on the ongoing judicial activism and some political forces have termed the judiciary's recent decisions politically-motivated. CJP's recent visit to a shrine in Jhang during the process of recounting in the constituency did raise a few eyebrows. At a time when the judiciary is being accused of having a role in the alleged political engineering, the top judge's visit

to an area where vote recounting was underway, does not give the right message. Apart from reforming the justice system, the CJP should be extra careful. *

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Source: <https://dailytimes.com.pk/275237/fixing-the-justice-system/>

Looming Energy Crisis | Editorial

The power sector crisis is going to be a challenge for the new government to conquer. It has plagued Pakistan for years despite promises of overcoming it by successive governments. An act which should be commended is the ability of the last government to overcome the energy deficit and show an increase in the amount of energy produced. However, the problem was that they could not sustain that production and that is a problem the new government will inherit. Work needs to be done to improve the transmission lines which cannot carry the newly added currents into the system.

The capacity payments at this point amount to Rs490 billion at the moment. Those payments need to be streamlined because as they are increasing, so is the electricity tariff for the consumers. This means that increased generation has increased the per unit costs and the lack of payments to private power companies is increasing the burden on the taxpayers. There is also a significant lag at the Ministry of Energy's end. The solar division has not facilitated the adoption of the wind and solar energy alternates despite the lowering of price in the last three years. This resulted in a great tariff for the consumers but the lack of prioritisation prevents us from taking advantage. Same is the case with setting up small hydropower plants. At this point, Pakistan cannot afford such lags and those appointed for these roles need to be as vigilant as possible.

If bodies such as the K-electric are underproducing than their actual capacity, they need to be held accountable. At the same time, the role of the provincial bodies is very important in the process but if there are reports of mismanagement, that needs to be looked into. The new government will be under a lot of fire if the country sees another five years without a necessity as basic as the electricity. This not only affects businesses but also pushes the average Pakistani to cope up with extreme weathers, even more so because of the lack of attention given to environmental concerns.

NEPRA has alluded that the energy policy and plan now curtails the independence to take any concrete action because any action of the body is appealable in court and they have to put up with bureaucratic red tape to actually

be able to implement a policy. These are grave challenges and ones that must be addressed to put the country on the path of surplus energy production.

Source: <https://nation.com.pk/31-Jul-2018/looming-energy-crisis>

Prime Minister Imran Khan | Editorial

The winds of change have started to blow across the country. The PTI has won the Centre as well as the provinces of Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa and Punjab, besides managing a notable presence in Sindh. That Imran Khan is destined to become the Prime Minister of Pakistan is all in the air. While all analyses and assessments pointed to a hung National Assembly, the PTI has gone well past the magical 100-seat mark, good enough to attract independent candidates into its fold to secure simple majority and form the government comfortably — well, without the support of difficult-to-handle allies. That the PML-N and the PPP combined failed to match the PTI's tally of seats showed that the countrymen overwhelmingly rejected the narrative of 'Respect for Vote' and the so-called pro-development policies and voted for pursuing a Naya Pakistan through human resource development.

With Khan now in the saddle, the real test of his capability as a leader has started. Coping with the many serious challenges facing the country — related to economy, energy crisis, internal and border security, civil-military relationship and foreign policy — is no mean feat. A first timer, Khan will have to perform out of his skin to come good on his promises of a Madina-like welfare state, across-the-board accountability, 10 million jobs, widened tax base, depoliticised police, sovereign foreign policy, etc. He has spoken a lot about the out-of-school children; and now is the time to practise what he has been preaching all along his more than 20 years of struggle. Karachi deserves Khan's particular attention. As promised, he is required to lay the foundation of turning it into a metropolitan city, by making available facilities that a metropolitan city deserves.

Khan's victory is, however, marred by the allegations of rigging — before elections and on the polling day — proving that there is an undeniable link between elections in our country and rigging allegations. That's where the role of the Election Commission comes under question. We need to learn from neighbouring India where the chief election commissioner has, over the years, become so powerful that serious allegations of rigging in the country have become a thing of past.

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Source: <https://tribune.com.pk/story/1767018/6-prime-minister-imran-khan/>

Pakistan & World Relations

Resetting Pak-US Ties | Editorial

The Pak-US bilateral relationship appears to be undergoing a subtle shift in gears. Admittedly, Washington is still playing hardball when it comes to the Taliban request for direct talks. And yes, it continues to outsource to this country responsibility for securing the latter's place at the multilateral negotiating table. Indeed, it pursues the line that Islamabad is harbouring Afghan militants on this side of the border.

Yet the devil is always in the detail. Especially given that both sides confront a common enemy in ISIS. The terror outfit emerged on the Afghan battlefield back in 2014; possibly buoyed by its 'success' in Iraq and Syria. Be that as it may, analysts soon began to understand that this chapter more or less operates independently of the core group. It is engaged in a turf war with the Afghan Taliban for control of territory and resources. Alarming for Pakistan, are reports that militants from within its borders have jumped, quite literally, on the ISIS bandwagon.

That the US top diplomat for the Af-Pak region, Alice Wells, did not publicly dwell on this in press releases after her meeting this week with the COAS; only referring to such elements as those Taliban residing outside of Afghanistan is to be welcomed. Not least because it suggests a maturing recognition of the precarious balancing act that Pakistan is navigating.

Such as the military offensives here to flush out remnant safe-havens from inside national borders. Indeed, this is what many pundits believe pushed militants from this side of the Durand Line into the ISIS embrace. After all, some local groups have in the past pledged spiritual allegiance to the latter and have, on occasion, joined forces at the practical level. The US, for its part, is also familiar with walking the tightrope given that safe-havens exist on the Afghan side that are used to launch cross-border attacks over here. This is to say nothing of the US-led military operations that have in the past nudged the same over into Pakistani territory.

The primary reason behind Washington pushing Pakistan so hard to get the Taliban to join the Kabul-led peace process is that it believes this will free up efforts to exclusively target ISIS. There is some merit to this; as paradoxical as this may seem given the legitimate focus on political settlements. For this is what the Taliban amnesty package was largely about. To strengthen Kabul's position. In fact, according to reporters on the ground — a not un-small number of Taliban have sought government protection against ISIS ferocity. Which, of course, in real terms, may mean simply pointing guns in the opposite direction. But that remains a predominantly Afghan question.

It is time for Pak-US ties to focus more on commonalities than divergent viewpoints. For much more can be achieved by working together. Indeed, this is something to which recent efforts to strengthen the Pak-Af relationship bear testimony. It is hoped that when the next set-up is in place — both Islamabad and Washington will be amenable to pressing the reset button. *

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Source: <https://dailytimes.com.pk/262155/resetting-pak-us-ties/>

Good Neighbourly Ties With India | Editorial

CARETAKER Prime Minister retired Justice Nasirul Mulk has reiterated that Pakistan was committed to peaceful and good neighbourly relations with India on the basis of sovereign equality. Talking to Pakistan's High Commissioner to India Sohail Mahmood, he stressed the importance of sustained engagement and peaceful resolution of all outstanding issues between India and Pakistan, including Kashmir dispute, for durable peace and stability in South Asia.

The views expressed by the Caretaker Prime Minister are clear testimony to the fact that irrespective of change of government, there is a clear preference in Pakistan to have peaceful relationship with our eastern neighbour. This has been the policy of Nawaz Sharif government, the interim government is reaffirming the pledge and commitment and whoever forms the next government after general elections would also hopefully follow the same policy. This is evident from the speeches and interviews of major political leaders and parties as all of them are speaking responsibly on the issue despite the fact that we are passing through brisk election mode where passions are exploited for the sake of attracting voters. We witnessed that this happened in almost all elections in India where Pakistan bashing was one of the major stunt of all major political parties. As against this, Pakistan genuinely believes that there can't be progress and prosperity sans peace and security. It is, however, regrettable that India has not been responding to the goodwill gesture of Pakistan and instead misses no opportunity of inflicting harm on Pakistan. The Indian army is engaged in almost daily violations of ceasefire on Line of Control and the Working Boundary while its diplomats are busy in propaganda campaign to malign Pakistan on account of terrorism. India's attitude and seriousness can be gauged by the fact that it is scuttling efforts of Pakistan to host SAARC summit and is least interested in resumption of stalled dialogue process. India must engage with Pakistan meaningfully to resolve longstanding disputes as there can't be sustained peace without addressing the root causes of tension and conflict.

Source: <https://pakobserver.net/good-neighbourly-ties-with-india/>

Pak-Iran Ties: Positive Direction | Editorial

IN recent times, high level exchanges between Pakistan and Iran appear to be taking bilateral relations to a positive direction and indeed it is the way forward to ensure a better future for this conflict ridden region and meet common challenges including those related to security. Historically speaking, relations between two countries have remained friendly but still marked by mistrust and misunderstanding on different issues including that of border management but it is good to see that two countries are now engaged deeply to address irritants in their relations.

On Monday an Iranian high-level military delegation headed by Chief of General Staff Maj Gen Mohammad Bagheri visited caretaker FM Abdullah Hussain Haroon at the Foreign Office and later held talks with Chief of Army Staff Gen Qamar Javed Bajwa during which both the sides pledged to further deepen their military and defence relations. Gen Bajwa is rightly believed to be the architect of improvement in Pakistan-Iran ties particularly the military relations. Last year, he had made an unprecedented visit to Iran setting the stage for improved cooperation. Later, Chief of the General Staff Lt Gen Bilal Akbar visited the country in June. As the improvement in military relations was predicated on the basis of border security cooperation, discussion on border management was also on top of agenda during Gen Bagheri's meeting with Gen Bajwa. Another key issue on the agenda of their meeting was regional security. Indeed the journey towards improvement in military ties had not been free of irritants and problems but both the countries have really worked together to overcome those challenges and prevented nascent cooperation from falling apart. Recently the Iranian spymaster was also in Islamabad to attend a rare meeting of the spy chiefs of the regional countries that involved Pakistan, Russia and China. The meeting reportedly focused on the threat posed by the growing footprint of the militant IS group in Afghanistan. The terrorist group is emerging as a major threat in the region and concerns of four countries are genuine and warrant close collaboration to neutralise it. In recent times, we have also seen increased cooperation and efforts on part of regional powers to sort out a solution which is in the best interest of Afghanistan as well as its neighbours. Further, Pakistan and Iran can benefit enormously from mutual cooperation in economic and commercial fields. We should also involve and integrate Iran in the

implementation of the CPEC projects. The possibility of extending Pakistan-Iran gas pipeline to China once it becomes operational should be given serious consideration. Pakistan and Iran also need to work towards making Gwadar-Chahabar sister ports in practical terms for a secure and prosperous future of our posterity. As China is developing Gwadar, the Iranian side can also seek its assistance for the expansion of its port after India has been seen reneging on its promise.

Source: <https://pakobserver.net/pak-iran-ties-positive-direction/>

Pak-Afghan Dissonance and Democratic Peace

By Mueen Uddin Ahmed

As expressed by Immanuel Kant, an 18th century philosopher, constitutional republics are one of the prerequisites of achieving perpetual peace in the world, because democracies are more peaceful. Commentators of the democratic peace theory argue that democracies are more peaceful towards other democracies; however, at times find it difficult to maintain good relations with non-democratic states. Ironically, bilateral relations between Pakistan and Afghanistan despite being democratic have remained far from normal, up until the meeting between Premier Abbasi and President Ghani early in April 2018 when both leaders agreed to operationalise half a dozen working groups under the Afghanistan Pakistan Action Plan for Peace and Solidarity (APAPPS). For the purpose of explaining uneasy peace in retrospect and prospects of political consonance between the two countries, an intricate examination of the prevailing political environment and systems has been carried out.

Pakistan and Afghanistan have witnessed democratic forms of governments for at least the past decade now, however Pakistani democracy in essence is much older and far more mature than the Afghan democracy. The structural variant of democratic peace theory explains that the institutions of representative governments hold decision makers accountable to the masses; while normative variant argues that liberal values like free press and competitive party system best explain the peace between democratic states.

National Assembly (NA) of Pakistan has 272 directly elected representatives plus 70 reserved seats. The last general elections were held in 2013 and fresh elections are due next week, on July 25, 2018. There are 17 National Assembly constituencies bordering Afghanistan including nine from FATA, however it remains unrepresented in the provincial assemblies of KP and Balochistan and is governed directly by the Centre. This partially results in undermining of people's aspiration when it comes to distribution of resources and legislation. There is no parallel of FATA and PATA in Afghanistan where people live outside the main law. Remedial measures in Pakistan have begun by the 25th Constitutional Amendment in Pakistan.

Afghanistan follows a presidential form of government; however, 2014 elections resulted in a US-brokered National Unity Government (NUG) according to which an additional appointment of Chief Executive (CE) was created, besides President. So far, most of the points of NUG agreement between Abdullah Abdullah and Ashraf Ghani remain unimplemented, glaring ones being: non-regularisation of CE post in the constitution of Afghanistan leading to no role of CE in state affairs and appointment of ministers; parliamentary elections (Wolesi Jirga) not carried out since 2010, though the term of current parliament expired in 2015; district council elections have never been carried out, which essentially contributed towards selection of the Afghan Senate (Mesharano Jirga); Loya Jirga (Grand Council — epic law making institution of Afghanistan) has not been convened to carryout constitutional and electoral reforms.

The Afghan political system largely remains volatile and dependent on foreign mediation for stability, subtly shedding its sovereign character.

According to former National Security Advisor Lt Gen (r) Nasser Khan Janjua, Pak-Afghan peace and prosperity is interdependent and both countries have a common destiny. Here a question arises, why do two democratic states find it so hard to patch up? This question will probably be best answered through the lens of democratic peace theory.

Firstly, Pak-Afghan political rapprochement initiatives through 2014 to date could not achieve their desired results because true representatives of Afghan people are still absent from the Afghan Parliament and Senate. In such a scenario, no matter how much the Government of Pakistan cooperates and facilitates people-to-people contact; the lack of true representation does not put enough pressure on the Afghan government to work for the aspirations of their people to achieve peace and prosperity.

Secondly, non-implementation of NUG agreement and the persistent tussle for power between President and CE affects not only the functioning of their political system but also breeds resentment in the Afghan society. Polarization in Afghan society is evident from resentment shown by other ethnicities on adoption of the word 'Afghan' to describe them. The Afghan political system largely remains volatile and dependent on foreign mediation for stability, subtly shedding its sovereign character. To achieve democratic confidence, a well-represented

Afghan political system encompassing all ethnicities is pivotal, while the non-implementation of NUG agreements also remains a hurdle.

Thirdly, the delayed parliamentary and district council elections in Afghanistan are now due on October 20, 2018. However, various political parties have demanded that these elections be held under an interim government and not under President Ashraf Ghani (a Pakhtun). Apparently, the demand seems fair enough since many independent observers have acknowledged that elections could be influenced by the government machinery. Moreover, results of parliamentary elections directly contribute towards presidential elections, selection of Senate and the Loya Jirga.

Fourthly, the governmental writ, democratic values and institutions in Afghanistan have eroded as compared to the monarchy era, instead of getting stronger. Political parties are drifting from their agenda and performance based politics are being replaced with ethnicity based politics. The three-party alliance between Tajiks, Uzbeks and Hazara political parties initially formed to challenge Pakhtun domination has been so successful that it has also started to attract a few anti-Ghani Pakhtuns. According to a study, 58 percent of the Afghan constitution (94 out of 162 Articles) stands violated as of today. The first vice president, Rashid Dostum, is in exile and various provincial governors have openly challenged their removal by the President. The Kandahar IGP, General Raziq, claims that not even the President could remove him from his position, despite being implicated in human rights violations by international institutions. The insurgents control or contest approximately 40 percent of Afghanistan, this is a figure that has grown larger progressively.

If we want to forecast the trajectory post-parliamentary and post-presidential elections in Afghanistan, some projections seem evident. Firstly, the growing polarity between Pakhtuns and other ethnicities could result in another deadlock leading to possibly another power sharing formula, which has a bad legacy already. Secondly, Ashraf Ghani has offered political dispensation to the Taliban (mostly Pakhtuns), which, hypothetically speaking, if accepted would add to the worries of non-Pakhtuns in Afghanistan. Thirdly, policymaking and implementation would remain hostage to internal ethnic representation challenges and indirectly remain dependent on foreign mediation for stability through military presence and politico-diplomatic expediencies. Resultantly, true

aspirations of Afghan people to achieve peace and prosperity through better relations with Pakistan could largely remain unattended.

As of today, a forlorn Afghan democratic government is one of the reasons for uneasy peace between the two neighbours, which does not take any pressure from the Afghan society to genuinely pursue a lasting peace with Pakistan, in spite of shared history, culture, demography and geography. To conclude, the Afghan political system that favours and accommodates aspirations of the Afghan people has not been truly implemented. The Afghan parliament is run under presidential decree and not by elected representatives as required by the Afghan constitution. At the local and border level, merger of FATA in KP would add to the stability through better governance and facilitation of people-to-people contacts. Pakistan should take Afghan democratic fault lines into consideration and wait for the other shoe to drop before engaging in any long term agreements with Afghanistan.

The author is M.Phil in Peace and Conflict Studies

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Streamlining Indo-Pak Relations By Asad Hussain

The ever-worsening bilateral relationship between India and Pakistan is inching towards an unmanageable phase. Despite being in the state of peace, a war-like situation has persisted on the Line of Control (LoC) in Kashmir. The two states are excessively indulged in extending propaganda war to defame each other internationally. The hostility has picked up the pace especially after Prime Minister Narendra Modi took office in 2014.

There is no denying the impression that blame game has remained one of the most significant weapons used by the two states against each other to dent the reputation in world politics and achieve one's nefarious objectives. To quote few such instances, India holds Pakistan responsible for the incidents and terrorist attacks in Indian-held Kashmir. India has always held Pakistan responsible for the terrorist attack on its Parliament (Dec 2001), Mumbai attacks (Nov 2008), the Pathankot attack (Jan 2016), the attack on the Uri military camp (Sept 2017) and the attack on army camp in Nagrota near Jammu city (Nov 2016).

To pursue it further, India has remained fierce vocalist for the alleged involvement of Lashkar-e-Taiba/Jamaat-UI-Dawa and Jaish-e-Muhammad for conducting attacks mentioned above. New Delhi has demanded that the chiefs of these organisations should be handed over to India and the alleged terrorists caught by Pakistani government after Mumbai attacks must be hanged whose cases are still lingering in Rawalpindi courts.

Similarly, Pakistan has also blamed India for its involvement in Balochistan and Karachi. The arrest of Kulbhushan Jadhav from Chabahar confirmed that Indian intelligence agencies are indulged in spreading terror and chaos and funding non-state actors to yield irregularities in Pakistan. The recent bloodiest wave of terrorist attacks in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan is the part of the same story. India is doing this to disrupt the smooth democratic transition in Pakistan and interrupt the 2018 general elections.

The current Indian manoeuvres highlight three important paradigms of New Delhi's strategy. First, India has demanded punitive measures against the

organisations listed above for reopening dialogue. Secondly, this pre-condition for holding the peace talks is coupled with Indian endeavours to isolate Pakistan internationally and regionally and to get it declared as a terrorist state by the toothless UN and the mighty US. Thirdly, with the help and assistance of the US, India is increasing its role in the Indian Ocean and Afghanistan and becoming Asian power by pushing Pakistan to the back burner. This will inevitably disturb the balance of power in the region and will hurt Pakistan's strategic interests.

The two countries started their journey together, share a common history and to some extent have a similar culture. The exigencies of time suggest that they should forgo their old useless rivalry and open up hearts to mend their ways

Despite New Delhi's attempts to launch a reign of terror in Kashmir, building illegal dams on Pakistan's water, denting Pakistan's reputation, disturbing the regional balance of power, exacerbating cross-border terrorism, media campaigns and other border-related skirmishes, Pakistan has always remained a staunch vocalist of peace talks. Pakistan has always taken initiatives to start trade with India, expand societal relations and resolve the Kashmir issue. Therefore, it would be desirable if India adopts the same approach towards these problems.

Moreover, Pakistan has adopted a very rational stance that if Pakistan has been financing these organisations then why is Pakistan facing the most disastrous bloodshed? According to a report, 80,000 civilians and arms forces personnel have been martyred in these attacks. Thus, to further avoid bloodshed, the two nations must rethink their paradigms of decision making.

Let's take a deep breath and reflect on what India and Pakistan have achieved from this decades-long antagonism. Despite the heavy toll of casualties on both sides, the ongoing tussle has achieved nothing except losses.

The two countries started their journey together, share a common history and to some extent carry similar cultures. The exigencies of time suggest that they should forgo their old useless rivalry and open up their hearts.

The following five measures can be adopted to streamline the fragile relations:

Firstly, trade is the most significant component of a globalised world. All the developed nations had set-aside their regional and international disputes and maintained their trade relations with other states to enhance their economic strength. Likewise, Pakistan and India must move forward in this regard and remove all non-tariff barriers and bureaucratic hurdles to strengthen trade ties. Both the nations must provide non-discretionary market access to each other.

The forces of bigotry and extremism are loud on each side. Therefore, to counter the increasing hatred, misconceptions and stereotyping, people must interact with each other and forget old enmities. To facilitate this, the governments of both countries must make crossborder travel easier

Secondly, increasing people to people contact is the crucial element to cement the fragile relations between Pakistan and India. The forces of bigotry and extremism are loud on each side. Therefore, to counter the increasing hatred, misconceptions and stereotyping, people must interact with each other and forget old enmities. To achieve this end, governments of both the countries must facilitate the travelling regime. Bringing ease to visa policies, ensuring the security of tourists, setting up educational exchange programmes, exchanging artists and professionals, developing shared publications and conducting joint ventures of exhibition and events can yield positive results for the betterment of the relations.

Thirdly, the two countries have some of the best players indifferent sports. But, unfortunately, they avoid indulging in contests with each other. The state machinery needs to initiate the games between the two nations to bring to halt the feelings of hostility.

Fourthly, both the countries are in the development phase of their nascent democracies. And with the shared social background, both countries are facing similar problems. Why don't the civil bodies and government of both states join hands to weed out the issues?

Fifthly, there is another strong harbinger of change. We must start telling our young one's the story of the partition where men, women and children saved one and other from injustice regardless of the regional affiliation and religious sentiments. The intelligentsia of both nations must devise a strategy to lessen the

effects of hatred and highlight the stories of living together. Moreover, adding chapters of love between the two countries in the curricula, making films which depict the love of the people in tough times and writing stories of joys and suffering to gether may further help the cause.

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ECONOMY

Misconceptions About CPEC By Ikram Sehgal

A flagship of China's massive One Belt One Road (OBOR) initiative, the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) is driven in part by Beijing's desire to build additional routes for its energy imports from the Middle East and to lessen its dependence on sea routes. For Pakistan, CPEC is an extremely cohesive project, a game changer not only for Pakistan but for the entire region and beyond. The corridor has been welcomed across the region with optimism that can only accelerate with the passage of time. Unfortunately, there are detractors to this vital project, India's blatantly hostile stance is supported by some leaders of a few nationalist parties, political workers, intellectuals and even a few analysts. A sustained campaign has been launched to create an impression that Pakistan will lose more than it will gain. The barrage of criticism spread across a platform of lies and falsehood must be debunked and the actual facts explained.

One myth is that China is an imperialist power bent on exploiting "our natural resources for the gargantuan appetite of economic growth", the fact is that China is blessed with huge deposits of natural resources, including some rare earth elements. A wrong perception being spread is that Chinese labour and workers (mainly Chinese prisoners) will replace Pakistani workers rendering them jobless, whereas the fact is there is more than plenty of work in China. For security reasons the 10,000 Chinese nationals living in several camps will go back when projects are completed. That Chinese military bases are planned in the coastal belt and Gwadar Port is another wrong opinion. The actual fact is that CPEC is a 100% economic project aimed at linking the region with economic opportunities with no military designs. Apart from this, there is another false perception that anti-state sentiment in Xinjiang will only exacerbate the likelihood for militant ideologies to connect across CPEC, the fact is that this socio-economic project will bring in prosperity and peace in the region, particularly in the less-developed areas. Youth will get job opportunities reducing their vulnerability to terrorist teaching.

The belief that Pakistan's rising trade deficit with China (\$6.2 billion) will harm Pakistan is not Pakistan-specific. India's trade deficit with China is 47 billion dollars and that of the US is 347 billion dollars. There is a false notion prevalent that Pakistan is being dictated terms by China, the provinces are not being consulted whereas the fact is that all four provinces are consulted and invited to every meeting Pakistan and abroad. In May 2017, all chief ministers attended the OBOR Summit in China with former PM Nawaz Sharif. That CPEC will harm local businesses is another wrong idea, the fact is that by providing quality products, CPEC will increase competitiveness of goods in local markets. Pakistan not being able to provide security to Chinese here, especially in Balochistan, due to the law and order situation isn't a reality either. The fact is two Special Security Divisions (SSD) have been mobilised by the army, consisting of 15,000 personnel providing security to CPEC projects/personnel. It is not true that air pollution caused by coal-fired power plants is harmful. Plants in Pakistan are all new, thus there is no question about air pollution. Over 1,000 similar plants are already operational in China.

Another wrong perception is that CPEC is not going to bring about any positive change for Pakistan but the fact is that to even claim the massive investment of over \$70 billion in Pakistan, over \$600 billion in Russia and more than \$200 billion in Central Asia, Iran and Afghanistan will not bring any change is unrealistic and absurd. The notion that resources will be exploited with projects being undertaken against the will of locals, resulting in demographic change is false as the fact is that Balochistan's growth is more than guaranteed; CPEC investment will create more job opportunities bringing about change for the better for locals. Pakistan becoming a Chinese colony is far from being a possibility as the actual fact is that history has proven that colonialism and imperialism are legacies of countries of the global West. China (and the US) are industrial powers with global clout that have never tried to colonise any country. High insurance, high loan interest and high return on equity is also a myth whereas the fact is that most loans are of low interest, in projects investment is guaranteed with 17% return per annum on equity.

The deliberate attempts by anti-Pakistan lobbies and detractors to sabotage CPEC are because they know it will bring progress and prosperity in Pakistan. By creating doubts and sowing fear and misconceptions, a lot of traction has also

been gained by the cynics of CPEC reporting factually incorrect information. The government's efforts to debunk misconceptions have fallen woefully short, the electronic and print media must get into the act to educate the masses and launch a campaign about the actual benefits to Pakistan from this mega project. What must be hammered home is that China is a friend which has put their money where their mouth is by actually bringing sizable investment into Pakistan when no other country was willing to do so, rhetoric has been replaced by substance. The level of economic engagement China is undertaking with Pakistan is unprecedented and will go a long way in improving our economy and bringing about a more stable political situation in the country.

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Source: <https://tribune.com.pk/story/1748106/6-misconceptions-about-cpec/>

Economic Challenges for the New Government By Waqar Masood Khan

Nation's coffers would be nearly empty by the time the new government starts

While election frenzy is griping the country, few indications are available if the political parties are abreast of the challenges they would be facing if they get a chance to form the government, and what policies they plan to adopt to deal with them. The election manifestos of most parties have not yet to be announced and, therefore, no public pronouncement is in the field. One exception is the 100 day program announced by the Pakistan Tehrik Insaf (PTI). However, there is hardly any indication in this program that directly addresses the macroeconomic challenges.

It would be useful to enumerate the challenges that would call for immediate action as the new government assumes office. Many analysts have exaggerated the enormity of the challenges, painting a doomsday scenario waiting to unfold. This is not true. The country also offers considerable opportunities of redemption and hence while it would be painful to overcome challenges, these opportunities could quickly herald a new era of prosperity.

Our foremost challenge is to restore the macroeconomic stability. It has many parts but its ultimate manifestation is the untenable balance of payments (BOP). Last week we had reviewed in detail the eleven-month BOP position, which indicated a very high deficit likely to touch 6pc of GDP (\$18 billion) – highest in more than a decade. In the last five years, the external debt has risen by \$22 billion while there is an increase of only \$4 billion in country's reserves (\$10 billion versus \$6 billion). Reserves are barely sufficient to cover two months of imports. So, proverbially, nation's coffers would be nearly empty by the time the new government starts its term. Accordingly, inescapable and most pressing issue would be to mobilise foreign resources to ward-off an imminent default on foreign obligations.

To this end, it would be near impossible to get any outside support unless an IMF program is put in place. Patchwork is always possible, which even the caretakers are also doing by picking one loan or the other, from this lender of that lender,

and moving from week to week. An arrangement that would signal the dawn of a new era would only be possible when accompanied with a credible program of reforms with international buy-in. This is essential to meet the growing financing gap and begin to build reserves to stabilise macroeconomic situation and to avert default.

Let us also answer whether it will be possible to do without the outside help. Frankly, that would be exceedingly painful and politically too costly. It would essentially require abandoning the current regime of current account convertibility, a covenant that we have agreed to that requires freedom of import of goods and services and access to foreign exchange from the competitive inter-bank market. We may have to revert to import controls that we have left behind more than two decades ago. There would be shortages, unusual price increases and loss of competitive environment that has developed since the time we moved to a deregulated economy. Accordingly, the new government would be ill-advised to venture into such experiments.

Our foremost challenge is to restore the macroeconomic stability. It has many parts but its ultimate manifestation is the untenable balance of payments (BOP)

Therefore, we recommend the government should follow the familiar course of reforms work to build a credible plan. We briefly outline what should be its elements. First, a sharp fiscal adjustment would be required. The likely deficit of 7pc has to be brought down to 5pc during the next fiscal year. This would call for both an increase in tax collections as well as a major cut in development spending because current expenditures – except subsidies – would require deeper analysis to right size the government. Equally importantly, given that 57.5pc of divisible taxes are transferred to provinces, their cooperation in cutting expenditures would be critical through the build-up of surpluses. On the tax collection side the momentum of first three years of the last government that saw a 60pc increase in revenues would have to be relaunched. The tax collections in the last two years have dropped to no more than 12pc.

The second area of reform would be the monetary policy, which is the responsibility of the State Bank. The policy was too lax and accommodated widespread fiscal indiscipline. The policy rate actions were delayed – only two adjustments totaling 0.75pc were made since January – despite huge decline in

foreign reserves. The policy rate would require significant adjustment to signal a tight monetary policy in the immediate future.

The third area of reform would be the exchange rate. It is hard to predict what would happen to the rate once a reform program is put in place but given the precariously low levels of reserves, the need to build reserves would call for intervening in the market for purchases, which inevitably would bring pressure on the rate.

The fourth area of reform would be to fix the power and gas sectors. The circular debt (CD) requires settlement as well as stopping future accumulation. It is reported that CD has reached Rs570 billion, despite a cash payment of Rs200 billion during the year. There is also the non-cash settlement of the previously paid CD parked in the power holding company (PHC) to individual distribution companies. Efforts to pay CD debt would pose a challenge as it would run counter to the need for containing the fiscal debt. However, an adjuster may be sought in the interest of improving the efficiency of the power sector that is impeded by a high level liquidity stuck up in CD. But the more formidable task would be to stop future accumulation of CD. The previous CD settlement plan was abandoned both in amending the law as well as implementing the divestment plans that would have enabled payment of such debts. There is an additional CD surfacing in the area of LNG payments. So far it is estimated to be around Rs30 billion, but could soon balloon to a very high level unless settled immediately.

On the structural side, nothing is more important than the revival of the privatisation program, which was also abandoned halfway by the previous government. Without a serious effort to put a plug on further accumulation of losses by public sector enterprises, neither fiscal viability would be ensured nor the continuing losses of efficiency in their operations recouped. The straight forward plan of inducting strategic investors stands the highest chance of success and would be welcome by international partners.

Finally, an unusual situation is created in country's anti money laundering and countering financing for terrorism (AML/CFT) regime by FATF decision to place the country yet again in the grey list. Reportedly, a new plan of action spread over 15 month has been approved by FATF plenary. This is an odious plan

literally imposed by International Cooperation Review Group (ICRG) as opposed to Asia Pacific Group (APG) that Pakistan has been working with in the past. We have to make good of it as much as possible and seek relief wherever we find it impossible to implement. The IMF program may also contain provisions that may link progress on the plan as part of its reviews.

The new government, evidently, would be bargaining a very tortuous road to navigate the economy. Only a leadership with vision and foresight would be able to stabilise the economy and set it on the road to prosperity. The leaders must sacrifice more than what they would be asking from the people. Austerity and frugality in public lifestyle should be the catchword in the new economic regime.

Source: <https://www.pakistantoday.com.pk/2018/06/30/economic-challenges-for-the-new-government/>

What Are We Importing? By Dr Pervez Tahir

In the first 11 months of 2017-18, imports stood at \$55.23 billion, an increase of 14.12 per cent. Exports increased by slightly more at 15.28, per cent. However, the absolute level of exports is just \$21.35 billion, paying for only 38.7 per cent of imports. In theory exports do not have to be equal to imports, there being other means of paying for imports. But the gap in our case is humongous. What exactly are we importing? Are some of these dispensable at a time of foreign exchange crisis, with its gravity increasing by the day?

Imports are divided into nine groups. As one would expect, the largest is the Petroleum Group valued at \$12.93 billion or 23 per cent of the total. This is understandable as Pakistan is dependent on the world for its requirements of petroleum products and crude oil. Savings are still possible by lowering energy intensity, a measure of the amount of energy used to produce a unit GDP. It has been consistently falling globally and in all major economies. Pakistan falls way behind its peers. A big time new entrant is the import of gas that contributes 18.4 per cent of the Petroleum Group imports. Next in importance is the Machinery Group with a share of 19.3 per cent in the total imports. Again, Pakistan is dependent on the import of capital goods to raise the investment-to-GDP ratio necessary for a respectable rate of growth of GDP. Power-generating machinery, electrical machinery and apparatus, telecom and textile machinery are, in that order, the major items in the group. The third largest group is the Agricultural and Other Chemicals Group, with a share of 14.7 per cent. These are essential inputs for agricultural and industrial production such as fertilisers, insecticides, plastic materials, medicinal products, etc.

In a country still claiming to be agricultural, \$915 million were spent on importing raw cotton. There is not much public awareness of the fact that the fourth-largest group of imports is the Food Group. In the period covered here, Pakistan incurred a huge expenditure of \$5.72 billion to import food items. The share in total imports was 10.3 per cent. Around half of the amount went to the import of edible oils and tea due to insignificant local production. The indigenous oilseed crops such as sunflower, canola, rapeseed/mustard and cottonseeds cater for only 12 per cent of the demand. Not much import substitution is in evidence.

Rapeseed/mustard showed a negligible growth of 0.1 per cent in 2017-18. The other half of food import bill was on milk & its products, dry fruits & nuts, spices and pulses. Despite claims that Pakistan is among the top milk producers of the world, the country imported \$252 million worth of milk and related products in 2017-18, an increase of 8 per cent over the previous year. Pulses import cost the country \$483 million. Domestic production of masoor has remained unchanged and that of moong has declined by 8.7 per cent. What is achievable is demonstrated by the fact that the import bill in the previous year was \$903 million. The reduction was caused by the increase of maash production by 4.3 per cent. The usual suspects, cars and motorcycles, cost \$1.3 billion, while buses and trucks cost \$581. "All other items" claim a hefty \$4.6 billion.

Rupee depreciation and regulatory import duties will reduce imports, but the desired impact requires reinforcement by appropriate nontariff barriers against dispensable imports and incentives for domestic production, especially in the Food Group.

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Source: <https://tribune.com.pk/story/1750656/6-what-are-we-importing/>

Back to the IMF | Editorial

THERE is growing awareness that Pakistan is firmly on the road back to the IMF for an emergency loan as the country's foreign exchange reserves head towards the critical mark of one month's import cover. It is an open question when that point will be reached, considering that the recent rounds of exchange-rate depreciation have given a boost to exports. But that boost may not last long, and the depreciations have also driven inflation since they are responsible for the rise in the price of fuel imports, both petroleum and natural gas. The debate on timing aside, the fact that Pakistan is set to repeat the cycle of depleting foreign exchange reserves, followed by an approach to the IMF, shows that despite growth in the real sector, the fundamental dysfunctions of the economy remain entrenched in the five years since 2013 when the Fund's support was last availed.

Now that the awareness of an impending return to the IMF is spreading, some anxieties are being stoked along the way. A recent report in the Financial Times, citing unnamed officials, pointed out that being in a Fund programme would mean opening up the financial details of all CPEC loans and grants, as well as the financing terms on which other Chinese loans have been taken for balance-of-payments support. The report cited unnamed officials as saying that such an eventuality has been the topic of discussion between Pakistani and Chinese officials — and if true, it sounds a bit like blackmail. One can only hope it has not come to this, but if it has, then the government is treading on a dangerously narrow ledge.

It may well come to that though, given that Pakistan is fast running out of options to shore up its reserves. Already at least \$2bn have been drawn from the Chinese as balance-of-payments support, and the currency swaps position also shows some drawings. With options running out, and the deficit on the current account persisting, a future course of action is becoming urgent. The interim government has done the right thing in refusing to engage in what amounts to a strategic policy choice that goes far beyond the mandate of a caretaker set-up. What is needed is work to begin on what a potential letter of intent might look like and what sort of commitments Pakistan is ready to make in return for a Fund bailout so that at least the outline of an action plan can be left behind for the new

government which would then not have to start from scratch. It is always better to go to the IMF with an action plan. The caretakers could encourage that conversation among government, business and economists. That would be within their mandate.

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Source: <https://www.dawn.com/news/1419324/back-to-the-imf>

Monetary Policy | Editorial

THE State Bank has all but confirmed that the economy has now hit the choppiest of waters ever since the growth process began a few years ago. The latest monetary policy statement, which announced a one percentage point increase in the key discount rate, the largest increase since monetary tightening began, is only the tip of the iceberg. The statement is littered with language that should be cause for serious concern at the policy level. Of course, there is little that the interim government can do about it since the measures required go far beyond its mandate. To give an example, the State Bank says aggregate demand “has proved to be higher than previously thought”, and the provisional estimate for the fiscal deficit for fiscal year 2018 is now 6.8pc as opposed to 5.5pc estimated in May. The current account deficit has come in at \$16bn from July to May, compared to \$11.1bn in the same period last year, despite multiple rounds of exchange rate depreciation and a rebound in exports. Whatever improvements we may have seen in exports and remittances, “the sheer size of imports continues to pressurise FX reserves”. Perhaps with this in mind, the bank has warned that “the near-term management of the country’s external accounts is of critical importance”. The urgency is now palpable.

The net reduction of foreign exchange reserves of \$6.7bn seen till July 6 is now the headline story of the economy, and the unsustainably high levels of demand in the economy will be the big challenge to contain. Without rapid and large-scale stabilisation efforts, through further depreciation in the exchange rate and sharp cuts in spending, along with rate hikes on the most elastic taxes (usually petroleum and power), the situation will not be brought under control. The question asked through the years when the government touted its growth story now asserts itself aggressively: can the economy afford this growth? For next year, the State Bank has estimated the growth rate to come in at 5.5pc, considerably below the target of 6.2pc set by the government. From here onward, the waters are going to get choppier still since the driving forces — growing fiscal and external deficits — are unlikely to go away on their own. The party is over, from the looks of it. The days of growth are over, and stabilisation measures are around the corner, in a repeat of a cycle that is decades old.

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Trade Wars – Implications on Pakistan By

Dr Kamal Monnoo

With all the on-going trade wars cum posturing in the developed world: China vs. USA; USA vs. EU; Canada vs. USA; EU signing a historic trade deal with Japan; China signing a new deal with the UAE; etc., the question is that does it also affect Pakistan or not? Answer: Yes, of course it does and don't let anyone misguide you by stating otherwise. The gigantic production economies like China have manufacturing operations and jobs to sustain and they will not bow down easily. Meaning, that the goods being refused by the US (United States) will start knocking on the doors of other markets, undermining their domestic manufacturing in the same way they were affecting domestic production in the USA. And it is precisely for this reason that the moment Mr. Trump placed enhanced tariffs on Chinese good, the EU (European Union) immediately slapped their own protection measures to ensure that the goods originally meant for the US markets do not now instead find their way in the EU markets.

Pakistan unfortunately has already been on the receiving end for over a decade now with an un-checked free flow of cheap Chinese products, which has resulted in literally destroying its once robust SME (Small and Medium Sized Enterprises) sector. Job creation has suffered (only 20% of the employable youth has access to new jobs) and the economy of late has been rendered to being a mere consumption oriented. With Xinjiang developing as China's new production powerhouse and its convenient access now to low shipping costs (thanks to fast track CPEC) the pressure on Pakistan to absorb a new influx of Chinese goods will only increase in the coming years. The transit corridor to Gwadar catering to Xinjiang's exports to the outer world would mean the risk of duty-free or smuggled pilferage of goods into the Pakistani markets, thereby repeating the saga of the ATT (Afghan Transit Trade) that became the single most main culprit in creating an unprecedented high level of an un-documented sector in Pakistan! Given our growing dependency on China (in every way) and that the entire nation and its institutions are so gung ho on implementing all facets of CPEC (China Pakistan Economic Corridor) at any cost, it will be a big challenge for anyone to arrest further erosion of the home industry through growing imports from China. Never mind that the balance of trade is already completely skewed in their favour and that as an economy our imports have risen to un-sustainable levels, with no

real hope in sight of any meaningful breakthrough in our exports – as there exists no real export surplus to ship out – but then, who cares!

In fact the actual blow back on Pakistan from the global trade war could be much more than one may normally assess or certainly higher in comparison to other regional economies, largely because of our close association with China. Closer to home the developments under the, 'Made in China 2025', initiative in general – including its facets in the bordering Xinjiang province that directly affect us – are being termed by most developed countries as being damaging to inclusive global development. They argue that the Chinese companies in the targeted industries have been offered loans at low interest rates by the State-controlled Chinese banks and the share notion of these state backed companies then going on to dominate markets at home and abroad through preferential placing, tends to be counterproductive to the healthy development and the very future of key technologies and high-end industries. What this tells us is that perhaps tariffs aren't the real issues here, as the real tussle is about manufacturing jobs.

Fine, but the question that then arises is that what does Pakistan need to do to protect its jobs at home? Answer: First, and foremost, to alter its partnership with China in a way that induces China to bring its low value production industries to Pakistan. China is still highly reliant on smokestack industries of the past. With China endeavouring to move to high-end industries, and with its real workers' wages being on a rising trend, this could be a good time to relocate some of these industries, albeit not in Xinjiang but in Pakistan. A move if somehow successfully achieved by Pakistan through targeted policy making could in times to come play a key role in addressing Pakistan's balance of payment woes. A good example could be to follow the model Chinese industrial investment in Taiwan. However, it would be difficult, since the pitfall in our case being that over the years not only have we not invested in improving the skill set of our work force, but also that due to mere populist policies, to gain cheap political mileage, the professionalism and discipline in our work areas stands compromised.

Second, our prized CPEC will need to be revisited and re-structured in order to save the home industry. Pakistan's manufacturing sector for quite some time now has been grappling with the impact of high cost of production, unfriendly government policies, and a liberal imports regime, thereby resulting not only in closure of the installed manufacturing, but also in failing to attract fresh

investment to create new jobs. Investor confidence has plummeted, entrepreneurship (new start-ups and investments with risk) is virtually non-existent and many traditional items' factories have shut down; naturally giving rise to higher unemployment. According to the latest National Human Development Report, released only recently by the same institution, youth unemployment in Pakistan surged to 9.1% in 2015 from 6.5% in 2007. The report added that the International Labour Organization (ILO) put the unemployment figure for the 15-24 years age group at 10.8%. Clearly adequate creation of new jobs in Pakistan is absent. Given that looming external push by the foreign manufacturers to make further inroads into the Pakistani markets the danger will only increase in the coming months, with the need of the hour being to craft a fresh trade and industrial strategy that not only protects the interests of the local industry, but also gives it a chance to increase its global outreach. All eyes will be on the incoming lot!

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Economy: Challenges and Opportunities By

Waqar Masood Khan

It's not that bad

The social media is abuzz with outlandish predictions of economic melt-down. A post attributed to former World Bank/IMF officials is particularly vicious, which reads like an apocalyptic scene: “the external deficit is so big that exchange rate would go down to Rs200 even with an IMF program; the country would face a situation like that of Venezuela and Argentina – widespread shortages of reserves, expect fuel crisis and long lines for many other imported goods. To turn around would require scrapping of last NFC, shutting down of loss making SOEs, major increase in energy prices to cover losses in power sector, substantial increase in interest rate, substantial devaluation, major tax increases, major cut back in development expenditures and rapid privatisation. Basically to rapidly reduce fiscal deficit, slow down the economy, to reduce imports. Brace for a Venezuelan type of situation by December”.

Undoubtedly, there are elements of truth in this narrative but it is highly exaggerated. Surely, we have a difficult situation in hand. But we have faced such situations in the past and overcame the challenge once we did what was required to be done or refrained from policies responsible for the crisis. In the last three decades, we have faced a similar crisis for at least six times. This vulnerability started after liberalisation of Pakistan's the external account. Prior to 1988, Pakistan was meeting its foreign exchange needs essentially from multilateral (World Bank-ADB) and bilateral (Aid-to-Pakistan Consortium) sources. The unipolar world spawned globalisation and international capital movements in the private sector. Markets and competition were the new rules of the game, and to be able to play, controls were to be removed.

While the country made major strides in opening trade, facilitating capital movement, removing forex controls and generally dismantling barriers to economic activities, we, however, failed to institute economic governance commensurate with the imperatives of new realities. In particular, fiscal discipline was the biggest casualty, which was frequently abandoned leading to excessive demand and external account deficit which the country was unable to fill. We

face crises because we fail to exercise responsible care in fiscal affairs. We are neither interested in raising domestic resources (taxes and other revenues) nor in curtailing expenditures. Consequently, we borrow relentlessly. In doing so, we face no difficulty in rupee financing, because we can print local currency in any amount we want. But we overlook the fact that this excess demand inevitably leads to increased demand for imports, which means demand for foreign exchange. The availability of foreign exchange is limited by our exports and remittances – both significantly below the level of imports.

Under these circumstances, we rush for help from the IMF. Once under a program, things begin to improve, so long as we adhere to its conditions. However, we soon discover that these conditions are politically unpalatable and fling the program. That doesn't last long, as the cycle of indiscipline is re-booted, following the above path, at the close of which the need for an IMF program is again felt.

The Fund program would also bring on board World Bank, ADB and other development partners to support the new government and to close the financing gap. The program would free the government from the constant worry about depleting reserves and fear of default

The present situation has emerged following the same pattern. The only surprise is that it has come on the heels of first ever successfully completed IMF program, and that too under a democratic government. All gains made under the program were lost. Fiscal and external deficits have risen to dangerous level, structural reforms abandoned, reserves declined rapidly and exchange rate is facing free fall.

Despite these challenges, the current phase offers highly promising opportunities. The last year saw the highest growth rate of 5.8pc in 13 years. Inflation is moderate, agriculture, manufacturing and services sectors are buoyant. Investments are also rising with robust consumer spending. Undoubtedly, some of this was aided by excess demand due to high fiscal deficit, but its primary nature remains firmly rooted in private sector confidence. Once the imbalances are removed, the economy would grow with a very healthy growth rate.

It is a foregone conclusion that the country has to approach IMF for a new program to restore economic stability. In fact, we have lost considerable time for the sake of political convenience. At the close of 2017, the economy had reached a point where a stand-by arrangement from IMF was critically needed, yet no such initiative was taken as it would have demanded economic discipline in the penultimate months of government's term, which was not expedient.

We need a fund program to stem external account unsustainability, which means insufficient resources (reserves, FDI, loans) to meet the financing needs of the economy. The starting point of a Fund program is the so-called 'financing-gap'. The current account deficit last year was \$18 billion. Roughly, we had FDI of \$2.7 billion, public investment (Sukuk and Euro Bond) of \$2.3 billion and net borrowing of \$6.8 billion from various sources. This adds up to \$11.8 billion, which means there is still a shortfall of \$6.2 billion relative to the deficit of \$18 billion. Where was it made up from? The answer is by drawing down on our reserves by \$6 billion, which declined from \$16 billion in June '17 to about \$9.8 billion in June '18.

For this year, the option of repeating last year's performance is simply not there. The level of reserves is dangerously low to lose any further. The exchange rate stability is critical for investors' confidence. The Fund program would aim at stabilising the external account. To this effect the key is to reduce fiscal deficit, which was reportedly recorded at 7.1pc of GDP (Rs.2450 billion). The Fund program, e.g., would require a reduction in deficit of 2pc of GDP in the first year, which would mean either raising Rs750 billion in taxes or cutting equivalent expenditures or a combination of the two. This is surely a tall order, requiring severe austerity that the government would have to practice. But this is how the excess demand in imports would be curtailed and current account deficit contained.

Other requirements would be to further increase the SBP policy rate and a major reduction of deficit financing from the SBP, which would also put further pressure on the interest rate. Administered prices would have to be freed. These measures would spur inflation but it would be nothing like runaway inflation. Then there would be structural reforms, such as the revival of the privatisation program and fixing up of the circular debt and power sector inefficiencies, without which future investments would not be possible.

The Fund program would also bring on board World Bank, ADB and other development partners to support the new government and to close the financing gap. The program would free the government from the constant worry about depleting reserves and fear of default. It can then focus on its development and reforms agenda.

Let's finally make comments on NFC, Venezuela and Argentina. The NFC challenge has no immediate solution. The government should seek a CCI resolution for provinces to give surplus in their budgets. Pakistan is simply not comparable to either of the two countries. Venezuelan economy is facing turmoil since it embraced socialist policies. Even in a non-socialist government, the ills created continue to this day. Argentina is recovering from nearly two decades of government controlled economy with prices frozen during this period. The required adjustment for balancing fiscal and external accounts is much more than what is needed in Pakistan. We have a very short period of about two years of economic mismanagement that can be cleaned up quickly. But the process of adjustment would be painful and government would do well to let people know, as the would-be prime minister has stated in his first national address, that the government would sacrifice equally if not more than what it would ask people to bear.

Source: <https://www.pakistantoday.com.pk/2018/07/27/economy-challenges-and-opportunities/>

Rupee Strengthens Further Against Dollar

By Shahid Iqbal

KARACHI: The dollar on Friday continued losing its value against the rupee, dropping even below the interbank rate suggesting ample supply of the US currency in the open market, dealers said.

They cited stability in the result of general elections was the key reason for the appreciation of the local currency.

Forex Association of Pakistan President Malik Bostan said the dollar was traded as low as Rs126-126.50 in the open market – well below the interbank rate of Rs128. Since Monday, the dollar has lost Rs4.30.

The interbank market remained relatively calm with slight fluctuations as it closed at Rs128 versus Rs128.40-128.50 on July 24, a day before the national polls.

Greenback was selling at lower than interbank rate

However, another major reason was the State Bank of Pakistan's strict action against movement of cash from one city to another – implemented from July 24.

“Since we can't move cash from one city to another, it created a shortage in the market which is why the dollars are available but there is no cash to buy them, and so the greenback lost value” said Exchange Companies Association of Pakistan Secretary General Zafar Paracha.

On July 6, the SBP issued a circular restricting intercity cash movement by the exchange companies. The decision came after the enlistment of Pakistan in the Financial Action Task Force grey list in June for terror financing and money laundering.

The enlistment jolted the exchange rate with a high degree of instability that shot up dollar prices and demand in the market.

Paracha said that due to general elections in the country, borders with Afghanistan were sealed – blocking smuggling of dollars from Pakistan. As a result, more greenback is available locally.

Currency dealers said the general public have rushed to sell their holdings, which was another reason behind the falling dollar rates.

“Within two days, our export of third currencies (other than dollars) increased to \$4 million while it was almost negligible before general elections,” said Bostan, adding that the export of these currencies will bring back dollars in the country.

“In the open market, 80 per cent are sellers of while the rest are buyers,” he continued.

Published in Dawn, July 28th, 2018

Source: <https://www.dawn.com/news/1423355/rupee-strengthens-further-against-dollar>

The Solution To Pakistan's Looming Economic Meltdown By Mir Mohammad Ali Khan

Economies, especially the sinking ones, are not saved by taking measures that please and appease people. Measures that might irritate the public at large in the present but give them relief in the future are the ones that will work.

Let's just go through a review of where we stand as an economy before we discuss the solutions.

In my June 2 article Pakistan is heading towards a financial emergency, I had made some bold claims. I had clearly said that I would not be surprised if the dollar to rupee rate crosses 125 within a month – which it eventually did.

What does this mean for the common Pakistanis and the Pakistani economy? Well, to begin with, our external debt is \$98 billion. Or it was. I say "was" because we earn in rupees and pay back in dollars. So, an increase in the value of the dollar means an increase in debt. The net reserves with the state bank are just \$10 billion out of the \$16 billion in total held by all banks. The debt to GDP figures the world and the economists keep giving to all of you are nothing but a fallacy. Debt to GDP means nothing because the GDP is not our income. It's the value of all services and goods produced in a particular period. If Pakistan had produced \$300 billion in the value of the GDP it by no means indicates that the 300 billion dollars is our income. The amount of taxes we collect is our income. Nothing else. The profits we make as the Government of Pakistan from nationally run companies like PIA, Steel Mills, OGDC, PSO etc. are added income in addition to the tax collection. Our nationally run companies are not only making losses but are being given further money to continue their operations.

Simply put, we have no money left to pay our debts. In addition, our current account deficit has increased to almost \$18 billion. Our imports are twice the amounts of our exports, more so than that but I am taking a softer approach. Our circular debt is at \$10 billion. Our reserves can barely cover our imports for more than 33 days. That is the biggest sign of worry amongst many signs.

There is no single solution. No panacea. The measures that need to be taken are numerous, multifaceted and simultaneous too.

The first and the foremost solution is to ban certain imports outright, starting from luxurious items. Of course, the objections from world trade organisations will be there but there is a solution to this problem, which is to increase import duty on these items to such a high level that nobody can afford it.

One of the biggest myths is that devaluing your currency will increase your exports. Wrong. Devaluing your currency might discourage import but to think that it will increase your exports in a country like Pakistan is a wish and not a reality. Exports are not just price sensitive. That happens mostly in economies whose exports are already in an extremely healthy state. The cost of production increases in countries like Pakistan for the exporters because of the devaluation of its currency locally. Energy or electricity is one of the biggest cost for exporters in Pakistan. We import furnace oil to produce electricity in most cases. If the dollar is expensive than it means that our energy costs will increase, and this will increase the price of the finished goods to be exported out of Pakistan. Importers in other countries refuse to import such expensive products.

Source : <https://dailytimes.com.pk/274054/the-solution-to-pakistans-looming-economic-meltdown/>

EDUCATION

Lessons From CSS Results By Muhammad Murtaza Noor

The recent announcement of results by the Federal Public Service Commission (FPSC) once again exposed the inadequacies in quality of higher education in Pakistan. According to the result, just a little over three per cent of all candidates were able to qualify the Central Superior Services (CSS) examinations of 2017 by securing the minimum passing marks. Figures show a total of 9,391 candidates appeared in the written examination of the year 2017; out of them only 310 candidates, including 199 males and 111 females, finally qualified.

The results of the CSS exams have been facing decline for several years, as 3.33pc candidates qualified the exam in 2014, 3.11pc in 2015 and 2.06pc in 2016. The percentage of candidates qualifying the written test has come down from 9.75% in 2011 to 3.3 % in 2017.

According to the Annual Report of FPSC 2016, a large number of vacancies i.e 95 vacancies out of 333, remained un-filled due to the reason that candidates from respective quotas could not pass the competitive examination and examiners as well as Viva Voce board of the Commission shared concerns on declining standard of education. Examiners' Assessment Reports for CSS CE 2015 and 2016 observed that low level of general knowledge; poor written expression, grammatical mistakes and lack of analytical approach were some of the main reasons for dismal performance of candidates in competitive exams.

The scheme of syllabi (1981) for competitive examination was reviewed by the Commission in 2015. The Commission conducted the CSS CE 2016 based on the new syllabi. Under the new scheme, marks of many subjects were rationalized and six new optional subjects viz Governance and Public Policy, Criminology, Gender Studies, Environmental Sciences, Anthropology and Town Planning & Urban Management were added to the list. Besides, Comparative Study of Major Religions was introduced for non-Muslims. Optional subjects were

also re-grouped to provide level playing field to both students of natural sciences and social sciences

The continuous disappointing results civil service competitive exam puts great responsibility over Chairman of Higher Education Commission (HEC) as one of important major function of HEC is to ensure academic excellence by identifying flaws and failures in the system. It is right time for the HEC leadership to work closely with the 189 public and private sector universities and other stakeholders to fix the problem.

Taking notice of the CSS results, newly appointed Chairman HEC Dr. Tariq Banuri termed the decline as national crisis. Declaring it as most important challenge during his tenure, he announced to set up a high level committee to identify the specific weaknesses (which universities, which subjects, what skills, etc.), so that the HEC could help universities remedy some of the deficiencies immediately. According to him, this issue will require a sustained attention to enhancement of quality. Based on the report, HEC would submit detailed recommendations to the government, including the strengthening of institutional, financial, and capacity building aspects.

It is hoped that the committee, after in-depth study and comprehensive deliberations, would come up with concrete recommendations for improving the quality of higher education in Pakistan as national and international assessments and reviews have already highlighted flaws in higher education system of Pakistan.

A close coordination is required among federal HEC and provincial HECs/governments as well. There is also need to review the performance and working of Quality Assurance Division & Quality Assurance Agency within HEC, two key divisions responsible for ensuring quality assurance and Quality Enhancement Cells established in the universities. An independent third party assessment as already suggested by the concerned stakeholders, could be greatly helpful in this regard.

The education intuitions also need to pay special attention towards improving critical thinking and analytical approach discouraging culture of notes and cramming. At the same time, remedial courses addressing the poor writing skills

and low level of general knowledge should be offered for the students. The education intuitions and parents should encourage reading habits.

The specific needs of the students should be identified at the time of admission and short remedial courses should be offered accordingly. I have personally experienced, before joining Quaid-i-Azam University Islamabad in 1998, 6 months English language course, helped me a lot not only during my university but also throughout my career.

It is also right time to review the decision of opening new university campuses without ensuring certain standards and qualified faculty as during last decade, it has become common practice by the political leadership to announce establishment of new universities/campuses at political gatherings to gain popular support.

The situation also requires assessment over attraction of civil services for talented university graduates and working of FPSC. The Senate Special Committee to examine the Annual Report of Federal Public Service Commission for 2015, after through deliberations, observed that the Commission is in need of a proper study as to what should be the composition of the board of the commission, what went wrong where in the mechanism of taking the Competitive Examination, how other countries process the selection of civil servants. The Committee also asked the Commission and Established Division to calculate information about how have the toppers of the competitive examinations served in the last twenty years.

Without bringing about meaningful structural reforms in higher education sector and civil services, the desired results could not be achieved.

Muhammad Murtaza Noor is associated with the development and education sector for more than 18 years. He is currently working as National Coordinator with Inter University Consortium for Promotion of Social Sciences Pakistan, an autonomous largest alliance of Pakistani universities.

The writer is a freelance columnist associated with the development and education sector.

Source: <https://nation.com.pk/02-Jul-2018/lessons-from-css-results>

Dismal State of the Top Cadre Services By **Shehryar Aziz**

The Federal Public Service Commission has recently released the result of the Commission for Superior Services Examination for the year 2017. Of the 9391 candidates that took the exam, only 3.30 per cent managed to pass it.

The FPSC Examiners' Report blames the candidates' poor English language skills for the dismal result. The exam result is very damning indeed, for it basically implies that above 90 per cent of the candidates who have 16 years or above of university education do not possess the English language skills to articulate their answers and understand what is being asked by the examiners. Responding to the high failure rate being blamed on his department, the Chairman HEC has announced a high level committee will be set up to pinpoint the specific shortcoming in higher educational institutions.

The FPSC stats do not indicate a gradual decline instead a sudden plunge in the results of the past few years. In 2012, 800 candidates passed the civil service exam, next year in 2013, only 2 per cent, or 238 candidates, could qualify. Perhaps there is more to the matter than just the university education, of the failing candidates, a lingual issue to the dilemma that needs to be identified, as majority of the candidates fail to clear English Composition exam while passing other subjects including European History, International Law and Political Science.

The HEC does have a role to play, but FPSC should fix its own shortcomings before levelling blame elsewhere. Firstly, the FPSC examiners enjoy absolute freedom from transparency. Neither can candidates see their own papers nor can they apply for rechecking in case they hold a reason to claim rechecking of the answer copies.

One of the Examiner's Report published by FPSC, demonstrates why this is an issue that needs to be dealt with. "FPSC must revise the syllabi of regional languages also to tackle the factors behind opting these subject for favouring as easy or scoring high for success." (FPSC Examiners Report, available online at fpsc.gov.pk). Shockingly, when in March 2017, the Lahore High Court ruled that

CSS exams in future will be conducted in Urdu due to it being the national language, it was the FPSC that appealed against the verdict and got the decision reversed.

Secondly, one can take the GMAT and GRE to gain admission to any Ivy League college but apparently the FPSC does not deem such tests as fit to select Pakistan's civil servants. Unlike the CSS exam, these tests are psychometrically tested to gauge a certain aptitude as per the requirement of the test administrator. Moreover they are also statistically tested to conform to the constructs of data validity and data reliability.

In the UK today, to enter the civil service fast stream (equivalent of CSS), there are 2 online questionnaires, an e-tray exercise testing decision-making skills and a video interview. One must pass the aforementioned to qualify for the assessment centre stage. The assessment centre stage evaluates one for some of the key elements of a Fast Stream role and consists of a leadership exercise, a group exercise and an analytical exercise.

FPSC on the other hand is quite content with being the museum of the recruitment system left by the British at the time of independence and still conducts exam under the outmoded pattern, hence the decline in one of Pakistan's top cadre services' performance.

In present day, CSS isn't designed to match the right person to the right job. For the person who speaks the Shakespearean English, he would not be content in dealing with the humdrum of civil service, day in and day out for thirty or so years till retirement. And those that are suitable for the job, they wouldn't be the ones who would know English better than their native language.

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Source: <https://tribune.com.pk/story/1753090/6-dismal-state-top-cadre-services/>

Accountability In Education By Junaid

Zahid

According to the Accountability in Education 2017-18 Report, there are 264 million out-of-school children and youth the world over — a failure that we must tackle together, because education is a shared responsibility and progress can only be sustainable through common efforts. This is essential to meet the ambitions of the Sustainable Development Goal on education (SDG 4), part of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Governments, schools and teachers have a frontline role to play here, hand in hand with students themselves and parents. Growing populations gaining access to education, along with evidence of underachievement in learning, have brought into sharp focus persistent deficiencies in provision and quality. These, combined with tight education budgets and increased emphasis on value for money worldwide, have countries searching for solutions. Increased accountability often tops the list.

Accountability can be a virtue, describing the quality of being answerable and reliable. In this report, it is defined as a type of mechanism. On legal, political, social or moral grounds, governments and other education actors are obliged to report on the fulfilment of their responsibilities. As per 'Accountability in Education 2017-18' report, Pakistan is among those 33 countries which cannot even meet education financing bench mark.

In Pakistan, the auditor general's office reported to the Public Accounts Committee of the National Assembly that \$7.5 million worth of Basic Education Community Schools programme funding had been illegally diverted. The project director transferred the amount to a private account instead of a prescribed bank. The National Database and Registration Authority also detected more than 2,000 fake teacher employee identity cards and auditors tracked 349 'ghost' schools.

Pakistan has monitored the attendance of more than 210,000 education staff in 26,200 schools using biometrics: fingerprints and photos, coupled with Global Positioning System coordinates. As of February 2017, as many as 40,000 absent teachers and 6,000 absconders (employed but long absent) have been disciplined. In Pakistan, teachers report on daily attendance by text messages. The forum of nine low and middle income countries committed to achieving SDG

4 account for more than half the world's population. Yet, Bangladesh, China, India, Nigeria and Pakistan do not report on global indicator 4.1.1 at any education level (early primary, end of primary or end of lower secondary). The next in line are textbooks, an important part of the school and higher levels of education. In Pakistan, the textbooks are designed according to the National Curriculum Policy 2006. The policy outlined appropriate learning goals but failed to guide about teaching methodologies and teaching materials which resulted in its failure. Similarly, the content covered in the textbooks is not directly in line with the content scope manifested in the curriculum and also does not cater to the current needs and desirable characteristics. The textbooks have also failed to incorporate the curriculum reforms envisaged in the National Education Policy 2009. For example, it was decided that human rights-related content would be included in the textbooks. But, no success has yet been observed in this regard.

The timely provision of free textbooks is the state's responsibility. Provincial textbooks boards usually take that responsibility. But they normally get late in providing the textbooks at the start of new academic year. This year, new academic sessions began from the start of April. Not to speak of other regions, students of Islamabad faced many difficulties in getting the new textbooks. Hardly 20 per cent books were available in the markets by the end of April 2016. Punjab's textbook board also failed to provide the books in time. The books contained mistakes and the binding quality was below standard. The 10th class English book is not having the 7th and 8th chapters in it and many of the middle-level books are missing some pages.

In Pakistan, textbooks have also been criticised for normalising militarism and war and including biases, historical errors and distortions. Prominent Pakistanis other than military heroes and nationalist movement leaders are often excluded. Pakistani textbooks published after a 2006 curriculum reform still emphasised wars with India and largely ignored peace initiatives. They also perpetuated a narrative of conflict and historic grievances between Muslims and Hindus, rather than discussing the potential for conflict-resolution and reconciliation.

Sufficient attention has not been paid to the technical and vocational education in Pakistan. The number of technical and vocational training institutes is not sufficient and many are deprived of infrastructure, teachers and tools for training. The population of a state is one of the main elements of its national power. It can

become an asset once it is skilled. Unskilled population means more jobless people in the country, which affects the national development negatively. As more educated farmers are more likely to be more productive, take measures to mitigate climate change effects and adopt new technology. In Pakistan, such farmers are more likely to adopt irrigation pumps powered by alternative energy sources because they can get access to the information and are more aware of the options. Use of the pumps is associated with higher yields, higher household income and lower poverty. Experience shows households that adopted agricultural practices to counter climate change effects were more educated and had better access to weather-related information. Therefore, technical education needs priority handling by the government.

There is a need for implementation of national education policy and vision 2030 education goals. An analysis of education policy suggests that at the policy level there are several admirable ideas, but practically there are some shortcomings also. It may not be possible for the government at the moment to implement a uniform education system in the country, but a uniform curriculum can be introduced in educational institutions of the country. Similarly, an effective monitoring system is needed in education departments.

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Source: <https://tribune.com.pk/story/1756405/6-accountability-in-education/>

Free Education! | Editorial

CARETAKER Prime Minister (Retd) Justice Nasir-ul-Mulk has directed to prepare a comprehensive and robust mechanism to provide free and compulsory education to all children from the age of five to sixteen years. Chairing a briefing in Islamabad on Tuesday, he gave instructions to implement Article 25-A of the Constitution in letter and in spirit to ensure child's right to education.

Education has remained major concern and focus of the successive governments in Pakistan because of its crucial role in socio-economic development of the country. However, despite slogans about universal education, free education, improving standard of education and allocating more resources for the sector, the situation remains almost the same all over the country except in Punjab where government schools are now excelling due to attention they received during the last five years. However, in case of Punjab too, qualified and highly qualified teachers have been inducted into education corps but rampant corruption in the department by clerical mafia is a major hurdle in bringing about a real transformation. The caretaker Prime Minister has rightly emphasised the need for fuller implementation of the constitutional provisions relating to free education up to Secondary School Certificate, as this would also encourage children from poor background to equip themselves with knowledge and become a productive citizen.

But for a tangible change and improvement, it is incumbent to introduce professional subjects and impart technical skills to students so that they are prepared to enter the job market with ease. We have also been emphasising that establishment of science and computer labs in all schools should be a priority and fundamental changes should be introduced in the system of imparting education and the conduct of examination with emphasis on more thinking and creativity. Curriculum should also be updated to keep pace with the fast-changing developments in the realm of knowledge and education.

Source: <https://pakobserver.net/free-education/>

The Boiling Point of our Education

Emergency By Hisham Khan

The general elections in Pakistan are just a few days away. As is the environment in the days running up to the polls, candidates are busy campaigning to gain the goodwill of their respective constituencies. As always, lofty promises are being made to revitalise the country's weak economy, revive industrial activity, and create jobs for the underutilised workforce.

And while scores of Pakistanis pin their hopes on various political actors, the hard fact remains that post-elections most tall promises will be forgotten by their orators.

Take the case for the state of education, for instance, despite occupying significant space in the manifestos of all the political parties, for the last 10 years or so, at least 20.8 million Pakistani children between the ages of five to 16 years remain out of school. More than 13 million (53 per cent) of these out of school children in Pakistan are girls.

Most of the children who do manage to see the inside of a school are unlikely to sustain their education beyond fifth grade; this is especially true for girls. At the national level, the enrolment rate for girls stands at 53 per cent at primary, 21 per cent at middle and a worrisome 14 per cent at the high school level.

The situation becomes all the more precarious when we take an exclusive look at the smaller provinces. For instance, in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa 52 per cent of the girls between the ages of five and 16 are out of school. The enrolment rate at the primary level is only 51 per cent which drops to just 17 percent at middle school level, and becomes a shameful 8 per cent at high school level.

It is important to understand that we are no longer in the early 2000s where, thanks to the advent of the Millennium Development Goals, universal primary education was the global slogan. We are now living in the post-development era where at least 12 years of education is the new "basic"

To Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) and Pakistan Peoples Party's (PPP) credit, both the political parties seem to have taken heed of these alarming statistics, dedicating a section each in their respective manifestos to especially speak about improving girls' access to secondary level education. PPP has promised the implementation of Article 25-A, which makes it obligatory on the state to provide free quality education to every Pakistani child between the ages of five to 16 years.

PTI on the other hand, does not merely speak about the implementation of Article 25-A but also goes further and pledges to increase the number of schools for both boys and girls in addition to providing stipends to girls to facilitate their access to education.

Out of the three major political parties, Pakistan Muslim League — Nawaz (PML-N) perhaps has the most disappointing manifesto, at least as far as the state of education in Pakistan is concerned. While the party's manifesto does focus on making quality education accessible for both the genders, it does so by focusing squarely on primary and higher education, without as much as mentioning the crucial steps in between, i.e. secondary and higher secondary levels.

To put it euphemistically, this rather curious approach to tackling Pakistan's education emergency seems ill-advised and immature. It goes without saying that without providing appropriate access to secondary and higher secondary levels, it is absolutely pointless to discuss higher education. What this approach is likely to result in is a massive dropout rate post primary schooling — something that Pakistan is already struggling with at the moment.

It is important to understand that we are no longer in the early 2000s where, thanks to the advent of the Millennium Development Goals, universal primary education was the global slogan.

It is impossible to look past the fact that the dream of a truly prosperous Pakistan cannot be realised without investing in the future of our children. There is no negotiation on this matter and there should be no difference of opinion on this. It is a national issue and it can only be addressed if the communities, the civil

society as well as the local, provincial and federal governments join hands and work earnestly till every out-of-school child finally finds a place in a classroom

We are now living in the post-development era where at least 12 years of education is the new “basic”. Accordingly, it is imperative that all efforts by both state and non-state actors should be channelled towards ensuring at least 12 grades of free, quality education for every Pakistani child.

It is worth pointing out here that this election year, the civil society organisations are making rigorous efforts to make the dismal state of education in Pakistan stand-out as an important agenda item during the elections.

However, no amount of advocacy can bear fruit unless an average Pakistani actually starts demanding at least 12 years of free and quality education for his/her children from the ruling elite.

It is impossible to look past the fact that the dream of a truly prosperous Pakistan cannot be realised without investing in the future of our children. There is no negotiation on this matter and there should be no difference of opinion on this.

It is a national issue and it can only be addressed if the communities, the civil society as well as the local, provincial and federal governments join hands and work earnestly till every out-of-school child finally walks into a classroom.

Twelve years of free and quality education is the right of every Pakistani child and it is about time that we actively demand it from those who rule us.

The writer is a development practitioner, currently working with Pakistan Youth Change Advocates (PYCA) to ensure universal secondary education in the country

Published in Daily Times, July 23rd 2018.

Source: <https://dailytimes.com.pk/271645/the-boiling-point-of-our-education-emergency/>

WORLD

Trump's Palestine Plan | Editorial

WHILE the Arab-Israeli peace process is practically dead, thanks mainly to Tel Aviv's brutality and American support of the Israeli occupation, a new 'peace plan' piloted by Donald Trump is said to be in the works.

As reported, Mr Trump's son-in-law and Middle East point man Jared Kushner recently toured the region to drum up Arab support for the so-called 'deal of the century'. While no official version of the plan has emerged yet, credible sources have leaked details and the news for the Palestinians is not good: if the plan is implemented, it will effectively normalise the occupation and condemn the Palestinians to live as second-class citizens in their own land under Israeli overlordship.

Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas has reportedly refused to consider the plan while veteran Palestinian negotiator Saeb Erekat told the media that the plan will "eventually ... normalise the Israeli apartheid in Palestine". Unfortunately for the Palestinians, key Arab states, including Saudi Arabia, Egypt and Jordan, are said to be backing the plan.

According to the leaked details, the Palestinians will be told to forget Jerusalem and make do with Abu Dis — a suburb of the holy city — as their capital, while the Arabs will also be denied the right to return to lands snatched from them by the Israeli occupiers over the decades.

It is difficult to see the Palestinians accept such a humiliating offer. Moreover, Israel will maintain security control over the Arabs while illegal Israeli settlements will be legitimised. After seven decades of strife, peace is sorely needed in Palestine. However, it must be a just and honourable peace, recognising the Palestinians' national and human rights, preferably in the shape of a viable two-state solution.

Yet, with a right-wing government in Tel Aviv bent upon smothering Palestinian desires, and its powerful backer in the White House supporting Israel's every move, such a peace is a distant dream. What is even worse is that the Palestinians' 'Arab brothers' appear to have abandoned them in their hour of trial.

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Source: <https://www.dawn.com/news/1417416/trumps-palestine-plan>

Challenges: Euro-Asia and America By

Rizwan Ghani

With deepening China, America standoff on tariffs and Trump's naked attack on Merkel's open-door immigration policy amidst growing anger in US on his family separation immigration policy the Secretary General of NATO has called for increase in defense spending as demands for improving Europe's economy grow louder ahead of the upcoming EU Summit in Brussels.

Beijing has promised reciprocal steps in response to Trump's statement of imposing tariffs on \$200bn Chinese goods. If the tit-for-tat policy continues, it is going to turn into a Sino-US trade war. It could have negative consequences for the two countries and rest of the world in economy, trade, defence and foreign policy. Without overcoming the underlying causes, Trump cannot bring long-term benefit to America and its people and rest of the world as major world economy.

Trump blames previous US governments for huge trade deficits with China. In 2017 alone, it was \$375bn. But what he fails to realize is that for three decades, US manufacturers have "offshored" productions to China to benefit from lower labor costs. These US manufacturers have avoided US taxes on their huge profits when they sold the goods back home. The same is true for multinationals including US firms in Mexico, Canada and the EU.

No doubt trade deficit is a serious issue. It is linked to lost jobs and revenue that is used for public welfare. Trump is using negative trade imbalance to play politics with countries, treaties and global peace. He blamed Trudeau for not agreeing to renegotiating bilateral agreements every five-year (sunset clause) and in turn refused to sign G-7 communiqué.

The fact of the matter is multinationals, business tycoons, politicians, mafias are using offshore havens, governments, privatization policies, financial sector and legal covers to make billions of dollars in profits, avoid taxes and skim money from public projects in poorer countries, businesses and hiding mega corruption money.

It is more politics than protectionism. Trump has been criticizing multinationals including Amazon publicly for stealing jobs, automation, and not paying fair taxes. But it is just to appease his base because he has not used the US tax authorities, academics, experts, international setups including the EU, the WTO, G-7 or OECD to work out a unified tax policy for multinationals.

To cut trade imbalance, Trump should have de-incentivized overseas investments. It would have created more jobs, revived manufacturing, improved workers rights and in turn generated more tax revenue. Instead, Trump gave huge tax breaks to big businesses forcing the federal and state governments to cut budgets, withdraw healthcare and social welfare of millions of Americans including children and all those who are already struggling to get education, survive in low paid jobs, working on hourly wages and don't have health insurance.

The reports of coalition of "like minded leaders" in Europe on immigration are unfortunate. If EU plans for migrant processing centers in North Africa are discussed in Brussels with €36bn refugee pushback plan mired in gross human rights abuses including rapes, it will be another shame. Merkel accepted refugees to overcome manpower shortage, support economy and country's exports. In 2017, German exports exceeded \$1.6 trillion. Trump is simply using immigration to undermine Germany's trade interests.

Reports and surveys in Europe have shown that immigration has built nations. The politicians and the EU should find a unified immigration policy to meet Europe's needs. The people of Europe will have to recognize America as their competitor and take charge of their future by forcing their politicians and the EU to stand-up to protect their economic, trade and job interests.

The leaders of Europe should end austerity, bring mega investment plans, give productivity targets, banking reforms, abolish tax havens, introduce accountability and transparency. Jobs, education and development cannot be left to private businesses which are only there to make profit.

Europe should reduce military spending. Trump was right that NATO is obsolete. Jens Stoltenberg, the current NATO Secretary General, should be shown door for pushing militarized Europe, demanding increased defence spending amidst

poverty stricken Europe and rest of the poor world. The growing populism in Europe is direct result of austerity, unemployment and refugee crisis due to failed Western foreign policies, wars and gross human rights violations in the ME, Asia and Africa.

Instead of listening to Stoltenberg, Brussels should ask Trump to end drug export to Europe from Afghanistan to save their youth from drug addiction. The tax money should be used for ending drug trade and infrastructure development in line with China's Belt and Road Programs. Euro-Asia economic prosperity, not arms buildup can make the world a lot safer and better place and help overcome challenges.

—The writer is senior political analyst based in Islamabad.

Source: <https://pakobserver.net/challenges-euro-asia-and-america/>

Ending Pointless Afghan War | Editorial

Work-in-progress peace process enters crucial stage

Senior US envoy Alice Wells arrived in Pakistan on Monday for meetings with the civilian-military bigwigs after the initial stopover in Kabul for preliminary talks with Afghan leadership on accelerating peace talks with the Taliban, highlighting once again the inescapable fact that the road to Afghan peace passes through Islamabad. This visit has special significance as it comes in the aftermath of the celebrated and unprecedented Eidul Fitr ceasefire between Afghan government and the Taliban which Pakistan welcomed, three days of surprisingly familiar and easy interaction between civilians, military and militants, an eye-opening event that alarmed senior Taliban commanders, as it exposed war-weariness of Taliban rank and file after 17 years of waging war. The US considers that the jubilant ceasefire spectacles provide enough impetus to redouble efforts for a negotiated settlement.

Under the robust Afghanistan Pakistan Action Plan for Peace and Solidarity (APAPPS), a laudable progress is noticeable in counter-terror cooperation, strengthening mutual trust, remaining engaged, and developing a permanent framework and mechanism structure, including various Working Groups, which have recently led to a written agreement or roadmap (still kept under wraps) on key issues, as acknowledged by Afghan president Ashraf Ghani. The US finds the militants' refusal of peace talks 'unacceptable'. It is itself now willing to talk to the Taliban in tandem with Afghan government without preconditions, expecting the same of the militants. Pakistan is envisaged as putting in 'sustained and decisive' efforts to rope in the Taliban leadership. Both the US and Afghanistan recognise Pakistan's pivotal role in Afghan peace, and its leaders must seize this ideal opportunity to pacify the perpetually destabilised region, as there presently exists a genuine, indeed desperate, common desire among all three main protagonists for peace, and in this complex equation Pakistan is expected to do its bit, commonly termed 'do more', to coax the militants to the negotiating table, considering its supposed sway over some Taliban leaders, especially those allegedly based on its territory. Pakistan has enough dire problems on its plate demanding immediate attention, including the economy, and facilitating peace in

Afghanistan will free it to confront the larger, worrisome, ndomestic dilemmas and a much-needed rancour-free US relationship.

Source: <https://www.pakistantoday.com.pk/2018/07/03/ending-pointless-afghan-war/>

Iran — Saving The Nuclear Deal | Editorial

To little fanfare Iranian President Rouhani has visited Switzerland and Austria as he seeks to shore up the 2015 nuclear deal which is today endangered by the American pullout and the imminent imposition of sanctions on the Islamic republic that begin on 6th August. Much is in the balance. Iran has said that it will resume nuclear activities of a civilian nature and leave the accord unless it gets guarantees from France, Germany and the UK that will ensure the flow of inward investment and trade. Friday is going to be crunch-day when all parties to the agreement, excluding the Americans, are going to meet in Vienna to debate an economic package crafted by the Europeans in order to counter the effects of the US withdrawal.

Whatever comes out of the moot needs to go beyond tepid platitudes. European companies are already wary of running afoul of US sanctions and the potential is there for things to get very messy indeed as President Trump appears bent on having a trade war somewhere in the world. The Swiss represent American interests in Iran in the absence of formal diplomatic ties, and the Austrians hold the rotating European Presidency — in the light of which the Rouhani visit attracts considerable gravitas.

Iran is in the sights of countries other than the US, with Saudi Arabia and Iran both engaged in a proxy war in Yemen that is fomenting the world's largest humanitarian crisis, and Iran stirs assorted pots in Syria as well. There is trouble on the domestic front for Rouhani and street protests, rare events in a tightly-controlled country, have been widespread as the Iranian economy stumbles along. Iran shares a border with Pakistan that abuts Balochistan, and the insurgency there spills over both sides of the border. It is also an important trading partner and a future source of energy, and Pakistan has to perform a delicate balancing act ensuring that it holds the Saudis at a discreet arm's length while cultivating Iran. Any destabilisation of Iran or even the collapse of the regime will go badly for Pakistan. Pandora's Box rarely looked more menacing.

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Source: <https://tribune.com.pk/story/1749772/6-iran-saving-nuclear-deal/>

NPT at 50: Powerless to Denuclearise By Dr Zafar Nawaz Jaspal

THE landmark Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) celebrated its fiftieth anniversary on July 1, 2018. Theoretically, it remains committed to riding the world of the nuclear weapons. Is a world free of nuclear weapons really doable? Trends reveal of course not. The prospects for progress on article VI of the Treaty are currently “bleak”. In reality, all the nine nuclear-armed states are engaged in modernizing their arsenals and making nuclear weapons a more central part of their defence strategies.

The NPT was introduced at the height of the Cold War, a half-century ago, and signed on July 1, 1968. It entered into force in March 1970. It went into effect with almost 100 states as original signatories and, today, it counts 191 state parties. Its scope included disarmament, arms control and proliferation of nuclear technology for the civilian application or “peaceful” use of the atom for nuclear power generation, medical treatment and improving the agriculture yield.

The Treaty was a grand bargain between the nuclear weapon states and non-nuclear weapon states aspiring for civilian use of nuclear technology. This bargain has permanently divided the world into nuclear haves and haves-not. Article IX, clause 3, states: For the purposes of this Treaty, a nuclear-weapon State is one which has manufactured and exploded a nuclear weapon or other nuclear explosive device prior to 1 January 1967.” Though overwhelming majority has endorsed this discriminatory clause of the NPT, yet a few have refused to accept the inequitable characteristic of the Treaty.

Indeed, the NPT impeded the horizontal proliferation without checking the vertical proliferation of nuclear weapons. The nuclear weapon states—Britain, China, France, Russia, and the United States — are parties to the NPT and they always reiterate their pledge to execute article-VI that demands: “Each of the Parties to the Treaty undertakes to pursue negotiations in good faith on effective measures relating to cessation of the nuclear arms race at an early date and to nuclear disarmament, and on a treaty on general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international control.” Realistically, despite their commitment, the elimination of nuclear weapons remains a vision, not immediately attainable and

perhaps not achievable in the anarchical international society. Consequently, approximately 14,455 warheads continue to exist.

From the beginning, Pakistan, India and Israel refrained from joining the NPT for different reasons. India and Pakistan participated in the negotiations of NPT draft discussion but did not join it. They tested their nuclear weapons in May 1998 and today advances their nuclear-triad. South Sudan, founded in 2011, has not joined the NPT and North Korea pulled out of it in 2003. The withdrawal of Pyongyang from the Treaty has increased the chances of nuclear risks in the Korean Peninsula. However, President Donald Trump and Chairman Kim summit on June 12, 2018, in Singapore has lessened tension in the region without a clear signal of the latter to denuclearise North Korea and rejoin the NPT as a non-nuclear weapon state.

Similarly, Israel is unwilling to accept constraints on its unacknowledged nuclear weapon programme. Tel Aviv cannot be convinced or coerced into giving up its nuclear arsenal and for joining the NPT. Joe Cirincione, President of Ploughshares Fund rightly concluded, “With President Donald Trump’s abandonment of the JCPOA accord blocking Iran’s paths to a bomb, a new wave of proliferation could threaten the Middle East.”

The alarming fact is that the risk of nuclear weapons being used is on the rise. On April 18, 2018, the United Nations’ representative for disarmament affairs, Izumi Nakamitsu, told a preliminary review meeting of the NPT that: “The threat of the use, intentional or otherwise, of nuclear weapons is growing.” She pointed out: “Rhetoric about the necessity and utility of nuclear weapons is on the rise” and “modernization programs by nuclear-weapons states are leading to what many see as a new, qualitative arms race.” The United States Nuclear Posture Review released on February 2, 2018, manifests that the Americans upgrade their nuclear weapons arsenal to complement massive “strategic” bombs with smaller “tactical” weapons.

To conclude, the steady advances of nuclear weapon states arsenals and the vitality of nuclear deterrence capability in the making of defence strategy of the Great Powers not only obstruct the implementation of Article-VI of the NPT but also encourage the security conscious states either to develop their indigenous

nuclear weapons or secure the positive security guarantees from the nuclear weapon states.

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Source: <https://pakobserver.net/npt-at-50-powerless-to-denuclearise/>

Climate Change And Urbanization: Challenges To Global Security And Stability

– Analysis By Ronak B. Patel and David P. Polatty IV

Two global trends that present monumental new challenges for civil-military coordination in humanitarian crises are urbanization—the growth of cities across the world—and climate change. The following article explains how these two trends and their interactive effects will increasingly complicate and test civil-military coordination in humanitarian crises. Each trend individually intensifies the risk for crises and makes responses remarkably more complicated. The manner in which these two trends interact to drive and escalate further crises is also becoming clearer. The humanitarian community has begun to address these challenges in its operations by debating their impact on coordination and thinking through potential actions that can facilitate more resilient approaches to crisis preparedness. Militaries, increasingly engaged in supporting humanitarian missions in both natural disaster and conflict settings, face a rapidly changing environment. Civil-military coordination in these crises must be re-examined, and militaries must adapt to this shifting landscape in order to operate effectively with humanitarian actors.

Climate Change and Cities

Climate change greatly exacerbates and complicates known threats affecting urban areas. The role that climate change plays in driving and compounding natural disasters, displacement, pandemics, and even conflict in cities forces militaries to rethink how they conduct humanitarian assistance and disaster response operations. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) predicts an average sea level rise of 0.4 meters by 2100 in the best and least-likely scenario, but projections with unchecked emissions predict a rise of up to two meters.¹ Global temperature is forecast to increase by 2 to 3 degrees Celsius by the end of the century keeping current emissions commitments.² This rise in temperature alters precipitation and ocean atmospheric patterns, increasing the severity and frequency of storms.³ By 2030, two-thirds of the global population is expected to live within 100 miles of a coastline, with over 1

billion people expected to live in low-lying coastal zones, those within 10 meters of sea level.⁴ A majority of megacities, those with populations above 10 million, contain this vulnerable geographic zone and climate change places these urban centers at risk.⁵

Additionally, sea level rise and warming have multiple destructive consequences as they contribute to food insecurity, drive population displacement, and in some cases, conflict. Many experts predict that hundreds of millions of people will migrate in the next few decades due to environmental change that will cause drought and increase the salinity of freshwater sources, leading to food shortages and loss of agricultural livelihoods.⁶ For many, this will be unpredictable, sudden, and maladaptive displacement within and across borders. This displacement will be increasingly into urban areas where the majority of refugees now live.⁷

Both urbanization and climate change also collude to increase the global risk of pandemics. The 2014 Ebola outbreak in West Africa and the recent Zika virus epidemic demonstrate how infectious pathogens can have devastating consequences in a globalized and urban world, with increasing density and inadequate public health and healthcare systems. Previously self-limiting outbreaks can now enter the cauldron of urban slums that receive both migrants and displaced populations within a dense urban landscape, aggressively facilitating the spread of disease. Without the capacity to detect, respond, and quarantine effectively and safely, growing cities fueled the Ebola epidemic in West Africa, threatening a pandemic. Climate change contributes as well by dramatically altering environments. Greater humidity enhances the range and altitude of mosquitos, while warming waters allow conditions for cholera to spread beyond its typical locales, respectively.⁸

Climate Change and Conflict

Climate refugees are, in and of themselves, imperatives for humanitarian action, but they can also demographically and economically stress local host populations and lead to conflict. While no causal link has been proved, the pathway is becoming more evident.⁹ Former Secretary-General of the United Nations (UN) Ban Ki-moon cited the Darfur conflict as a potential example of climate change-induced conflict, as drought drove displacement and ultimately led to conflict.¹⁰

While climate change has historically been a polarizing topic in U.S. politics, the Intelligence Community, in 2008, prepared the National Intelligence Assessment on the National Security Implications of Global Climate Change to 2030. This assessment notes that we judge global climate change will have wide-ranging implications for U.S. national security interests over the next 20 years. . . . The United States depends on a smooth-functioning international system ensuring the flow of trade and market access to critical raw materials such as oil and gas, and security for its allies and partners. Climate change and climate change policies could affect all of these—domestic stability in a number of key states, the opening of new sea lanes and access to raw materials, and the global economy more broadly—with significant geopolitical consequences.¹¹

There have been numerous updates since this initial assessment, culminating in the September 2016 release by the U.S. Intelligence Community and National Intelligence Council of a memorandum, Implications for U.S. National Security of Anticipated Climate Change.

This memorandum highlighted that climate change “will almost certainly have significant effects, both direct and indirect, across social, economic, political, and security realms during the next 20 years. These effects will be all the more pronounced as people continue to concentrate in climate-vulnerable locations, such as coastal areas, water-stressed regions, and ever-growing cities.”¹² The nexus of climate change and urbanization present wide-ranging threats to not only U.S. national security, but also global security and stability and the health and welfare of potentially billions of vulnerable people.

Cities and Conflict

Humanitarian response in cities is incredibly challenging, particularly in those afflicted by conflict. As power is typically defined by territorial control, cities represent the most valuable domain in conflict and serve as one of the principal metrics by which to measure control. Cities serve as the seats of power and the battlefields of modern conflict.¹³ Coordinating with a humanitarian response in conflict will entail actively engaging these new urban landscapes. The layout and density of these rapidly growing urban spaces present concrete operational challenges. Large swaths of informal settlements, or slums, which represent over 50 percent of many urban environments, are a hallmark of growing cities.¹⁴ These are often unmapped areas, marked by narrow ingress and egress routes

and little to no lighting. Most have proved difficult or nearly impossible to police and many have been ceded in all intents and purposes to criminal elements.¹⁵ In fact, in many of these cities, state authorities do not have a monopoly on power or violence, with multiple actors who are not bound by international humanitarian law effectively in control of many parts of the city. Displayed most prominently in Latin American cities, criminal violence has led to homicide rates that exceed violent death rates in some declared wars.¹⁶

Militaries that engage in humanitarian operations, either to support logistics or provide security, face a multitude of challenges that they may not have dealt with in the past and, therefore, have not been trained to effectively respond to.

The Complexity of Urban Response

Due to rapid urbanization, over 50 percent of the global population now lives in urban areas. This is accelerating at a pace that will see the urban population grow to 66 percent of the global total by 2050, while the rural population declines.¹⁷ Humanitarian response will increasingly take place in these rapidly growing cities as they concentrate the risks and hazards to natural and man-made disasters. Unregulated growth, deficiencies in basic services, inadequate disaster preparedness, and poor mitigation efforts place populations at greater risk for crises that will necessitate an international humanitarian response.¹⁸

The very nature of humanitarian response is being rethought because of urbanization's increasing complexity.¹⁹ Urban crises now entail a much broader variety of actors aside from international aid agencies, state authorities, and national militaries. There is a larger role being played by municipal authorities that increasingly lead and coordinate aid responses. Local community-based organizations and nongovernmental organizations provide goods and services before, during, and after a crisis, and may be a major source of on-the-ground efforts during an urban response. Similarly, the private sector provides the majority of goods and services in urban areas, and they are an important part of the initial response and recovery.²⁰

This is increasingly recognized by humanitarian organizations that now engage in market analyses and cash transfers, as well as support markets, rather than simply delivering hard goods. There are also myriad stakeholders that must be taken into account, especially local communities affected by the crisis, among

other informal and formal powerbrokers. As described above, various powerbrokers may control territory and even provide what traditionally have been public services, such as a mafia organization providing electricity. Humanitarian engagement in these environments requires a deep contextual understanding of local communities. Militaries coordinating with civilian actors will face similar complexities, even when they refrain from the “retail” or service delivery side of the response. The very need to coordinate with numerous actors and authorities will necessitate a re-examination and modification, at the least, of standard operating procedures and traditional frameworks for engagement.

The humanitarian community itself is reassessing its approach to coordination in urban crises, with much of the above informing the new Urban Crises Charter released by the Global Alliance for Urban Crises at the May 2016 World Humanitarian Summit.²¹ This charter emphasizes the need to promote a localized and holistic approach to humanitarian response, with a detailed contextual analysis and local participation and ownership of the process. These ideas have permeated various emerging methods such as area-based programming as well as a settlement approach to urban response. While the humanitarian architecture continues to evolve to better deal with urban challenges, militaries coordinating in these crises must similarly adapt, whether coordinating to support logistics, conducting engineering and infrastructure support, or providing protection for a humanitarian mandate.

Military Operations

Urbanization poses massive security, logistics, health, and healthcare challenges to any current or future humanitarian response that will take place in or around a megacity. Most international militaries do not specialize or routinely train for urban operations. Even the U.S. Army, arguably the world’s most capable modern ground force, is not designed to operate in complex urban settings. U.S. Army Chief of Staff, General Mark A. Milley, has publicly stated that the Service “has been designed, manned, trained and equipped for the last 241 years to operate primarily in rural areas.” He further elaborated that the Army needs to prepare “for operations in urban areas, highly dense urban areas, and that’s a different construct. We’re not organized like that right now.”²² Tragic recent and ongoing humanitarian crises in relatively small cities, including Aleppo, Syria (~2.5 million people in 2012), and Mosul, Iraq (~664,000 people in 2015), have highlighted the unique dangers that exist to vulnerable people, medical

responders, and humanitarian organizations in urban environments. Not only have these groups found themselves under nearly constant attack by militaries and nonstate actors, but they also cannot easily gain access to food, water, medicine, and other basic lifesaving needs.

Observing the death toll of hundreds of thousands of innocent civilians in Aleppo, Syria, from 2001 to 2016—and then considering the fact that Aleppo is not even in the top 150 cities in the world by population—should serve as a warning beacon for humanity to more effectively think through future conflicts and humanitarian emergencies in large cities.²³ In these urban environments, comprehensive civil-military coordination becomes an even greater imperative to ensure that access to vulnerable people is gained and maintained until the conflict is resolved or an enduring ceasefire is implemented.

Opportunities

Given the challenges for military engagement regarding the acute phase of an urban humanitarian response listed above, there may be an increasing role and opportunity to improve civil-military coordination in the pre-disaster phase. Performing these activities in predictably high-risk cities, where politically feasible and in line with national interests, opens an area of military engagement in humanitarian efforts as part of a potentially larger grand strategy. Cities that have existing military bases and ongoing activity present a logical starting point with clear direct benefits for those military installations, the communities they are collocated with, and overall efforts by all actors in the humanitarian ecosystem to improve responses.

More frequent, realistic, and robust simulations and exercises with specific involvement of municipal authorities, local nongovernmental organizations, and stakeholders from selected cities, along with the UN and major humanitarian agencies, may help improve humanitarian response and coordination in future crises. When appropriate, including international militaries in these simulations and exercises may allow key relationships to form prior to disasters and provide all actors with a deeper understanding of challenges and opportunities for improving coordination. Also, frameworks and processes for coordination can be explored and tested in the non-acute disaster phase.

Various militaries are engaged in efforts to improve coordination (for example, U.S. Pacific Command's Rim of the Pacific [RIMPAC] exercise), and sometimes the efforts include key civilian actors from the humanitarian response community. From RIMPAC and other similar exercises and simulations, there is an excellent opportunity to take best practices from civilian-civilian and military-military coordination tools and methods and learn from them to improve civil-military coordination.

Taking global scenarios and long-term predictions of climate change down to likely scenarios, over shorter time frames and for specific regions and cities, may help identify hotspots—indicators for early warning—and develop tools that decisionmakers can use in urban planning, forward deployment of resources, disaster preparedness, and humanitarian response planning. These are shared interests among civilian and military actors and may very well serve as a rallying point due to the perceived neutrality of diverse actors coming together in a “safe” academic setting.

Similarly, shared tools and efforts to understand and map the key actors and factors that influence and dictate the security environment, particularly for vulnerable populations, present a common area for work. This may also encourage a wider discussion on how militaries may better comply with international humanitarian law or provide protection and access within humanitarian corridors in conflict environments.

U.S. Servicemembers assigned to Combined Joint Task Force–Horn of Africa periodically visit children in Caritas Djibouti mission in downtown Djibouti to donate food items, toys, clothing and supplies, April 26, 2017 (U.S. Air Force/Eboni Prince)

U.S. Servicemembers assigned to Combined Joint Task Force–Horn of Africa periodically visit children in Caritas Djibouti mission in downtown Djibouti to donate food items, toys, clothing and supplies, April 26, 2017 (U.S. Air Force/Eboni Prince)

Finally, increased interaction between academics from civilian and military universities—specifically those engaged in humanitarian research and education fields—allows a unique opportunity to conduct research and writing that tackles some of the most pressing issues facing vulnerable people and communities both in urban environments and due to climate change. Academics from military

universities often have tremendous influence on the development and evolution of military doctrine within their nation's military. The same can be said for academics from civilian universities who frequently work closely with, and often deploy in support of, humanitarian organizations, and therefore can help drive process and framework improvements for humanitarian responses. Expanding opportunities for civil-military academics to exchange ideas in symposia, classrooms, and simulations may only further accelerate improvements to civil-military coordination efforts.

Conclusions

The profound challenges that urbanization and climate change present for humanitarian response and thus civil-military coordination in disasters and conflict settings require focused discussion and reevaluation. A new model or architecture for civil-military coordination may be required as global challenges become increasingly complex. Better communication remains a priority and becomes imperative in the face of these new complex challenges. Humanitarians tend to use open communication platforms and new technologies such as Web-based assessment tools, crowd-sourcing, and open street mapping; these innovative approaches are pushing the envelope further. Military communication systems, by design, are closed, often classified in nature, and value information control. A new communications platform for shared resources may better enable aid agencies and militaries to coordinate with each other, let alone with local actors that are increasingly taking a more prominent role in humanitarian response.

Humanitarian actors may also have to align closer to certain international military efforts, in some cases of conflict, to ensure access to populations in need. At the very least, humanitarian and military communities will benefit from exploring new models of coordination together. Options to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of civil-military engagement include joint training, workshops, simulations, and research collaborations where we can explore broad approaches to better innovate together. While certain goals to improve civil-military coordination can be described conceptually, designing a new operational framework is far off until humanitarian actors and militaries commit the time and resources to working together in safe spaces such as conferences and classrooms. The next decade will force all actors to collectively pursue inventive solutions to coordination challenges in these complex crises, and new modes of

operation and patterns of engagement may develop on the ground before any pre-defined protocols are formalized. Honest and collaborative discussions and explorations of new civil-military coordination frameworks and processes are urgently needed to keep pace with a rapidly changing and increasingly dangerous world.

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Trump-Putin Summit – Episode Without Agenda? By Dr. Imran Khalid

With the sounds of victory trumpets still hanging in the air over the thrilling summit in Singapore with Kim Jong-un, President Donald Trump is preparing for yet another extra-sensational melodrama in the coming days – his pre-election wish to have a one-on-one big meeting with Vladimir Putin. Both the White House and Kremlin have simultaneously announced on the same day about the summit between Donald Trump and Vladimir Putin in Helsinki on July 16. This will be the first official summit between the two mavericks who have always openly expressed their mutual fondness for each other.

The last two weeks saw a lot of rumours emanating from both the capitals about the possible summit between the two big men in mid-July and speculations were high that both will be meeting in Vienna. In fact, there are also reports that during his visit to Austria earlier this month Putin allegedly discussed with Austria's Chancellor Sebastian Kurtz about the possibility of hosting a Trump-Putin summit in Vienna this summer. The initial discussion about this proposed summit took place in Trump's March 20 phone call to Vladimir Putin. On June 10, Putin further confirmed his readiness to meet Trump in person – not at the White House as proposed by Trump in his phone call, but at a third party location. Nonetheless, they have finally selected Helsinki to be the meeting point. It seems that the successful Singapore episode has further emboldened Trump to take additional risk of meeting with Putin at a time when controversy over Russia's election meddling is still very much alive and whirling in the corridors of the White House. Yes, his summit with Kim Jong-un was anathema of traditional American foreign policy and it generated a lot of hot air and disparagement, but his meeting with Putin will be potentially more explosive and cataclysmic for him politically. Even his –now tamed- detractors – and supporters among the Republicans will not be able to remain silent.

Interestingly, unlike his meeting with Kim Jong-un which had a clear cut pre-defined agenda, President Trump has apparently no agenda at all for his meeting with Putin. Will Putin offer to roll back the Russian interventions in Crimea or Syria? Will Putin offer to abstain from playing with oil prices through his OPEC clout? Will Putin offer to reduce the Russian nukes and intercontinental ballistic

missile system at a reasonable and acceptable level? None of this is likely to be the part of agenda at the Trump-Putin summit. Now the pricking question is what is going to be the Trump theme for this get-together? Perhaps this is what the Trump aides should be working to carve out. Without any tangible positives for the United States, this meeting will in fact eclipse his recent diplomatic triumph at the Singapore summit and it will also make Putin hero, who has nothing to lose in this episode.

Looking at his track record of erratic and nerve-shattering moves in the arena of global politics, President Trump is again expected to trust his impulsive and gut-driven methodology. His affinity for Putin is an established fact and he does not leave a single chance to express his fondness for Putin – still a mystery, why. This month's G7 summit in Quebec was a lucid example of his eagerness to do "something" for Putin. Among other contentious issues, one key point where Donald Trump locked his horns with long-time allies was his one-man campaigning for the re-admission of Russia into the club. Even Trump's inner team was totally unaware of his sudden lobbying for the re-inclusion of Moscow into the folds of the G7. There are validated reports that in the pre-Summit preparatory meetings, Russia was never the point of serious discussion between Trump and his foreign policy team. It was as surprising for his own team in Quebec as for his counterparts when he started campaigning for Russia, totally forgetting the fact that the move for Russia's expulsion from the group was spearheaded by Washington in reaction to Russia's annexation of Crimea in 2014. Trump totally misread the mood of his counterparts and unnecessarily pushed for a puerile point that eventually created more acrimony at the gathering. He was wrongly expecting that his pro-Russia campaign would muster enough support at the G7 summit. His impetuous and ill-planned drive for a reconstituted G8 backfired badly and he ended up pushing Washington towards more isolation in the global power structure. By advocating for Russia at the G7 summit, he has definitely won the sympathies of Putin but he has bought more isolation, which does not augur well for the United States to uphold its leadership and sway over the global politics.

Right now, after his triumphant return from Singapore, Trump is very much over-confident about his signature personalized diplomacy; he thinks that he will again score some thrilling points in his encounter with Putin, and he will be able to further taunt his predecessors for their religious adhesion to the traditional norms

and discipline of American diplomacy. But he is on the wrong track this time, it seems. Without any concrete agenda, he will not be able to fetch a success story to sell at home this time. On the contrary, Putin has nothing to lose in such a meeting where he has to do nothing more than just sharing a lunch table with Trump and a joint photo shoot while shaking hands. But the question is what should be the agenda that will give the opportunity to Trump to beat the drums of victory.

n The writer is a freelance columnist.

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Afghan Peace: Another Jumpstart Effort By

Iqbal Khan

AMBASSADOR Alice G Wells, US Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary, is visiting Islamabad [and Kabul] so frequently that Pakistan's Foreign Office might be thinking of offering her complimentary accommodation for setting up Islamabad camp office! Beyond routines Wells has a special assignment: to hold Taliban by their throat and present them to President Ashraf Ghani, as soon as possible. Ghani already has an America dictated power sharing draft agreement in his pocket. And American support for granting him blanket clearance for rigging his second-term election is contingent upon making reasonable performance on this track. Both Afghanistan and the US want to reach some kind of deal with the Taliban before the parliamentary election due later this year. Hence Wells' urgency!

However, Taliban have rejected the latest peace talks offer. Taliban spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid said Taliban "are not interested in talks while foreign troops are still on Afghan soil." Mujahid also repeated long-standing Taliban claims that Afghan government officials are "puppets. Arduous challenge for Alice is that Taliban insist on talking directly to the US, as they think that present status of Afghanistan is of a country under American occupation. So they want to engage with the power that be—ostensibly, logical thinking. With focus on Taliban, Wells is putting in strenuous effort to steer the Pak-US relationship clear of mines laid by President Donal Trump. During her latest visit, she reiterated that Pak-US relationship is important and the US would like to carry it forward. Despite Trump sown hiccups, these bilateral relations are still presenting a functional façade. Pakistan is confident that Taliban could be brought to the negotiating table after the success of recent short ceasefire on Eid. However, it feels that bringing Taliban to negotiating point is not the sole responsibility of Pakistan, but is a shared errand.

In a parallel development, during several rounds of discussion between Pakistani and Afghan officials, both sides have worked out a roadmap on how to invite Taliban to join the political process. Afghan President has confirmed that Pakistan and Afghanistan have made considerable progress on how to achieve peace in Afghanistan. This however does not match ground realities. Recent

BBC study reveals that Taliban are openly active in 70 per cent of Afghanistan; Afghan government controls 122 districts, or about 30 per cent of the country. Yet, it does not mean that government controlled territories are free from Taliban attacks. “Kabul and other major cities, for example, suffered major attacks – launched from adjacent areas, or by sleeper cells,” the report said. When asked about the BBC’s study, the Pentagon did not comment directly, but pointed to the latest figures by the NATO-led coalition, asserting that about 56 per cent of Afghanistan’s territory was under Afghan government control or influence. The study quoted a spokesperson for Afghan President Ashraf Ghani playing down the findings. The BBC study also said Islamic State had a presence in 30 districts, but noted it did not fully control any of them.

Against this backdrop, Wells’ recent visit to Kabul and Islamabad was significant. While in Kabul, she stated that American leadership desires decisive moves in the peace talks. Wells said there was widespread support for peace, underlined by scenes of unarmed fighters mingling with government troops and civilians on the streets of Afghan cities during Eid festival. Wells said that Taliban’s failure to engage in talks to end Afghanistan’s nearly 17-year old conflict was ‘unacceptable’: “I think it creates this impulse for everyone to renew their efforts to find a negotiated political solution. “Increasingly I think it’s becoming simply unacceptable for the Taliban not to negotiate”— a wishful assumption. Taliban soon responded by multiple attacks killing scores of people in Jalalabad and elsewhere. Wells also called on Army chief General Qamar Javed Bajwa. Views were exchanged on issues of mutual interest, regional security and cooperation between both the countries, the Inter-Services Public Relations said in a statement. She “commended the sacrifices and resilience of the people and armed forces of Pakistan and appreciated the role Pakistan Army has played in battling the scourge of terrorism”. Both agreed on continued engagement at multiple levels. Trump has suspended military and civil sector aid to Pakistan since the beginning of this year alongside holding back the already paid for military hardware. America is also defaulting on arrears of Coalition Support Fund, amount that America owes to Pakistan that latter has already spent on account of logistical services provided to the US.

Finance Minister, Dr Shamshad Akhtar also held a meeting with Wells. They discussed the current state of Pak-US relations with particular focus on economic cooperation. Finance Minister said that such bilateral visits enhance

understanding of each other's point of view on important issues. The Minister also briefed Alice Wells about Pakistan's participation in the recently concluded FATF meeting. America had gone out of the way to have Pakistan placed on FATF grey list to the extent of circumventing the FATF operating procedures. Wells said that since the Afghan government and United States were willing to start talking without preconditions, the onus was now on the Taliban to respond—once again logic stands on its head. "Right now it's the Taliban leaders... who aren't residing in Afghanistan, who are the obstacle to a negotiated political settlement," Wells said. She forgot to account for those Taliban controlling over 70 per cent of Afghan territories. Previous meaningful peace initiatives were deliberately scuttled by the US, one has to see how the current one proceeds! Only the forward movement of peace process will reflect on America's sincerity of purpose, which is hard to discern — at least for now.

—The writer is a freelance columnist based in Islamabad.

Source: <https://pakobserver.net/afghan-peace-another-jumpstart-effort/>

What's Next For NATO? By Harlan Ullman

This is a potentially tectonic week for NATO, US relations with Russia and America's future global leadership role. It began where last week left off. A trade war with China was underway. After sending strongly worded letters to several NATO members for insufficient defence spending, on a campaign swing in the Mid-West, President Donald Trump continued personalizing these attacks by accusing Germany's Chancellor Angela Merkel of not bearing a fair share of these costs.

Regardless of what happens at the NATO summit on July 11 and 12, followed by President Trump's brief swing through Britain — including golf in Scotland — and then his first formal meeting with Russian President Vladimir Putin, the future of the Atlantic alliance is at stake even if the Brussels' meeting is civil and without major incident. The reason for this is because NATO was conceived as a military alliance against a military threat. Therefore it still views the world through a predominately military lens.

As relations with Russia deteriorated, Moscow's seizure of Crimea finally provoked an alliance response. Many believed the military threat had returned. Yet the danger from Russia is far less military than it is political. The dilemma is that NATO lacks the political tools to deal with this form of political intimidation.

However, instead of a fundamental re-examination of NATO's strategy in these circumstances, the alliance reflexively chose to follow a Cold War game plan and a military response. Enhance deterrence and military power by increasing spending, exercises and troop numbers in Eastern Europe to check Russian expansion into NATO member states as occurred in Georgia in 2008 and Ukraine six years later with "little green men."

President Putin has absolutely no intention of invading NATO and invoking Article 5 that declares an attack against one is an attack against all. Instead, Mr Putin realizes that his most effective strategy is to disrupt alliance cohesion and solidarity with a combination of intimidation, propaganda, disinformation, misinformation, economic pressure and a not so subtle threat of military strength. The smarter action by NATO would have been to mount political as well as

military responses. But to accomplish that, NATO had to become more than a military alliance.

While NATO has gone through major strategic reviews, the most significant was in 1967 and the Harmel report named for its chairman, Belgian Foreign Minister Pierre Harmel. NATO moved from a strategy of massive nuclear retaliation set in place under the Eisenhower Administration to “flexible response.” Given the Soviet Union’s increases in both conventional and nuclear capability, “flexible response” meant to deter all possible types of war. Now, a new version of the Harmel Report is desperately needed to take on the new political challenges.

NATO was conceived as a military alliance against a military threat. Therefore it still views the world through a predominately military lens

With the likely ascension of Macedonia, NATO will have thirty members. In an alliance in which “consensus” — or in plain English — unanimity is required for all decisions, most will not be made quickly, if at all. Consensus will not be abrogated. However, other options such as allowing “coalitions” of partners to undertake missions should be broadened, particularly to counter Russian active measures including cyber.

NATO members rightly regard Article 5 as the alliance’s foundation. However, none are prepared to cede critical domestic prerogatives and authorities to Brussels. The consequence is that greater reliance on political actions has not occurred.

Similarly, the goal of committing 2 percent of GDP for defence spending set at the Wales Summit in 2014 is an artificial number that does nothing to increase capabilities against “active measures” and Russian gambits such as interference in elections. Given Trump’s insistence that two percent is the metric by which to measure NATO loyalty and utility, this will not be easy to change.

Unless the summit is a disaster, no one will wish to make major strategic changes. Relief will be the unspoken takeaway. If Mr. Trump decides to declare four days later that Russia, like North Korea, is no longer a nuclear threat, or even a threat at all. NATO’s future cannot be assured in its current form. This is

very much in line with the America First ideology and the original Trumpian view that NATO was obsolete, since rescinded.

NATO is at another cross-roads. That cross-roads could be leading to a sharp precipice. Any bets as to how this turns out? We should know next week.

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US-India Nexus Threat To Peace By Malik Muhammad Ashraf

Importing instability in the region

Modi-led Indian government is essentially anti-Muslim and anti-Pakistan as is evident from the persecution of the Indian Muslims, reign of terror let loose by the Indian security forces against the people of Kashmir, persistent cross-border firing along the LOC, bellicose blustering by the Indian ministers and generals and the avowed agenda of the Indian government to isolate Pakistan.

Modi is a staunch follower of the Indian leaders who opposed tooth and nail the partition of India and the creation of a separate homeland for the Muslims of the sub-continent and even today have not reconciled to this reality. Reportedly addressing budget session in the Parliament in February 2018 subjected Congress to scathing criticism for having accepted the partition of India in 1947 and also reiterated that India could have taken Kashmir if instead of Jawahar Lal Nehru, Sardar Vallabhai Patel was the prime minister at the time of partition. The adequately reflects the mindset and the deep down anti-Pakistan feelings that Modi harbours as well as provides an insight into the rationale for the policies that his government is pursuing.

India is taking advantage of the strained relations between US and Pakistan over the war on terror particularly the arm-twisting tactics employed by the Trump administration to put pressure on Pakistan and the dynamics of the new global politics. The US and its western allies are hell bent to prevent China from becoming number one economic and military power simultaneously trying to ensure that Russia does not re-emerge as a potential challenger to US status as the only super power of the world. They are trying to prop up India as a counter-balance to the burgeoning Chinese influence in the region and beyond. India logically becomes strategic partner of US and the west in view of their strategic interests in South Asia and South East Asia. In lieu of India doing their bidding in this scheme of things they are prepared to turn their backs on what was happening in Kashmir and what policies India pursued viz-a-viz Pakistan.

Peace in Afghanistan means peace in Pakistan and Pakistan would be the last country to undermine its own strategic and economic interest

The US-India nexus is a potential threat to the peace and security in this region and it would not be an exaggeration to say that India was trying to import instability in the region which ultimately would also harm her own interests, though the Indian leaders blinded by their desire to establish their hegemony in the region do not realise it at the moment. In the permeating scenario, the possibility of any amity between India and Pakistan seems almost non-existent, particularly till the time Modi government is in saddle in India.

The new strategy unfurled by President Trump to deal with the situation in Afghanistan is also a perfect recipe to aggravate instability in the region. My considered view is that US was not going to get out of Afghanistan in the foreseeable future and her strategy seems to keep the situation in a fluid state as instability in the region could help it to undermine CPEC, the biggest ever economic initiative ever unleashed at the global level. The US and India fear that the successful implementation of the OBOR and CPEC which is the pivot of the entire scheme would surely make China number one economic power in the world besides changing the economic profile of the participating countries especially Pakistan. Viewed from that perspective, the only way that reality can be stopped from unfolding is to foment instability in the region.

The emergence of IS in Afghanistan as ascribed to US patronage by none other than the former Afghan President Hamid Karzai cannot be dismissed lightly. US support for the Islamic State is also corroborated by independent global sources.

Reportedly the US is mulling options to put further pressure on Pakistan which might entail cutting off military assistance to Pakistan permanently. The US notwithstanding the fact that Pakistan has rendered unprecedented sacrifices in the war against terror and dismantled the entire infrastructure of the terrorist outfits and was working with unswerving commitment to weed out the remaining terrorists who are on the run or might have mingled with the Afghan refugees, is not prepared to acknowledge the effort and continues to insist that Pakistan had not done enough and terrorists based in Pakistan were still using its soil to launch attacks within Afghanistan. The argument preferred is that Pakistan was not restricting the flow of fighters and weapons across its border with

Afghanistan. That surely is a very absurd suggestion. Granted that Pakistan was not doing enough or able to stem cross-border movement of the terrorists the question arises what were the US and Afghan forces doing on their side of the border to prevent it?

It is pertinent to point out that when operation Zarb-e-Azb was launched in North Waziristan, Pakistan army leadership and Pakistan government did take the US military commander and Afghan government into confidence and asked them to make sure that the terrorists running from North Waziristan did not escape to Afghanistan. But unfortunately that cooperation never materialised with the result that the Haqqanis and TTP leaders crossed over to Afghanistan. The TTP has been executing terrorist attacks within Pakistan using Afghan territory and in spite of repeated pointers and requests very little has been done to deal with the issue. The Haqqanis are Afghans and they have returned to Afghanistan after operation Zarb-e-Azb. Reportedly and also acknowledged by the US military commanders, 40pc Afghan territory is beyond the control and writ of the Afghan government and obviously the terrorists are using that area to launch terrorist attacks against their chosen targets.

Pakistan has unilaterally started fencing of the border between the two countries and a number of forts and watch-posts are also being established to monitor the cross-border movement. Pakistan shares a porous border of 2430km with Afghanistan and it is not physically possible to seal it completely. If at all that is what the US feels can prevent terrorism in Afghanistan then it becomes the combined responsibility of US and Pakistan to undertake the project. That is not being done.

The foregoing ground realities testify to the fact that the US administration was not sincere in resolving the Afghan conundrum and was instead interested more in precipitating the situation to the chagrin of the regional countries including Pakistan and of course China which probably has the biggest stake in peace and tranquility in the region to ensure realization of the OBOR vision.

Peace in Afghanistan means peace in Pakistan and Pakistan would be the last country to undermine its own strategic and economic interests by supporting the elements which were out to destabilise the situation in Afghanistan. The US

stance about Pakistan continuing to provide sanctuaries to the terrorists is logically wrong as well.

The recent efforts to re-foster bonhomie between Pakistan and Afghanistan and the killing of Mullah Fazlullah in a drone attack in Afghanistan though are positive developments but no concrete and credible headway can be made unless US trusts and supports Pakistan in its efforts to eliminate terrorism and promoting peace in Afghanistan.

Source: <https://www.pakistantoday.com.pk/2018/07/11/us-india-nexus-threat-to-peace/>

All Change in Turkey | Editorial

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan has been sworn in for another five-year term and in one of his first moves has appointed his son-in-law as the country's new finance minister. Cries of 'nepotism' quickly followed and the markets were agitated at the development, fearing that the democratic rule that has so characterised Turkey in recent decades is being swiftly eroded by an executive presidency. For his part, Erdogan has said that he is going to 'propel our country forward' and that Turkey was making a 'new start.'

Thus begins a truly new phase in the life of Turkey the country and its now deeply-polarised people. The parliamentary system has been in place since the foundation of the Turkish republic 95 years ago. In the eyes of Erdogan Turkey is leaving behind a system that has cost the country dearly in terms of political and economic chaos and a majority of his countrymen and women agree with him, but a very large minority do not and they remain a hub, indeed a bedrock, of disaffection and unhappiness that is going to endure long into the future.

Turkey is now a presidential republic, effectively controlled by a single man and now his extended family and trusted associates and friends. The academic fabric of the country has been decimated by the arrests and sackings following the failed coup. International trust has waned as nations especially in Europe — which Turkey now has no hope of joining via the EU — gather their wits and analyse what all this might mean for the security of their own borders as well as trading relations. Indeed, Erdogan has already distanced himself from the West, and few Western leaders attended his inauguration besides a sprinkling from Africa and the Middle East — hardly the warmest of welcomes.

There are now around 160,000 people in jail but with 53 per cent of the vote, an economy that is doing well and a support base that is satisfied with recent outcomes a new Turkey is finding its place. Loose cannon or stabiliser? Only time is going to tell.

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Source: <https://tribune.com.pk/story/1754561/6-all-change-in-turkey/>

What Could Happen Next with North Korea

By Victor Cha

It has been one month since President Donald Trump and North Korean leader Kim Jong-un met in Singapore and signed a brief four-paragraph document that raised expectations that North Korea might finally be ready to make a strategic decision to abandon its weapons programs and join the international community. Let us recap what has followed this historic meeting. Trump in a wide-ranging press conference directly after the meeting, said that the North Korean leader had agreed to give up his weapons, and that as evidence of his good intentions, the DPRK would repatriate the remains of POW/MIA soldiers from the Korean war and would decommission a missile engine testing facility. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo made his third trip to Pyongyang last week to iron out some of the details of the Singapore statement and described the meetings as “productive.” He promised that working-level meetings would follow on repatriation of remains and that talks would continue on decommissioning of the missile engine test site.

Diplomacy with a country like North Korea has never been easy in my experience. Like Pompeo, I had no knowledge of my itinerary before I landed in North Korea, no sense of where I would be staying, and little sense of who I would be meeting. That is part of the cost of doing business with North Korea. Most diplomatic conventions are thrown out of the window. However, even handicapping for this, the results since Singapore leave a lot to be desired. North Korea has not yet decommissioned the engine test site despite President Trump’s boasting that this has already been done. Moreover, rumors are that the site in question is for liquid-fuel engines when the North has moved on to more sophisticated solid-fuel engine technology (liquid-fuel engines have longer launch times and therefore make them more susceptible to pre-emptive strike). So, it’s not that great of a step forward in disarming the regime. Despite Pompeo’s claims that his meetings in Pyongyang last week were productive, the North Korean news agency quoted unnamed DPRK officials as saying the meetings were terrible and that United States demands for denuclearization were “robber-like” (the media has translated this as “gangster”). More working-level talks on denuclearization are to take place at an unspecified time, but this hardly instills confidence as their ineffectiveness was what prompted Pompeo’s third trip to Pyongyang last week, making this city the most frequented foreign destination for

the Secretary's young term in office. As for the scheduled working-level meetings on repatriation of remains on July 12—something which Trump maintains publicly has already happened—the North Korean side never showed up .

This is hardly an impressive record of follow-through since the Singapore summit. But it is not yet time to abandon diplomacy. For one, the fact that talks are taking place are vastly better than the situation one year ago , when the Trump administration was actively considered a military strike on the regime that would have escalated into a devastating war. In addition, Donald Trump inadvertently has created “audience costs” for the DPRK leader in the sense that this isolated young leader clearly enjoys the world stage and summits with his American, Chinese and South Korean counterparts. Rumors are that the DPRK leader may even attend the UN General Assembly in New York this fall, which would be hard to do unless Kim started to make good on some of the deliverables in the Singapore statement.

Going forward, Pompeo has no choice but to continue to negotiate. Despite the “Hail Mary” nature of the summit, denuclearization talks with North Korea made halting progress one yard at a time. As was the case ten years ago when I was involved in talks, the issue of “sequencing” will again take center stage. That is, the North scoffs at disarming without some serious concessions by the United States first including movement on lifting sanctions, normalization of relations, conclusion of a peace treaty, and energy/economic assistance, while we have said that denuclearization is the key that unlocks the door to all of these benefits.

It is possible that Donald Trump might again try to break this cycle by offering up some of these concessions in advance, in particular normalization of relations and a peace treaty ending the Korean war. These steps would indeed be historic and would fit his personal narrative of wanting to win the Nobel Prize for doing something that his predecessors could not accomplish. There is no promise that even these actions, however, would lead the North to abandon permanently its nuclear weapons and ballistic missiles. After all, the North's endgame is to achieve de facto acceptance by the United States as a nuclear-weapons state, and to conduct arms-control negotiations that reduce tensions on the peninsula (but not denuclearization).

But for Donald Trump, a partial denuclearization may be all that he needs to claim victory, particularly if he uses such an imperfect deal as a platform for then withdrawing U.S. troops from Korea. Trump has already unilaterally suspended U.S.-ROK military exercises because they are “provocative” (North Korea’s description adopted by Trump) and because they are “expensive” (Trump’s words adopted by Trump). He has also been very clear since the 1990s that he does not understand why the United States bears costs for stationing troops in Korea when the Koreans are a “rich country” that can defend themselves.

Should the president see U.S. troop drawdowns as the ultimate solution to extricate himself from this problem, he will not only have done permanent damage to our alliances in Asia, but he will have also emboldened North Korea and led it to believe that its decades-long strategy to use the nuclear threat to remove the United States from the peninsula has finally succeeded. Such an outcome would be warmly welcomed by China and Russia as further evidence of the diminution of the U.S. hegemonic position in Asia. In the end, this will make Americans less, not more, secure.

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Image: U.S. President Donald Trump and North Korea’s leader Kim Jong Un (L) arrive to sign a document to acknowledge the progress of the talks and pledge to keep momentum going, after their summit at the Capella Hotel on Sentosa island in Singapore, June 12, 2018. REUTERS/Jonathan Ernst/File Photo

Source: <http://nationalinterest.org/feature/victor-cha-what-could-happen-next-north-korea-25601>

Change in Global Opinion | Editorial

A HISTORIC report by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights on widespread human rights violations in India-held Kashmir has been rightly endorsed by the UN Secretary General António Guterres. The secretary general has also appeared to support UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein's call for an independent international investigation of the massive rights violations by the Indian state in IHK. Mr Guterres's remarks, particularly urging India and Pakistan to find a peaceful solution to the Kashmir dispute, are likely to get a cold reception in hawkish circles in India, but they are eminently sensible and suggest that the tide of international opinion on India's oppressive and deeply troubling actions in IHK may be changing ever so slightly.

While undeniably the many strands of the Pak-India relationship, the Kashmir dispute and other issues that remain to be resolved are interlinked, the international community has had a tendency to overlook the gross human rights violations and excesses of the Indian security forces against the brave, defiant but often defenceless people of India-held Kashmir. That must change. The report of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights is important for two reasons: it casts a light on the appalling violations by the Indian security apparatus while making clear that without an independent international investigation, the true extent of violations cannot be known. India has used its international influence to conceal the shocking and shameful treatment of the people of IHK from the global public. It should no longer be allowed to get away with the torture, maiming and worse of a courageous people.

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U.S.-Russia Relations are Stuck on Repeat

By Nikolas K. Gvosdev

Both Trump and Putin are now locked into narratives about what did (or did not) happen that prevent this issue from being dealt with—and this holds the entire rest of the bilateral agenda hostage.

rior to the summit meeting between President Donald Trump and Russian president Vladimir Putin, I contributed to the “Russia Matters” expert survey about likely outcomes from the meeting. My assessment was that the “normalization [of U.S.-Russia relations] cannot occur as long as Putin and Trump are respective presidents; normalization of the relationship can only occur in a post-Putin/post-Trump environment.” I saw nothing coming out of Helsinki that would cause me to revise this assessment.

The Sisyphean weight of the 2016 elections prevents any meaningful progress from occurring. Both Trump and Putin are now locked into narratives about what did (or did not) happen that prevent this issue from being dealt with—and this holds the entire rest of the bilateral agenda hostage. Not surprisingly, almost all of the U.S. political and media reactions to the summit revolves around Russia’s continued denials of interference and President Trump’s apparent acceptance of those demarches at face value.

The relatively anodyne statements about increasing dialogue across a range of strategic issues facing both countries do not represent a substantive, comprehensive agenda for the U.S.-Russia relationship—and Trump lacks the political capital to be able to undertake any dramatic shift. There should be no doubt in the Kremlin on this point after Helsinki. If we were, however, to put to one side the election interference question, did Trump make any major concessions to Russia, at least those that might justify the accusations of treason that are being bandied about?

For one, the United States has not altered its position that Crimea remains a part of Ukraine and continues to deny any recognition that the annexation of the Crimea to the Russian Federation was legal. At the same time, the United States has not, as a result of the Helsinki meeting, agreed to stop providing Ukraine with

weapons or to cease the training of the Ukrainian military. The optics of the President's NATO summit were poor, to be sure, but at the end of the day, the United States remains committed to rebuilding up its military position in Europe and to continue with the enhanced forward presence in Poland and the Baltic States to ensure that there is a credible deterrent to Russian meddling. The United States is not withdrawing from Europe nor did Trump engage in any sort of "Yalta-2" meeting to give recognition to any Russian sphere of influence in Eastern Europe.

In the joint press conference, Trump also made it clear that he expects American energy producers to enter the European market and to compete directly with Russia for market share. The devil will be in the details, of course—with the crucial question being whether the U.S. government plans to offer incentives or subsidies to bridge the price gap between what American producers are willing to sell energy to European countries for and what those consumers are willing to pay, given that Russian energy is more inexpensive. But also, there is a clear statement of intent that it is the policy of the U.S. government that American energy firms should be playing a greater role in meeting Europe's energy demand—with the concurrent understanding that this is designed to limit both Russia's influence as well as its income.

Indeed, the comments of Dmitry Peskov, Putin's spokesman, that Russia needs "to remain vigilant," suggest that the Russian side has no illusions that—no matter the personal chemistry between Putin and Trump—the general course of U.S. policy will not change.

Trump will return home amid a great deal of criticism that he did not forcefully call out Putin for Russian efforts to influence the 2016 election. But re-establishing and sustaining Russian-American dialogue on a variety of questions related to maintaining strategic stability makes sense. The question is whether the Helsinki summit gives enough top cover for lower-level Russian and American officials to engage in dialogue and discussion. My initial sense is that it does not—and that U.S.-Russia relations will remain frozen for the foreseeable future.

Nikolas K. Gvosdev is a contributing editor of the National Interest.

Russia's President Vladimir Putin (R) shakes hands with U.S. President Donald Trump as First lady Melania Trump stands nearby during a meeting in Helsinki, Finland July 16, 2018. Sputnik/Alexei Nikolsky/Kremlin via REUTERS

Source: <http://nationalinterest.org/feature/us-russia-relations-are-stuck-repeat-25941>

Syria Is Still a Mess By Robert Moore

Sen. Lindsay Graham, a prominent Republican voice on national security and international policy, spoke out last week during a visit to the Middle East warning Turkey against further military involvement in the Syrian civil war. After meeting with Turkish President Erdogan, Sen. Graham cautioned the NATO ally—“You don’t want any further incursions in Syria by the Turkish military, you’ll get yourself in a quagmire.”

In a world filled with hyperbole, political spin, and fake news, it is rare to hear such an accurate and evidence-based statement as this. The civil war in Syria, raging for more than half a decade, has been a sterling example of a ‘quagmire’ in the geopolitical context since its inception. Even before the fighting started, Syria was one of the most complicated and volatile states in the Middle East.

Tracing its troubled history from the downfall of the Ottoman Empire and the much-maligned Sykes-Picot agreement of 1916, the Syrian state over the past century has existed as a nonsensical mixture of historically antagonistic groups forced to live under the same government through external policing or internal authoritarians. The Arab Spring movement simply catalyzed the longstanding grievances of Syrian Sunnis against Alawite rulers in Damascus, and the simmering fault-lines erupted to the surface.

Turkey, for its part, has significantly more at stake in the outcome of than most other nations, sharing a long border with the fractured state and wary of instability in their own country. But their opposition to the empowerment of the Syrian Kurds on their border puts them at odds with western countries like the United States, who want to use the Kurds to fight extremist groups as well as put pressure on President Bashir Assad’s government. Meanwhile, Russian leaders along with Iran continue to support the Assad government and have come dangerously close to starting a larger conflict with Turkey and NATO.

This makes the Syrian war a proxy conflict between NATO and Russia, as well as a proxy battle between the U.S. and Iran as the two countries negotiate over the future of Iran’s nuclear program and international sanctions.

So yes, the Syrian civil war is still very much a mess, one that any external power should be very wary of entering.

Of course, Sen. Graham's warning to the Turkish government was not made out of concern for Turkish interests, but to remove the impediment that Turkish recalcitrance poses to American support of the Syrian Kurds and our future in the conflict. In fact, a majority of American legislative and executive leaders from both sides of the aisle have supported further U.S. involvement in the conflict, from training and equipping rebel groups to calling for no-fly zones and greater military intervention .

Is the United States immune from the strategic contradictions and tactical complexities that other countries would suffer from in Syria? Our involvement there since 2013 shows that we are not.

The initial train and equip program for “vetted” members of the Syrian opposition—a \$500 million initiative— was cancelled in 2015 after failing to come close to meeting expectations, but also due to growing concerns that U.S.-provided weapons were making their way into the hand of the very extremist groups we wanted to fight. Similar factors doomed the CIA's program in President Trump's first year in office. Terrorist groups proliferated despite the efforts of the international community to address funding and manpower pipelines. Both the Trump and Obama administrations steered away from sending large numbers of U.S troops into Syria out of concerns about public support and the likelihood of strategic success.

American leaders, especially those with congressional oversight responsibilities, would be better off taking a step back and reviewing our involvement in the Syrian conflict with a mind towards actual national security interests—protecting our homeland and the rights and freedoms of the American people.

Are these interests gravely impacted by a civil war in a largely resource-barren country on the other side of the world, and have our efforts there enhanced our interests in a way that is reasonably justifiable to the costs? Honest analysis would show that we have even less reason or purpose for intervention in this quagmire than neighboring countries like Turkey and that there are more worthy causes for American time and treasure.

Robert Moore is a public policy advisor at Defense Priorities. Having spent nearly a decade working defense and foreign policy issues on Capitol Hill, Robert has extensive knowledge of, and experience with, the policy-making process, including how Congress shapes U.S. national security. He most recently served as the lead staffer for Sen. Mike Lee on the Senate Armed Services Committee. He also advised Sen. Lee on matters of foreign relations, intelligence, homeland security, and veterans affairs. He previously worked as part of Sen. Jim DeMint's national security team.

Source: <https://nationalinterest.org/blog/middle-east-watch/syria-still-mess-26031>

Helsinki Summit | Editorial

The bromance between Donald Trump and Vladimir Putin appears stronger than ever. At least this was the takeaway from the recent Helsinki summit that was a chance for the two world leaders to get together bilaterally.

As a sign of commitment to his Russian counterpart, the US president forgot himself and backed Moscow's claims of non-interference in the 2016 American elections. In doing so, Trump effectively took the side of a foreign power over that of his own intelligence agencies; prompting certain quarters to cry treason.

All of which helped the two men to skirt, to a large extent, the pressing issues of the day. Such as the way forward on Syria, the Crimea question and non-proliferation. Though from the get-go, the pair had decided that the powwow would have no specific agenda. That its conclusion did not bring with it a joint communiqué further adds to the confusion as to what was and was not achieved.

That being said, most pundits agree that Moscow was firmly in the driving seat. Indeed, world media slammed the US president's performance with Britain's Daily Mirror sticking the knife in by labelling Trump, "Putin's poodle". They have a point; which may or may not have important implications for Washington's relations with the EU; barring a Brexiteering Britain. On Syria, Putin talked of normalising the conflict to the point where refugees in Turkey, Jordan and Lebanon would be safe to return. The underlying message being that NATO should pack up and go home. By contrast, however, Trump seemed entirely enamoured with just how well the American and Russian armies got along. Well, then.

To Middle East watchers, what was on show in Helsinki was sheer capitulation by the global superpower. Indeed, Yury Barmin of the Russian International Affairs Council noted how Trump failed to resoundingly slam Moscow for its campaign to capture what remains of the southwest de-escalation zone as well as Derraa, the so-called birthplace of the Syrian revolt. Not only that, the American president appeared almost to strain at the leash as he touted Putin's manoeuvrings as being in line with Israeli security concerns. Meaning that the Jewish state would prefer to have Russian troops near its border than, say,

Iranian ones. In return, Putin offered to streamline the Astana talks on Syria — comprising Moscow, Tehran and Damascus — with those of a broader international club that groups the US with Britain, France, Germany, Jordan and Saudi Arabia. Thus Tehran, Washington and Riyadh would be expected to put aside their vast and overwhelming differences for the greater Syrian good. All of which suggests that Putin is either a very shrewd or optimistic chap.

Sadly, Trump made it all about him with his clumsy claims of misspeaking on the question of Russian electoral collusion. Whereas the summit should have placed Syria on top of the agenda. For warfare brings with it gross humanitarian disasters. And addressing the latter should have been everyone's immediate concern. *

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Source: <https://dailytimes.com.pk/269904/helsinki-summit/>

The Case For US Global Leadership – OpEd

By Marc Grossman

During almost three decades as a member of the US Foreign Service, I was privileged to play a modest role in the design and nurturing of what many call the “liberal rules-based international order.” Today, that order – created by Americans and our allies and friends and supported and upheld by US military and diplomatic power – is under attack at home and abroad.

As a diplomat, I learned that how one describes things matters. The words “liberal rules-based international order” mean nothing to 99 percent of the American public. Indeed, this mantra is likely heard by skeptics as an elite chant emerging from what President Donald Trump derides as the “swamp” or Ben Rhodes, a former national security official during the Obama administration, called the “blob.” The urgent challenge is to convince a larger audience that the international system the United States created and defended remains a crucial foundation of Americans’ wealth and power.

The RAND Corporation recently described that foundation: “Since 1945, the United States has pursued its interests through the creation and maintenance of international economic institutions, global organizations including the United Nations and G-7, bilateral and regional security organizations including alliances, and liberal political norms.” Today, the benefits of this system are not obvious to many Americans. Thanks to US leadership of a globalizing economy and multilateral international political system, most Americans are better off but not all. Millions in the United States and around the world feel financially insecure and culturally neglected. They fear that their countries’ best days are behind them – and many voted for Brexit, Trump and Hungary’s authoritarian Prime Minister Victor Orbán.

While supporters of the “existing international order” talk of complexity, nuance and interconnectedness, Trump talks directly and effectively to voters’ fears and anxieties. In his speech to the UN General Assembly in September, Trump said he wanted to promote a world defined by “sovereignty, security and prosperity.” That’s an order people who feel beleaguered can understand.

The irony is that Trump has so far shown limited capacity to implement that vision. When he attacks and then praises individual US allies, or denigrates then hails NATO, before again questioning the US commitment to collective defense, he creates what one observer calls “whiplash,” not support for US interests. Trump is right to tell the NATO allies to meet their commitment to spend 2 percent of GDP on defense. But then raising the ante to an unrealistic 4 percent is either a sure policy loser – if he actually seeks that outcome – or a strategy designed by Trump to end the most successful military alliance in history.

Trump’s approach to trade is similar. Putin must be delighted with Trump’s description of the European Union as a “foe on trade” in advance of their meeting in Helsinki. Likewise, while NAFTA undoubtedly needs revision, Trump’s threat to walk away would put at risk millions of American jobs based on trade and investment with Mexico and Canada. There is a similar story when it comes to steel and auto tariffs: General Motors recently warned that tariffs on imported cars and parts could lead directly to US job losses.

In Asia, Trump is right to expect China’s support for a denuclearized North Korea and to focus attention on Beijing’s many unfair trade practices, energetic theft of intellectual property and continuing militarization of the South China Sea. But the chances of getting the Chinese to pay serious, sustained attention to US interests will surely be increased if Beijing is faced with a concerted effort by the US, its allies and friends. Instead, Trump abandoned the Trans Pacific Partnership, a trade agreement designed to strengthen the US position in Asia, and has attacked, along with America’s NATO allies, Mexico, Japan and Korea.

Trump assumes that insulting US allies and friends makes him look strong to his base. One reason he succeeds is that supporters of the existing international order remain trapped defending words which generate little passion and entice no new followers. Those who believe that America remains a powerful force for good in the world must now make this case in new, more forceful ways. Instead of further exhortation to support the “liberal rules-based international order,” here are five “truths” to use in public:

America’s global power and influence are good for Americans. Our economy grows and our country is safer when we have a strong military and strong diplomacy to keep and expand that power and influence.

America is more powerful and prosperous when there are clear rules and we set them. How many Americans want to live in a world where China or Russia sets the rules – or there are no rules at all? That's what happens when America leaves a leadership vacuum.

America's power and influence are multiplied when we work with other countries. We need likeminded friends and allies who can assume some of the burdens of global leadership and together solve problems that even the United States can't manage alone. An isolated America is a less successful and secure America.

America is better off having more democracies in the world rather than more autocrats and dictators. A world growing in freedom is a world where Americans can advance US interests and enjoy greater peace and prosperity.

Americans are richer when America is the world leader in the global economic system. Estimates are that more than 41 million US jobs are connected to trade with other nations. American workers are not afraid of competition, so long as it is fair and provides benefits to all.

There are disadvantages to trying this new pitch. Some US allies and friends, who helped establish today's order and also greatly benefited from it, probably won't welcome any change in emphasis in the existing rules. But with the stakes so high, these allies and friends must accept more explicit talk of patriotism and national self-interest from those who oppose Trumpism. They must also recognize that they can do much more to promote the West's common defense and security interests and acknowledge that there need to be changes and new processes in the international system.

A global struggle is underway to define the future of relations among nation-states. On one side is an anger-driven, fearful nationalism. On the other is an aspiration for an evolving international system still based on what *The Economist* describes as "America's unique willingness to lead by fusing power and legitimacy." The result of this battle of ideas will, in the end, produce some new form of international system or at least loosely defined ways for nations to interact.

If we hope to bequeath the benefits of US global power and influence to future generations, the support of the American people is required. Those who support US global leadership must adopt more direct and convincing ways to talk about how the US designed-international system promotes and protects America's interests. Progress is not a zero-sum game in which global progress comes at the expense of America's. Americans need to rally behind the idea that US global leadership is essential to their prosperity and way of life.

Source : <http://www.eurasiareview.com/20072018-the-case-for-us-global-leadership-oped/>

Trump's European Tour ends on Negative Note By Imran Khalid

A new day, a new tweet, a new comment and a new controversy. So, finally the week-long European tour of US President Donald Trump has come to an end. As expected, kicked up by the mercurial Donald Trump himself deliberately, the tour was laced with innumerable controversies. We have never seen such a stormy and controversial tour by any US President of the European continent. He left behind nothing, but new controversies. He started the tour by demanding the fellow members to increase their financial contribution to the NATO, then severely criticised Angela Merkel over the Nord Stream 2 pipeline project, then told Theresa May that she was mishandling Brexit and suggested her to sue the European Union, then labelled the EU as “trade-foe”, and then finally ended up the tour on negative note at Helsinki summit that earned him nothing but severe criticism at home. Trump's disdain for routine diplomatic norms and discipline is an open secret and he seems to be thoroughly enjoying his non-traditional way of deal making.

Time and again, Donald Trump has demonstrated that he does not see any difference between managing a personal business empire and running a government as a head of state. The impulsive and bullying tendencies of his core personality dominate every sphere of his management style. The same personal traits were very visible in his demeanour during his entire tour of Europe. Thanks to his blunt ruggedness and cragginess, he has been able to push away all traditional US allies. Not surprisingly, American foreign policy, under Donald Trump, is fast re-defining its priorities and direction. In simple words, President Trump is embracing old enemies as new friends, while alienating old friends as new detractors – creating a different kind of isolation. In Brussels, he literally jolted his colleagues at the NATO summit by unleashing his fury at them over the money matters and financial aspects of the 29-member alliance.

Throughout the proceedings of the two-day NATO summit, Trump maintained a very hostile and belligerent approach. He specifically targeted Germany's Chancellor Angela Merkel over the Nord Stream 2 pipeline that will transfer gas from the Russian territory to Germany. Trump openly lambasted Germany on the Nord Stream 2 pipeline project and went on to call it a “captive of Russia,”

because of “very sad” and “inappropriate” energy deals with Moscow facilitated by the Nord Stream 2 pipeline project. “It certainly doesn’t seem to make sense that they paid billions of dollars to Russia, and now we have to defend them against Russia,” is how Trump expressed his displeasure. It reminded the despicable exchange of taunts and scoffs between him and Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau at the G7 Summit last month.

Interestingly, Trump left the G7 summit, after engaging Justin Trudeau in a serious and personal fight over the trade tariffs, to meet North Korea’s Kim Jong-un in Singapore to claim a “historic” diplomatic success. He has repeated the same module by targeting Angela Merkel at the NATO summit before departing to meet Vladimir Putin in Helsinki. But this time, on the way to Helsinki, he added British Prime Minister Theresa May in the list of victims of his verbal tirade by giving a highly explosive interview to The Sun newspaper, in which he harshly criticised May’s Brexit strategy, while praising her political rival Boris Johnson as “potentially great prime minister”. Thus, he unnecessarily poured fuel over the “Stop Trump” protests in the UK. In his attempt to project his favourite buddy Boris Johnson positively, he has fanned the anti-Trump sentiments but also given a chance to Theresa May to temporarily ward off the mounting pressure over the Brexit crisis.

The problem with Trump is that he is unable to control his extremely impulsive nature that always catapults him into such difficult situations. The irony of the course is that, within three days after unequivocally criticising Angela Merkel for her enthusiastic advocacy for gas pipeline project in collaboration with Russia’s Gazprom, he met with Russia’s strongman Vladimir Putin in an apparent effort to establish “close and extraordinary relationship”. This is a blatant duality in his stance. His affinity and professional admiration for Vladimir Putin is an reestablished fact. He has never hesitated from expressing his liking for Putin despite the fact the Russian election meddling allegations are still hovering in the air. The reality is that if any other European leader had expressed similar affection for Putin, then Trump would have certainly berated him or her with all the negative and sullied words in the dictionary. This is the Trump way of doing the business.

A cursory glance at all his controversies would divulge that “money” is at the bottom of each episode. Verbal tirade with Canada’s premier Justin Trudeau at

G7 summit, financial management of NATO, intense criticism of Angela's Merkel's pipeline project and seeing the EU as trade foe, trade imbalance and trade tariffs are the key words that have been influencing Donald Trump's extremely belligerent tone towards the chronic US allies. On the contrary, he has demonstrated fair amount of softness towards all those strongmen who have been previously the cheerleaders of anti-US camp – Kim Jong-un, Rodrigo Duterte and Vladimir Putin etc. He is doing all this at the expense of inviting further disapprobation of the American establishment, which is very reluctant to listen to his pro-Russia mantra. Particularly at this time, when the allegations of Russia's election meddling are very much alive and whirling at full speed in the corridors of Capitol Hill, Donald Trump is trying to change the anti-Russia module of US foreign policy – and that too with such a fervour and eagerness. This is a risky venture. But he seems to be determined to take the risk. Nonetheless, he has returned back from Europe with a bag full of new controversies and new tension between him and the European leadership in general.

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Source: <https://pakobserver.net/trumps-european-tour-ends-on-negative-note/>

Iran-US Verbal Spat | Editorial

It is a pity that the conduct of international relations has come to this: the president of the United States is threatening a sovereign nation (Iran) via an angry tweet — that too in all caps — using unstatesmanlike language wholly unsuitable to a leader of a world power. But as Donald Trump's tenure has shown thus far, name-calling and conducting sensitive diplomacy through Twitter is all par for the course. Mr Trump fulminated that Iran should “never, ever threaten the United States again” or else the Islamic Republic would suffer consequences “few throughout history have ever suffered before”. It seems the US president was miffed by Iranian President Hassan Rouhani's earlier comments that should the US go to war with his country, it would be the “mother of all wars” while adding that peace with Tehran was “the mother of all peace”. While world leaders, especially in times of tension, are known to make hyperbolic and ultranationalistic speeches, these comments are troubling considering the current situation in the Middle East. Unfortunately, many in the US administration appear to be looking for a confrontation with Iran; a little before Mr Trump's bombastic tweet, US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said that he wanted all states to stop buying Iranian oil by November (effectively declaring economic war on Tehran). Expectedly, the harsh comments emanating from Washington have engendered hard-line responses from the Iranian establishment, including the supreme leader and commanders of the Pasdaran.

It seems that there are very few sane voices left in Washington where the Iran file is concerned. In fact, many of those who cheered earlier American wars in the Middle East (eg National Security Adviser John Bolton) are back in the saddle and close to Mr Trump who is not exactly known for his deft diplomacy and understanding of global affairs. However, Mr Rouhani was not entirely wrong when he said that a US-Iranian conflict would be the “mother of all wars”; certainly, the likelihood of such a conflagration swallowing up an already volatile region is not remote. While Iran's European interlocutors are working to save what is left of the nuclear deal and trying to find a modus vivendi, America is on the warpath. However, to save the nezam, the Iranian establishment appears ready reply in kind if threatened. That is why for those who want a peaceful global order it is imperative that this conflict be averted, and Washington take the lead by toning down its rhetoric.

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Why Israel Was Never A Democracy – OpEd

By Ramzy Baroud

The head of the Arab Joint List Alliance at the Israeli Knesset (Parliament), Ayman Odeh, described the passing of the racist Jewish Nation-state Law as “the death of our democracy.”

Did Odeh truly believe that, prior to this law, he had lived in a true democracy? 70 years of Israeli Jewish supremacy, genocide, ethnic cleansing, wars, sieges, mass incarceration, numerous discriminatory laws, all aimed at the very destruction of the Palestinian people should have given enough clues that Israel was never a democracy, to begin with.

The Jewish Nation-state Law is merely the icing on the cake. It simply gave those who argued, all along, that Israel’s attempt at combining democracy with ethnic supremacy was racism masquerading as democracy, the munition they needed to further illustrate the point.

There is no escaping the moral imperative now. Those who insist on supporting Israel must know that they are supporting an unabashed Apartheid regime.

The new law, which was passed after some wrangling on January 19, has divorced Israel from any claim, however untrue, to being a democratic state.

In fact, the law does not mention the word ‘democracy’ in its wording, not even once. Reference to the Jewish identity of the state, however are ample and dominant, with the clear exclusion of the Palestinian people from their rights in their historic homeland:

“The state of Israel is the nation-state of the Jewish people ...

– “The actualization of the right of national self-determination in the state of Israel is unique to the Jewish people.

– “The state will labor to ensure the safety of sons of the Jewish people ...

– “The state will act to preserve the cultural, historical and religious legacy of the Jewish people among the Jewish diaspora,” and so on.

But most dangerous of all is the stipulation that “the state views Jewish settlement as a national value and will labor to encourage and promote its establishment and development.”

True, illegal Jewish settlements already dot the Palestinian land in the West Bank and Jerusalem; and a de facto segregation already exists in Israel itself. In fact, segregation is so deep and entrenched, even maternity wards in Israeli hospitals separate between mothers, based on their race.

The above stipulation, however, will further accelerate segregation and cement Apartheid, making the harm not merely intellectual and political, but physical as well.

The Legal Center for Arab Minority Rights in Israel, Adalah, has documented in its ‘Discriminatory Laws Database’ a list of over 65 Israeli laws that “discriminate directly or indirectly against Palestinian citizens in Israel and/or Palestinian residents of the Occupied Palestinian Territory (OPT) on the basis of their national belonging.”

According to Adalah, “These laws limit the rights of Palestinians in all areas of life, from citizenship rights to the right to political participation, land and housing rights, education rights, cultural and language rights, religious rights, and due process rights during detention.”

While it would be accurate to argue that the Jewish Nations-state bill is the officiation of Apartheid in Israel, this realization should not dismiss the previous reality upon which Israel was founded 70 years ago.

Apartheid is not a single law, but a slow, agonizing build-up of an intricate legal regime that is motivated by the belief that one racial group is superior to all others.

Not only does the new law elevate Israel’s Jewish identity and erase any commitment to democracy, it also downgrades the status of all others.

Palestinian Arabs, the natives of the land of historic Palestine upon which Israel was established, did not feature prominently in the new law at all. There was a mere stipulation made to the Arabic language, but only to downgrade it from being an official language, to a 'special one.'

Israel's decision to refrain from formulating a written constitution when it was founded in 1948 was not a haphazard one. Since then, it has been following a predictable model where it would alter reality on the ground to the advantage of Jews at the expense of Palestinian Arabs.

Instead of a constitution, Israel resorted to what it termed 'Basic Laws', which allowed for the constant formulation of new laws guided by the 'Jewish State's' commitment to racial supremacy than to democracy, international law, human rights or any other ethical value.

The Jewish Nation-state Law is itself a 'Basic Law.' And with that law, Israel has dropped the meaningless claim to being both Jewish and democratic. This impossible task was often left to the Supreme Court which tried, but failed, to strike any convincing balance.

This new reality should, once and for all, end the protracted debate on the supposed uniqueness of Israel's political system.

And since Israel has chosen racial supremacy over any claim, however faint, to real democracy, western countries that have often shielded Israel must also make a choice on whether they wish to support an Apartheid regime or fight against it.

The initial statement by EU foreign affairs chief, Federica Mogherini was lackluster and feeble. "We are concerned, we have expressed this concern and we will continue to engage with Israeli authorities in this context," she said, while renewing her commitment to the 'two-state solution.'

This is hardly the proper statement in response to a country that had just announced its membership in the Apartheid club.

The EU must end its wishy-washy political discourse and disengage from Apartheid Israel, or it has to accept the moral, ethical and legal consequences of being an accomplice in Israeli crimes against Palestinians.

Israel has made its choice and it is, unmistakably, the wrong one. The rest of the world must now make its choice as well, hopefully the right one: standing on the right side of history – against Israeli Jewish Apartheid and for Palestinian rights.

Source: <http://www.eurasiareview.com/27072018-why-israel-was-never-a-democracy-oped/>