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*Compiled By Shahbaz Shakeel*

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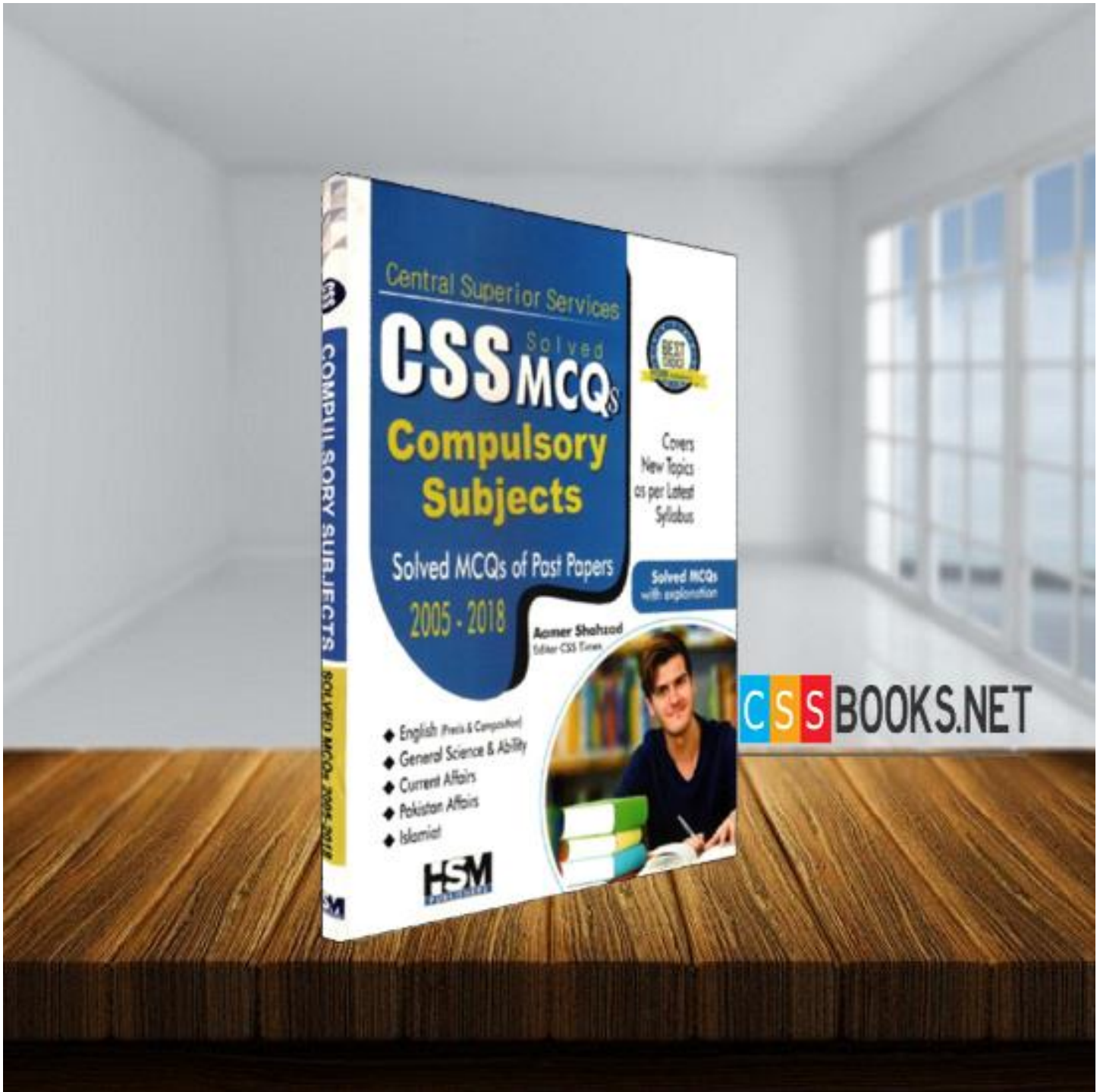
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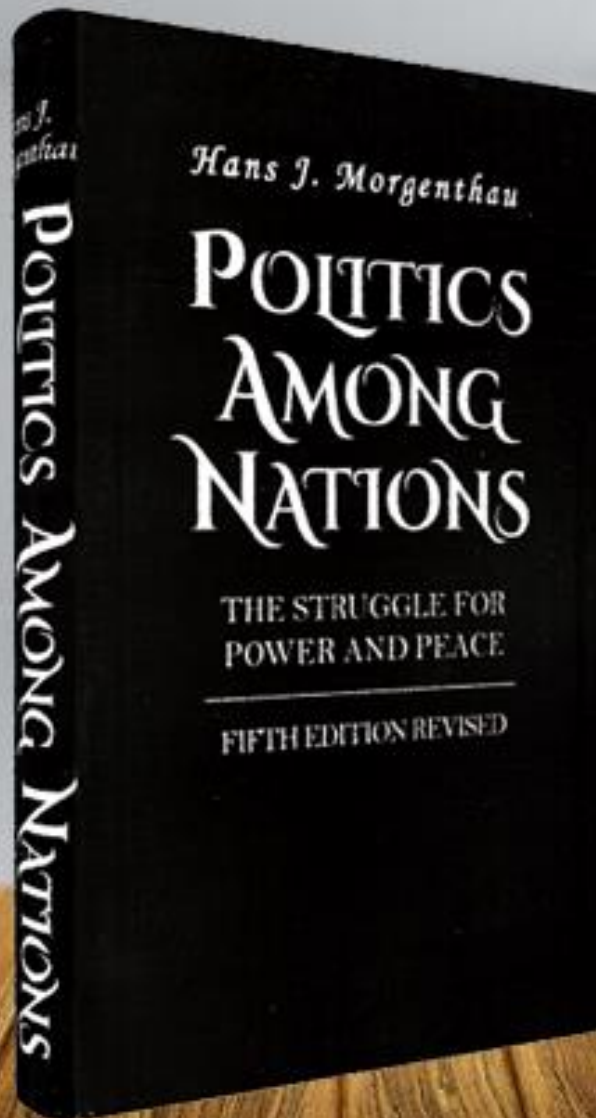
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# Table of Contents

## **PAKISTAN**

1. Energy Sector — Getting House in Order By Dr M Asif .....	9
2. Pak Foreign Policy & Strategic Framework By Mahrukh A Mughal .....	12
3. Checking Population Growth   Editorial .....	15
4. Water Woes, Challenges And Way Forward By Muhammad Bilal Abdul Ghani.....	16
5. Poverty Reduction Initiative   Editorial .....	21
6. 18th Amendment — A Gain For Democracy By Babar Ayaz.....	22
7. Implications of Indo-US Entente For Pakistan By Muhammad Ayaz Nazar .....	25
8. Pakistan’s Place in the Trump Global Disorder By Shahid Javed Burki .....	28
9. Trump At His Undiplomatic Best   Editorial .....	31
10. Kashmir’s Unending Struggle   Editorial.....	32
11. Peace Corridor   Editorial .....	33
12. Restructuring The Civil bureaucracy By Nasir Khan .....	34
13. India and Pakistan Bid for the Membership of the NSG By Adeela Ahmed .....	38
14. India’s Intransigent Approach   Editorial.....	41
15. Arms For Peace   Editorial .....	43
16. New National Action Plan   Editorial .....	45

## **PAKISTAN & WORLD RELATIONS**

1. Pakistan-Russian Friendship By Leonid Savin .....	46
2. A Turnaround In Ties   Editorial.....	50
3. Will Iran-Pakistan Ties Improve Under Imran Khan? By Ahmad Faruqui .....	52
4. Pak-US Relations and Afghan Quagmire By Waqar Masood Khan .....	56
5. Pak-Saudi Strategic Relationship By Dr Muhammad Khan .....	60
6. Pak-Afghan Relations By Amjad Nazeer.....	63
7. Imran’s Visit to UAE to Boost Friendship By Ashfaq Ahmed .....	68
8. Pakistan-Malaysia Ties By Dr Ahmad Rashid Malik .....	71
9. Pak-India Thaw   Editorial.....	74
10. True Essence of Pakistan-China Ties By Talat Masood .....	75

**ECONOMY**

1. Seeking Another Rescue Package By M Ziauddin .....	78
2. Reviewing Privatisation!   Editorial .....	81
3. Reforming The Tax System Editorial .....	82
4. Economy Gets Another Chance By Imtiaz Rafi Butt.....	84
5. China International Import Expo & Pakistan By Dr Ejaz Hussain .....	87
6. Afghanistan in CPEC   Editorial.....	90
7. Economic Occidentalism, FATF and Pakistan By Dr Muhammad Babar Chohan .....	92
8. Internal and External Challenges & CPEC By Naveed Aman Khan.....	97
9. Moody’s Warning   Editorial .....	100
10. Talks With IMF   Editorial .....	101
11. Alternative Economic Plan   Editorial.....	103

**EDUCATION**

1. A Uniform Education System   Editorial.....	105
2. Education Crisis   Editorial.....	106
3. Education Policy is Needed By Zahid ur Rehman .....	108
4. Out of school   Editorial.....	111
5. Embracing The Quality Culture in Higher Education By Dr Shaukat Ali Mazari.....	112
6. The Higher Goals of Education By Dr. Asad Zaman .....	116

**WORLD**

1. Resuming Peace Talks By Dr Zafar Nawaz Jaspal .....	119
2. A Russian Pivot to Asia? By Alexey Khlebnikov.....	122
3. International Relations: A New World Order By Sheraz Zaka.....	125
4. Trump After Midterm Elections By Waqar K Kauravi and Umar Waqar.....	128
5. More Politics Than Substance: Three Years Of Russian And Chinese Economic Cooperation In Central Asia – Analysis By Nargis Kassenova* .....	131
6. Afghanistan: The Stalemate and Solution By Mohsin Raza Malik .....	135
7. Spat Between the US and China By Muhamamad Waqar Aslam .....	139
8. Defining the role of the United Nations By Muhammad Usman Ghani .....	142
9. Moscow Format: New hope for Afghan Peace? By Iqbal Khan .....	145
10. Gaza Ceasefire   Editorial .....	148
11. Nuclear Suppliers Group And its November Agenda By Beenish Altaf.....	149

12. Sanctioning Iran | Editorial ..... 152

13. Beyond The AI Arms Race By Remco Zwetsloot, Helen Toner, and Jeffrey Ding ..... 154

14. The Global Nature of Global Warming By Remshay Ahmed ..... 161

15. Post–Election Foreign Policy Trouble By Paul R. Pillar..... 164

16. The Coming War Over Ukraine? By Jonas Driedger..... 167

17. ‘Historic But Tragic’ | Editorial..... 171

18. ASEAN – Search For Synergy? By Dr. Imran Khalid ..... 172



## PAKISTAN

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### **Energy Sector — Getting House in Order By** **Dr M Asif**

With the new government in office well into its third month, the energy sector remains awaiting meaningful measures for its woes to be addressed. Although it's too short a time to imagine things turning around, at least future directions are expected to be made clear pretty soon.

The over a decade-long energy crisis is still very much alive. Despite the last government's acclaimed installed capacity of 28,000MW, electricity load-shedding has not vanished. Gas load-shedding is also there with warning shots being called for it to get intense in winter. A substantial proportion of energy supplies are lost in transmission & distribution. Above all, the ever escalating circular debt has been reported to have reached Rs1,300 billion. The energy crisis is actually far deeper than these apparent dimensions. Besides these issues, acute dependence on imports, detrimental energy mix and dearth of management capacity are areas of further concern. As a matter of fact the latter set of problems, which is hardly under the radar, underpin the state of affairs. The initiatives taken to address the crisis over the last decade or so have been segmented, shortsighted and often counter-productive, consequently the problem still stands tall. Any sustainable and meaningful solution to the crisis requires a visionary, comprehensive and cohesive approach strategically targeting all problem areas.

Pakistan's energy crisis can be attributed to bad governance more than anything else. It is simply a result of decades of compromised policy and decision making, and vested interests. As Einstein famously said

'We can't solve problems by using the same kind of thinking we used when we created them', good governance would be imperative for addressing the energy crisis. Colossal losses in the energy sector are a wee example of the bad governance in the energy sector. The present government has announced a crackdown on electricity theft, which is a commendable step. The transmission and distribution system has been one of the weakest links in the whole energy

equation, thanks to years of negligence. The system is insufficient, weak and has tremendous leaks. The system is reported to be incapable of distributing more than 19,500MW of electricity as against the installed capacity of 28,000MW. The fragility of the system is evident from a number of national level transmission failures — including the one in 2015 that plunged over 80% of the country into darkness for hours — as well as instances of over 200 feeder trips in a single day in Lahore. The losses in the transmission and distribution system — predominantly thefts and non-payment of bills — are reported by Nepra to be 18% though actual figures are understood to be considerably greater as the trend of overbilling to adjust higher losses is quite common. The recent case of late Habib Jalib's daughter is a wee example here. Losses are also rife in the gas sector, generally termed as unaccounted for gas (UFG,). Over the last decade UFG has almost doubled, reaching to a level of over 15%, thanks to rampant theft. UFG, typically in a range of 2-3% in the developed countries, should be below 5% for a country like Pakistan.

The control of losses requires improvement both on the technical and governance end. Technical solutions need to be deployed to curtail thefts. The Minister for Energy has discussed plans for using special cables that would resist illegal connections. Prepaid electricity metering is another effective solution that has been successfully tried across the world, both in the developed and developing countries, to control losses and increase revenues. Besides the technical measures, widespread corruption in the utilities needs to be sorted out. Mostly, thefts are patronised by the utilities staff or are given a blind eye in case of influential perpetrators. The theft facilitators in utilities, that include low ranked staff such as meter readers and linesmen as well as top officials, need to be tamed to find a permanent solution.

Let's not forget crack down on electricity theft is not a new idea; such moves have been announced in the past well but only to quickly erode away without any tangible results. It's all summed up by a last year's news report that the State Minister for Water and Power came to attend an executive meeting of Multan Electric Power Company (MEPCO) in the company of a person who was prime suspect in a Rs600 million power theft case being probed by the National Accountability Bureau (NAB). The present crackdown on theft should not be momentary as has been the case in history, it should aim to address the issue for good with clear key performance indicators. There should also be proportionate focus on all nine DISCOS as per their losses bearing in mind that three of them

have the figures over 30%. It is also pragmatic to revisit the Center-Provincial stakeholder-ship on issue of losses.

Over the years the energy sector has seen tons of initiatives. Everything that exists in the concerned dictionary — ie policy reforms, road maps, organisational restructurings, working groups, task committees and bailout packages — have been tried only not to deliver. Nothing has worked simply because there was no will. Let's hope the new government is sincere in its promises. Intention alone however cannot deliver unless it is backed by sound strategy and commitment. Improvement in governance is thus imperative for the success and sustainability of any remedial measures in the energy sector. Things will not improve without getting the house in order.

Published in The Express Tribune, November 1st, 2018.

Source: <https://tribune.com.pk/author/7542/dr-m-asif/>

# **Pak Foreign Policy & Strategic Framework**

## **By Mahrukh A Mughal**

NOTWITHSTANDING the fundamental principles, the foreign and security policy of a country cannot remain static or indifferent to the evolving conditions in the regional or world politics. Rather, it is a continuous process that remains subject to review and readjustment in accordance with the political and strategic changes taking place at regional or world level. Asia is undergoing a perceptible change triggering a strategic realignment of states. Pakistan, sitting on the confluence of three regions — South Asia, Central Asia and South West Asia— is destined to have an important position in these alliances. The Afghanistan problem seems far from a peaceful settlement in the near future compelling the USA and its NATO allies to prolong their military presence in that country for another two decades. Having thus far evaded defeat at the hand of the combined forces of NATO and the Afghan National Army, the Taliban are determined to seek a solution to this decades-long imbroglio on their own terms to extract maximum political advantage out of the stalemate that has come to characterize the Afghan situation.

Pakistan would continue to suffer from the adverse consequences of the low intensity war in her immediate neighbourhood. Pakistan has two vital strategic objectives in Afghanistan. The territory of this luckless country should not be used by any adversarial country or force for terrorist attacks in Pakistan or destabilize parts of her territory including Balochistan. Apparently, these adversaries are the Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan and the Indian intelligence — RAW (Research and Analysis Wing) whose activities from across the Afghan border into Balochistan are now an open secret. The second objective is to have a peaceful, stable and a friendly Afghanistan in her neighbourhood. This is very important in view of the geo-strategic and economic interests shared by two neighbours since centuries. These two core objectives would continue to be main concerns of Pakistan.

Pakistan also has centuries-old cultural and spiritual relations with Iran. Our bilateral relations with Iran since the inception of Pakistan have been close and mutually supportive. The Shah of Iran was the first foreign Head of State to pay an official visit to Pakistan in 1952. Pakistan and Iran after lengthy negotiations resolved their border issue in February 1958. At one stage, the Shah of Iran had

proposed to have a confederation of the two countries with joint defence and he himself as the Head of the Confederation. He was of the view that at a later stage, Turkey could also be co-opted into the Confederation. Though the proposal of the confederation could not materialize, it gave birth to the Regional Cooperation for Development (RCD) comprising Pakistan, Iran and Turkey with the help of the USA. This regional organization has now been expanded into the larger Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) that in addition to the original three members includes Afghanistan and Central Asian Republics.

We may remember that Iran was the only country to have allowed Pakistan strategic depth during the 1965 war with India. Our aircraft had been shifted to the nearest Iranian airports. This was a great support in a difficult time. There could have been flourishing trade between Pakistan and Iran. Iran has massive energy surpluses but is devoid of food sufficiency. We are abundantly endowed with food yet suffer from energy shortage. Iran consumes a lot of superior quality of rice. The natural affinity between the two countries has not been tapped, partly due to the sanctions, but in an equal measure, because of our position in the rivalry between Iran and Saudi Arabia in the larger Middle Eastern context. However, the Turkish bilateral trade with Iran has since been growing. Turkey is the main buyer of the Iranian gas. Turkey exports over two dozens of various items to Iran.

Bilateral trade between the two countries was estimated at \$23 billion a decade ago. Turkish economic links with the Central Asian states have also been on the rise since their independence from the erstwhile Soviet Union. At present, Turkey has a formidable presence in these countries. Iran has already rehabilitated its road and railway links with the Central Asian States. Since the lifting of the western sanction from July 2015, Iran has also been increasing its economic connections with the Central Asian States particularly through energy corridors for which it is strategically located. Iran has so far been the main country providing seaport facilities to these landlocked countries through Bandar Abbass Seaport, though situated at a greater distance. The nearest seaport to these States is Gwadar. Keeping in view the distance of Bandar Abbass, Iran has embarked on the development of Chabahar Seaport, only 70 kilometers from Gwadar to take a share from the foreign trade of the Central Asian Republics along with Gwadar in the future.

Pakistan has not shown keen interest or made proactive efforts to exploit the forum of ECO to her advantage. Unfortunately, Pakistan adversarial relations with India and Afghanistan did not make her able to utilize its geo-strategic location to increase political and economic relations with the Central Asian States. We have not yet revamped our rail link with Iran from Quetta to Taftan to connect with the Iranian railway network onwards to Central Asia. Similarly, we have also been unable to extend our rail and road links from Peshawar to Jalalabad to Uzbekistan. The controversy on the question of giving India access to Afghanistan through Torkham border has adversely impacted our relations with Kabul. For the last one decade or so, we have no access to Central Asia through Afghanistan. The Afghan regime, as a retaliatory act, has stopped the transit of our overland trade with the Central Asian countries. This is unfortunate for both the countries. The bilateral trade between the two countries has recently reduced from \$2.50 billion to \$1.50 billion. The Afghan transit trade has also been affected by bad relations between the two countries. Pakistan cannot afford to overlook the future economic boom spurred by these international and regional trade connections. Pakistan could enhance the size of its bilateral trade with Iran by directly importing natural gas and oil. Pakistan's foreign policy guidelines should therefore aim at active regional participation and good neighbourly relations for pursuing a path towards peace and prosperity.

— The author, a freelance columnist, is based in Lahore.

Source: <https://pakobserver.net/pak-foreign-policy-strategic-framework/>

## **Checking Population Growth | Editorial**

PAKISTAN is the sixth most populous country in the world with its population growing at the rate of 1.86 percent and there is no doubt that all existing as well as future planning for the country's development will have no positive effect until population growth is checked with active collaboration of all the relevant institutions as well as the civil society.

It is heartening to note that like many other important matters including that of the construction of dams, honourable Chief Justice of Pakistan Mian Saqib Nisar has also taken very pertinent notice of the population explosion. And the task force he constituted on the matter has come with some concrete suggestions including that of making pre-marital counselling on family planning mandatory for Nikah registration as well as holding Ulema conference on the issue on a regular basis. We are confident that the CJP will take the requisite steps and direct the relevant institutions to also ensure implementation of the recommendations of the task force as it is the matter of the future of the country. Indeed creating awareness amongst masses especially those living in the far-flung areas that have no access to modern communication system is the need of the hour to educate the masses about the importance of family planning that is also vital for the overall health of women and children. Our country is already resource stressed with problems already arising of water shortage and the existing health and education facilities are not enough to meet the requirements of current population. Therefore it is important that the federal and provincial governments develop a national narrative as also suggested by the task force in consultation with all the stakeholders to create a sense of urgency in reducing population growth rate and achieving socio-economic wellbeing of all. Country like China has set a policy to regulate the number of children and we also need to take steps towards that end after taking on board the religious scholars. It is important that different contraceptives are made available free of cost to the families at the health centres especially those in the rural areas. Misperceptions about these contraceptives should also offset through lady health workers as well as the media.

Source: <https://pakobserver.net/checking-population-growth/>

# **Water Woes, Challenges And Way Forward**

## **By Muhammad Bilal Abdul Ghani**

According to one survey Pakistan has only water storage capacity only for thirty day as compare to international standard given of 120 days. Moreover, India is continuously stealing our liquid gold with each passing day as it has started more than twenty small and large scale water projects on the rivers of Pakistan. Water reservoirs are major source of hydro power production, Pakistan has hydro power generation capacity of more than 50,000 MW and Pakistan is using only its 13 percent which is very menial figure as compare to other neighbouring countries like India, China and Turkey. There is dire need to wake up from slumber and take immediate preventive actions to tackle this problem.

Pakistan has crossed both water stressed and water scarce boundaries. The availability of per capita water in Pakistan is reducing drastically. If we look at history, per capita available water in 1951 was 5260 m<sup>3</sup>, in 2007 it was 1200 m<sup>3</sup>, in 2009 it was 1100 m<sup>3</sup>, in 2010 it was 1000 m<sup>3</sup>, in 2017 it was 908 m<sup>3</sup> and projected to touch down 800 m<sup>3</sup> in 2025. The graph is exponentially going downward and water available for rabi and kharif seasons is reducing with every passing year. According to Pakistan council of research for water resources, if no more water reservoirs will be built, Pakistan will be drought affected country in 2025. A drought bomb is ticking on the fate of Pakistan. Before going to solutions we will analysis the problems of Pakistan in the field of construction of water reservoirs and storage problems.

Pakistan is facing water problems in two dimension domestic and regional issues. In domestic level there are two type of problems, one is royalty issue and other is non implementation of water appointment accord 1991. In royalty, provinces have dispute over the distribution of profits associated with water reservoirs. Tarbela dam is located in KP and Mangla dam is located in Punjab and both provinces demanded more share in profit due to their provinces. Water appointment accord came in to effect in March 21, 1991, according to clause 2 of document Punjab will get 55.94 MAF, Sindh will get 48.76 MAF, KP 5.78 and Baluchistan will get 3.87 MAF of water. The provinces at tail end often blamed other provinces of using their



share water. Sindh blamed Punjab and Baluchistan accuses Sindh of not giving their due share.

The major reasons of the water fiasco are , burgeoning population , over exploitation of underground water, increase in industrial activity, climate change , failure to augmentation of water resources, old and outdated irrigation system, poor water monitoring and management system. Heavy sedimentation in existing water reservoirs which has reduced 27 percent of our water storage capacity. The two major dimensions in these areas are water theft and water wastage Due to these reasons a larger part of water is wasted and the amount that is being effectively used is very low. Out of 145 MAF, only Pakistan is storing 14 MAF. According to IRSA figures, Pakistan has been discharging 30 MAF annually into the ocean whereas the requisite flow under Kotri Barrage is 8 MAF.

There should be complete ban on ground water exploitation, In Punjab only there are 1.2 million tube wells, which are biggest source of water theft

In order to solve these domestic problems and simmering tensions between provinces a strong centralized policy is required to satisfy the provinces. Many clauses of water appointment accord are ambiguous which needs immediate review. The water issues should be regularly discussed in council of common interest meetings and proper solution including revised water sharing formula should come into surface to solve the distribution and storage related problems. More than 25 years have been passed after water appointment accord but still no amendment is made in spite of many changes in weather conditions, precipitation pattern and storage capacity of dams. Constitution amendment should be made to ensure the free and fair distribution of water among provinces. The concept of water trading should be implemented among the provinces because Baluchistan and KP cannot extract and utilize their maximum share due to their land topography. Punjab and Sindh can use this water and payment can be made against this as a return according to a pre agreed formula.

At domestic level one important thing is water management system. Modern, digital water monitoring system should be installed on canals and rivers with centralized control room to monitor water theft and wastage. We have to change our agriculture methods so that water can be used efficiently. We have to shift our crop trends from more water intensive crops towards least water intensive crops.

Effective water pricing system should be adopted and in this regards we can follow Israel model. Israel is 60 percent desert and has only one fresh water lake yet it is water super power and its exports are in millions of dollars. They have adopted pay-as-you use model and with this model people have realized the true importance of water wasting and utilization.

Adding more to it, there should be complete ban on ground water exploitation, In Punjab only there are 1.2 million tube wells, which are biggest source of water theft. Every person who wants to extract ground water must take NOC from government and then proceed it further with effective utilization. Furthermore, a mass awareness campaign should be launched at the earliest to educate the people about water scarcity and tell them how we can save the water by using grey water system in households and drip irrigation system in fields.

Last but not least, National water policy has been formally approved and it should not collect dust in baskets and strong action committees should be made under the supervision of prime minister to implement its points in letter and spirit so that we can save this wastage of liquid gold.

The second dimension of water woes is regional issue. It is clearly written on the wall that future wars will be fought on this liquid gold. Pakistan has two rival countries in this regard, one is India and second is Afghanistan. The water related issues with both adversaries are historic and chronicle in nature. India is trying its best to snub the Pakistan on this front and making larger dams on the share of Pakistan ignoring all international commitments. Pakistan and India were tied in to historic water related knot in 1961 with arbitration of World Bank and the outcome was Indus water Treaty. India is continuously depriving us from our water rights despite of mass climate and geo political changings. Indus water treaty is not sacrosanct document which cannot be reviewed. After passing more than 50 years, with a lot of geo graphical, environmental and climate changings it has become necessary for both countries to sit on table and review this historic agreement and make it viable for our next generations.

The biggest problem for Pakistan in this agreement is that the rivers allocated to Pakistan are coming from Indian side and they are making reservoirs on our waters violating the spirit of treaty. In recent developments, Indian PM Narendra Modi inaugurated the Kishanganga (330 MW) Dam built on Jhelum River. On the other

hand, India has started many controversial projects including Baglihar dam (450 MW), rattle dam (850 MW), Pakal Dul Dam (1000 MW), lower Kalnai Dam (48 MW) on different rivers of Pakistan. After treaty we have three options, one is to sit together (mutual dialogues), second is neutral expert and third is appointment of court of arbitration. The most viable option is mutual dialogues which can pave the way of progress and prosperity for whole region.

On the western side Pakistan has Hydrel issues with Afghanistan. There are two rivers flowing in opposite directions one is river Kabul flowing from Afghanistan to Pakistan and second is Swat River flowing from Pakistan to Afghanistan. During Hamid Karzai government, India asked Afghanistan to construct dam on River Kabul to restrict the waters of Pakistan. These developments could create problems for Pakistan. There should be comprehensive agreement between both countries for the permanent solution of problem.

The way forward to resolve these long lasting issues is mutual dialogues with both countries that should be immediately started. Modern water monitoring and management system should be installed on the rivers in order to monitor the status of water reservoirs across the borders. Old agreements and treaties should be presented on the table with win-win approach because no country wants its loss in case of water because it has become aortic for all stake holders. Both countries should relax visa conditions for frequent visits to water related people. Frequent site visits will also help to alleviate the tensions between both countries.

Recently Supreme Court has arranged the symposium with the title “creating water secure Pakistan”. In ceremony addressing to the audience, president of Pakistan Dr. Arif Alvi said that “mistrust over dams must end and we need to build trust among the provinces” chief justice said that “work on dams should not be seen as intrusion”.

The writer is freelance engineer from UET Lahore

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Source: <https://dailytimes.com.pk/319886/water-woes-challenges-and-way-forward/>



## **Poverty Reduction Initiative | Editorial**

The rural and urban divide in Pakistan is a cause of concern as has been highlighted by a report released by the World Bank. It reaffirms the fact that more than 80 percent of Pakistanis living below the poverty line live in the rural areas of Pakistan. This shows that the successive governments have failed to implement agendas that go beyond the metropolitan hubs and all of the development is concentrated in such areas because they are not only the centers of activity but also are areas which are highlighted in official visits. There is also a gross divide between the development framework of the different provinces. It shows that the Punjab centric policies have left the other three provinces waiting for the governments to take action. Provincial governments have also failed in this regard because 70 years of independence implies that a government should have done ample amount of work to develop the rest of the areas in Pakistan, which has unfortunately not been the case here.

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However, the current regime is prioritising human development and Prime Minister Imran Khan has promised the launch of a poverty reduction initiative. According to this initiative, measures will be taken within seven to ten days to bring people out of abject poverty in the country. For this purpose, the new government also contacted Chinese officials because our friendly neighbour introduced several rigorous programmes in their own country to alleviate the poverty situation. The first step in this initiative is setting up homeless shelters. This gives people a good headstart because then they can focus on finding a livelihood.

The promise is that the entire state machinery will be involved in this initiative. This comes after the economy got the required boost after economic aid and the government can now focus on projects which will provide immediate relief to the citizens.

Source: <https://nation.com.pk/12-Nov-2018/poverty-reduction-initiative>

# **18th Amendment — A Gain For Democracy**

## **By Babar Ayaz**

Punjab used to be the champion of hoarding all powers in the centre, but a positive role played by PML-N leaders in agreeing, first to the changes in the criteria for distribution of fiscal resources in the NFC and subsequently agreeing to the expansion of provincial autonomy in the Eighteenth Amendment has to be noted. It shows that Punjab's bourgeois leadership resisted the pressure of the centrist establishment against devolution of powers to the provinces.

The transfer of subjects listed in the concurrent list of the constitution to the provinces was a long-pending demand of the smaller provinces. The Eighteenth Amendment fulfilled this demand.

Some of the important subjects were transferred from the Federal Legislative List Part 1 to List 2, which was a good omen. This included the provinces in decision making on the subjects which were earlier decided unilaterally by the Centre because they were in List 1. But a close look at the concurrent list of subjects show that the provinces were not be enriched by this change. Most of the 47 subjects mentioned in the list brought no financial gain to the provinces. However, the transfer of the concurrent list subjects to the provinces added to their responsibilities and financial liabilities. It was hoped by the provinces that increased allocations under the NFC Award 2009 would help in meeting this expenditure.

Provinces wanted control over their natural resources and fiscal authority on such taxes, which have buoyancy and elasticity. The NFC Award dealt with some of these issues. But the most important victory of the provinces was that their demand to have control over their natural resources including oil & gas was met half-way in the Eighteenth Amendment. Provinces were supposed to share control over these natural resources and the territorial waters adjacent to them 'jointly and equally' with the Center. However, this is yet to be implemented.

The transfer of subjects listed in the concurrent list of the constitution to the provinces was a long-pending demand of the smaller provinces. The 18th Amendment fulfilled this demand

For instance, the law provided that the provinces producing oil and gas would have the first right to use it but this is not being done. Otherwise, Balochistan and Sindh — which have vast resources of natural gas — would not be begging for a larger share in the country's gas resources.

Agreement to rename NWFP as Khyber Pakhtunkhwa settled an old demand of the 73% people living there. It gave a great psychological comfort to these people and cemented their bond with the rest of Pakistan.

One of the most important amendments to the constitution was in respect of appointment of judges to the Supreme Court and the provincial High Courts.

Though the constitution said that the President has to appoint the judges "after consultation with the CJP," the factual position is otherwise. The word 'consultation' here has been interpreted by the Supreme Court of Pakistan in the Al-Jihad case as such, that, the name recommended by the CJP is binding on the President. What else can you expect if given a chance to decide about one's own jurisdiction and power? This was however done on the principle that the independence of judiciary and separation of judiciary from the executive has to be maintained. So unlike India where a collegium of five judges of the Supreme Court decide about appointment of a new judge, in Pakistan it's one man's discretion.

In spite of Article 6 of the constitution which says that "any person who abrogates or subverts, or suspends or holds in abeyance ... the constitution by use of force ... or any other unconstitutional means shall be guilty of high treason," twice the military has over-thrown elected governments and violated the constitution. And every time it was validated by the Supreme Court of Pakistan. To check the abetting judiciary, the Eighteenth Amendment added a clause 2(A) which says: "An act of high treason mentioned in clause (1) or clause (2) shall not be validated by any court including the Supreme Court and High Court."

The National Security Council, which had a strong armed forces presence, was also packed-up by the Eighteenth Amendment. It was created on the army's demand.

The Eighteenth Amendment is also a milestone as it included a number of human rights articles in the constitution i.e.: 4 minority seats were added to the strength of the Senate; it guaranteed access to information to citizens in all public matters; right to free compulsory education to all children of the ages five to sixteen.

Not used to the smooth evolution of a democratic process, people still ask how the establishment was in a benevolent mood and allowed its favourite amendments to be deleted from the constitution. Analysts believe that the policy of reconciliation and consequent consensus among the political parties mellowed the hawks in the establishment. The army is too involved in fighting the terrorist's threat to the security of Pakistan to dictate the politicians whose support it needs in the on-going war.

The Eighteenth Amendment was indeed another win of democracy in Pakistan, and a defeat of the advocates of the benevolent dictatorship in the country. Any attempt to roll back the 18th amendment and the gains of the 7th NFC Award would be dangerous for the federation.

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# **Implications of Indo-US Entente For Pakistan By Muhammad Ayaz Nazar**

The South Asian balance of power is in transition due to the changing contours of US South Asia policy and waxing India-US relations. Strengthening ties between Pakistan and China are response to it. Russian role in the region will play as catalyst to further shape the regional power configuration as the world is moving toward multi-polarity.

During post-cold war era, Indian stance toward USA changed as US emerged sole super power in the international system after disintegration of USSR. India followed classical Kautilian philosophy of appeasement and making alliance with sole super power of international system under the prevailing wave of uni-polarity. Indo-US defense cooperation transformed into strategic partnership in 2005 due to convergence on critical regional issues particularly Afghanistan problem. The civil nuclear energy cooperation agreement of 2008 has further strengthened this partnership.

In recent years, USA has granted nuclear waiver to India in nuclear trade as gesture toward recognition of India as semi-legitimate nuclear power. India has achieved milestone in nuclear export control regime after this stimulus by signing membership of key multilateral nuclear trade agreements including The Australia group, MTCR (Missile Technology Control Regime) and The Wassenaar group. Only left multilateral treaty is NSG (Nuclear Supplier Group) for becoming functional part of multilateral nuclear material export control regime. This Indo-US strategic partnership has been strengthened due to two main reasons.

First, the lucrative Indian market economy is a best trade exchange option for USA as India has consecutive growth rate of seven percent since 1980. Second, Indian defense trade and military hardware acquisition spending policy toward US is beneficial for US military industrial complex (MIC) which in return lobbies for India in US congress and pentagon. India has purchased weapons of \$15 billion USD from 2005 to 2015 while India has emerged as top global importer of arms by surpassing China in 2015. This military procurement and trade policy has positive balance of payment in the interest of USA.

India is seeking political leverage on international forums and strategic space in Afghanistan in return for this favorable trade exchange with the US

This tradeoff is equally beneficial for India. India is seeking political leverage on international forums and strategic space in Afghanistan in return for this favorable trade exchange with the US. The US South Asia policy has become partisan with India after 2008 nuclear cooperation agreement especially on critical issues including Kashmir and cross-border terrorism in the region. This imbalance in US South Asia approach has severe security implications for Pakistan.

The relevance of Indian military modernization drive has augmented foreign and security policy endeavors of the polity. This military modernization has changed national power equation of India which will have deep implications for changing balance of power in South Asia and global transition of power. Similarly, the global balance of power has undergone significant transformations during the 21st century.

India has witnessed unprecedented political and economic rise given the transforming global power configuration. India has initiated a comprehensive military modernizations plan in order to translate its economic strength into an effective and tangible military might. Political and academic debate among strategic communities deliberate on the scale and strength of this modernization, as well as how it will influence India's relative power in the Indian Ocean and Asia-Pacific region.

The increased pace of this military modernization with available finances has result in more assertive foreign policy behaviorisms from India. This changing balance of power has depleting effect on strategic stability of south Asia which has security implications for Pakistan. India has tried to apply policy of double dealing in order to convince international community that freedom movement in Kashmir and other insurgencies in India are terrorist movements.

India wants to use political and economic support of international community as a tool in order to crush these movements through use of force which are security challenge for India. Since 2001, India is using its multi-flank diplomacy as a tool for portraying Pakistan a terrorist and pariah state before international community

in order to convince the world for supporting Indian preemptive war doctrine against Pakistan.

Under the crescent of cold-start doctrine of 2004, India has planned a strategy of preemptive war against Pakistan which has been often quoted as limited war doctrine. This cold-start doctrine was revised in 2014 while further amended in 2016 in order to make it more offensive and punitive. Surgical strikes as war option in Indian military doctrine of 2017 is an addition to it. Indian disputed claims of surgical strike in 2016 and 2018 against Pakistan are part of this strategy to pressurize Pakistan and sensitize global community.

Pakistan has vigorously rebutted these Indian claims. Rather, Pakistan has adopted full spectrum deterrence doctrine as counter balancing effort against this changing security strategy of India to thwart Indian aggression across Line of Control in Kashmir region. These emerging patterns reflect depleting strategic stability and instigated armed race as major outcomes in South Asia. Pakistan needs to skillfully launch diplomatic endeavors for garnering support from friendly regional states especially, KSA, Turkey, Iran, China and Russia to diffuse Indian prograde of isolating Pakistan by carving out regional solution of political settlement in Afghanistan.

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# **Pakistan's Place in the Trump Global Disorder** **By Shahid Javed Burki**

I published *Rising Powers and Global Governance* in 2017. The book has 14 chapters, eight of which discussed the world's major powers — the United States, China, India and Russia — and some of the troubled areas such as Afghanistan, the Middle East and Europe. I would like to quote at some length from the concluding paragraph of the chapter on the United States titled 'A Receding America?' I wrote: "In 2015-16, America stands at a threshold; how it crosses it will determine the role it will play in the world. There are a number of issues to be resolved. Once the dust thrown up by the elections of November 2016 settles, as a new president moves into the White House, America will have to decide what kind of space it wishes to occupy in a world that is going through unprecedented change. Withdrawing behind its borders is not an option. It is too large a country with too many strengths to contemplate such a move. Aggressively confronting China, a country that has made enormous and unprecedented progress, should not be regarded as an option either."

I got three things wrong in that brief paragraph written in late 2015. The dust thrown up by the presidential contest of November 2016 did not settle down. With the unexpected election of Donald J Trump as president, the dust still hangs in the air two years after the new president took office. With the adoption of 'America First' as the guiding principle of foreign policy making, President Trump has pulled his country behind a wall of isolation. And, he has begun to aggressively challenge China on several fronts, attacking what is now the world's second-largest economy.

The United States was changing even before Donald J Trump became president on January 20, 2017. There were reasons for change. The process that came to be called 'globalisation' had brought about significant changes in the system of production. Demographic developments had made the country more diverse, ethnically as well as in terms of religion.

Donald Trump's 'Make America Great Again' and 'America First' campaign were unmistakable attempts at preserving the hold of the white population — in

particular white men — over the country's political and economic systems. But this was a losing battle; nothing proved that to be the case as much as the results of the November 2018 mid-term elections. They yielded the House of Representatives that was much more diverse in terms of race as well as religion than ever. As one analyst noted, "The new members include several firsts for Congress — the first Muslim women, the first Native American women and the first African American women from several states." But there is a complete split between the country's two political parties: the Republicans and the Democrats. The nonpartisan Cook Political Report calculated after most results from the mid-term elections had been declared that the percentage of white men as a share of House Democrats is set to decline from 41% to 38% as a result of the 2018 election. Meanwhile, the percentage of white men as a share of House Republicans is set to rise from 86% to 90%.

There are several ways in which President Trump has upended the global economic and political order he inherited. He has adopted a strong anti-immigration stance, speaking openly about not wanting to bring into his country people of colour and those who follow the Muslim faith. He has begun to call himself a nationalist as opposed to a globalist, setting into motion a trend that has caught on in several European countries. By moving in that direction he has developed a wide gulf between the United States and more liberal parts of Western Europe.

He has lost the position the United States had occupied as an arbitrator in the Middle East, hoping to bring peace to this long-troubled region. In the process, he has openly sided with the Jewish state of Israel and against the Palestinians. By moving in this direction, he has encouraged the Middle Eastern monarchies in the Sunni part of the Arab world to ruthlessly suppress any moves to take these nations towards a democratic political order. The United States-Israeli-Sunni Arab alliance is also directed at pushing Iran in the hope of bringing about a change in the regime in that country. By forcing the Shiite clerics to give up political power in that country, this combination of forces will clear the space in which they could operate openly and without any constraint.

The moves against China now cover a large area. The effort is to throw obstacles in the way of China, preventing it from making further economic advance at a rate that would make it the world's largest economy. It is set to overtake the United

States in a decade or so. One part of the effort to constrain China is to form a new alliance with some of the major powers in Asia. This alliance is built on the idea of the 'quad' promoted some time ago by Japan. This would involve in addition to Japan, the United States, Australia and India. The Trump administration is calling it the Indo-Pacific Alliance. Whereas the quad was to focus on economic cooperation, the Trump administration is more focused on its military aspects. One consequence of this move is to bring India out as a counter-weight to China. For the first time in history, India is siding with one great power to work against another great power.

There were a lot of moves within a short period of less than two years during which Donald Trump has been America's president. Almost all of them are negative resulting in the creation not of a new world order but the founding of global disorder. Trump has managed to reduce the scope of multilateralism, favouring instead the bilateral approach to the making of foreign policy. He has abandoned the effort to advance liberal democracy in the Muslim world. And he has pushed China towards seeking its own way in the world rather follow the global path. Policymakers in Pakistan have to keep all this in their sight as they plan to reposition their country on the world stage.

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## **Trump At His Undiplomatic Best | Editorial**

President Donald Trump cannot speak about Pakistan without hurling accusations — of betrayal. Trump has been persistent in his bashing of a country that has been America's frontline partner in its 17-year-long war on terror ever since he entered White House in January 2017. Starting off with unveiling his Afghanistan and South Asian strategy in August 2017, the US president — in an annoyingly stern tone — warned Pakistan to 'do more' to rein in 'the agents of chaos' or face sanctions like aid cuts and losing its status as a major non-Nato ally. Trump raised the ante, choosing 'Pakistan's non-compliance' as the subject of his first tweet for the year 2018. Therein, he accused Pakistan of 'lies and deceit' and of 'providing safe havens' to terrorists, sending a clear-cut message that there will be 'no more' aid. And that was soon followed by military aid cuts to Pakistan and exclusion of its military officers from coveted training and educational programmes that had been a hallmark of the bilateral military relations for more than a decade.

At his crudest and harshest best, Trump now defends his administration's decision to stop military aid, in words that flout the norms of diplomacy and decency: "They [Pakistan] don't do a damn thing for us [against the \$1.3 billion provided every year]." The US president also claims to have evidence that Pakistanis were aware of Osama bin Laden's presence on their soil. Trump administration's tough rhetoric, meant to enhance pressure on Pakistan, reflects US frustration at not achieving any stability in Afghanistan even after 17 years of conflict — something that Prime Minister Imran Khan has also mentioned as he came up with a fitting reply. The harsh rhetoric may well be seen in the context of an Afghan endgame being worked on and hoped for, by the US, in about six months from now. The Trump administration now appears focused on reaching a political settlement with the Taliban, having given in to a number of demands of the insurgent group, including the holding of direct talks. But instead of sharpening the tone and tenor of the oratory against Pakistan, it will be far more helpful for the Trump administration to sit down with Pakistan and figure out a workable mode of engagement on the issue of Afghan political settlement.

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## **Kashmir's Unending Struggle | Editorial**

We live in a world that excels in its rhetoric to respect human rights and the sanctity of human blood. Since the end of WWII there are hundreds of international and bilateral conventions, agreements and accords that commit the nations to address all the conflicts and rifts through diplomatic manoeuvrings or negotiations.

But when it comes to the simmering bloody conflict in Kashmir the deafening silence of the international community is strange and regrettable. The world has preferred to remain a silent spectator as the blood of Kashmiri children, women and youth continues to flow into the streams of Valley. The latest is the case of the brutal assassination of Hafizullah Mir, a top leader of the Tehreek-e-Hurriyat led by Syed Ali Shah Geelani. He was shot dead by 'unidentified gunmen' at his home in Budhra area in Achabal. Mir was released only last month after two years of imprisonment in jail.

The 70-year-old dispute over Kashmir continues to threaten the co-existence of the two nuclear powers in South Asia — Pakistan and India. It became bloodier with the start of an indigenous Kashmir Freedom Movement in 1989. The Indian forces unleashed a reign of terror to tame the movement and its freedom fighters. Every innocent life that is lost in this unending struggle simply strengthens the resolve of Kashmiris to carry on this battle for freedom.

For the first time in June this year, the United Nations came out with a report highlighting the Indian forces' atrocities during July 2016 and April 2018. "In responding to demonstrations that started in 2016, Indian security forces used excessive force that led to unlawful killings and a very high number of injuries," the report reads. The killing of Mir is a clear indication that the Indian government gives a damn to the international concerns over the ongoing atrocities in India-occupied Kashmir. History tells us that it is possible to make the conquest of a territory last long but perpetually conquering a people doesn't work. And India must learn this lesson.

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## Peace Corridor | Editorial

PAKISTAN and India Thursday announced opening of the Kartarpur corridor for visa-free entry to the Indian Sikh Yatrees (pilgrims). Foreign Minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi said Prime Minister Imran Khan will lay foundation stone of Kartarpur corridor on November 28 and that Pakistan had already conveyed to India its decision to open Kartarpur corridor for Baba Guru Nanak's 550th birth anniversary.

Pakistani statement came after India's cabinet, headed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, approved the development of the Kartarpur corridor from Dera Baba Nanak in Indian Punjab's Gurdaspur district to the International Border. The corridor will connect Dera Baba Nanak in Indian Punjab's Gurdaspur to Kartarpur in Pakistan's Narowal district where the Gurdwara Darbar Sahib — the shrine of revered saint Baba Guru Nanak — is situated. Welcoming the development, Minister for Information and Broadcasting Fawad Chaudhary has aptly described it as a victory for peace. Terming it as a step in the right direction, he hoped such steps will encourage voice of reason and tranquillity on both sides of the border. Pakistan's initiative and response in this regard is in line with the commitment made by Army Chief General Qamar Javed Bajwa. In August, the COAS had told Indian politician Navjot Singh Sidhu that Pakistan would open the Kartarpur crossing "when [the Sikh community] celebrates the 550th birth anniversary of Baba Nanak", during latter's visit to Islamabad for Prime Minister Imran Khan's oath-taking ceremony. Interestingly, the gesture of the two sides is focused on pleasing the Sikh community but if implemented with sincerity, it can help melt ice between the two countries in the backdrop of almost daily rhetoric. Otherwise too, Pakistan has been extending every possible facility to Sikh Yatrees during their visit and stay in Pakistan to participate in religious festivals and offer rituals. As for opening of the said corridor, various proposals have been discussed and announcements made since the Musharraf era, but lack of interest by the Indian side has kept the proposals confined to cold storage. Anyhow, it is a welcome development and we hope the move would not be confined to just Kartarpur crossing and the two countries would take similar confidence building measures to ease tension and move towards substantial talks for resolution of all outstanding issues for the sake of sustainable peace in the region.

Source: <https://pakobserver.net/peace-corridor/>

# **Restructuring The Civil bureaucracy By**

## **Nasir Khan**

We are living in the twenty first century with latest technology gadgets but still we've the bureaucratic system that was given by the British. It is very difficult to be a part of the twenty first century economy with a nineteenth century bureaucracy and with eighteenth century rules. This is what our bureaucratic system is.

The legislature, the judiciary and the executives are the key players of any government. The legislature constructs the laws, judiciary interprets laws and executives implement those laws. The executives are the bureaucrats who exercise their authority to work for public related issues by applying laws. Civil servants play a pivotal role, shaping and transmitting a national vision and development agencies in public policy formulation and implementation.

With an emphasis on good governance in Pakistan; attention has focused on the quality of public administration, a linchpin in any country's development when it comes to policy analysis, formulation and delivery of development programmes. A vivacious, spirited and vigorous civil service is the means for progress, good governance and national development. The civil services are guided and controlled by secrecy, anonymity, neutrality, objectivity, fairness and impartiality.

Policy formulation at state level isn't an easy job. The executives play the key role to constitute the policies as our legislatures are less educated and have no vision. But the dilemma with Pakistan is that its civil servants have also no interest in the betterment of the system.

They know that if the status quo is ended then their authority will also be challenged and their ways of bribes will be reduced. Pakistan has been unlucky since its inception, because it did not get a true, optimistic, patriotic, and devoted leader. In Pakistan, if you want to get a legal job done, you need to pay a bribe otherwise it will be prolonged. This is red tape which promotes corruption and bribery. So how is it possible that these so called civil servants play a positive role for pro-public policies?

Civil servants are considered to be the most prestigious, powerful and extraordinary people. Civil servants are easily contemptuous of legal chains when they know that they lack sufficient consequences for their misusing power. It can be called human nature and civil servants are the humans.

The executives are in a position of power and authority. They are the first face representatives of the government. They tilt towards the political elite and they work for vested interests. They abuse their power to grab financial as well as political benefits. Nepotism, favoritism, biases, and discrimination are prevalent in the bureaucracy in Pakistan.

Bureaucrats are in a position to intimidate, threaten, coerce, intentionally withhold information, violate fairness and good faith, and, sometimes, they have an unrevealed conflict of interest. This is again the representation of abusing the authority.

Common citizens are not educated and aware of laws. Civil servants take advantage of the unawareness of the public. The abuse of authority includes the deliberate use of power for some particular aim which cannot be justified legitimately and even logically.

A big set back is that the bureaucracy has to obey politicians for promotions and other fringe benefits. Thus, there is a dire need to depoliticise the bureaucracy

Bureaucracies can play a key role in progress and national development if they are non-politicised, transparent, and accountable. Military and authoritarian rule in Pakistan has influenced negatively the political culture which leads to chaos and unrest in the country. There is a dire need to change and reform the civil services to create democratic values which have become imperative for Pakistan. Effective and efficient bureaucracy will act as a vehicle for the betterment of Pakistan.

In Pakistan, years of military and authoritarian rule has cultivated a depressing and pessimist political culture on the ideology and philosophy of the civil service, despite all, its role and responsibility in national progress and development cannot be undervalued. It has become imperative to bring revolutionary reforms in civil and public service in accordance with democratic values. Efficient and effective civil service will be a catalyst for development in Pakistan. On contrast, its

inefficiency and ineffectiveness can compose and compile as one of the heaviest stones round the neck of Pakistan.

Consequently, the civil services of Pakistan remain very influential, decisive, vital and critical to progress, advancement, national development and democratic solidarity and stability.

Due to the failure of civil services, Pakistan is facing many challenges at local, national and even at the international level. There is a myth that corruption and bribery are associated with the civil services in Pakistan. Politicisation of the top civil services causes high political destabilisation. A big setback is that the bureaucracy has to obey politicians for promotions and other fringe benefits. Thus, there is a dire need to depoliticise the bureaucracy.

Creativity is one thing which is always important but vision is another that is always mandatory. The fickle and capricious minded political elite who change their opinions faster than they change their clothes, have vested political and financial interests and they neglect the meritocracy at large. They make the lives of government officials miserable and despondent. It has become mandatory to empathise and console with those who undergo or suffer the stigma and contamination of vigilance and alertness strictures and sometimes dismissal from their services.

In the current era, accelerated change has been brought about by the use of technological advancements, greater decentralisation and socio-political activism. The ramifications and consequences of these changes and modifications must be felt by the government to increase and enhance the expectations and potential for improved governance through efficient and effective service delivery, honesty, transparent, accountability, responsibility, and the rule of law. The bureaucracy or the civil service is the primary and it must keep pace with the changing time in order to meet the needs of the hour and the aspirations of the public. The rationale of bringing reforms to reorient the bureaucracy into dynamic, energetic, vibrant, efficient and accountable apparatus for the public service deliverance establish on ethos, and values of integrity, veracity, truthfulness, impartiality and neutrality. It is mandatory for sustainable development and the proper function of the state.

Professionalism is the key to success for the civil services. There is a dire need to develop professional skills and knowledge in bureaucrats. They normally depend on their subordinates who use malpractices, and ultimately they become a part of the corruption just because of the lack of professionalism.

The system has been paralysed with a number of precedents. The wheels hobble at a slow melancholy pace. Honest, dedicated, and competent civil servants must concentrate on human capital reforms to create a high performing state. The system or the bureaucracy that devastates its valuable human potential is morally, ethically and decently indefensible. The bureaucracy must facilitate the decision making in the right direction for the betterment of the state. It must be non-politicised and result oriented. There must a revolutionary change in the civil services otherwise there is no hope of change.

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# **India and Pakistan Bid for the Membership of the NSG By Adeela Ahmed**

The 48 years journey of India and Pakistan resulted in them getting the de-facto Nuclear Weapons Status. Since the last 20 years, both rivals have developed their arsenals in accordance with Credible Minimum Deterrence to meet the demands of nuclear strategy and security environment.

Henceforth, with the modification of global dynamics, India and Pakistan bid for the membership of Nuclear Suppliers Group. They aspire to enter into a legitimate Nuclear Regime to gain global recognition, power, prestige, and security.

India's bid for NSG membership is backed with powerful states in disguise as Nuclear Weapon States, playing their Great Game to control the power politics of the Asia Pacific Region. India's real motive is to have access to Nuclear technology from International markets, admission in the international arena of nuclear commerce, get more Uranium for Nuclear Reactors and fulfil their demand for thermonuclear weapons, Import Nuclear weapons (Russia-France), and easy to produce missile capabilities. The aggressive aims are undermining the guidelines of NSG and are a grave threat to regional stability.

In addition to that, India's Strategic ambitions are eminent to its recent Strategic collaborations with France and Russia. It shows that their future plans are not just confined to the peaceful use of Nuclear Technology. Moreover, India is acquiring Iгла-S system, Vshorad missiles, S-400 Triumph, Eurofighter Typhoon, LCA-Tejas MK 1A, Mig-21s, Su-30 MKI, Rafale, AK-103 assault rifles, Nuclear Submarines from different defence deals. The existence of India's secret nuclear city Challakere highlights India's ambitions to become a regional power. Their stance to match the nuclear arsenal of China and Pakistan is a big bluff.

India is using all its resources to avail the NSG membership. They are lobbying with close friendly states to work with other members to get India acknowledged in the NSG. India is also addressing concerns of some member countries over India's non-NPT status. India is stressing that admission must be 'merit-based', and not 'criteria-based', as advocated by China, and that being a member of groupings like

the Australia Group, Missile Technology Control Regime, and Wassenaar Arrangement, boosts its credentials.

Out of the 48, 41 members are with India while China, Ireland, New Zealand, Austria, Turkey, South Africa have objections to exceptionalism and insistence on the development of a uniform criteria for the entry of all non-NPT nuclear states

Moreover, President Obama explicitly committed himself to facilitate India's entry into the four components of the international export control regime, namely the MTCR, the Australia Group, the Wassenaar, and the NSG. India has recently been granted the STA-1 status and can avail new strategic opportunities under a 2+2 Framework which can open the doors of international nuclear commerce for India. It is an open threat to regional stability and violation of NPT Regime.

Alice Wells, the Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for South Asia and Central Asia said that we moved ahead with an STA-1 authorization and we certainly believe that India meets all of the qualifications of the Nuclear Suppliers group and will endure to actively advocate on behalf of India's membership.

Beijing backed a two-step approach which demanded that the NSG members first need to arrive at a set of principles for the admission of non-NPT states into the NSG and then move forward with the negotiations. Talks between the Indian and Chinese officials on the subject were "forward-looking". Apart from China, there are others factor that are a hurdle for India to achieve NSG status, including India's refusal to sign the CTBT and the Fissile Material Cut-Off Treaty.

NSG member nations are typically nuclear nations that come together as a global control regime for trade in nuclear materials, equipment, and technology. India's bid for membership violates the rules and regulations of NSG.

If India does get the membership, it will not support Pakistan's membership and it will sabotage Pakistan's sovereignty. Pakistan wants global recognition, as the country's defence policies will be in danger due to the US' and India's aggressive aims. The US exempts India from rules and regulations for civilian nuclear trade and facilitates it with a legal right for the sake of playing their own Great Game in the Asia Pacific Region. The Indian government has accelerated its diplomatic efforts to participate on the NSG's high tables as a full-fledged member.

Out of the 48, 41 members are with India while China, Ireland, New Zealand, Austria, Turkey, South Africa have objections to exceptionalism and insistence on development of a uniform criteria for the entry of all non-NPT nuclear states. Hence, it is vital to strengthen the criteria and norm-based approach and revisit multilateral approaches to strengthen the Proliferation Regime. Moreover, criteria Based Approach will benefit Pakistan's security concerns.

On contrary, Pakistan has defensive Nuclear Posture which had maintained Full Spectrum deterrence to counter Indian Cold Start Doctrine and Pakistan Nuclear policy is not aggressive/offensive to obtain more fissile material for nuclear weapons. The reality of Nuclear South Asia is that whatsoever, the Nuclear Treaty, Group or Agreement have to be signed, India and Pakistan evaluate their Strategic calculations with each other to keep their National Security foremost.

Pakistan must strengthen its diplomatic lobbying skills to collaborate with others NSG member states to defend Pakistan so that it can get the NSG membership along with India. Tasnim Aslam, head of the UN desk at the Foreign Office stated that "Pakistan has the expertise, manpower, infrastructure and the ability to supply NSG controlled items, goods, and services for a full range of nuclear applications for peaceful uses".

Presently, there is a need for dialogue to discuss the issue and the role of the US and Russia which cannot be negated. The US is only responsible for securing its own interests, it should motivate regional states towards peace instead of making its own interests a top priority. India's policy of isolating Pakistan and its hostile attitude towards Pakistan is hazardous for South Asian Stability.

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## **India's Intransigent Approach | Editorial**

THE inauguration of the Kartarpur corridor had many of the ingredients for what a normalised relationship between Pakistan and India could look like: the governments of Pakistan and India working together to facilitate people-to-people contact and religious tourism; Indian officials visiting Pakistan in a relaxed, even joyful manner; and a speech by Prime Minister Imran Khan that hit all the right notes of amity and regional peace and prosperity.

Mr Khan made no mention of the unfortunate diplomatic flap in September, when Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi rejected in extraordinarily harsh language Mr Khan's offer to restart bilateral dialogue, and chose, instead, to focus on the theme of common responsibility.

"There have been mistakes on both sides ... We should not live in the past. It should be used to learn lessons," Mr Khan said yesterday.

Unhappily, the Indian government rushed to smother the goodwill generated by the inauguration of the corridor, and once again doused hopes that bilateral dialogue may be restarted soon.

Indian Foreign Minister Sushma Swaraj's extraordinary comments yesterday leave no doubt that the hawks in the Indian ruling party and establishment continue to control Indian policy towards Pakistan.

What is less clear is what Ms Swaraj is hoping to achieve with her fierce rhetoric against Pakistan.

Perhaps the Indian foreign minister wanted to counter the joyous scenes from Narowal district yesterday that would otherwise have dominated the news cycle in both countries.

It was surely a muddled approach to achieving a small, though highly symbolic, breakthrough.

Ms Swaraj has stated that there will be no bilateral dialogue while there are “terrorist activities” inside India, allegedly sponsored or organised by Pakistan, but that is a roundabout way of saying there will be no dialogue at all in any circumstances.

While India may have some legitimate complaints, as does Pakistan against India, there is no plausible scenario in which not talking to Pakistan at all will address the issues on both sides.

For Pakistan, the challenge will remain to keep open the offer of dialogue to India, while doing whatever can be done to reduce regional tensions.

The Kartarpur corridor is an example of how Pakistan may be able to slowly win hearts and minds in India, something that could eventually put pressure on the Indian state to restart dialogue with Pakistan.

However, Indian intransigence and bloody-mindedness risks the possibility of hawks in Pakistan demanding a response to India.

The earlier brash rejection of dialogue by India eventually elicited a strong and undiplomatic response from Mr Khan.

The PTI government is still finding its feet and has already suffered domestic blows to its mandate and authority.

Prime Minister Modi and his government should pause and reflect on what it is they hope to achieve by repeatedly slapping back a hand offered in peace.

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## **Arms For Peace | Editorial**

THE 10th International Defence Exhibition and Seminar (IDEAS) is underway in Karachi, bringing together all the industry's players across the globe to showcase the latest technological innovations in defence sector. Pakistan has regularly been hosting the strategically important event in the backdrop of the reality that Asian region is one of the largest markets for defence products and the governments allocate significant budgets for modernization and up-gradation programs for their armed forces.

With the passage of time, Pakistan has emerged as one of the quality manufacturers and suppliers of the defence arms and equipment. The IDEAS is hosted as part of the efforts to seek international alliances to meet the requirements of armed forces and growing needs of the regional defence forces. Pakistan's own defence products present a perfect mix of indigenous and foreign technologies thus offering an ideal platform for defence collaboration. The show provides an excellent platform to project Pakistan's potential as supplier of quality arms and ammunition and a reliable partner in defence production. Though Pakistan's nuclear weapons programme and missile development capability is not meant for technology transfer, collaboration or sale but these do indicate that the country was capable enough to master even complicated and most advanced technologies. However, there is a marked difference between Pakistan's defence capability and those of some other countries as Pakistan has proved its credentials as a peace loving country by offering a number of initiatives aimed at promoting regional and global security and stability. The topic of IDEAS-2018 "Arms for Peace" is also manifestation of the country's desire to have a strong defence capability but just for ensuring peace and stability. President Dr Arif Alvi, who inaugurated the four-day event in Karachi, rightly pointed out that Pakistan does not like wars since they bring nothing but "hunger, lack of nutrition and misery". He categorically declared that Pakistan wants peace, it has been striving for peace in a belligerent neighbourhood but it must stay strong adding "our weapons are for peaceful intent". Pakistan's decision to maintain minimum credible deterrence is also a clear proof of the country's desire for peace. We hope that Pakistan would be able to forge partnership with some friendly countries to develop its defence industry on modern lines so that it not only meets requirements of our own forces but also those of some other countries in a highly competitive environment.

Source: <https://pakobserver.net/arms-for-peace/>

## **New National Action Plan | Editorial**

The need for a new National Action Plan (NAP) would have made more sense if the original one had been implemented in letter and spirit and still found wanting. It was pretty clear that the previous government just did not have the political will and resolve to implement the vital plan. So far, in the little time it has been in office, the new government has not placed it anywhere near the top of its list of priorities either. Now it turns out that the inaction owed to a new plan in the works; one that is the brainchild of Minister of State for Interior Shehryar Khan Afridi.

But wasn't one of the positives of the old plan that it had across-the-board participation and acceptance? How can a new one, which 'bridges the gaps' of the old one, replace it if it is the working of only one man? Wasn't the old way of doing it, which involved building consensus, also the right way? Considering the APS tragedy that forced the NAP in the first place, shouldn't the government take all political and security bodies on board for consultations before announcing something so important?

There is a lot of confusion on the political front at the moment. The government, seemingly obsessed with its accountability drive (which the opposition calls a blatant witch hunt), has alienated everybody else on the political horizon. So much so that no crucial committee has yet been formed in the House. It is imperative not to let this political environment impact the realm of security. No matter how much various political outfits dislike each other, they will simply have to work together on matters of security, if not much more, in the interest of the people and service of the state. The government is advised to make all efforts to first implement the original plan, then get across-the-board consensus before formulating a new one. Simply imposing its own plan on others, at this point, would only amount to putting the cart before the horse.

Source: <https://www.pakistantoday.com.pk/2018/11/28/new-national-action-plan/>

# PAKISTAN & WORLD RELATIONS

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## **Pakistan-Russian Friendship By Leonid Savin**

At the end of October, the “Friendship-2018” joint Russian and Pakistani military exercises were held in Pakistan. More than 200 members of the special armed forces of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan and a special reconnaissance unit of the motorized mountain brigade of the Southern Military District of Russia located in the Karachay-Cherkess Republic were involved in the exercises.

There are several key points of the past exercises. The first is technical details. At the training complex, from a height of more than 20 m, the exercise participants jointly carried out a non-parachute landing with a method of descent to the ground using a special rope in full gear. The mastering of such skills will allow the special forces of the two countries to carry out a practical descent to the ground on a special rope while helicopters hover in the air at an altitude of more than 20 m.

“Mastering a non-parachute assault landing method allows landing a tactical assault force in places where the helicopter’s landing on the ground is limited, in particular, on the mountain slopes, as well as in the forest,” explained the commander of the Russian motorized brigade of the Southern Military District, Captain Egor Krainov.

After the landing, the servicemen worked out the procedure for organizing the defense of the landing area, fire ambushes and repelling the attack of conventional terrorists in the mountains.

To create an environment as close as possible to the combat, imitation tools were used, including explosion-packs, smoke bombs and blank cartridges. Also, the Russian and Pakistani military personnel completed the assault in order to simulate capturing a building and freeing prisoners.

According to the scenario of the exercise, the “terrorists” seized a two-story building in the highlands. During the active phase of the operation, joint assault groups made their way to the building, captured by a conditional enemy, and penetrated the premises under the cover of a smoke screen. After that, the military carried out a sweep of the building, during which they used stun grenades.

The second is the diplomatic effect. Such events help to establish trust, especially if all stages are done openly and transparently, as well as understandable to all parties.

Third, the exercises also had a great media effect, at least in Russia. All the leading news agencies (both state owned and private) wrote about the various stages of the maneuvers. And the “Star” TV channel of the Russian Defense Ministry did reports from the scene. This is a very important nuance. After all, there are still prejudices in Russian society connected with the deployment of Soviet troops in Afghanistan in 1979-89 and the role of Pakistan in the Afghan conflict. Therefore, the report from the exercise site had a long-term and deep impact. It is superimposed on the overall perception and changes the discourse.

In the current geopolitical situation and in light of the irresponsible behavior of the United States (and their satellites) on the world stage, the implementation of joint Russian-Pakistani projects, including military cooperation, will help strengthen security in Eurasia in the interests of all participants.

We can recall how such cooperation with China developed. From friendly exchanges of delegations and tactical exercises, Russia and China have moved on to strategic interaction, as evidenced by the recent “East-2018” maneuvers (the active phase was from 11 to 17 of September). These games are interesting to mention for a number of reasons.

These exercises became the largest in the history of contemporary Russia. If we make comparisons, then the last time maneuvers of a similar size took place was 37 years ago – the West-81 exercises, which took place in 1981 with the participation of the armed forces of the Soviet Union and the Warsaw Pact countries (at that time the commander of games was marshal Nikolai Ogarkov). Instead of the Warsaw Pact, partners in the West, China and Mongolia now take part in the exercises. This is the second factor. At the same time, it should be noted

that Chinese officers were admitted to the headquarters of the exercises, so they actually took part in the command and control process as well. At the Tsugol training ground, the motorized infantry of the armed forces of Mongolia and more than three thousand servicemen of the People's Liberation Army of China were involved. On the Chinese side, aircraft and helicopters were also involved.

On the part of Russia, the maneuvers involved about 80 ships and support vessels, more than 36,000 tanks, armored personnel carriers and other vehicles and about 1000 UAVs. The logistics component of this should also be noted, since Russia also employed about 200 echelons of trains for the transportation of equipment and servicemen, and the distance between the extreme eastern and extreme western point of the exercise was more than four thousand kilometers. The maneuvers themselves were preceded by another sudden check of the combat readiness of the troops on the 20th of August.

The maneuvers "East-2018" were held for the first time on a bilateral basis. Two groups opposed each other, on the one hand, the troops of the Central Military District and the Northern Fleet, on the other hand, formations and units of the Eastern Military District and the Pacific Fleet.

READ MORE: Australia extends 'backpacker visas' to ease farm worker shortage

During the exercises, a new tactic of the operation of the landing units was applied. According to the legend of the exercises, the Marines had to storm the shore of the Klerk landfill, on which the conventional adversary was located. Under heavy fire Mi-8 helicopters landed on the shore. At strategic altitudes snipers and machine gunners were fixed. From the air they were covered by Su-25 frontline attack aircraft. Then came the breakthrough of the defense line of the "enemy," after which the landing boats swam onto the shore: a strike group on infantry fighting vehicles. Then a squad joined the "battle," reinforced with a flamethrower compartment. Also in the composition of each of its platoons were grenade launchers and machine guns.

For the first time, the entire operation "East-2018" including aviation, ships, and Marines was directed from the ship command post located at the Marshal Krylov measuring complex. From its side it is possible to communicate with any point on the planet, coordinating actions of troops. It should be noted that in the armed forces of Russia an automated command and control system is used, which has



been repeatedly worked out on previous exercises. Also, for the first time, new invisible missiles were tested.

It should be noted that the exercises were fairly transparent – they were attended by numerous observers from different countries that personally could see what the Russian armed forces are now capable of. There were also no friendly fire incidents or other injuries of servicemen reported. Apparently, these maneuvers will be the beginning of a new tradition of conducting military games in Russia. Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu said that major military exercises will be held every five years. According to him, the state armament program is designed for ten years, but maneuvers must be organized more often.

Let's get back to Russian-Pakistani relations. We are now waiting for naval exercises in February at the port of Karachi, where Russia will take part. And then the two nations will need to move on to strategic interaction.

The writer is Editor of Russian think tank Geopolitic.

Source: <https://nation.com.pk/05-Nov-2018/pakistan-russian-friendship>

## **A Turnaround In Ties | Editorial**

In the recent past, Pakistan's policymakers became convinced that seeking partners in the region would help it more in overcoming the challenges it was facing. The shift in foreign policy paradigm was a right move for the partnership between Islamabad and Washington was not based on equal terms as successive American presidents tried to cover their failures in Afghanistan by scapegoating Pakistan. The shift in Pakistan's foreign policy is visible as Imran met his Russian counterpart, Dmitry Medvedev in Shanghai.

Prime Ministers of both the nations agreed on enhancing bilateral relations in diverse areas. Improving cooperation between the two countries is what is needed most at the moment. And both sides have realised the fact that participation in one area of mutual benefit will open vistas for cooperation in other fields. Pakistan has recognised the effectiveness of regionalism only after consistent American betrayals.

The recent thaw in Pakistan-Russia relations is key regional development. The warmth in the bilateral ties indicates that Russia is acting on its strategy of developing new partnerships in the region. The meeting between the Prime Ministers of the two states and the recently concluded military exercises that both sides had held together shows that the two countries are warming up to each other as the changing geo-strategic situation demands so.

Not ignoring the fact that it is in the long-term interest of Pakistan to establish mutually constructive relations with Russia. Efforts should be made to forge ties with Moscow without expecting immediate results. It is just a matter of time that Russia will be forced to adopt a more balanced foreign policy towards South Asia. Given the decreasing role of the United States (US) in our foreign policy tilt towards regional powers is the natural and sensible choice. The government, especially the military taking initiatives that are mutually beneficial are praiseworthy. More such step will be welcome.

The military under Chief of Army Staff (COAS), General Qamar Bajwa, understands well that through confidence-building measures and cooperation on issues like terrorism, threats of destabilisation in Central Asia, and formation on a

consensus-based government in Afghanistan may bring the two sides closer. The words of COAS, “Exercise is a great forum to reinforce existing relationship between the two militaries,” and Imran Khan’s stress on increasing economic cooperation with Moscow means that a multi-pronged strategy is at play to take the Russo-Pak ties to new heights.

It is high time that a paradigm shift takes place from the Cold War Era ‘zero-sum’ approach to people-centred cooperative security driven economic and strategic partnership for the progress of the region. And the latest developments suggest that Islamabad and Moscow realise this.

Source: <https://nation.com.pk/07-Nov-2018/a-turnaround-in-ties>

# **Will Iran-Pakistan Ties Improve Under Imran Khan? By Ahmad Faruqui**

The Prime Minister, less than a hundred days in office, has already visited Saudi Arabia, the UAE and China. The visits have secured funding to mitigate the twin financial deficits and strengthened ties with those countries.

How about ties with Iran, Pakistan's western neighbour with a population of some 80 million? The two countries share a long cultural history that precede the latter's independence in 1947.

The court language of the Mughals who reigned over pre-British India was Persian and the tombs of their emperors bear Persian inscriptions. Pakistan itself is a Persian word, its national anthem is in Persian, and its national language, Urdu, is written in the Persian script. Chaste Urdu abounds in Persian words and literary allusions.

Presidents Ayub and Yahya who ruled in the 1958-71 period maintained close ties with Iran which was then ruled by the Shah. President Iskandar Mirza, overthrown by Ayub in 1958 and exiled to the UK, was denied a funeral in Pakistan. The Shah allowed his body to be buried in Tehran.

Strains developed in Iran-Pakistan ties during the tenure of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, which ran from 1971-1977. Bhutto sought closer ties with the oil-rich Gulf States in the wake of the Arab oil embargo, much to the discomfiture of the Shah of Iran.

Iran-Pakistan ties reached their nadir in 1979 when the Shah was overthrown and the Soviets invaded Afghanistan. President Zia said goodbye to Iran and welcome to Saudi Arabia. He replaced Khuda Hafiz with "Allah Hafiz," a clumsy coinage that is not to be found anywhere in the Arab world. Ayatollah Khomeini termed him Zia ul-Batil.

In recent years, border skirmishes have marred relations between Iran and Pakistan. What is the future of Iran-Pakistan ties under Prime Minister Imran

Khan? I put that question to Alex Vatanka, a scholar at the Middle East Institute who has authored a recent book on Iran-Pakistan ties.

Vatanka recalled that during a visit to Islamabad the lights went out at the airport. He said all the foreigners in the immigration line were shocked. How could the lights go out in the capital of a country with 200 million people that prides itself on being the only Muslim country with nuclear weapons? But the Pakistanis seemed resigned to power outages.

Vatanka wondered why an energy starved country like Pakistan was not availing itself of its proximity to Iran, which is blessed with one of the largest oil reserves in the world and the world's largest gas reserves.

Why had Pakistan not built an oil or gas pipeline with Iran? Why had it not built a transmission line to Iran, connecting the power grid of the two countries? Millions of Pakistanis were suffering blackouts because their nation was not engaging with Iran.

The reason was not hard to identify. The US and the Gulf States were dead opposed to Pakistan improving its ties with Iran. Once again, politics had stumped economics.

Most likely, Pakistan will continue to deepen its ties with the Gulf Arab states, totally ignoring their abject record on human rights and turning a blind eye to how they treat Pakistani expatriates in the region

Vatanka observed that Pakistan's foreign and defence policies were driven by a fear of India. While the Shah had provided substantial military and economic assistance to Pakistan, notably during the Indo-Pakistan wars of 1965 and 1971, the regime of the Ayatollah's was unable to do so. Thus, "Since 1971 Pakistan had focused on getting largesse from the Gulf to fight India."

In addition to assisting Pakistan directly, the Shah had also acted as Pakistan's interlocutor with the US. The Ayatollah's were in no position to intercede on Pakistan's behalf to anyone. Plus they maintained strong economic ties with India.

Because of their shortsighted policies, Vatanka argues that both Pakistan and Iran are “punching below their weight.” While Pakistan continues to indulge in Indo-phobia, the Ayatollahs harbor a “vague notion of independence from the West.” Both believe that religion is the cure to all their ills.

When the Shah was deposed, many of his supporters went into exile, or were arrested or executed. They were replaced with rank amateurs. I can attest to that since two of the graduate students at the University of California who got their doctorates with me in 1979 were soon appointed to high positions in the Khomeini regime. One became the governor of Khuzestan and the other as the governor of the central bank (later, he became the finance minister).

During his tenure from 1977 and 1988, Zia ignored Iran, despite the historical ties between the two countries, and despite the presence of the second or third largest population of Shia Muslims in the world, and focused on the Arab states.

Today, the Iranians don't trust the Pakistanis, seeing them as a people who have sold themselves to the Gulf Arabs for near term gains, ie, to get the money they need to fight India.

Competition has replaced cooperation between Iran and Pakistan. The ports of Gwadar and Chabahar ports, located less than a hundred miles from each other, engage in head-to-head competition. With the arrival of an additional \$6 billion in its coffers from the Saudi's, Pakistan may not be able to stay out of the Yemini conflict for very long.

Vatanka said that Pakistan's relationship with India is suffused with strategic myopia and it's unlikely that anything will change during Imran Khan's tenure. Dark religious forces have penetrated Pakistan's strategic culture and it will prove difficult for any prime minister, least of all one with a tenuous majority in parliament, to remove them from their dominant role, as the controversy over the judgment in the Asia Bibi case has shown. Religion has weakened Pakistan from within.

Most likely, Pakistan will continue to deepen its ties with the Gulf Arab states, totally ignoring their abject record on human rights and turning a blind eye to how they treat Pakistani expatriates in the region.

Vatanka said the time has come for Pakistan to move beyond the Kashmir dispute with India. It's a "land dispute" with no solution. It should stop pursuing strategic depth in Afghanistan in anticipation of a future war with India. Most importantly, it should stop blaming the Americans, the Israelis, and the Indians for all its woes. Many of the problems are self-inflicted.

Imran has offered to mediate the conflict between Riyadh and Tehran. Mediating between warring countries is a tall order, fraught with failure. General Zia failed to mediate the conflict between Tehran and Baghdad and the Iran-Iraq War raged for eight years.

Perhaps Imran should put the onus on Riyadh and Tehran, both of whom trade extensively with New Delhi, and ask one or both of them to mediate the conflict between India and Pakistan.

The writer is a defence analyst and economist. He has authored Rethinking the National Security of Pakistan (Ashgate Publishing, 2003)

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Source: <https://dailytimes.com.pk/318855/will-iran-pakistan-ties-improve-under-imran-khan/>

# **Pak-US Relations and Afghan Quagmire By** **Waqar Masood Khan**

Anybody learning the right lessons here?

After a hiatus of several months the Americans are back taking a swipe at Pakistan in the aftermath of a tragic ‘insider’ attack on senior American and Afghan security officials in Kandahar. The Secretary of State Mike Pompeo was his usual self in sending a blunt message: “We expect Pakistan to curb terrorists fighting in Afghanistan and it will be held accountable if it fails to do so”.

He went on to say: “We don’t believe we can get to the place that everyone wants, right. Everyone wants reconciliation in Afghanistan, and to achieve that, you can’t have a safe harbour for Taliban, for Haqqani, and for others inside of Pakistan”. He also made it clear that “the Pakistani government knows that that’s our view and this administration has already made significant efforts to hold them accountable, and we hope that they’ll achieve the goal that we’ve set for them”. It was perhaps a reference to suspension of reimbursement of expenses Pakistan’s security forces provide in support of the US operations on the alleged ground of presence of Afghan militants in the country, which is vehemently denied by Islamabad.

The message, laced in a language suitable for a master-servant relation, was given in a news briefing in response to a question from an Afghan journalist. Earlier, soon after the Kandahar incident, the Afghan president, Mr Ashraf Ghani, had claimed that the planning for the attack was done in Pakistan. He did not disclose the basis of this assertion. Clearly, Secretary of State’s response could well be aimed at giving credence to Afghan government’s view. But it could also be a result of the sheer audacity and nerve-racking nature of the attack in Kandahar.

For the first time, the commander of the NATO forces, a US army general, was the target of the attack who narrowly survived unhurt. Three senior Afghan officials, including the police chief Abdul Raziq, who had earned considerable notoriety in stamping out Taliban from wherever he was posted, were not so lucky and two American guards were also wounded. The job was done by Taliban sleepers embedded in the provincial governor’s (who was also killed) body guards.



This was the most lethal insider attack, which have become the leading cause of deaths of coalition troops in Afghanistan since they were disengaged from active combat. A total of 102 insider attacks have taken place. This has perverted the symbiotic relationship between the US and the Afghan forces. How can a mission aimed at training and mentoring the Afghan forces be successful when the very people trained and mentored open fire on their trainers and mentors, and that too, in most of the cases, from behind, the most symbolic form of treachery? The distrust and demoralisation sowed amongst coalition servicemen by such attacks saps more energies than during active combat. A notable politician being the Mayor of a town in the State of Utah had gone for a second round of his national guard duty in Afghanistan where he was killed by a gunshot suspected from an insider.

Once the anger had sub-sided, the US dispatched its Deputy Assistant Secretary Alice Wells, an accomplished diplomat with long experience of South Asia

In the backdrop of Kandahar tragedy, Danny Sjrursen, a retired US army officer, who served on several combat and reconnaissance missions in both Afghanistan and Iraq asked a fundamental question: What, then, can we say about this near miss ambush, and how does it reflect on the war effort – America’s longest – in Afghanistan writ large? He gives the reply: “the US mission is failing by every measurable metric – notably in politics and security. The attack, and the identity of those killed, demonstrate the murky nature of the entire mission in this landlocked, inhospitable corner of the globe. Two salient facts stand out – 1) the Taliban contest a record number of districts, and, obviously can strike where and when they choose – killing a provincial governor, police chief, and nearly hitting the top US general in the country; 2) some of the Afghan dead were themselves shady figures – demonstrating the gray zone of the US operations in the Central Asia”. [Emphasis added]

It is a curious response from the senior State Department officials to attempt to turn their ire and bile on Pakistan. May be this is because Pakistan is a plausible scapegoat, given its sturdiness to withstand countless challenges it has been subjected to since the Russian invasion and the endless war-like situation that has prevailed in Afghanistan since then.

As if what the secretary of state said was not enough, the ante was upped by a report that a day earlier at a seminar held at the Woodrow Wilson Center, a Washington-based think tank, the Acting Deputy Assistant Secretary for Pakistan Henry Ensher referred to alleged “safe havens” for Taliban, attacking the US forces, and Pakistan’s “nuclear weapons and materials” as the two main concerns of the Trump administration. He claimed that the US has and will continue to exert “pressure of all sorts” to persuade Pakistan to change its policies. In his keynote address, he said that “We can no longer be silent about the fact that some externally focused terrorist groups enjoy safe haven in Pakistan’s territory”.

Mr Ensher, who assumed the charge of his new position only in October, is a novice in Pak-US relations. Much of his career was spent in Iraq and Afghanistan mostly acting as civilian adjunct to military missions: “... bringing stability to Afghanistan was the “primary and major area of policy divergence” with Pakistan, and reminded Islamabad that “no partnership can survive such disconnect”. He was not impressed by recent gains Pakistan made in clearing its territory from militants, as he complained that this was not helpful to them since Haqqani network was not eliminated. He further said “Pakistan has much to gain from partnering with our peace effort in Afghanistan and much to lose by providing safe haven to terrorists...” In a mix of excitement of the new job and ignorance of the dynamics and history of Paki-US relations, he was quite brash when he said: “Pakistan would be held accountable if terrorists operating from its territory were not curbed”. He further warned that “Pakistan’s battlefield nuclear weapons pose a greater risk from theft and misuse and increase the risk that a conventional conflict between India and Pakistan could escalate to use of nuclear weapons”.

These outbursts could well serve some domestic purpose, but they are utterly unhelpful in cementing a stronger partnership with Pakistan. The tone and tenor of discourse is downright undiplomatic, if not insulting. Pakistan is not a servant and the US is not a master; yet enough compost has been heaped by Trump administration on a sovereign country. Top Pakistani leadership both civil and military has repeatedly said that Pakistan seeks no assistance from the US. We do want a friendly relation based on trust, respect and mutual interest. Furthermore, we have the ability to determine our own interests, without others lecturing us on this subject. We have red lines that we would not allow these to be crossed come what may.

Once the anger had sub-sided, the US dispatched its Deputy Assistant Secretary Alice Wells, an accomplished diplomat with long experience of South Asia. She saw in Pakistan what the department must have suspected: pure indignation and resentment. She was not given high level meetings by key leaders of civilian and military establishments. The message she brought was disclosed by the Foreign Minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi (ironically, that too as part of his briefing on Chinese visit): the US is broadening the engagement with Pakistan; trade and market access talks would resume; Mr Ensher would come to Pakistan and revive a long stalled energy cooperation dialogue between the two countries, and many more moves to normalise the relations.

The lesson is clear: US has to respect Pakistan; despite the US supporting India at the expense of its friendship with Pakistan, we continue to remain engaged and desire to deepen our ties. Necessary forums should be evolved to iron-out differences rather than announcing them through the public messaging system.

Source: <https://www.pakistantoday.com.pk/2018/11/09/pak-us-relations-and-afghan-quagmire/>

# **Pak-Saudi Strategic Relationship By Dr Muhammad Khan**

As an international practice, states have written agreements for military and strategic cooperation to assist each other against any threat or aggression. Nevertheless, in the case of Pakistan and Saudi Arabia, despite very few written agreements, both countries have tacit understanding of assisting each other at the trying times. In this regard, Prince Turki Al-Faisal, the former head of the General Intelligence Directorate, Saudi Arabia, once said, "Relationship between Saudi Arabia and Pakistan is 'probably one of the closest relationships in the world between any two countries without any official treaty.'" In fact, for three decades, he has witnessed and monitored the strategic nature of Pak-Saudi relationship, so he exactly knew the intimacy and consistency of this relationship.

Since the beginning of their bilateral relationship in the era of Cold War, there have been complete agreement and cooperation on all regional and global issues between both brotherly countries. On the strategic level, Pakistan and Kingdom of Saudi Arabia stood fast against Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. Though, United States was behind the disintegration of former Soviet Union, but it was Pakistani strategy, which worked well, causing disintegration of world super-power in its neighbourhood. Saudi Arab was directly connected with Pakistan and assisted it, in this decade long war against Communism.

After this first ever perceptible Pak-Saudi strategic cooperation, Saudi Kingdom started viewing Afghanistan as its immediate neighbourhood and has developed a strong interest in the future of the country. Indeed, in the decade of 1980s, Saudi Arabia feared a continuation of the Soviet advance towards the Arabian Sea and the Persian Gulf. Afghanistan itself is not the core issue in Saudi Foreign policy; rather, it derives its importance for Riyadh, owing to Pakistan. The changes at international arena after 9/11 have further brought Pakistan and Saudi Arabia closer to each other. Both countries tried their best to resolve the Afghan problems through peaceful means. Throughout the war against terrorism, Pakistan and Saudi Arabia worked together for return of peace and stability in the war-torn Afghanistan.

Pak-Saudi relationship has rooted in the history, therefore, once Pakistan decided in 2015, not to participate in Saudi led Yemen campaign, it was mainly driven by domestic compulsions. At that time Pakistani military was undertaking active military operations against terrorists and separatists in various parts of the country. Operation Zarb-e-Azb was at its peak in North Waziristan Agency; an area considered to be a no go area till mid-2014. Apart from this, Pakistani military was carrying out operations in almost all agencies of former FATA region and some areas of Balochistan Province. At all stages, Saudi Government was taken into confidence, thus, there was no point of disagreement. It was through an understanding that once Saudi Arabia decided to establish a force structure of Muslim countries against terrorism; the Islamic Military Alliance, to combat terrorism, the former Army Chief of Pakistan, General Raheel Sharif, was appointed as its Commander-in-Chief. Had there been some reservations, between two countries, such a development could not have taken place.

In the historical perspective, Pak-Saudi military cooperation started in the early 1960s. During this era and even till 1970s, Pakistani armed forces played a great role towards founding of Saudi armed forces. Pakistani military had a key role in the establishment of Saudi Army, Saudi Air Force and Saudi Navy. Saudi military officers from all arms and services attend various professional courses in the Pakistani military institutions each year.

Unlike many assumptions and misperceptions, Pakistan had always stood by Saudi Arabia on the security issues and both enjoy the best of bilateral trust in all fields; security, politics and economy. Pakistan considers security of Saudi Arabia as of its own security; therefore, no question arises of any deviation and distrust. During his visit of Riyadh, Prime Minister Imran Khan had an in-depth discussion with Saudi leadership about the on-going conflict in Yemen. He even made an offer to the Kingdom for playing a role of mediator to end the Yemen war, amicably. "One more important thing I want to share with you that I will make all-out efforts to get resolved Saudi Arabia-Yemen conflict by acting as a mediator. We will also try our best to play a mediatory role in bringing all the Muslim nations together."

Indeed, the strategic and military cooperation between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia has intensified over the years. There have been joint military exercises between the militaries of two countries besides training of Saudi officers in Pakistani military institutions. In December 2015, there have been joint military exercises in Pakistan

and in March 2016, Pakistani military took part in Saudi military exercises, 'North Thunder' conducted in northern part of the country. Indeed, on the strategic level, both countries are enjoying an excellent relationship, which would continue despite regional and global strategic realignments.

— The writer is Professor of Politics and International Relations at International Islamic University, Islamabad.

Source: <https://pakobserver.net/pak-saudi-strategic-relationship/>

## **Pak-Afghan Relations By Amjad Nazeer**

Rediscovering Peace through Ancient and Modern Silk Road: Stretching their lovesick arms out in the south-east and south-west of the Karakoram and Hindukush, perch the princely beauties of Pakistan and Afghanistan. This is the plateau where Himalayas, Hindukush, Karakoram and Tianshan mountain-ranges of India, Afghanistan, China and Pakistan intertwine. At the crossroads of Central Asia, the Magnificent Pamir Heights intercept the fabled towns of Kashghar and Turpan. Rapturous vineyards embellish the place since centuries. Crisscrossing glorious mountain-tops, Af-Pak possess legendary past, transformable from its contended arena to a blissful abode.

Uzbek, Tajek, Turkmen and Persians in Afghanistan while Sindhi, Siraiki and Punjabi across Pakistan enculturate their respective lands with music, poetry and mysticism while Hazara, Baloch and Pashtuns inhabit across Helmand and Hindukush imbued with the fiction and melodies of their tribal arrogance. Unique and diverse, as is the flora and fauna, so is the religion and rituals of these lands. Many a villagers still live in their republics of peace and piety without much concern with the power and proxy wars.

Utterly desired by this hour, let the bars and borders stay upon the map and let the people hearten from both sides to interact and engage. Let the railway run through Bolan; let the trams pass by Khyber Pass and let the terrains dance in exchange of love and folklore as would do the camel-led caravans of Taklimakan and burly horses of Farghana.

Despite the bicentennial grab and greed of 'strategic possession', Afghanistan is vivacious enough to aspire for its divine spirit of harmony and concord. Shook by political turmoil and terror, Pakistan too maintains its diversified ethos and poetic affection across.

Beyond bordering-conflicts and blaming-brawls, arts and civilizations plead people to embrace their past and present differently from the way it is thrust upon by the powers-that-be. An inspiring story holds the power to dismantle hostile narratives and reframe relations from a cultural perspectives. Apart from other avenues, tradition may open-up windows of transverse travel and tourism too.

Despite the bicentennial grab and greed of 'strategic possession', Afghanistan is vivacious enough to aspire for its divine spirit of harmony and concord. Shook by political turmoil and terror, Pakistan too maintains its diversified ethos and poetic affection across

Overriding every odd, Silk Route once transmitted the fantasy tales of 'thousand-and-one-nights' from Euphrates and Tigris to Aras, Kabul and Indus civilizations. Clad in peace and pacifism, for over a millennium, the route kept transporting fiction and fables crossways till the seafaring replaced horses and camels. But so long as sun shines and winds blow, sargam and stories shall never stop crossing fences and check posts. Now struggling with itself and others alike, half a millennia ago, Afghanistan was a cradle of cross-cultural civilizations nurtured by the Silk Route treading.

Once upon time, a thin route from Kashgar twisted across our beloved Karakoram to run into the upper Indus down to the fertile plains of Ganges. Its south-western route ran through Wakhan corridor of Pamir to the present day Balkh and further down to the eastern edge of the Persian Empire. Traversing through sand-dunes and wind-worn-rocks, mercantile convoys, along with the commodities, also exchanged the words of wisdom. Traded through the same route, Chinese Silk was so precious that it was literally weighed in gold while stories walked around for free.

Ancient Kingdoms of Samarkand and Bukhara, Neshapur and Tabrez as well as northern valleys of Pakistan to Constantinople honoured narrators and rhymesters voyaging along the same route. After all unfamiliar lands and exotic people divulge stories, unforgettable.

The present day Pakistan is would then listen Chinese fables, they in-turn Tajek, Uzbek and Persian. And Persians would turn their ears to the people in Cairo, Damascus and Baghdad and they to the Israelites — all enriched with the wondering experiences of Silk Route. Fostered in Taklimakan and Gobi desert, the double-humped, long-eye-lashed camels carried loads of silk, saffron and scent to the oases of peace and pleasure. In return of silk, Chinese would saddle in the superior Kyrgyz and Kazak horses. However, dismounting from the horses backs



poetry would settle in the camps and courtyards of queens and viziers, and all around.

Flying on the wings of fire, the prophet Zoroaster delivered one of his most compelling sermons here in Balkh, 3500 years ago. His notion of individualism and free will, and of truth, reason and justice is the soul of several faith till today. Human person, suggests the master, possesses the ability to judge 'what is good' and 'what is evil,' by the virtue of 'reason'. His unacknowledged wisdom deeply permeates into the ancient and present day Af-Pak and Indo-Persian traditions — both religious as well as cultural. In Zoroastrian homes, one can find Bible, Gathas and Quran all courteously placed side by side. Rolling on the Silk Road, Islam approached Xian (China) in the 10th century. Reminiscent of the age, here stands the famous Qin-Qing-Si mosque.

With the blessings of Silk Road, Afghanistan possessed rich heritage and culture. Engulfed by the war dust, Kundus, Bukhara and Mazar Sharif still maintain their plurality and lively attitudes. With their songs and stories, wordsmiths and versifiers ornate the nights of Herat, every Thursday. Even if tormented by fire and fury, soul never dies.

Minuscule in number, Sikh and Hindus also live in Afghanistan. Zablon Simintove is 'the last Jew'—a carpet-trader and care-taker of the only synagogue in Herat. With his death Afghanistan will lose a vital chunk of history. Masal, the only Japanese woman and exclusive Tsuchi chef who made Bamyan her home since 1980s, runs a famous 'Hotel Silk Road' here.

Rumi — the greatest of all mystic poets — was also born and received his early instructions in the 12th century Balkh. It is relevant to quote him:

“Dance, when you're broken open. Dance, if you've torn the bandage off. Dance in the middle of the fighting. Dance in your blood. Dance when you're perfectly free.”

and: “Where there is ruin, there is hope for a treasure.”

In the foothills of Hindukush, survive the polytheistic Kalasha in Bomborit and Birir valleys. Claiming the Greek descent, their twirling festivals are adored all over the

world. Across Indus, gods, if not Greeks, did fly to make Himalaya their home. In its' southwest, once prospered the Gandhara civilisation in Swat, Taxila and Peshawar. Its crafts and creativity influenced the entire Buddhist civilization. Gautama's hymns and stories were inscribed in stone. From the 1st to the 5th century, the place has been attracting Buddhist pilgrims from as far as China and Far East. No surprise, the largest Buddhist community of the subcontinent lived in East and West Pakistan till 1971. Built upon Buddha's sacred relics, four of the holiest stupas stand in Gandhara till today. Innumerable Buddha sculptures and monasteries have been discovered from these valleys. Monks from north and southeast yearn to visit the venerated venue but only if the Government of Pakistan know its' sanctity and significance.

Losing the benevolent Buddhas at the hands of Taliban, Bamyán has lost the watchful Buddha eyes gracing the pilgrims for centuries. The two resembled the 4th century Chinese Buddha's of Bing-Ling-Sue. Traces of Indo-Chinese norms are still alive there. Bamyán was a stop-over before the Silk Route caravans moved into the desert of Taklimakan — which unbelievably sizzles in the day and goes freezing in the night.

Ahead of Karakoram, wives and women in Xian would intone verses and perform rituals of willow branches at the Yellow River for the safer return of their loved ones. In the words of Wan Weyn:

“The travellers' willows, tokens of fresh and green, by offering you a twist for you are departing towards the setting sun. Soon you will be part of the past”.

Buddhism, as did Islam and Christianity, changed while ensembling with the cultures and lifestyles of the local genera. Since 8th centuries onwards, Islam began influencing people's lives here. What needs to be revoked is the goddess of love and harmony to disassemble the armies of hatred and hostility.

Sadly, the ancient Silk Route is disappearing into the dust of dams and dusk of time. However, the New Silk Road is already coming-up and evolving to play a similar role. Afghan-Pak region holds enormous possibilities to become a hub of ideological and economic exchange. The New Silk Road can effectively transcend the tales of past and present a better future.

The author heads the 'Institute of Development Research & Corresponding Capabilities (IDRAC), Islamabad

Published in Daily Times, November 14th 2018.

Source: <https://dailytimes.com.pk/321839/pak-afghan-relations-4/>

# **Imran's Visit to UAE to Boost Friendship By Ashfaq Ahmed**

Abu Dhabi: UAE and Pakistan on Sunday stressed their support and cooperation to confront the scourge of terrorism and extremism that threatens the security and stability of nations and their people.

The two sides also discussed cooperation for regional and international efforts that contribute to security, peace, stability and development, and consolidating the values of dialogue, tolerance and co-existence in the region and the world.

The discussion between the top leadership took place on Sunday in Abu Dhabi during the official visit of Pakistan's Prime Minister Imran Khan to the UAE.

His Highness Shaikh Mohammad Bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi and Deputy Supreme Commander of the UAE Armed Forces, held official talks with Imran and discussed bilateral relations and ways to boost them.

While receiving the Pakistani prime minister at the Presidential Palace, Abu Dhabi, Shaikh Mohammad hoped that Imran's visit to the UAE would boost the friendship and ties of cooperation between the UAE and Pakistan. This is the second visit of Imran to the UAE during the last two months since he became the prime minister.

Shaikh Mohammad stressed that UAE-Pakistani relations are based on a long history of joint work, trust, respect and mutual interests. He expressed his hope to continue developing these relations at all levels and aspects for the benefit of the two countries and peoples.

"The UAE, under the leadership of President His Highness Shaikh Khalifa Bin Zayed Al Nahyan is keen to consolidate its relations with friendly countries and expand them on the basis of trust, understanding, mutual respect and common interests to achieve sustainable development, peace and promote the values of coexistence and tolerance on the regional and global levels" Shaikh Mohammad said.

During the meeting, both sides discussed areas of cooperation, promising opportunities and various means of supporting and developing them, especially in trade, economic and investment.

They also discussed ways of boosting the UAE-Pakistani relations to wider future horizons of cooperation and joint action to achieve the aspirations of both countries and peoples.

They also reviewed regional and international developments as well as a number of issues of mutual concerns.

For his part, Prime Minister Khan emphasised his country's drive to develop and strengthen relations further with the UAE across multiple sectors.

The two leaders affirmed their common interest in strengthening bilateral relations and partnerships, which serve the development and achieve prosperity for their peoples.

Writing in the VIP guest book at the Presidential Palace, Prime Minister Imran expressed thanks and appreciation for the hospitality extended to him and his accompanying delegation during their visit to the UAE, and wished the country further progress and development, as well as prosperity and welfare to its people.

Shaikh Mohammad also hosted a launch banquet in honour of the Pakistani prime minister and the accompanying delegation.

“The UAE, under the leadership of President His Highness Shaikh Khalifa Bin Zayed Al Nahyan is keen to consolidate its relations with friendly countries and expand them on the basis of trust, understanding, mutual respect and common interests to achieve sustainable development, peace and promote the values of coexistence and tolerance on the regional and global levels”

The meeting was attended by Shaikh Tahnoun Bin Zayed Al Nahyan, National Security Adviser; Shaikh Mansour Bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Presidential Affairs, Hamad Al Zaabi, UAE Ambassador to Pakistan, and a number of other ministers and top officials.

The Pakistani delegation included Foreign Minister Makhdoom Shah Mahmood Qureshi; Minister of Finance Asad Umar; Minister of Petroleum Ghulam Sarwar Khan; Chief of Army Staff of the Pakistan Army, General Qamar Javed Bajwa and Moazzam Ahmad Khan, Ambassador of Pakistan.

Earlier in the Day, Shaikh Mohammad received Imran Khan who was accorded an official reception where the Pakistani national anthem was played, and a 21-gun salute was fired in his honour.

Pakistani media earlier reported that Imran is visiting the UAE to seek economic assistance similar to that of Saudi Arabia to salvage Pakistan's dwindling economy.

In September, Saudi Arabia had agreed to provide \$3 billion (Dh11 billion) for one year as balance of payment support and a further one-year deferred payment facility for oil payments up to \$3 billion. Economists calculated the impact of the support at \$12 billion.

Last month, Qureshi had said that Pakistan had requested a Saudi Arabia-like deal from the UAE to stabilise the economy. Islamabad had earlier urged the friendly country to provide a 'fiscal space' to Pakistan amid the economic crises.

An IMF team is already negotiating the bail-out programme, likely to cover a period of three years.

The Institute of International Finance in its latest report said a potential IMF programme for Pakistan could be valued at \$15 billion. The IIF expects an agreement on a three-year IMF programme of \$15 billion by end of this year. However, Finance Minister Asad Umar now believes \$6-7 billion from the IMF could settle the economic crises.

Published in Daily Times, November 20th 2018.

Source: <https://dailytimes.com.pk/324030/imrans-visit-to-uae-to-boost-friendship/>

# **Pakistan-Malaysia Ties By Dr Ahmad Rashid Malik**

On the invitation of the Prime Minister of Malaysia, Dr Mahathir Mohamad, Prime Minister Imran Khan paid an official two-day long visit to Malaysia on 20-21 November. He was given a rousing welcome at the Perdana Square. Imran Khan received a guard of honour during the welcoming ceremony at Prime Minister Mahathir's office in Putrajaya. The Prime Minister was received by Senator Marzuki bin Yahya, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs and Dr. Mohammad Farid bin Rafik, Deputy Minister in the PM Office of Government of Malaysia.

Earlier, Imran Khan visited the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, and China. Malaysia was the fourth destination. Imran Khan was accompanied by Foreign Minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi, Minister of Finance Asad Umar, Minister of Information and Broadcasting Chaudhry Fawad Hussain, and the Commerce Advisor Abdul Razak Dawood. Since Dr Mahathir assumed his office in May, Imran Khan is going to be first foreign signatory to have visited Malaysia. Besides the talks, he held alone-on-one meeting.

Both Dr Mahathir and Imran Khan held a wide range of talks on important global and regional issues. Both leaders agreed to expand ties, expand trade and investment, create favourable conditions for commerce and business in both countries, particularly in palm oil, agri products, food retail, halal products, automotive parts, energy, science and technology, and telecommunications.

In addition to the 10,000 Pakistanis working in Malaysia, the country receives as many as 50,000 visitors from Pakistan each year. Under a 2005 agreement between Pakistan and Malaysia, as many as 100,000 Pakistanis may eventually work in Malaysia, especially in the manufacturing, construction, and plantation sectors

Reaffirming the Malaysia-Pakistan Closer Economic Partnership Agreement (MPCEPA) signed on 8 November 2007 in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia and Pakistan recognised the importance of regular discussions to strengthen the trade relationship in key sectors by addressing the bilateral trade imbalance. Both

countries are also interested in promoting ties in defence relations. Malaysia is a participant to Pakistan Defence export 2018.

Both countries have been promoting trade in halal food items in bilateral trade. Both countries have also expressed their keen interest in eliminating corruption. Moreover, they have also expressed concern over the Palestine and Rakine States where the plight of Muslims is in question. They also expressed concern about the Kashmir cause.

Corruption is a serious crime committed in many countries. Different countries have adopted different mechanisms to tackle the issue and to eradicate this menace. Malaysia's score in the Corruption Perception Index (CPI) was 52 as recently recorded.

MACC Chief Commissioner Datuk Shukri Abdul gave a briefing to the Prime Minister about the working of MACC. Imran Khan became the first world leader to visit the MACC since the organization came into being 51 years ago. MACC investigate both civilians and military men as well as judges, no one is exempted. Pakistan should get an MACC training and learn from their experience. The Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) will impart its knowledge and help Pakistan in many ways. Imran Khan has promised 'strict accountability' and a new push against the people who looted his country.

Pakistan and Malaysia are old friends along with a tested relationship. Both are Islamic countries and play a great role in South and Southeast Asia. Pakistan and Malaysia developed a robust relationship in 1970. It was the Shah of Iran's role that brought Pakistan and Malaysia closer to fully understanding each other.

Moreover, both countries agreed to abolish the partial visa agreement promoting brotherly ties. In addition to the 10,000 Pakistanis working in Malaysia, the country receives as many as 50,000 visitors from Pakistan each year. Under a 2005 agreement between Pakistan and Malaysia, as many as 100,000 Pakistanis may eventually work in Malaysia, especially in the manufacturing, construction, and plantation sectors.



Imran Khan has the courage to learn from Malaysia's development and continuing progress. This is further to be increased as trade and commerce between the two countries are increased.

Imran Khan did not seek Malaysian capital to resolve some of the country's financial issues. Pakistan has been facing a US\$ 12 billion financing gap for the current fiscal year. The Pakistan Government is keen to minimise the amount borrowed from the International Monetary Fund by getting loans from friendly countries like Saudi Arabia, China, and now Malaysia, as officials here believe that the global lender could attach tough conditions. A package of US\$ 6 billion each from Saudi Arabia and China has been pledged. Imran Khan wants to get out of the IMF package to end his financial woes. It looks like Imran Khan is confident in his endeavour and will continue with his efforts with other lenders as well.

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He writes on East Asian affairs.

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Source: <https://dailytimes.com.pk/325269/pakistan-malaysia-ties/>

## **Pak-India Thaw | Editorial**

History is not going to be rewritten anytime soon but the groundbreaking ceremony of the Kartarpur border crossing, due Wednesday, is proof enough of popular sentiment's ability to swing political opinion in its favour. The proposal, dead since 1988, was renewed by COAS General Bajwa in August this year and shared with Congress leader Navjot Siddhu when he came for Imran Khan's oath taking ceremony. And what better way to greet this advance than Siddhu's own position – in his letter to India's foreign ministry requesting permission to partake in the groundbreaking – as he said "... the Kartarpur spirit can make pilgrims of us all, venturing out on a journey that breaks the barriers of history and opens the borders of the heart and the mind."

The Indian response, however diplomatically reserved, is encouraging. External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj cannot come, unfortunately, because of prior commitments but two ministers will still attend. This marks an interesting change in New Delhi's position towards Pakistan; especially so close to their election. Sure, BJP retains its anti-Pakistan venom as the trump card on election day, but it seems public sentiment across the border has made the government change tactics, a little, just before the voting. It will not want to alienate its core conservative vote bank, no doubt about that, but the decision to indulge on the Kartarpur border shows that it does not want to ignore the growing bloc that favours a thaw either.

To say Pakistan and India stand at a crossroads is to state the obvious. Youth bulges on both sides, who have little understanding of the generations-old hatred that keeps the two governments at daggers drawn, need an environment of peace, commerce, growth, investment and jobs. And they have always warmed up to the historical enemy whenever given a chance, especially in the Confidence Building Measures of the Musharraf era that brought the two sides "within a signature of settling Sir Creek," at least. At a time when Pakistan has promised "two steps for every one you take," and the army chief is openly calling for reconciliation, and India offers condolence for our fallen in terrorist violence, there is an urgent need to turn these advances into an irresistible snowball.

Source: <https://www.pakistantoday.com.pk/2018/11/26/pak-india-thaw/>

# **True Essence of Pakistan-China Ties By**

## **Talat Masood**

In a world that is deeply divided on the basis of economic interests, geostrategic considerations, nationalism, religion and superpower rivalry, Pakistan is fortunate to have a deep trust-based relationship with China. This is one country with which our national interests are fully congruent and have remained consistent for more than five decades. More importantly, the relationship has acquired greater significance in the light of Pakistan's domestic and external challenges. And to Pakistan's good luck over the years China has accelerated into becoming a global powerhouse at an astounding pace and leads the world in several significant sectors as housing, textiles, construction of dams, modern railway systems, use of internet and lately catching up on robotics and space technology.

Besides, China has spread its assistance to more than 60 countries through One Belt One Road projects. But the specific Pakistan programme — CPEC — is the leading one in terms of Chinese government's priorities and execution. Pakistan's expectations from the project are high and are a central component of its foreign and economic policy. The onus of its progress would very much depend on how efficiently Pakistan would manage these projects. But what is even more important is that this reliance does not turn into long-term dependence. More significantly, the value of this relationship will be further enhanced if Pakistan in the process learns of the specific attributes that contributed to China's phenomenal progress. For instance, how they have dealt with their past adversaries — India, Vietnam and earlier with erstwhile Soviet Union — to create a peaceful environment for economic and social development; and what sort of economic, political and social incentives were provided to the people that they were so highly motivated in the reconstruction of a transformed China.

Of course, it would not be possible to adapt to their techniques of progress as the systems are different but still there are many areas where there are fewer barriers for learning from their experience and creating our own strategy for development.

For instance, China's progress like that of South Korea and other countries has depended on a huge investment in education. Their literacy rate is 100% whereas

that of Pakistan in 2017 was 58% according to our Economic Survey. To expect that Pakistan could genuinely progress with millions of its people constituting over 40% of the adult population illiterate would be wishful thinking. Moreover, the quality of education leaves much to be desired. The standard of science and technology and of engineering institutions will have to be upgraded as a top priority to be able to compete and stay relevant in the highly competitive global and regional environment.

What is less known that Chinese leadership has used its bureaucracy brilliantly. The relationship between the political leadership and bureaucracy is close and they work in harmony. In contrast, the present government in Pakistan has yet to develop a balanced relationship with them. It has become a norm to shuttle civil servants around indiscriminately losing their trust and reducing their efficiency. So far what we are seeing is that they are living in constant fear of getting into trouble for taking decisions even if they are based purely on merit and with best of intentions.

Having served as secretary defence production and after retirement as member of Ad hoc Public Accounts Committee, I have closely observed the performance of our civil servants, which by and large, is commendable. The government should desist from manipulating them politically and create a working environment wherein they are trusted so as to actualise their full potential. They are clearly one of the important pillars for bringing about change.

In order to boost the economy the government should respect foreign and local investors and provide them profit opportunities. This is the only incentive that works. The Chinese have learnt that lesson and has brought trillions of dollars of investment in China. With inward-looking attitude, over cautious institutions and intelligence vetting taking months, how do we expect that major global groups or regional countries would be inclined to invest?

Creating a peaceful environment is necessary to attract local and foreign investment. This is one policy that the Chinese have pursued with great success. Notwithstanding that with President Trump's economic nationalism and unilateral policies, Chinese efforts at promoting globalisation and cooperation with the United States have suffered a temporary setback.

Interestingly, the Chinese government has been fully supportive of Pakistan's efforts at improving relations with its neighbours especially India, Afghanistan and the United States. For it understands its value in the context of Pakistan's overall prosperity.

Pakistan's foreign policy especially aims at also maintaining cordial relations with major regional powers, Muslim countries and its neighbours. Britain and Japan are major donors in the social sector. Japan has been supporting Pakistan's stable and sustainable growth since 1952.

It goes to the credit of the PTI government that in addition to strengthening Pakistan's relations with China, it has made serious moves at improving relations with India, Afghanistan and the United States. The recent opening of the border for Sikh pilgrims is a good initiative and places Indian hawkish forces on the defensive. It is unfortunate that due to the militarised approach, scant progress has been made so far. Hopefully, the recent initiative of the US to engage with the Taliban leadership would give traction to the peace process. These efforts are backed by Pakistan and China. President Trump's entire focus on Afghanistan, in any case, places Pakistan's relationship on the outcome of the Afghan conflict and presumed role in it. The United States' other major concern is China's deep and expanding collaboration with Pakistan in CPEC that it finds difficult to digest.

The remarkable aspect of our relationship with China is that they are building our institutional capacity and above all holding our hand at a time when the country faces innumerable challenges. This is truly a unique understanding and the most robust relationship that we have experienced in our 71 years of engaging with major powers.

Published in The Express Tribune, November 28th, 2018.

Source: <https://tribune.com.pk/story/1855523/6-true-essence-pakistan-china-ties/>

## ECONOMY

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### **Seeking Another Rescue Package By M Ziauddin**

Prime Minister Imran Khan is in China on a five-day visit. The prime objective of the PM's visit is to seek a generous bailout package from China so as to be able to negotiate a relatively less demanding IMF deal.

On its part the top Chinese leadership is expected to use the opportunity to try to remove all the legitimate as well as the not-so-legitimate doubts that the new PTI-led coalition government has been expressing since its advent about the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC).

Pakistan is perhaps thinking of getting a bailout package of at least \$5 billion from China. But it would entirely depend on Beijing how this package is put together, if at all.

The PM is also likely to take up the issue of steep trade imbalance in favour of China with Beijing exporting goods worth \$11.458bn to Pakistan while exports to China from Pakistan have remained stuck below \$2 billion for some years. This imbalance needs to be corrected on an urgent basis.

Meanwhile, Pakistan's textile industry has expressed the hope that Prime Minister Imran Khan would be able to persuade the Chinese leadership to set up a special credit line of \$5 billion for fresh investments and joint ventures between the manufacturers of the two countries.

This facility, our textile tycoons believe, could be extended by China under pay-as-you-earn scheme on buying-back basis to encourage both investment in and exports from Pakistan.

This special credit line is also expected to help early relocation of the Chinese textile industry to Pakistan and increase our exports there. There is said to be a

big market for Pakistani textile products in China where wet textile processing is being shut down and relocated to other countries.

### PM Imran meets Chinese President Xi in Beijing

China's domestic textiles and clothing market is estimated to be \$500bn. Pakistani textile exports form only three per cent of their textile and clothing imports of \$268bn, showing that Pakistan has a huge potential there.

It is also being proposed that China could consider setting up garmenting plants in Pakistan for export to avert Trump tariffs on its American shipments and avail Pakistan's market access as well to the EU under the GSP+ scheme.

Another country which is located south of another part of China — Vietnam — has grown by leaps and bounds taking advantage of skyrocketing growth in its northern neighbour.

According to Bennett Murray, an American journalist serving the German news agency DPA in Hanoi writes in his article 'Vietnam Is Winning the US-China Trade War' published in Foreign Policy on Oct 30, 2018 with Asian business people increasingly resigned to a protracted trade war between Washington and Beijing, firms are more eager than ever to escape tariffs by relocating to China's smaller southern neighbour.

"Most telling was the decision of Goertek, the Chinese company assembling Apple's AirPods, to reroute all production of the earbuds to Vietnam.

"The advantages of production in Vietnam over its northern neighbour were mounting even before US President Donald Trump took office. In Shenzhen, China, the home of the Apple supplier Foxconn's flagship Longhua industrial complex, the monthly minimum wage is now 2,200 yuan (\$315). In contrast, Vietnam's highest minimum wage (the national government sets a multitier minimum wage based on regional living costs) is almost half that at 3.98 million Vietnamese dong (\$170). Wages fall even lower away from major cities—in Thai Nguyen's Pho Yen district, the home of the Samsung factory, the minimum wage is a mere 3.09 million dong (\$130).

“China and Vietnam also have their own free trade agreement, allowing firms in Vietnam to cheaply import raw materials from the north for manufacture and export.”

Pakistan can also emulate Vietnam, but before we try to take that route our manufacturers and exporters need to do a thorough market survey of western China in order to be able to identify manufacturing units there which would benefit by getting relocated in Pakistan. Also the survey would tell us what kind of products and of what quality are in demand in the region.

Published in The Express Tribune, November 3rd, 2018.

Source: <https://tribune.com.pk/story/1839426/6-seeking-another-rescue-package/>



## **Reviewing Privatisation! | Editorial**

THE Federal Cabinet, on Thursday, decided not to privatise Pakistan International Airlines (PIA), Pakistan Steel Mills (PSM) and instead restructure them. The Cabinet endorsed the decision of the Privatisation Commission in this regard taken a day earlier. Though the Cabinet approved privatisation of a number of other institutions and entities including Islamabad's famous Jinnah Convention Centre and PIA's Roosevelt Hotel, which do not augur well.

The decision to abandon privatisation of PIA, PSM and instead reforming these two important national institutions would be welcomed by people of Pakistan. Employees and their families, who have been suffering from mental torture and financial problems, would also heave a sigh of relief and hopefully they would work with renewed zeal to restore glory of their institutions. There is no doubt that the two institutions are suffering huge losses but it was mainly because of past neglect and non-professional running of these organisations. Thousands of people were inducted in PIA and PSM during tenures of successive governments not on merit but on political considerations. Similarly, open-sky policy decision, operating non-viable routes and undue interference by union bearers played havoc with the two entities and governments instead of reforming them opted for easiest course of getting rid of them.

This is despite the fact that PIA was a symbol of national pride and there was no reason why PSM should incur losses when steel has become a basic ingredient of modern-day development. Therefore, the history would remember PTI government if it succeeds in its plans to revive these organisations that have the potential to play an important role in overall progress of the country. We believe that reforms, restructuring and not privatisation or closure of institutions is the answer to phenomenon of institutional collapse.

Source: <https://pakobserver.net/reviewing-privatisation/>

## **Reforming The Tax System Editorial**

The PTI has taken the first steps towards tax reform. The first step is to separate revenue collection from tax policy formulation. The question is whether this will be significant enough to improve tax collection in the country. The decision is intended to take away policy formation powers from the Federal Board of Revenue, which will now only be responsible for tax administration and collection. The decision seems to mirror the larger shifts in governance advocated by international lenders. Similar moves to separate policy formulation and administration in the electricity and gas sectors has not worked well in terms of improving the actual operation of the sectors. A special committee will be formed to formulate a larger tax reform framework, which could mirror the government's Economic Advisory Committee. Independent tax experts are expected to be put on board.

Would making the FBR an autonomous body be in line with the PTI manifesto improve tax collection? FBR reform is a crucial part of the PTI's 100-day reforms agenda. PM Imran Khan in his first speech promised to start the reform process with the FBR. The change looks good on paper like most other tax reform proposals to have been implemented, but there has been little success apart from the indirect taxation proposals. Tax reform has been on the cards for the last four decades. Previous efforts have included the Qamarul Islam report in the 1980s, the Shahid Husain Task Force in the 1990s, and the decade-long Tax Administration Reform Project.

There has always been a problem in how tax issues in the country are diagnosed. The narrative is that tax reform involves getting rid of decades of failure to adapt on the part of the bureaucracy. The reality is different. The tax bureaucracy is known to have adjusted well to the changing nature and growing scale of the Pakistani economy in terms of its ability to enrich itself through corrupt practices. Governance and service delivery in Pakistan are not connected to taxation. If anything, the feeling exists that tax does not go into providing services to the taxpayer. One can separate tax collection from policymaking, but how does that repair the relationship between the state and the local taxpayer? When service delivery involves informally bribing a state official to get an electricity connection or to get roads repaired, then the money should go directly into the tax coffers. The FBR is showing that it is in action – but the 3,000 notices are nowhere near

sufficient to improve tax collection in the country. It will be important to see what the overall idea of tax reform is under the current government. For now, we are seeing a piecemeal, rather than a holistic, approach.

Source: [https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/391809-reforming-the-tax-system?fbclid=IwAR3NEjNGsL3mY6hH7QtoozdmV\\_AOR4h5cEz7h4ZfgJrYm0-MiucO7q6JsQ0](https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/391809-reforming-the-tax-system?fbclid=IwAR3NEjNGsL3mY6hH7QtoozdmV_AOR4h5cEz7h4ZfgJrYm0-MiucO7q6JsQ0)

# **Economy Gets Another Chance By Imtiaz**

## **Rafi Butt**

As the new PTI led Government comes to grips with the complexities of tackling the national economy, Imran Khan and his team have managed to acquire yet another chance for the country. Just four weeks ago, the economy was on the brink of collapse. Pakistan could afford only two months worth of imports and was unable to pay back debt payments. From that point onwards, the country has come a long way in the turn of events in November 2018. There are multiple hurdles like corruption, internal and external debt, the government bodies in losses, low tax net, smuggling and a host of other problems that need serious intervention and the new Government seems committed and in high spirits, and that too for cogent reasons. From the point of financial insolvency and the decision to go to IMF for a bail out, Imran Khan and his team kept looking for alternate financing sources. After two attempts, the Saudi Government agreed to give a financial nudge of around six billion dollars. All this was done to reduce the exposure to structural adjustments of IMF and reliability on more than one source of liquidity. The Saudi Government also promised huge investment into uplift of Gwadar and industrial zones across Pakistan. But this was merely a straw compared to what was required to save Pakistan's economy. Aware of the facts, the new Government sought relief from the Chinese Government and the reply did not come as a loan or bail out but much more.

Imran Khan and a team of public and private stakeholders have made an astounding trip to China. The visit conducted by Xi Jinping, the President and the Li Keqiang, the Prime Minister. As a high point, Pakistan managed to sign fifteen MoUs with the Government of China. These agreements cover a wide range of fields such as trade, commerce, industry, technical education, services, banking, construction, cultural ties and military assistance. China unveiled a special program for students of Pakistan who wish to study in China. The plan is to double the number of students which stands at twenty five thousand students annually. Another important step in the same sector was the inauguration of Youth Communication Committee which will establish first-hand and direct contact between academic experts and students from both countries. Similarly, the MoUs are aimed at projects that have never a part of bi-lateral ties between these two

countries, such as, the space project 2012-2020. It is a unique and ground-breaking achievement indeed.

In terms of trade and commerce, Pakistan and China have set their sights on lowering dependency on dollars and have implemented a currency swap of around 20 Billion Yuan which is an equivalent of 351 Billion Pakistan Rupees. It will take off a hefty burden of foreign exchange from Pakistan and rationalize the utilization of dollar in trade. A currency swap is smart way of removing another non-tariff barrier. Two countries that are regional partners have a lot to gain. A currency swap simply raises the demand for both currencies in the open market while hurting the undue favour to the dollar. It will save cost of doing business for Pakistani traders while making exchange of goods and services, easier to manage for Chinese banks. The talks and joint sessions between Imran Khan and Xi Jinping are worthy of notice. The Chinese Government acknowledged Pakistan's efforts in countering terrorism in the region and projected a three-pronged strategy to move ahead. In the words of Xi, Pakistan and China will become even stronger allies when they will unite against three major challenges, namely, 1- Extremism, 2- Terrorism, 3- Separatism. Imran Khan, for the first time ever, openly conveyed the objectives of the new Government to Chinese counterparts. He stressed that he was keen on learning from China, the way they have lifted 700 million people from abject poverty in less than 30 years. To this, the Chinese government openly offered poverty alleviation techniques and projects. It must be borne in mind that Pakistan has never been offered assistance in professional poverty alleviation matters while programs of the past like Benazir Income Support Program have barely achieved their objectives. The first few years, poverty alleviation demonstration projects will be initiated at once, as a pet rule, the implementation is to start from the most poverty-stricken areas of Pakistan. It is a pioneer program never seen before. Perhaps the answers to dilemmas of Pakistan on helping the poor are to be found not in the West but right here in Asia.

The Prime Minister Le Keqiang stressed the fulfillment of CPEC projects. In earnest, it has been decided that the 8th meeting of the Joint Co-ordination Committee will be held before end of 2018. The political point scoring and confusion that riled up rumours against CPEC being lopsidedly against Pakistan have been white-washed. Pakistan needs the business activity that will be generated as a result of a 60 billion dollar investment. Imran Khan praised the Belt and Road Initiative and removed all confusions. Pakistan is fully committed to the

BRI and Gwadar will become the focal point of trade in Asia. The completion of Gwadar and its full potential were highlighted time and again by the Chinese officials. By 2020, Gwadar is set to become the hub of imports and exports and a formal revival of the Silk Route. The taxes and freight activity alone will be a major boost to the dwindling economy of Pakistan. On the other hand, it is of equal importance to China as being the head of the Road part of the One Belt One Road Initiative. China's survival is also tied to CPEC and OBOR. The cost of Chinese exports will be significantly reduced as a result of Gwadar and that will in-turn keep the Chinese economy in a boom while the rest of the world, especially the West, moves in a deep economic recession.

On the flip side, there are always those who look at the weaker points and criticize. Western experts are of the view that Pakistan went to China with a plea for loans and funding, which was actively denied. To this, I would only say that yes, maybe, the request for funds have not been accepted but China being a time tested friend has offered much more in return. As they say, prosperity can only come from Trade and not Aid. The combined effect of Saudi and Chinese assistance has given the country another fighting chance, the IMF bail-out will not cripple the internal controls as previously thought, all possibilities are open for Pakistan. With high hopes, this is the last time we will ever need foreign funding to avoid bankruptcy.

—The writer is, Chairman Jinnah Rafi Foundation, based in Lahore.

Source: <https://pakobserver.net/economy-gets-another-chance/>

# **China International Import Expo & Pakistan**

## **By Dr Ejaz Hussain**

While implementing what is called “home turf diplomacy”, China is hosting a mega event, namely China International Import Expo (CIIE) in its commercial metropolitan, Shanghai, from November 5-10, 2018. A total of 82 countries and three international organizations will be showcasing their achievements in economic and trade development. As per local media reports, around 3,000 companies from over 130 countries have confirmed participation in the CIIE with a total booth area of 270,000 square meters. The participating countries also include the BRI (Belt and Road Initiative) countries of which Pakistan is a major country due to its practical role in realizing (extra) regional market connectivity through construction of economic corridors. Thus, China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) has offered itself as a test case for the Belt and Road Initiative.

China International Import Expo, a unique event of its kind, is multi-purpose. On the one hand, it offers an opportunity to world leadership to head together to talk on issues that usually are not addressed due to time and space constraints and, on the other, provide a forum to talk business especially import opportunities, issues and prospects for further cooperation. Moreover, CIIE offers an opportunity to regional and global companies to interact, exchange ideas and explore avenues for furtherance of respective interest in a world which is beset with challenges of protectionism and prospects of economic globalization. In addition, the Import Expo helps generate cultural understanding among different participating nations. Pakistan is contributing to the Expo in more than one ways. At the government level, the Prime Minister of Pakistan, Imran Khan, and officials of Trade Development Authority of Pakistan (TDAP) are likely to attend the event. From the private sector, members of Pakistani business community are expected to register participation, as the event is a wonderful opportunity to understand import dynamics in China.

The Pakistani business community was also present during a two-day symposium and conference on China-Pakistan (Business) Cooperation held in Xuzhou, Jiangsu province, by Jiangsu Normal University. Members of Pakistani business community and academia, including this author, exchanged views with Chinese

and, importantly, Iranian counterparts. Chinese scholarship argued that CPEC offers avenues for bilateral cooperation in industry, i.e. Special Economic Zones (SEZs), and agriculture, that could be linked with SEZs. On its part, Pakistani academics highlighted not only issues related, for example, to recent efforts to resist certain aspects of CPEC but also emphasized to expand CPEC to include Iran, Afghanistan and India. Hypothetically arguing, if the mentioned regional countries join CPEC, it will be a big boost to regional market connectivity and expansion but also a major diplomatic breakthrough to negotiate other bilateral and multi-lateral issues. Importantly, Iranian scholars, some of whom are studying Chahbhar, made a case for Gwadar-Chahbhar complementarity that will essentially benefit both Pakistan and Iran and will commercially interest China for trade with the Gulf, European, Arab and African countries.

CIIE offers an opportunity to regional and global companies to interact, exchange ideas and explore avenues for furtherance of respective interest in a world which is beset with challenges of protectionism and prospects of economic globalization. In addition, the Import Expo helps generate cultural understanding among different participating nations

Besides, Pakistan can utilize China International Import Expo to explore export opportunities in other BRI countries. For example, East Asian economies and the Central Asian market need serious exploration at the policy and entrepreneurial level. In addition, the country ought to expand its bilateral trade with China above and beyond CPEC. The latter, in my view, could be seen as an add-on variable in China-Pakistan relations. Put differently, China-Pakistan relations predate CPEC and the latter is one component of bilateral (economic) relations. Nevertheless, CPEC is very crucial pillar of contemporary China-Pakistan relations as the former is so far the only bilateral economic corridor, out of the six proposed corridors, that is put to practice. Thus, the government in Pakistan need to view it accordingly as any unnecessary and unilateral action on CPEC carries negative implications for the overall spirit of the BRI.

Last but not the least, the world we are living in, is still consists of more poor than rich people. “There are more poor people in India than the total population of Bangladesh”, said an Indian scholar the other day. Moreover, 60 million people in Pakistan still live below the poverty line. With regard to poverty alleviation, modern China has set an example by putting some 600 million people out of poverty in just



twenty years; and China is aiming at eradicating poverty for another 300 million heads in coming years. Pakistan in particular and the world in general has a lesson in this Chinese experience. Finally, this world need further opportunities to interact with and learn from inter subjectivities along with objective experimentation.

Thus, we need more, not less, globalization as a tool to, on the one hand, counter nationalistic protectionism and, on the other, as an instrument to exchange ideas and goods for the betterment, and not annihilation, of environment and humanity.

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## **Afghanistan in CPEC | Editorial**

Pakistan and China have formally called on Afghanistan to join CPEC. This is a pragmatic move that will benefit the entire region. Not least because it represents the best chance to date of getting Kabul and the Taliban to talk peace with each other. After all, as both sides know: the US is not in the business of nation-building.

The Afghans have signalled support for their country's inclusion in the Corridor. Indeed, there has been welcome talk of drawing lines between economics and politics for the sake of regional connectivity. That being said, both Kabul and Islamabad should have a clear understanding that two-way cross-border attacks cannot continue. The same goes for alleged Indian funding of groups on the other side of the Durand Line that target the state on this side. And while New Delhi may fear being encircled by economic powerhouse and regional rival Beijing — it should recognise that a prosperous and stable South Asia is in everyone's interests. Though the Indian side will naturally raise repeated concerns of how CPEC runs through what it views as contested territory. In fact, the question of unresolved border issues between Afghanistan and Pakistan will have to be addressed accordingly. But for now, these will seemingly be put on the backburner.

The Americans should, in theory, also welcome the move. After all, Trump Town not only insists that it wants to exit the Afghan quagmire — but that it falls to Pakistan to come up with a strategy towards this end. But any departure from Kabul does not envisage making way for Beijing. Indeed, Washington's response to these developments will likely reveal much about its long-term objectives for this region. After all, it has gone out of its way to paint China as a foe; a threat to the international economic order that the Americans continue to consider their rightful domain. Whereas, in reality, Beijing is simply a competitor. And as the whole world knows there is nothing that global capitalism champions more than the idea of a level playing field; however illusionary that may be.

This is something that the EU has also failed to acknowledge. The bloc last week conducted a seminar in which its parliamentarians participated alongside scholars to bash CPEC. That this did not extend to the broader BRI framework is telling. For it suggest that the Union is backing India in this matter. The rather cheeky was title of the talk was: East India Company Mark II? For it suggests that with Britain

leaving the EU fold — it is now fair game to take a pot shot at that country's colonial legacy. Yet China has been very clear about CPEC being nothing more than a financial enterprise. This is something that the soon-to-be 27-member bloc ought to be well placed to understand given how it rose from the ashes from the Second World War; as a vehicle for economic integration meant to prevent more wars within Europe's borders. Close political ties came later.

And herein lies the rub. It appears that the US and the EU fear that a rising China will usurp them in terms of political clout here in this part of the world. While this will likely be true in the long-term — this is something with which the rest of the world will have to accept. Particularly as neither Washington nor Brussels have contributed to the development of this region in the way that Beijing is promising. In fact, they have been otherwise engaged in launching humanitarian wars of aggression in the Middle East and beyond.

The long and short of it is that the question of Kabul joining CPEC is a matter for Afghanistan, Pakistan and China to decide. And seeing as the latter has in the past offered similar invitations to both India and the US — now is not the time for sour grapes.

Source: [https://dailytimes.com.pk/321884/afghanistan-in-cpec/?fbclid=IwAR1c-o7ZxgeBAaufHaXi0KztW2SfMZozjJzDi\\_uK7bqJT54blzNFOtSSSIU](https://dailytimes.com.pk/321884/afghanistan-in-cpec/?fbclid=IwAR1c-o7ZxgeBAaufHaXi0KztW2SfMZozjJzDi_uK7bqJT54blzNFOtSSSIU)

# **Economic Occidentalism, FATF and Pakistan By Dr Muhammad Babar Chohan**

Economic dependence of developing countries on developed countries, and international financial institutions, is not just coincidental but is largely a result of a particular cultural mindset based on geography, colour, caste, creed, religion, norms, ethos and customs. Humans, since their coming into being, have always been living in groups, tribes, factions, undivided families, ethnic diaspora, differentiated geographical entities, counties, villages, towns, cities, countries and even continents. This division can inflate beyond the narrow confines of the earth in case life is found on other planets. Such divisions, as humans feel, give them social identity and identity is a source of strength and power.

In other words, there has always been an identity crisis throughout the human history and its main reason is the human desire for the acquisition of unlimited power by hook or by crook. In search of this power, many European countries colonized the weak countries in the past, looted their resources and strengthened their own economies. In order to understand the human lust for power, it is pivotal to dig the human psychology that inherently loves identity through social fragmentation and cultural division. In this regard, Professor Daniel Kahneman argues that humans naturally ignore the challenges and inflate the benefits associated with their desires. His hypothesis about the human psychology was appreciated worldwide ultimately resulting in the award of the 2002 Noble Prize in economics for him. This suggests that the human desire for power gives rise to socioeconomic divisions in which some groups win while the others lose. That means someone's loss is someone's gain and this is what Pareto Optimality Principle roughly suggests.

In economics, the developed and developing world has been divided into 'the North' and 'the South' respectively. Another division may be observed from the frequent use of the notions of first world, second world and third world countries. The North-South divide of the world is widely based on various socioeconomic and political factors. The so-called global North consists of the developed countries, such as the United States, Canada, European countries, and developed countries of the Asia-Pacific region. The global South, on the contrast, is composed of

developing and least developed countries. Here an interesting aspect of the global economic division is that the entry into the global North is not just restricted to the above mentioned countries because of their geographical location. It is rather the attainment of certain socioeconomic and political thresholds that enable a particular country to enter in this elite global club. China's sudden rise, for example, is increasingly pushing it to disassociate itself from the global South. That means, China's de facto entry into the global North is in the offing. It further suggests that powerful economies mostly make collusive arrangements with each other rather than opting for confrontation unless they are overpowered by conflicting long term strategic priorities.

Pakistan's predominant ideology has, so far, not accepted the superiority of the Occident. As a result, the country is facing tough times about its perception by the international financial institutions such as the FATF

With this background, it is not difficult to understand why it is so important for Pakistan not to fall in the Financial Action Task Force's (FATF) notorious grey list. It is because of the overlapping interests and collusive alliance of the global North, with an altogether different socioeconomic/political identity, that is in direct conflict with Pakistan's socioeconomic and political priorities. The haunting grey list, on the contrary, is not important for many countries close to the socioeconomic priorities trajectory of the global North. Our earlier articles "Taxing crypto assets" (Daily Times, Nov 11, 2018) and "Handling FATF" (Daily Times, Nov 4, 2018) suggest pursuing robust technical and administrative interventions for meeting the FATF's requirements. The suggestions are not primarily meant to make a blind compliance of the FATF's directions but to strategically move Pakistan closer to the priorities trajectory of the global North of which China will soon be a part. Similarly in international conflicts, such as Afghanistan, the soldiers' casualties from the global North and the global South can't be equated. The death of a soldier from the United States, for example, is not deemed to be equal to that of an Afghan soldier or citizen. The professional competence of Pakistan's armed forces cobbled with nuclear capability, however, has impeded the forces of the global North to treat it like Afghanistan.

This suggests that even death can't equate the global North and South in international conflicts and economic priorities. This is a deep rooted ideological divide based on the perception of specific cultural, economic and political views

held by the global North about the global South. Professor Edward Said specifically demarcates this division between the West and the East by coining the notion of 'Orientalism'. His work is a kind socioeconomic discourse that explains how most countries from the global North got developed through the politics of fragmentation and the policies of division. In this regard, the Mediterranean Sea can be treated as the dividing line. The developed 'Occident' lives on its Western side while the underdeveloped 'Orient' lives on its Eastern side. Therefore, the world is witnessing a never ending tug of war between Occidentalism and Orientalism.

The perceptions of the Orient in the West are, therefore, characterized by underdevelopment and backwardness. This perception makes the Orient inferior in the eyes of the Occident. As a result, the Occident is not ready to equate the causalities of the citizens of the global North with that of the citizens of the global South. The treatment given to developing countries, similarly, is also based on this deep rooted divide perceiving the Orient as inferior. The concepts and practices of providing humanitarian and economic aid to developing countries, by the developed countries, are also meant to subjugate them ethically, psychologically and economically. The developing countries should, therefore, not accept hard cash from developed countries for long periods of time in the name of aid or bailout packages. They should instead optimize their efforts to increase economic growth through knowledge, innovation and indigenous entrepreneurship. This is the best way to handle and tackle the economic Occidentalism practiced by the global North.

When economic growth rate accelerates in Pakistan, for instance, it is an act that moves the country closer to the priorities trajectory of the global North. As mentioned earlier, the entry to global North is open to all countries depending on the overlapping of their socioeconomic, political and cultural development. The United Arab Emirates (UAE), for example, has recently been noted as the world's second safest country to visit. It is because the UAE has taken major socioeconomic steps, arguably against its cultural norms, thus moving close to the socioeconomic threshold set by the global North. Its economic success and willingness to accept the Western supremacy are the main reasons for earning the title as one of the top safest countries in the world.

Pakistan's predominant ideology has, so far, not accepted the superiority of the Occident. As a result, the country is facing tough times about its perception by the

international financial institutions such as the FATF. Strategically, Pakistan must stop the policy of continuously seeking aid and hard cash from the global North. This practice will strengthen the Western perception about Pakistan as an economically backward state despite being a nuclear power. While dealing with the money laundering issues, the word 'terror financing' has been derived from the notion 'war on terror' and replaced with the earlier used term 'illicit financing'. The move further strengthens the Western perception about Pakistan. There is, therefore, a need to ideologically understand that there is no alternative of hard earned money. There is also a dire need to get convinced that economic hardships and even failures are not bad. It is all about how a country perceives them through its policies. Another need is to inculcate problem solving approach in our policies with minimum dependence on external sources. That means knowledge, practical wisdom, innovation and indigenous entrepreneurship are the modes and means that can help Pakistan attain long run economic growth. In other words, long term economic growth has to be generated endogenously from within. In this context, seeking technical help from China can be helpful in bringing about a culture of self-reliance, sensible imitation, and innovation. It is because China is historically not part of the Occidental thought. Therefore, both countries can find common ideological grounds to move forward as a regional alliance in this particular context.

As far as FATF's recommendations are concerned, it is convincing to argue that the practice of e-integration of Pakistan's financial institutions is itself an exercise of capacity building and learning by doing. The disadvantageous aspect of the FATF's requirements, as observed by some political analysts, is that undue pressure is being exerted on Pakistan reflecting double standards of the West. However, the advantage is that Pakistan, under the FATF pressure, can proactively pursue the badly needed integration of financial institutions enabling them to share data with each other. Smartly injected IT interventions can, however, prevent the misuse of data and their unnecessary sharing internationally. If done successfully, the e-integration of financial institutions and data sharing will also improve Pakistan's ease of doing business indicators instrumental in accelerating long term indigenous economic growth. Achieving long term economic growth through advanced knowledge and indigenous efforts is the only way to counter the traditional Occidental thought that has, so far, treated Pakistan with distrust and disdain.

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# **Internal and External Challenges & CPEC**

**By Naveed Aman Khan**

THE China-Pakistan Economic Corridor is an ambitious project that aims at changing the geo-economic dynamics of Pakistan-China relations and augmenting the trading activity in the region. It anticipates economic growth, meeting the energy shortfall requirements, employment generation, foreign direct investment, infrastructure development, promotion of tourism and others. The multi-billion project offers a long-term investment in Pakistan involving the regional countries as well. However, the project is being challenged by domestic controversies and external opposition. In this scenario if these challenges are effectively tackled, it may lead to economic interdependence that would be climacteric for peace and economic development for the region.

The vision behind CPEC is to improve life of the people of Pakistan and China by building economic cooperation, logistics and people-to-people contact for regional connectivity. Moreover, it includes integrated transport and IT system, communication channels, agricultural development and poverty alleviation. It incorporates tourism, financial cooperation, human resource development and others. After the completion of the Corridor, it will become a primary gateway for trade among China, East Africa and the Middle East in particular. It is expected that this Corridor will help cut twelve thousand kilometres route. There are myriads of benefits of CPEC that are stimulating the hope for bright future of the corridor, the journey would not be without hurdles as there are several intrinsic and extrinsic challenges that are an impediment to the churning out of CPEC.

First and foremost challenge domestically is an absence of rule of law. The basic purpose of rule of law is to provide security of life and free movement to people. Pakistan has been ranked 106th in terms of rule of law experienced by the citizens, getting position on Afghanistan, Ethiopia, Zimbabwe, Cameroon, Egypt, Cambodia and Venezuela. Without rule of law sustained development remains an elusive goal; peace, investment, development are all linked with the values of law. Law and order situation is so inadequate in Pakistan that international as well as domestic investors are reluctant to invest in Pakistan. China-Pakistan economic corridor only could become a game changer, if Pakistan succeeded.

Second major threat to the CPEC project is political instability in the country that has become a serious problem in Pakistan. Political firmness is pre-requisite for the economic growth and development of the country. Uncertainty is ahead of Pakistan political crisis. No Prime Minister could hold the office for five years since independence in 1947. Resultantly security issues and political instability arise in Pakistan leading to military interference in the state affairs getting ground for a military coup. Thus political uncertainty unless not done away with, would continue to remain a challenge for the CPEC projects implementation. Investment will be withdrawn from CPEC if there is any political turmoil in the country. The third major obstacle to implementation progress of CPEC is an institutional imbalance.

Pakistan is a country where military has ruled for around 35 years out of 70 years. Throughout the three martial law regimes, the Constitution of Pakistan had been abrogated, suspended or held in abeyance. Presently, the CPEC is facing tremendous security challenges. In order to guarantee a secure environment for the CPEC development, military is expanding its power. This phenomenon significantly affects the civil-military relations and civilian control over the military that is challenging the process of democratic transition. The need has arisen that the military should be kept aside from the interfering in the political matters of the country. So that the government might make policies in the way people want. The fourth serious challenge which CPEC is facing is inter-provincial grievances. It is alleged that Punjab gets lion's share in CPEC projects at the cost of other provinces. It fashioned rifts between the federal government and the provinces.

The major conflict was the change of route in the KP. Former Federal Government wanted to build eastern route first which passes through the Central Punjab, despite the fact that eastern route is longer than western route which would be more costly. In this connection, Punjab province would get the most benefit, depriving other provinces their due share. China urged Pakistani leaders to resolve issues over CPEC project. CPEC is crucial for the country, it should not be made controversial by saying that the entire country and all the provinces would benefit from it, particularly backward areas of the KP and Balochistan. Fifth major challenge towards implementation of CPEC is the unrest in Balochistan province. Due to the fact that Gwadar port is located in Balochistan, the ongoing insurgency in the province poses crucial challenges to the success of CPEC project.

Consequently, the benefits of CPEC investment can be accurately measured if its impact on terrorism can be calculated.

Apart from domestic challenges, CPEC project implementation is facing several international challenges as well. The foremost external challenge to the Corridor is India's belligerent attitude towards CPEC. Indian felonious demand is that Gilgit-Baltistan is a disputed territory, therefore; route of CPEC passing through that territory is unjustified. Another considerable concern within India is that it sees Gwadar a deep-sea port as a part of China's string of pearls basis that extends from its eastern coast to the Arabian Sea. China is also developing ports in Sri Lanka and Bangladesh that are considered a potential military challenge to India. India perceives that in future China can block sea access to India by burgeoning such ports. Consequently, India is unhappy with the development of CPEC and trying to sabotage CPEC by playing its card in Balochistan.

Source: <https://pakobserver.net/internal-and-external-challenges-cpec/>

## **Moody's Warning | Editorial**

Watch the reserves!

While the equity market celebrates the MSCI breather – very likely very temporary – it's as if nobody in government noticed the warning issued by Moody's 'Global Emerging Markets: Outlook' report. Not only have Pakistan's reserves fallen to a four-year low, providing less than two months of import cover, but Pakistan's reserves adequacy is now among the lowest among rated sovereigns. And the only clarity that has come from the government is a sudden assurance that all is well. Yet there's still no final word on the bailout, or just who will throw in how much to keep us solvent, or whether we will still go to the IMF or not.

Just the other day the State Bank announced a 55pc FDI dip, year-on-year, in October – which shows that foreign investors, at least, are no longer taking the prime minister for his word. Meanwhile, inflation has crept up to almost seven percent, the highest number in a number of years, and annual growth too is expected to slow down to pre-PML-N government levels. How, then, the government can claim overcoming the economic crisis is difficult to understand, to say the least.

It is important for everybody celebrating these bailouts to remember that this is just money, which we are borrowing, to pay back old debt whose interest payments are now due. Before long, most likely, a similar situation will present itself. And since there are no signs of a structural turnaround in the economy, one that would turbo charge tax and export earnings, it is more than likely that the prime minister will have to go begging all over again. There is an urgent need to bring clarity to the economic front or the investor exodus, which has accelerated since the new government took over, will become too strong to be reversed.

Source: <https://www.pakistantoday.com.pk/2018/11/16/moodys-warning/>

## **Talks With IMF | Editorial**

No space for complacency

The IMF package alone will not reduce Pakistan's economic woes. With China and the UAE having made no open commitment of a hefty financial package, the crunch would only partially improve with an IMF package which still remains uncertain in view of the gaps in positions taken by Asad Umar and the Fund's delegation.

The PTI administration faces a dilemma. It is keen to get a bailout but is unwilling to accept some of the tough conditionalities. With an eye on a jittery bourse and a rupee in free fall, the finance minister would not like to create the perception that talks are not proceeding well. His assurance that the dialogue is moving in the right direction is a bit too optimistic.

The IMF insists on an end to subsidies over power and handing over the authority to fix tariff to the power regulator. It wants an upward revision in the revenue target to Rs4.75 trillion for the current year while it is not possible for the government to exceed the limit of Rs4.5 trillion. The IMF is opposed to fiscal federalism which is a part of the country's constitution. The PTI doesn't have the numerical strength to change the 18th amendment even if it wants to.

Like the PML-N which did not devalue the rupee out of a false sense of national prestige, the PTI is unwilling to privatise the PIA, Railways and Pakistan Steel Mills for equally fake considerations despite the fact that they continue to bleed the national economy.

If there is complete transparency in the Chinese assistance, as claimed by finance minister, what stands in the way of sharing the details with IMF? One had expected that Asad Umar would succeed in seeking a gradual escalation in power rates and a measured approach towards bringing millions of traders and well-to-do tax dodgers into the tax net. Putting all the weight on the common man immediately and forcing the large trading community to cough up instantly is likely to generate a crisis that is in nobody's interest. The finance minister has obviously failed to convince the IMF of the negative impact of disregarding politically sensitive issues.

Source: <https://www.pakistantoday.com.pk/2018/11/20/talks-with-imf/>

## **Alternative Economic Plan | Editorial**

CHAIRING a meeting of the Economic Advisory Council (EAC) on Sunday, Prime Minister Imran Khan reportedly instructed the Ministry of Finance to continue talks with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) but also keep an alternative strategy ready. Minister for Finance Asad Umar briefed the meeting on talks with the IMF and said the government will have to take tough economic decisions. Some participants of the meeting are said to have expressed their reservations about taking tough decisions, as it might create political problems for the government.

EAC includes some of the most brilliant brains of the nation, therefore, it can certainly help lead the country on the path of sustainable growth provided the authorities concerned give due consideration to its recommendations and implement them without any reservations. However, it must be kept in mind that experts only consider the professional aspect of a situation and do not take into account possible fallout of the strategy proposed by them for the masses. It is for the Government, which has been voted to power by masses, to safeguard interests of the people especially the vulnerable segments of the population. The Government seems to be not clear headed as far as economic and fiscal policy and its impact on the general public is concerned. This is because measures so far approved by the Government have led to unbearable increase in burden on the common man. Free fall of rupee, increase in import duty and frequent upward adjustment in the tariff of electricity and gas have not only complicated problems of the layman but also run contrary to the Government's objective of ensuring ease of doing business. How can you attract investment or enhance productivity by halting work on almost all infrastructure development projects and increasing the cost of input? On the one hand you are going to launch a massive housing project but on the other hand cost of construction has gone up tremendously during the last few weeks due to impact of government policies and judicial interventions leading to significant rise in prices of bricks, steel, cement and other related material. Similarly, how can we increase exports when factories are closing down due to contradiction in policies? Problems of the economy are not expected to one go or in just weeks or months, therefore, the Government might reconsider its approach and pursue a more pragmatic policy that also takes care of the vulnerability of the masses. What IMF has proposed is surely going to jolt the poor and therefore the Prime Minister has done well by giving instructions for devising

an alternate strategy to cope with the financial and economic woes of the Government. Incidentally, the World Economic Forum too has listed water crisis, unmanageable inflation, terrorist attacks, failure of urban planning and critical infrastructure as immediate risks faced by Pakistan and the Government needs to adopt a holistic approach to address these and other challenges.

Source: <https://pakobserver.net/alternative-economic-plan/>



# EDUCATION

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## **A Uniform Education System | Editorial**

Federal Education Minister Shafqat Mehmood stated on the floor of the National Assembly that the Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf (PTI) is working to introduce a uniform education system in the country. Those preparations are being seen in motion now as it was announced on Wednesday that the Punjab Higher Education Department (PHED) has initiated a move to introduce a uniform higher education policy by next month.

From all reports, it seems like the process is going smoothly and the government is investing proper resources to a uniform education policy. The department has recruited some of the most highly educated academics and experts on policy and education to be on board for consultation on different agendas and to give recommendations. Some of those agendas include reforming college education, qualifications, courses and curricula standardisation, faculty development for better learning and research outcomes, fostering research, innovation and developing partnerships with businesses.

If proper research and detail is being dedicated to a new education policy, then the initiation of this process is a good hopeful first step. A uniform education policy to bridge the chasm between the rich and poor was a high priority of PTI among its election campaign promises.

Yet the Federal and Provincial Education Ministers should tread very carefully when it comes to drafting a uniform education policy. Previous ideas doled out for equalising the education levels in the society have been to change the medium of instruction or impose the same curriculum in all schools, which were rather simplistic measures and have not worked out well. Equality of opportunity does not mean uniformity- to truly bridge the gap, we need to cater to the populations being neglected in the education sector. If a uniform education system is to be introduced, it needs to be well researched and extremely thought out so we raise the segments being left behind in education.

Source: <https://nation.com.pk/09-Nov-2018/a-uniform-education-system>

## **Education Crisis | Editorial**

Human Rights Watch (HRW) has released a report on the state of education in Pakistan; with particular focus on gender disparities. And it paints a grim picture.

‘Shall I feed my daughter or educate her’: Barriers to girls’ education in Pakistan outlines the education crisis that continues to confront the country. In real terms, this translates into a total of almost 22.5 million children out of school. A breakdown along gender lines finds that some 32 percent of primary school age girls are not in the classroom; as compared to 21 percent of boys. By the time that secondary school comes knocking (grade six): 59 percent of girls will have fallen by the wayside as compared to 49 percent of boys.

HRW makes two things clear. Firstly, that the right to education is a fundamental one in accordance with the Constitution. Secondly, the overwhelming absence of the girl child from the school system is evidence of a fragile national security climate. After all, Balochistan is home to the worst indicators on this front with a whopping 81 percent of women having failed to complete primary school; the figure for men is 52 percent. In addition, 75 percent of women had never set foot inside a classroom as compared to 40 percent of men. Meaning that as the Imran Khan government talks of CPEC bringing development and prosperity to the province it cannot afford to lose sight of the fact that here in Pakistan poverty is overwhelmingly gendered in nature. Therefore the priority must be to get as many girls into school as possible on an urgent basis; while also refusing to let adult women continue to languish below the education safety net. For a literate work force is one that is better able to contribute to the economic uplift of individual families as well as entire communities.

But the clock is ticking. The next five years will be critical. Not only because the PTI focused on education in its election campaign. But, rather, due to the fact that the democratic experiment hinges on the realisation of constitutional rights for all; including that of education. Therefore, aside from the need to build more schools while taking so-called ghost schools off the books — focus must also rest on enforcement. Meaning that those who employ (girl) child labour must face

aggressive punitive measures. Especially when it comes to rich households hiring daughters of the poor. For all too often this is articulated as benevolent paternalism; the underlying implication being that by having the girl child do domestic chores wealthy families contribute to her family's income; or are perhaps saving her from child marriage. Regardless of intentions, true or false, the reality remains that the rights of the child are being violated. Thus federal and provincial governments must take seriously the country's domestic and international obligations in this regard.

And now that the Prime Minister's begging bowl runneth over — he must put that money where his election pledges were and increase investment in education above and beyond the limits set by previous governments. For failure in this regard will betray yet another generation of Pakistan's children. \*

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Source: <https://dailytimes.com.pk/322215/education-crisis-5/>

# **Education Policy is Needed By Zahid ur Rehman**

Now that we are in Naya Pakistan, and like everybody else, I have some expectations from the new government. Apparently, the new government is aware of its responsibilities and it must have a clear vision of taking Pakistan forward. However, it is important to keep discussing specific issues, which are critical to Pakistan's progress, so that they are not overlooked while prioritizing target areas. I believe that the vision of a better and prosperous Pakistan cannot be achieved without overhauling the education system on the emergency basis.

The constitution of Pakistan in article 25-A clearly states that "The state shall provide free and compulsory education to all children of the age of five to sixteen years in such manner as may be determined by law". The honorable chief justice of Pakistan referred to this article while addressing a lawyers' gathering in Multan sometime back, and mentioned that education is a fundamental right of every citizen of the state of Pakistan. Unfortunately, like so many other fundamental rights, this fundamental right of citizens of Pakistan has also been ignored by successive governments.

Since its inception, Pakistan has had nine national policies and reform agendas to improve national education. The latest initiative is National Education Policy 2017, which like previous policies aims to provide free and compulsory education to children. But still, a shocking number, around 23 million children are out of schools. Clearly, an inadequate implementation of these policies has led to the current sorry state of education. It's time to realize that we don't need new educational policies but a political will to implement already developed strategies. Earnest efforts need to be made to ensure that every child gets basic 'compulsory' education, no matter what.

The problems with the current education system are many, such as, content of textbooks is outdated and backward, the infrastructure of institutions is deteriorating, and teachers are neither well trained nor motivated enough. In short, the current education system cannot support and contribute to the vision of a new Pakistan.

Recent surveys show that literacy rate in Pakistan is roughly 58 percent and it is on the decline. One of the reasons for this decline has been highlighted in Global Education Monitoring Report (GEMR) released by UNESCO. This report aptly highlights the deficiencies in our education system: of the 93 percent children that enroll in primary schools, only 61 percent complete their primary education. Similarly, out of 45 percent of children that enroll in secondary school, only 20 percent complete it. This trend shows that our school system is failing miserably in retaining the children at school. Primary reasons of this are mistreatment of children at school, poor teaching methods and lack of infrastructure. Clearly, things need to be improved. For this to happen, teachers should be trained and basic infrastructure in schools should be improved on the priority basis.

Recent surveys show that literacy rate in Pakistan is roughly 58 percent and it is on the decline

In addition to illiteracy, the quality of education we are providing is also a serious issue. As mentioned in GEMR, educational institutions in Pakistan have not been able to impart basic skills in information and communication technology. For instance, Pakistani adults performed marginally better than their peer groups in Zimbabwe and Sudan in using basic tools such as copy and paste or to move information in a document. It is undoubtedly true as I recently met some MBBS graduates who did not know how to use Microsoft Word and Excel. This is unbelievable and unacceptable in an international context. Inability to use basic computer application is widespread in students, especially, from natural sciences. It is pertinent that teachers encourage their students to use computers in doing research and in preparation of assignments and presentations.

Pakistan allocates only 2.8 percent of its GDP for education, which is less than all of its neighboring countries. Musharraf's government made a huge investment in higher education, but primary and secondary school were relatively ignored. Improvement should be made in primary, secondary and higher (tertiary) education in parallel so that high quality students/manpower is available to the universities and industry alike.

Investment in education does not result in a quick return. It's a long-term process, and its benefits will be apparent only when a well-educated and trained generation

enters the market . Many examples around the world show that the sustainable development of countries is achieved only by improving education at all levels.

The plans to improve education should be made in consultation with non-government organizations and other stakeholders. Studies by UNESCO show that “Governments that assign experts, consultants or donors to draft plans quickly risk undermining local ownership and commitment.” More importantly, new legislation is required to ensure the continuation of policies even with the change of governments.

We can also learn from countries such as Singapore, which consistently ranks top in International Student Assessment; a program that evaluates 15 years olds from various countries. Singapore invests heavily in educational research and all the suggested reforms are carefully tested before being applied. Singapore also provides extensive training to teachers and their performance is rigorously evaluated. Best performing teachers are properly rewarded. All this tells us that educational reforms are a continuous, coordinated and gradual process and it should be evidence based

It is time for the PTI government to fulfill its promise of imposing an education emergency. Pakistan is brimming with youthful energy. Only quality education can channel this energy in the right direction. Our youth is our huge asset or it is our greatest liability, only our policies and priorities will determine that.

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## Out of school | Editorial

THE figure is sobering: nearly 25m children in Pakistan currently do not go to school. This means that unless sincere measures are taken by the federal and provincial governments, as well as civil society, a whole generation of youngsters will grow up without the education and life skills needed to survive in a cut-throat world. Speaking at a news conference in Islamabad on Monday, the federal education minister said that the state will make all-out efforts to bring these children into the classroom. Noble as this goal may be, the state needs to unveil a concrete plan aimed at reducing the population of out-of-school children, reduce dropout rates, etc — ie it must come up with innovative solutions where earlier governments have not been successful. The girl child fares even worse than her male counterpart. According to a new Human Rights Watch report, the vast majority of out-of-school children are girls. It says, for example, that by the ninth grade, only 13pc of girls are still in school. That is an appalling figure that needs to be immediately remedied.

Where solutions are concerned, there is, of course, the issue of increasing government spending on education. Currently, Pakistan spends less than the 4pc to 6pc of GDP recommended on education. But beyond investing more funds in the education sector, there needs to be focus on learning outcomes. Getting children into school is one thing; making sure they are being taught — and taught well — subjects that will help them succeed in life is another. The education minister also hinted at improving quality in state schools, and talked of a uniform system of education. While uniformity in the syllabus may be important, it requires further debate amongst the federating units in the post-18th Amendment scenario. What both Islamabad and the provinces should immediately focus on is increasing enrolment and improving standards. Because the public school system has failed, parents who can afford it send their wards to high-fee private schools, while the poor have no option but to enrol their offspring in madressahs. True, the private sector has a role to play (without extorting money from parents), but it should not be a replacement for quality state schools that equip children with the tools to learn and thrive, and welcome both boys and girls equally in a conducive atmosphere.

Source : <https://www.dawn.com/news/1445502/out-of-school?>

# **Embracing The Quality Culture in Higher Education By Dr Shaukat Ali Mazari**

Quality is a relative term and its definition may vary from stakeholder to stakeholder depending their needs, experiences and perspectives. Harvey defined quality assurance in Analytic Quality Glossary as “Assurance of quality in higher education is a process of establishing stakeholder confidence that provision (input, process and outcomes) fulfils expectations or measures up to threshold minimum requirements” and similarly, quality enhancement (QE) is defined as “process of augmentation or improvement.”

Professor David Dill, who is an Emeritus Professor of Public Policy at The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, United States reports that the quality assurance practices in higher education officially at government level began in early 1980s in United States to ensure the standards of education for public interest. France began in 1984 to improve its quality assurance bureaucracy in higher education, the United Kingdom in 1985 to achieve an improved relationship of higher education with the labour market and the Netherlands in 1985 adopted quality assurance (QA) framework for steering universities. 25 European countries signed an agreement on comparability of the standards and quality of higher-education qualifications at University of Bologna, Italy in 1999, which is known as the Bologna process. In one of the meetings of Bologna Process under the Lisbon Recognition Convention, standards and guidelines for quality assurance in the European higher education area (ESG) came into being.

Quality assurance is looked after in higher education institutions internally as well as externally. For instance, European standards and guidelines for quality assurance in higher education have three layers of quality assurance like internal quality assurance (IQA), external quality assurance (EQA) and quality assurance agencies (QAAs). IQA is meant to work on institute’s developed standard operating procedures (SOPs), policies, their structure, requirements with the help of internal and external stakeholders and quality assurance documents are made available for public. EQA determines the efficacy of the IQA system, which is conducted by external experts including students representatives. Government authorized independent and autonomous quality assurance agencies, generally program



regulators ensure that standards meet the minimum criteria for academic qualification award.

Quality assurance is looked after in higher education institutions internally as well as externally

Like other countries Pakistan has academic standardisation framework, which is called Pakistan Qualification Framework (PQF) under the umbrella of Higher Education Commission (HEC) Pakistan. Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) of HEC is the policy making and monitoring body for assurance and enhancement of quality in higher education of Pakistan. QAA has formulated two-layer quality assurance mechanism; IQA as well as EQA. For internal quality assurance, QAA has developed Quality Enhancement Cells (QECs) in each university of Pakistan. Whereas, external quality assurance is looked after by QAA itself and through accreditation councils like Pakistan Engineering Council (PEC), Pakistan Medical & Dental Council (PMDC) and many other relevant councils for different programs. For internal quality assurance, a detailed guide on self-assessment report (SAR) is provided by QAA. The external QA includes, institutional performance evaluation (IPE), postgraduate programs review by HEC and review by accreditation councils for the accreditation or reaccreditation of the programmes.

Researchers from Germany, Dr Markus Seyfried, who is Chair for German Politics and Government, at University of Potsdam and Dr. Philipp Pohlenz, who is Chair for Higher Education and Professionalization of Academic Teaching, at Otto-von-Guericke-University reported in their research article “Assessing quality assurance in higher education: quality managers’ perceptions of effectiveness” published in European Journal of Higher Education that “the preparation of accreditation” lowers the effectiveness of quality management. Moreover, support of university management is reported to be pivotal to embrace the quality culture and practices in universities and cooperation with other higher education institutions have shown a synergetic effect in QA practices and in its promotion.

The dominant external quality assurance is generally perceived to be more for accountability and bureaucratic purposes. Similarly, a mild EQA system may not be taken serious either by management or internal quality managers. Research exhibits that a balance between IQA and EQA brings synergy and outputs are more beneficent to the institutions than individually dominated processes. Without

getting in confidence stakeholders on the one-point agenda of quality assurance and enhancement, good practices for QA and quality enhancement shall remain a question mark! Research shows, academic quality managers and directors who left alone with the feeling that they are on a position merely to fulfil the requirements of external QA agencies, very soon they become unproductive and toothless for nurturing a quality culture. James Williams from School of Social Sciences, Birmingham City University reports in 'Quality in Higher Education' in his work "Quality assurance and quality enhancement: is there a relationship?" that quality assurance is an inflexible, result based top to bottom approach, whereas quality enhancement is a negotiated qualitative bottom to top approach. Similarly, Gosling and D'Andrea reports in their work "Quality development: a new concept for higher education" that quality assurance along with educational development can improve the quality of education.

QAA of HEC ranks QECs through a 6 criterion, which are progress against IPE (16 percent), progress against SAR (16 percent), accreditation of programs (14 percent), progress against HEC postgraduate programs reviews (18 percent), functioning of QEC secretariat (31 percent) and implementation of QAA criteria (5 percent). As per scores, QECs shall be ranked in W, X, Y and Z categories. W being in the top tier and Z being in lower tier. As per previous HEC university ranking system, QEC with a W category will add a score of 3 out 100 in the ranking of its university, whereas a QEC with ranking of Z category shall not add any scores to their university ranking. Practices and scoring criteria of QECs show that the most of their work is to provide data and assist only external QA agencies. When this is the case then where is internal quality enhancement and assurance system? QAA-HEC criterion and practices indicate that QECs are data manipulators and providers with a dominant external quality assurance system. This nullifies the research of a balanced IQA and EQA system for nurturing a quality culture and structure of QAA-HEC itself, which is based on IQA and EQA.

A working framework may be drafted for a balanced IQA and EQA allowing QECs to develop their own quality enhancement and assurance mechanisms, processes, structure and empowering their role in decision making. The model of ESG, which is based on three layers of quality assurance and enhancement or a similar model may be adopted or drafted. Let the first layer be the QECs themselves within university. Second layer should be experts from other universities to check the effectiveness of QECs practices and third be the same of HEC, as mentioned.

Research has proved that suggested first and second layers shall empower the QECs role and cooperation for better quality management. Lastly, score must not reflect the role of QECs for their assistance to QAA-HEC but their contributions to quality culture development and practices.

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# **The Higher Goals of Education By Dr. Asad Zaman**

Currently, syllabi in Pakistani universities follow those of the educational institutions of the west, and are oriented towards providing students with the job-skills they need to earn money. This trend has become even more extreme over the past few decades as the burden of debt on students in USA has risen to nearly a trillion dollars, due to increasing commercialisation of the education sector. Pakistani university students' families also assume a huge economic burden in the name of equipping their children for the demands of the increasingly specialised job market. In all of this rush towards progress, morality plays no role in the curricula of educational institutions, a state of affairs that seems natural to those of us who have grown up under amoral educational regimes.

On deeper examination, it becomes clear that morality was in fact deliberately excluded from western curricula in the early part of the 20th Century. The reasons for this shift, and its consequences, have been detailed by Julie Reuben in her book: "The Making of the Modern University: Intellectual Transformation and the Marginalisation of Morality." According to Reuben, in the 1920s the college catalogues of even the most prestigious western universities opened with statements about their mission to build character among students. The purpose of education was understood by all as developing and grooming personalities, creating leadership skills, and instilling cognizance of civic and social responsibilities. This mission was increasingly abandoned since the 1960s, and today, no official documents speak to the responsibility of providing students with moral guidance.

To make the same point on a more personal level, I recall my experience as a freshman at MIT in 1971. It was an exciting time, leaving home for the first time to drink from the fountains of knowledge at the source. We were all innocent and young, enthusiastic about the infinite possibilities and pathways open before us. One night, a group of us spent all night discussing the meaning of life and other deeper questions – which path should we choose? What were the most worthwhile directions where we should spend our efforts, using the precious moments of our youthful and boundless energies? As morning dawned, it became clear to all of us

that we did not have a clue regarding this most important of questions that we all face in our lives. Accordingly, we decided to consult one of our professors — surely the knowledge that we sought would be available from the deep wells of wisdom to be found at one of the world's leading universities.

Accordingly, a small group of students went to one of our professors and asked him about how we could learn the answers to the bigger questions that life poses — what we should be doing with our lives? The answer he gave us satisfied us at the time; it was only much later that I realised that we had been deceived. He told us that experience shows that we must first learn the answers to the small questions, and only later would we be able to tackle the big questions. It seemed like a perfectly sensible answer, and we were satisfied to learn our calculus, chemistry, and computer programming, as the small steps we needed to take, in order to prepare for the bigger ones. It was much, much, later that I realised that he did not have any answers for us — the bigger questions were no longer on the syllabus of a Western education. Because the goods we were looking for were not in available in the shop, we were sold an inferior bill-of-goods, marketed as the pathway to what we were looking for. But in fact, regardless of how much math, chemistry, physics, biology, or economics, politics and social science you study, you will not learn the answer to the questions about how we can make the most of our few precious moments on this Earth.

The deep damage that this kind of education, expunged of morality and values, is inflicting on society can be gauged by many measures. A Western education trains students to build bombs, to calculate costs and benefits, but does not train them to understand that the best that life has to offer cannot be quantified or measured in dollars or pounds. In fact, human life is infinitely precious, and every baby is born with the potential for extraordinary achievements. However, because they were not trained to understand the value of life, the graduates of the finest educational institutes in the West designed bombs and machinery for mass murder of innocent civilians, did scientific research on torture, and many other kinds of inhumane experiments on human subjects. I can personally testify to a loss of idealism and moral values that I and my fellow students experienced in the strongly amoral atmosphere prevalent at campuses throughout USA. Our conversations as first year graduate students in the Economics department at Stanford University revealed that all of us were motivated by the desire to improve the economic conditions of the poor, and to create prosperity for the people. However, the

Economics program taught us that rational behaviour is selfish, and survival of the fittest in the jungle of cut-throat competition creates the maximum welfare for all. Accordingly, by the end of our Ph.D.s, we abandoned our idealistic dreams, and became focused on personal advancement through careers and jobs.

Today, our most urgent need as educators is to focus on building the character of our students. There is no doubt that values should not be imposed on others, and the meaning of life cannot be conveyed in a lecture. Nonetheless, this does not mean that we should sterilise our classrooms of meaningful discussion about the most important questions we face in life as human beings. There is a rich intellectual tradition, both in the East and in the West, of philosophers, mystics, and thought leaders who have grappled with the bigger questions. We fail our students if we only provide them with a technical education without exposing them to deeper knowledge about how to live, and how to excel as a human being. The Western education that we seek to imitate trains the minds, but not the hearts. What our students achieve depends very much on the greatness of the visions we can inspire them with. In this quest, our poets Iqbal, Rumi and others will be of far greater value than the conventional textbooks.

The writer is the VC PIDE, member, Economic Advisory Council to the PM.

Source: <https://nation.com.pk/21-Nov-2018/the-higher-goals-of-education>

## WORLD

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# **Resuming Peace Talks By Dr Zafar Nawaz Jaspal**

AFGHANISTAN'S anarchical situation has frustrated both internal and external stakeholders. The recent parliamentary elections presented the continuity of the democratic process in Afghanistan. But the surge in violence and turnout in the parliamentary elections have pessimistic fallout. Therefore, it is a debatable subject whether the continuity of election process in the country evolved a participatory culture in the Afghan society, which is imperative for the stability of democratic political system. In such a gloomy situation, the direct talks between the American diplomats and the representatives of Afghan Taliban seem meaningful. It qualifies the hypothesis that Trump administration has seriously been working for the major break through in Afghanistan, prior to the start of series of presidential primary elections and caucuses of 2020 Presidential election in the United States.

The reversal of a longstanding United States policy, i.e. "Any negotiations over the political future of Afghanistan will be between the Taliban and Afghan government," may improve the situation in the country. The American diplomats held face-to-face talks with Taliban representatives in Qatar twice since July 2018. The United States strategy to engage Afghan Taliban directly in the peace process germinated a hope for the restoration of peace in the war wearing society and state. Is Washington prepared to withdraw from Afghanistan, completely? The geopolitical trends at the global landscape indicate that the US will not withdraw from Afghanistan any time soon.

Without the withdrawal of the troops, Washington may not satisfy the insurgents. But the direct talk with Afghan Taliban is a right step in the right direction. It accommodates one of the important demands of the Taliban that the negotiations must be between them and the Americans as long as the American military is present in Afghanistan. Indeed, the direct talks between them are not a novel idea. In 2015, both sides had similar efforts. The peace talks were held between the

Americans and the Taliban in Doha but they were faltered after the Afghan government denounced the process. Presently, the Afghan government is in favor of direct talks. Ms. Durrani Waziri, the deputy spokeswoman for President Ashraf Ghani stated: “The government of Afghanistan welcomes every effort which supports the peace process under the auspices of the government.... We appreciate help and support from any side that can ease the peace process.” President Ghani also announced that he was ready to pursue efforts for peace. He said, “Everything can be on the table here as we move forward with this Afghan-led process.”

The Americans direct talks with Taliban exposed the inability of the President Ghani regime to engage the insurgents. In addition, it also reveals the failure of Trump administration’s Afghanistan policy announced on August 21, 2017. The deployment of four thousands additional troops were not enough to restore the writ of the Ghani government in the country. The coalition forces have failed to frustrate and defeat the insurgents. According the latest report from the US government watchdog shows that no territory has been won back from the Taliban.

Last month, Zalmay Khalilzad, a new special envoy for peace and reconciliation in Afghanistan visited Islamabad, Kabul and Doha. His meetings in these cities were meaningful. His interventions resulted in the release of a senior Afghan Taliban leader Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar Akhund by the Pakistan Government. He was second only to Mullah Omar, at the time of his arrest in 2010. The subsequent appreciation of the Americans confirms that this was the fulfillment of a long-standing Kabul demand to help facilitate the peace process.

Pakistan’s role in the affairs of Afghanistan is undeniable. It supports Afghan led Afghan own peace process. It seems instrumental in restarting direct talks between the American diplomats and the Afghan Taliban. Ironically, it has failed to transform the Trump administration and Afghan ruling elite’s destabilizing dual policy. They have been engaging Pakistan for restoring peace in the country and concurrently have been accusing it for derailing the peace process. Acting Deputy Assistant Secretary Henry Ensher said: “We can no longer be silent about the fact that some externally focused terrorist groups enjoy safe haven in Pakistan’s territory.” Perhaps, the continuity of mistrust is incongruous with the peace process in Afghanistan. To conclude, a fresh hope has been injected into the Afghan peace process. The direct talks between American diplomats and Afghan Taliban, and



release of Mullah Baradar are constructive initiatives in pursuit of peace in Afghanistan.

— The writer is Associate Professor, School of Politics and International Relations, Quaid-i-Azam University, Islamabad.

Source: <https://pakobserver.net/resuming-peace-talks/>

# **A Russian Pivot to Asia? By Alexey Khlebnikov**

In recent years, Russia has been going through quite challenging times. Economic slowdown, a collapse in oil prices and Western sanctions which have deprived Moscow of cheap money and technologies—all of these have pushed the Kremlin's strategists to concentrate on import substitution policy, the reorganization of import supply chains, decreasing dependency on oil exports and pushing for the country's pivot towards Asia.

In Moscow's view, Asia is a rapidly growing alternative to the current Western-centric system of international economic and political relations. Moreover, the Kremlin sees that this system does not reflect today's economic and political realities. This is why Russia started to invest a great deal of time and effort in building and developing lasting relations based on mutual respect and interests with partners in Asia.

With Moscow's recent "obsession" with the turning to the Asia-Pacific region, there are still doubts if it can do so at the expense of its Western partners. However, it seems that Moscow is trying to sit on two chairs. The Kremlin can't afford to alienate Europe completely because it is Russia's major economic partner (with over 40 percent of trade) and provider of technologies. At the same time, Russia is building and developing bridges with Asia, looking for new partners and markets that could potentially diversify its current economic activities.

Since 2015, Russia has been organizing a clone of the St. Petersburg International Economic Forum (SPIEF) in the country's Far East—the Eastern Economic Forum (EEF)—which aims at opening new opportunities for Russian companies in the east and for Asian businesses in Russia. If one were to compare these two major economic venues, it is clear which one is becoming more important. It is enough just to look at the high-profile guests of both forums. In 2018, leaders of China, Japan, South Korea and Mongolia took part in the EEF, while the SPIEF was attended only by French president Emmanuel Macron and Japanese prime minister Shinzo Abe. Contracts signed during the last EEF amounted to over \$46 billion, while the SPIEF gathered contracts worth \$38 billion.

## The Demand for Petrochemicals

The global petrochemicals market is considered to be the fastest growing, and expected to increase considerably over the next five years, rising from 1,464 million tonnes per annum (mtpa) in 2015 to 1,708 mtpa by 2020 and to 1,931.5 mtpa in 2026. In addition to that, according to 2018 BP Energy Outlook , petrochemicals is projected to be the fastest growing source of demand. Asia is going to be the main driver of such growth, with China leading as the largest consumer of petrochemicals.

In Russia, chemical products account for 4.4 percent (\$19 billion) of all exports. The industry's goods are the third most exported from the country after minerals and metals. And it seems that the country's industry wants to grow its capacities.

Seyfeddin Roustamov, a businessman who controls Metafrax, one of the top three producers of synthetic resins in Europe and the largest producer and exporter of methanol in Russia, said that his company is planning to invest more than 950 million euros (\$1.1 billion) in construction of a chemical complex construction in Gubakha, located in the region of Perm. The facility is planned to produce up to 575,000 tons of carbamide, 308,000 tons of ammonia and 41,000 tons of melamine per year. The project is the company's biggest investment in decades.

In October 2017, Metafrax signed a contract worth 388 million euros (\$447 million) with Swiss Casale SA (the world leader in creating and licensing its own technologies in production of ammonia, methanol, carbamide and melamine), which will provide services for project documentation, technological know-hows, equipment set-up, and construction management. Such cooperation confirms the dependency of Russian producers of European suppliers of technologies and licenses.

That said, 40 percent of Metafrax's revenue comes from exports to the UK, Finland, Austria, Germany, Switzerland and others. European countries are the biggest consumers of the company's products.

In February 2018, Roustamov's company established SamyangMeta—a joint venture with Korean Sunghong Co., Ltd. to boost its outreach to the Asia-Pacific.

Interestingly, Metafrax also hopes to deliver its products to the European market through this joint venture. It looks increasingly like an attempt to find alternative ways to increase its presence in Europe.

Nevertheless, Moscow's attempts to expand to the Asian markets in its quest to diversify its choice of economic partners is, in fact, a quite rational policy given the prospects of Asian market growth.

However, this endeavor, though very attractive, seems to be challenging. Despite the fact that the Russian economy has been dealing quite successfully with the economic challenges it faces, it still lacks the structural reforms needed to sustain the country's long-term economic development. The "pivot to Asia" policy cannot resolve all Russia's economic problems alone, nor will it smooth Moscow's confrontation with the West. This is why the Kremlin shall not develop ties with Asia at the expense of its relations with Europe. It needs to find a healthy balance which will allow Russia to develop successfully while taking advantage from both worlds.

Alexey Khlebnikov is an expert with the Russian International Affairs Council

Source: <https://nationalinterest.org/feature/russian-pivot-asia-34892>

# **International Relations: A New World Order**

## **By Sheraz Zaka**

Trump has already ordered the reinstatement of sanctions on the purchase of Iran's debt and taken steps to stop foreign companies from doing business in Iran. The European governments that spent almost two years negotiating the nuclear deal-France, Germany, Britain and the E.U. leadership-vowed to resist U.S. pressure for compliance and to protect the ability of their companies to evade U.S. penalties. European leaders have a different view. British Prime Minister Theresa May recently expressed that Iran is holding up its end of the deal. Now these countries want to protect their economies and companies from the ill effects of U.S. sanctions. The French, German and British agreed with Russia and China to try to set up a new payment system that would allow oil companies and other businesses to continue trading with Iran without having to rely on the U.S.-led global market and the dollar. In short, they're looking for ways to redefine the broader terms of their relationships with the U.S. At present it seems, Europe is seeking to permanently alter transatlantic relations by ensuring that it is a sovereign continent, not a vassal.

Transatlantic tensions are nothing new, of course. Trump's dismal approval ratings in Europe match those of President George W. Bush in 2008. Bush's 2003 decision to invade Iraq united Germany, France and Russia in opposition to a U.S. foreign policy priority. Yet European leaders now face greater pressure than ever to loosen the economic and security ties that bind them to the U.S. A generation has passed since the Cold War that cemented a U.S.-European partnership. And even Bush didn't question the value of NATO or threaten to wage a large-scale trade war on European partners. President Barack Obama saw the nuclear deal as a way to prevent Iran from producing a nuclear weapon, to ease the hostility that has dominated relations since the 1979 Islamic Revolution and to appeal to a new generation of pro-Western Iranians. Many hoped a less confrontational approach would eventually open the door to solving other problems, like Iran's ballistic missile program; hostage-taking; threats to Israel; and military involvement in Syria, Yemen and Lebanon.

On the other hand, US ties with Saudi Arabia are becoming tense by the assassination of Washington Post Saudi journalist Jamal Khashoggi in the Saudi consulate situated in Istanbul, Turkey. It is a shameful act for Islamic world that a journalist was assassinated with such impunity. US president's Trump said that stopping arms sales to the Saudis as punishment for Khashoggi's assassination would be a "tough pill to swallow." Few days ago, he said Saudi Arabia's King Salman denied any involvement, and the president suggested that "rogue killers" could be responsible. On Tuesday, Trump said criticism of Saudi Arabia was another case of "guilty until proven innocent. Till now, US response towards the incident of killing of the journalist is confusing because it certainly seems that US does not want to sever its ties with Saudi Arabia on this issue.

Moreover the trade tariffs Trump has imposed are unlikely to return many manufacturing jobs to America since most Chinese goods will continue to be cheaper than their alternatives. US consumers will pay higher prices. The China-located supply chains of many US corporations will be disrupted, while China's supply chains are mostly outside of the US. Nor will technology restraints significantly dent China's 2025 technology programme, since it has already achieved considerable technological autonomy.

The China-located supply chains of many US corporations will be disrupted, while China's supply chains are mostly outside of the US. Nor will technology restraints significantly dent China's 2025 technology programme, since it has already achieved considerable technological autonomy

The Sino-US economic confrontation will have extensive consequences for the global economy. The IMF estimates that the US and China may lose one per cent and two per cent of growth respectively, while global growth would be trimmed by around half a percentage point. There are fears of another global recession as other economies become infected by the Sino-US trade war. The prospects of the US containing China in the Indo-Pacific are also marginal. This is China's front yard. The US allies and friends in East Asia – even Japan, Australia and South Korea – are economically intertwined with China and will be reluctant to confront it. US Freedom of Navigation operations could lead to accidental conflict, as almost happened recently. Short of war, the US cannot wrest the South China Sea islands from China. A reckless US decision to discard the One-China policy could unleash a Chinese invasion of Taiwan.

Despite US objections, and Western propaganda, China's Belt and Road Initiative is unlikely to be derailed. Developing countries will not forego the opportunity to build infrastructure with Chinese financing. The 'debt trap' argument is misleading. Infrastructure investment rarely offers commercial returns. But no country can industrialise without adequate infrastructure. The US, with its parsimonious outlays on development cooperation, cannot offer an alternative to China's Belt and Road initiative. The new Cold War will change the structures of global interaction and governance. Cooperation among the major powers on global issues (non-proliferation, climate change, terrorism) and in regions of tension (North Korea, Afghanistan, the Middle East) may be frozen. China, Russia and the countries in the Eurasian 'heartland' will draw closer together. Alternative trade, finance and development organizations will emerge to circumvent US domination of existing institutions. A new world order seems to be emerging.

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# **Trump After Midterm Elections By Waqar K Kauravi and Umar Waqar**

California mass shooting followed the midterm elections in US tilting the balance of power in House of Representatives in favour of Democrats, although Trump and Republican Party got some face saving in the Senate. Trump's press conference after the elections said it all, 'Trump is angry and frustrated'. The mainstream media was comparing between a Trump who won the Presidential elections with solid back up from Republicans holding both houses with a Trump who has lost the House of Representatives.

Anatomy of the elections in midterm elections has displayed some new trends. There are some of the 'Firsts' in US political history; as reported by Global News, voters elected a diverse group of people, many of whom made history as the first person of their race, gender or sexual orientation in their respective races. Some of these historic firsts include first two Muslim women Rashida Tlaib and Ilhan Omar got elected to Congress, Omar is the first Somali-American person and Tlaib is the first Palestinian-American person in Congress. First two Native American congresswomen, one of which is openly gay were also elected, Texas sent first Hispanic women to Congress, First black congresswomen in Connecticut and Massachusetts got through to Congress, First woman under 30 years old Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez also made it. In Colorado, Jared Polis won the gubernatorial race to become the first openly gay governor. It is being said that it will be the first time the house will be more coloured than ever before.

Trump had played on populist (white) rhetoric, projecting the immigrant caravan as invaders and separation of illegal immigrant from their kids. The political environment was already marred by pipe bombs posted to residences and offices of Democrat big wigs and media houses as well as synagogue shooting in Pittsburgh.

The hate train driven by the Trump camp before midterm elections is being criticised by the media. Eric Elterman from The Nation (an American newspaper) writes, 'what is most surprising about the mass murder at the Tree of Life synagogue in Pittsburgh and the pipe bombs sent to journalists, Democratic



politicians, and the philanthropist George Soros is that we find it surprising at all. After all, both perpetrators were acting on messages they had repeatedly received from President Trump and his supporters in Congress and the media’.

The Washington Post’s Aaron Blake traced the ricocheting effect of the Soros-centred conspiracy theory through the White House, Republican representatives, and the increasingly bonkers right-wing media. And it’s not hard to see where these terrorists thought they were getting their instructions.

Even the Harretz magazine from Israel felt the anti- Semitic tone in Trump’s campaign; by saying that Trump’s Last Campaign Ad ‘Has anti-Semitic Overtones’, the campaign video blasts Washington ‘establishment’ working with global special interests – represented by Jewish figures in financial world.

Trump’s populism, highhandedness and divisive politics have created an atmosphere of uncertainty within and outside United States. The loss of House of Representatives to Democrats has added fuel to fire; no wonder Trump took couple of hours after elections to fire his confidant and friend Jeff Sessions from the post of Attorney General. As reported by The Guardian, State prosecutors across the US demanded that acting US attorney general Matthew Whitaker recuse himself from the Mueller probe. A 2014 speech of Whitaker came to light, revealing that he once said he believed that judges should be Christian.

In our piece ‘The Fired White House’ published in the Nation on 7th august 2017, we had analysed Trump’s tendency to fire his staff and how it would impact functioning of the White House. As predicted, Trump has been very consistent in senior firing staff, some of these people were either fired or lack of motivation to work with Trump, Nikki Haley and Jeff Sessions are the latest casualties.

With democrats now in-charge of important committees, Trump’s freedom of action enjoyed through Republican control of both houses will be limited. As pointed out by CNBC, ‘with their regained power, Democrats, who will take over committee chairships, also will be in position to investigate Trump and his administration in a variety of areas that Republicans showed scant interest in examining when they controlled the House. That includes eyeing the president’s campaign contacts with Russians, foreign financial connections to the Trump Organization, Trump’s

immigration enforcement actions and controversial spending by a number of Cabinet secretaries’.

Trump’s foreign policy has created ripples in the international system, his trade war against China, sanctions against Iran and Russian Federation, uncouth comments on African nations and somewhat uneasy relationship with the European Union have already made him unpopular in international community. With increasing pressure from domestic politics, driven by aggressive Democrats in the House of Representatives and contest within international arena, President Trump has a hard time ahead. This is likely to usher in a period of more instability within the US and impact her foreign relations.

While Trump may be eyeing the next elections in 2020, the US establishment has to appreciate that international system keeps running on its course without waiting for things to settle down in America.

We will end the paper by quoting from our previous work on President Trump, published in the Nation. ‘Apparently Trump’s way of governance has been based on a simple theory, kill the problems creating chaos by accentuating further chaos, something Trump has done in his building up of Trump business empire; but, Trump should understand that United States is not a Trump Tower on the Chicago River. International system does not go to sleep during hiring and firing breaks in the White House, and, every day counts in enhancing or retarding the American National Interest. While the world may be disturbed by the chaos in the White House, this perception of instability in decision making cabal of the sole super power would tend to convince the international community that they can do without waiting for a nod from America in day to day business of international relations’.

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# **More Politics Than Substance: Three Years Of Russian And Chinese Economic Cooperation In Central Asia – Analysis By Nargis Kassenova\***

(FPRI) — Over three years ago, in May 2015, Chinese President Xi Jinping and Russian President Vladimir Putin declared that they would co-develop their Eurasian integration projects, the Russian-led Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) and the China-led Silk Road Economic Belt (SREB), now repackaged as the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). In press statements, President Putin noted that the two sides “seek ultimately to reach a new level of partnership that will create a common economic space across the entire Eurasian continent,” while President Xi emphasized that they “will work towards greater mutual openness, coordinate our development strategies and deepen and interweave our interests for the good of both countries and peoples.” Thus, judging by the official rhetoric, we were witnessing the dawn of a new era of the “integration of integrations.” To a more skeptical observer, these statements seemed to indicate only that Moscow and Beijing had found a way to accommodate their interests in Eurasia, not that cooperation would lead to much in terms of substance.

## Quick Linkages with China

Encouraged by this development, Central Asian states embarked on formalizing their own agreements with China, linking national development strategies to the BRI. Kazakhstan, a founding member of the EAEU, pioneered the trend. In December 2015, the Kazakh and Chinese prime ministers announced that their countries would develop a plan for linking the then-SREB and Kazakhstan’s “Nurly Zhol” economic development plan. The core of the policy, launched by President Nursultan Nazarbayev in 2014, was to build domestic infrastructure. It featured three priorities: transport infrastructure, energy, and manufacturing. While transport and energy infrastructure had been core to Kazakhstan-China cooperation, the joint development of the manufacturing sector is a recent trend. The Chinese and Kazakh governments quickly assembled the plan, which came into effect in August 2016. They also developed a special program to transfer

industrial capacity from China to Kazakhstan that initially included 51 projects worth around \$26-27 billion, ranging from the chemical industry and transportation infrastructure to agribusiness and information technology. In September 2018, a new agreement was reached on the joint implementation of 11 projects worth \$1.9 billion.

Kyrgyzstan, another Central Asian state that is a member of the EAEU, officially supported the linkage between the EAEU and the BRI and started thinking of ways to benefit from it. In May 2017, then-President Almazbek Atambayev expressed his country's interest in becoming a link in the Digital Silk Road to connect Europe and Asia and connecting it to the country's National Program of Digital Transformation, "Taza Koom." New President Sooranbai Zheenbekov, who took office in 2017, has shown more interest in working with China in the field of "green tech" and proposed to create in Kyrgyzstan a Chinese electric car plant targeting Central Asia and Eurasian Economic Union as the main markets.

Non-EAEU member-states Tajikistan and Uzbekistan have proposed their own plans to cooperate with China's BRI as well. The main goals of the "National Development Strategy of the Republic of Tajikistan till 2030" (adopted in 2016), such as energy security, becoming a transit country, and food security, fully align with already well-developed areas of China-Tajikistan cooperation. Under President Shavkat Mirziyoyev, Uzbekistan is also eager to align its "Strategy of actions in five priority directions of development of Uzbekistan for 2017-21." In a joint statement made by President Xi and President Mirziyoyev in May 2017, the two sides promised to strengthen cooperation in the context of BRI in trade, investment, finance, transport and communication, agriculture, industrial parks, and others. Reportedly, during President Mirziyoyev's visit to Beijing, China and Uzbekistan signed dozens of deals worth \$23 billion, including a \$1.2 billion project on the production of synthetic liquid fuel at the country's largest gas refinery complex Shurtan and a \$3 billion deal on the development of the hydropower sector and modernization of water pumping stations.

#### Slow Developments between EAEU and BRI

In the meantime, in contrast to the fast pace of alignment of strategies between China and Central Asian states, the linking of the EAEU and BRI has been proceeding slowly with no substantive results yet. In March 2017, the Eurasian Economic Commission prepared a list of 39 priority projects to support the linkage,

including building new roads, modernizing existing ones, creating logistics centers, and developing transport hubs. The list is not available to the public, but according to public officials, the Western Europe-Western China motorway, Moscow-Kazan high-speed railway, and China-Kyrgyzstan-Uzbekistan railway are among these projects.

The construction of the Western Europe-Western China motorway, which is supposed to stretch from the Yellow Sea to the Baltic Sea and connect China, Kazakhstan, and Russia, started in 2009. The sections in China and Kazakhstan have been completed already. The section in Russia is taking time. Its likelihood of being built increased after Putin included it on a list of priority projects in May 2018. Other projects are even further away from completion. The Moscow-Kazan high-speed railway and China-Kyrgyzstan-Uzbekistan projects are at the stage of difficult negotiations and lack of clarity on financing and feasibility. It is also not clear what role the Eurasian Economic Commission can play in their implementation.

In May 2018, EAEU member-states signed an agreement on trade and economic cooperation with China. It reaffirms the World Trade Organization (WTO) commitments by the states and establishes procedures for more transparency with regard to each other's trade regulation measures and policies (tariffs, technical regulations, phytosanitary norms, assessment procedures, etc.). The agreement does not introduce any preferential trade arrangements (i.e., lower tariffs). It specifies that any WTO agreements and bilateral agreements between EAEU member-states and China that provide a more favorable regime than in the agreement have priority. This agreement would allow member-states to pursue their own arrangements with China. In fact, Kazakhstan has been already actively working with China on coordination of technical regulations and phytosanitary norms.

Such shallow progress in linking the EAEU and BRI indicates that its function is mostly rhetorical, signaling the intention of Russia and China to accommodate each other's ambitions in Central Asia. Russia, lacking resources and with limited geostrategic options due to its quarrels with the West, finds itself in a particularly difficult situation. Moscow does not seem to be convinced of the benefits of linking its weakened project, the Eurasian Economic Union, with China's powerful march to Eurasia. Perhaps revealingly, the Russian word used for "linking" in the

documents, *sopryazhenie*, has the same root as the verb “to hitch,” bringing to mind the famous lines from Alexander Pushkin’s poem “Poltava”: “You cannot hitch a trembling doe and a horse up to a single carriage.”[1] Russia, in other words, realizes that the BRI and EAEU are very different animals. The link is political rather than practical.

Geopolitical complexities in the co-existence of two different integration projects contribute to tensions inside the EAEU. Russian officials continuously warn other EAEU member-states that they should be more cautious with China and that they would be better off negotiating with China in the framework of the EAEU—which Russia dominates. But this advice largely falls on disinterested ears. China’s financial clout and infrastructure-building capacity are irresistible for investment-hungry Central Asian states. They have to be mindful of Russia’s sensitivities, but Moscow cannot offer them much in terms of modernization. These tensions are unlikely to amount to an open conflict since all the actors try to tread softly. The “horse” of the BRI will continue to push connectivity across the Eurasian landmass, and Central Asian states will hope for the best while pursuing co-development with their giant eastern neighbor.

Source: <http://www.eurasiareview.com/08112018-more-politics-than-substance-three-years-of-russian-and-chinese-economic-cooperation-in-central-asia-analysis/>

# **Afghanistan: The Stalemate and Solution By**

## **Mohsin Raza Malik**

In the hope of “opening a new page in the history of Afghanistan”, Russia hosted a landmark peace conference on Afghanistan in Moscow last week. “Aimed at jointly searching for ways to promote an inclusive inter-Afghan dialogue to advance the process of national reconciliation in the long suffering Afghan land”, this ‘Moscow format’ meeting was attended by a five-member group representing the Taliban and the Afghanistan’s High Peace Council (HPC) – an Afghan body whose members have been nominated by the government to reach out to the Taliban. This conference was attended by various important regional countries like Pakistan, China, Iran and five Central Asian Republics. Unluckily, as usual, there has been no significant breakthrough during this Russia-led peace conference.

In August last year, President Donald Trump formally unveiled the US Afghan strategy to achieve “a successful outcome” in Afghanistan by “integrating instruments of American power- diplomatic, economic, and military”. This strategy primarily included intensifying airstrikes and deployment of more troops in Afghanistan, targeting the Taliban’s financial sources, and putting pressure on Pakistan. Noticeably, this so-called Afghan strategy has largely failed to achieve its objective. The US-backed Afghan government is rapidly losing the areas under its control to Taliban and other insurgent groups. Last year, a report by the Special Inspector General for Afghan Reconstruction (SIGAR) revealed that Afghan government was controlling or influencing only 57% of Afghan territory. Now, according to a recent BBC study, Taliban fighters are currently active in 70% of Afghanistan. A decade ago, the US estimated that there were around 15,000 insurgents in Afghanistan. Today, this figure is estimated to have exceeded 60,000. On the other side, the civilian casualties in Afghanistan are also on the rise. According to an UN report, there were more than 10,000 civilian casualties in the country last year. Thus, the US has badly failed in stabilising Afghanistan despite fighting “the longest and the most expensive war” in its history.

Apparently, the US has now started realising two important things in Afghanistan. Firstly, it looks convinced that it can’t control or stabilise Afghanistan through military means alone. Secondly, it has started considering the Taliban an important

reality on the ground without engaging whom through a meaningful dialogue, there can hardly be peace and stability in Afghanistan. Therefore, the Trump administration has just appointed Zalmay Khalilzad, a veteran American diplomat, as the US Special Representative for Afghanistan to bring Afghan government and the Taliban to reconciliation. Zalmay Khalilzad has met with Taliban representatives in Doha twice in four months. Similarly, he has also held meetings with other regional stakeholders, including Afghanistan, Pakistan, the UAE and Saudi Arabia. However, these diplomatic efforts have yet not yielded any fruitful results. Reportedly, the Taliban are demanding the complete withdrawal of foreign troops from Afghanistan. They have also refused to recognise the incumbent Afghan government as legitimate.

Aimed at bringing lasting peace and stability to Afghanistan, there have been a number of peace initiatives during the last couple of years. To begin with, former Afghan President Hamid Karzai established the High Peace Council (HPC) to negotiate with various Taliban elements in 2010. Later in 2013, Qatar allowed the Taliban to officially open an office in Doha at the US request to facilitate the reconciliation process. The Quadrilateral Coordination Group (QCG) was launched in January 2016. This four-nation group, comprising Afghanistan, China, Pakistan and the United States, has been trying to ease the path to direct talks between the Afghan government and the Taliban. But unfortunately, it couldn't proceed further following the killing of Taliban chief Mullah Akhtar Mansoor in a US drone strike inside Pakistan in 2016. The Moscow format was introduced in 2017. This Russia-led peace process has also tried to facilitate the national reconciliation in Afghanistan. Under the so-called Murree Process, Pakistan has also tried to bring various warring Afghan factions to a negotiating table. But this peace process was also sabotaged through leaking the death news of Mullah Omar in Pakistan. The Heart of Asia- Istanbul Process (HoA-IP) is another important multilateral peace process which was launched in 2011 to promote regional cooperation for a secure and stable Afghanistan.

It is really unfortunate that all the aforementioned peace initiatives have somehow failed in bringing peace and stability to Afghanistan since the participating countries have not been sincerely cooperated and collaborated with each other owing to their mutual rivalries and conflicting interests in Afghanistan. Moreover, most of these peace initiatives were also not in conformity with the ground realities in the war-torn country. In fact, it is not the incumbent Afghan government but the



United States which is really calling the shots in Afghanistan. Indeed, the US has a number of strategic interests in this region. These interests compel it to stay in Afghanistan. Therefore, the US will naturally be more interested in preserving its broader strategic interests than stabilising Afghanistan. At present, there is a sort of deadlock in the dialogue process between the US-backed Afghan government and the Taliban as both are trying to reach a negotiated settlement on their own terms.

The Six plus Two Group on Afghanistan was an informal coalition of six nations bordering with Afghanistan (China, Iran, Pakistan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan) plus the United States and Russia. This Contact Group had been active to make peace in Afghanistan from 1997 to 2001 under the aegis of the United Nations. In fact, this Contact Group simply represents the genuine regional and international stakeholders in Afghanistan. However, over a period of time, India, which has not been a traditional stakeholder, has somehow succeeded in becoming an important player in Afghanistan to articulate and achieve its strategic goals in this region. It has evolved the policy of 'Strategic Encirclement' against Pakistan to counter the latter's 'Strategic Depth' in Afghanistan. As part of this strategy, India has actively extended its influence in Afghanistan. India is currently the fifth largest donor and the largest regional donor to Afghanistan. India has taken an important part in training the personnel of Afghan National Army and Afghan police. It is also trying to strengthen a bond with the Afghan people through its soft power. It has connected Afghanistan with the outside world through the Chabahar Port in Iran to reduce the landlocked country's dependence on Pakistan. It is also fanning anti-Pakistan sentiments in Afghanistan through a fierce propaganda. It is also operating an extensive terror network, comprising a large number of terrorists and spies like Kulbhushan Jadhav, against Pakistan from the Afghan soil. It is a fact that India has no significant interest in Afghanistan beyond harming Pakistan.

Pakistan, being the major beneficiary of the peace and stability in Afghanistan, has been part of every initiative to stabilise Afghanistan. It has actively supported an Afghan-led and Afghan-owned peaceful settlement in Afghanistan. It also initiated the 'Murree Process' for this particular purpose. Pakistan has just released the senior Taliban leader Mullah Abdul Ghani Barader upon the US request to facilitate Afghan peace process. Indeed, Pakistan is deeply concerned over the India's rising influence in the Afghan affairs. Therefore, the US and the world community

must understand and address the genuine grievances and concerns of Pakistan in Afghanistan rather than blaming it for supporting the Afghan Taliban.

In the wake of political deadlock in Afghanistan following the 2014 presidential elections, the US brokered a power sharing deal between presidential candidates Ashraf Ghani and Abdullah Abdullah. There have been many internal differences between the two Afghan factions ever since. The Taliban and many other Afghan factions do not recognise the incumbent US-backed Kabul regime. The US and its allies played a pivotal role in evolving the current political system in Afghanistan. They introduce an authoritarian and highly-centralised political system ignoring the country's multi-ethnic character. This system has miserably failed in stabilising Afghanistan. Therefore, an inclusive multi-ethnic representative regime in Kabul is advisable to help this troubled country meet its current national challenges.

There can certainly be no peace in Afghanistan as long as this unfortunate country remains a proxy battleground for some regional and international players. Now, the US and its allies should seriously evolve a comprehensive exit strategy to completely pull their troops out of Afghanistan. In fact, the complete withdrawal of foreign troops from Afghanistan is also a major precondition by the Taliban and other insurgent groups to make peace in Afghanistan. Therefore, essentially in line with the erstwhile 6 plus 2 Contact Group, a multilateral peace initiative is direly needed to stabilise Afghanistan. The United Nations should step in to help form a transitional government besides promoting a national reconciliation process in Afghanistan.

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# **Spat Between the US and China By**

## **Muhamamad Waqar Aslam**

It is a known fact that the US and China are rivals, it is not only about republicans but the democrats are also in this quagmire of a non-persuasive epitome. Americans are on the same page that China is not their friend but a potential threat to them. The US sees China growing and expanding further, because of its rapid growth in economy which is twice more than the figures of America.

Since 1940s, there is a confusion and an uproar which was eye opening, that the US is facing an ideological and strategic rival which had not even declared its inception. China vowed to stick with the dream of making itself wealthier and to stay focused on its goals.

The plethora of neo opening to the world has been excelled to China after the Soviet Union broke. However, progression is under going to the breakage of the opioid of friendly cohesion. A perilous atmosphere has been observed, since Richard Nixon opened doors to China and from this checkpoint. China has gotten the prior position in the world after America led it to be a part of WTO.

In the age of neo modernism, the concept of omnipotence in the global hegemony has become obsolete. Now, if a door gets closed than two other are opened. It is anticipated that the two communist states have also been in a bid to strengthen relations with Pakistan, so gaining aid will not be a problem.

CPEC is has emerged from a 34 billion dollar project to 62 billion dollars, although China decided to make transactions in Yuan, which excluded the dollar from this project. Inclusively, the US failed while on the verge of creating a subversion in CPEC and has initiated a bone of contention because the US knows the significance of this project

The main tribulation is the sword which is hanging upon the neck of American; the moment Russia takes charge of the Afghan outlet from the Balochistan border for which they have been yearning for, America's hold on the region will almost disappear.

Money cannot accommodate or mollify the prestige of a very self-independent homeland. Rising favoritism towards India and the US bestowing gifts on it, meanwhile ignoring the sacrifices of Pakistan is condemnable. Pakistan has rendered its help to US whenever it needed and 'the aid' which they gave in return is no match for the favors Pakistan did for the US. It is not Pakistan which is in the doldrums.

However, infringing American access to Afghanistan will revolutionize global politics and this possibly might cause the end of super power status for the American republic. Moreover, Pakistan is concerned with the increase in death tolls and the escalating grasp of the US, and its own part in clandestine missions in the name of aid. The fact of the matter is that it isn't only muscle flexing, since we are equipped with the geographical location for which all the powers across the annals of history have been desirous of it.

As far as I know, China is concerned with increasing its trade by taking the route which is 5 times more profitable to it, instead of getting involved in quarrels. CPEC is has emerged from a 34 billion dollar project to 62 billion dollars, although China decided to make transactions in Yuan, which excluded the dollar from this project. Inclusively, the US failed while on the verge of creating a subversion in CPEC and has initiated a bone of contention because the US knows the significance of this project.

As additional aid is expected from China to Pakistan, it is being deferred due to some oblique confidential issues. Many experts said that the visit of Pakistan's Prime Minister to China was not successful, a few of them said that the Chinese premier and President were exacerbated. China has exhibited a cynical disdain towards Pakistan as it has done massive investments in Pakistan but it must not forget that Pakistan helped it out in getting the lowest trade expenses possible.

Trump ought to not surrender the US union and should reinforce old friendships, which are similar to Japan and Australia, while sustaining new ones, similar to India and Vietnam. Unions are America's best security against the favorable position of China, which it will procure from its expanding monetary and military power. Maybe, it seems unavoidable that China and America will wind up as adversaries. It is not inescapable that the dispute might turn into a practical war.

As soon as matters between these two rivals get settled, more prosperity will come and an end to all the issues emerging.

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# **Defining the role of the United Nations By**

## **Muhammad Usman Ghani**

Coming after the WW-II, the Allied powers (America, the Soviet Nations, Britain, France) were bent on establishing an organization which could ward off the jeopardy of warfare. So they came up with the idea of the United Nations Organization.

The UN Charter endorses four main objectives, which was maintaining worldwide peace and security, and developing relations among nations. Fostering cooperation between nations in earnest to resolve economic, social, cultural or humanitarian international problems providing a forum for bringing countries together to meet the UN's ends.

On October 24, the UN had its 73 anniversary. Amidst this tenure, the UN has shown progress on many fronts, as it boasts power and ratification of 193 member countries compared to its predecessor the League of Nation. Most of the people in various regions of the globe are starving under the terrible cycle of hunger and shortage. The UN's intervention in famine eradication in food starved countries is laudable. Since 1990, extreme poverty rates have decreased the half owing to the adequate services of the UN. The UN's world food program and the Food and Agriculture Organization has functioned efficiently in the realm of famine eradication.

The UN High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) is another initiative by the United Nations. Established in 1949, the UNHCR has supported 17 million asylum-seekers and refugees. Two Nobel Peace Prizes in 1954, and 1981, give testimony to the triumph of the UNHCR.

Struggle against AIDS and HIV is the ultimate goal of the UN, as it is synonymous to the lifeline of the World Health Organization (WHO), Global Funds to fight AIDS, and UNAIDS in terms of providing financial assistance. Thanks to the courtesy of the UN that according to reports, in 2012 there was a marked reduction in the number of people who died from AIDS; it dropped from 2.3 million in 2005 to 1.6 million.

When it comes to development, the UN has played a subservient part in this field as well; since development strategies in the UN have been multidisciplinary, concentrated on human concerns and are linked to human rights. Over the years, the UN has set 50 goals related to development, of which the Millennium Development Goals for poverty reduction and other human advances are only the most recent.

Terrorism has claimed millions of lives and still poses as a great threat. Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Iraq are among a few nations, which have been affected badly on many fronts, owing to terrorist activities. The Yemen crisis, which has displaced millions of masses is far more complex than a Sunni-Shia conflict. As of March 26, 2018, almost 10,000 Yemenis had been wiped out by the strife, with more than 40,000 casualties overall. Nevertheless, the UN again does not know how to cope with this humanitarian crisis

However, if one probes the UN's debacles in its functioning, one will find duds on many grounds. The most prominent debacle of the UN is the Rwandan Genocide in 1994, in which around 1 million people died at the hands of Hutu extremists. In 1994, the UN started an 'Assistance Mission' for Rwanda, which forecasted an approaching genocide, but its peacekeepers failed to block the mass massacre.

The UNO is still ashamed of its failure to prevent the 1994, genocide in Rwanda, the UN chief Ban Ki-moon stated.

The Israel-Palestine issue, which wreaked havoc in the middle-east; still looks to UN's intervention to decipher the dispute, even so, owing to the hegemonic tread of the US over the UN, it has shackled the latter to resolve the issue. The death toll of the Palestinians only from 2000-2018, is 9733 compared to that of the Israelis, which is 1253. The Middle East region is renowned for its humongous oil and gasoline reserves, countries like Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, and the United Arab Emirates to name a few, they are one of the major exporters of gas and oil in the Earth. The US has always sought dominance in this region to extract petroleum and gas from the Middle East in a bid to feed energy to its industrial units. Israel is part of the Middle East and has been a comfort zone for the US to reach its ends in the Middle East; thus the US with its hegemonic posture on the UN has shielded

Israel on several occasions. Therefore, this issue has called the UN's efficiency into question.

Likewise, another major conflict that the UN has botched to sort is the Kashmir conflict. The smoldering paradise has been looking to the UN since 1947, get it out of the quagmire of oppression. However, the UN is helpless to mitigate the sufferings of oppressed Kashmiris.

Terrorism, the gravest threat to the world has claimed millions of lives and still poses as a great threat. Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Iraq are among a few nations, which have been affected badly on many fronts, owing to terrorist activities. The Yemen crisis, which has displaced millions of masses is far more complex than a Sunni-Shia conflict. As of March 26, 2018, almost 10,000 Yemenis had been wiped out by the strife, with more than 40,000 casualties overall. Nevertheless, the UN again does not know how to cope with this humanitarian crisis.

The foremost reason for the UN's failure to do something here is that the US possesses hegemonic stance over the UN. Since, the US funds the UN much more than other countries. The UN has been a good platform for the US to work and encompass its substantial reservoir of 'soft power'. In 2000, former Chairman of the US Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Jesse Helms said in a speech to the UN Security Council that no institution, be it the security council or the ICC, is competent enough to estimate foreign policy and national security decisions of the United States. Furthermore, member states don't exhibit cooperation owing to their clash of interests, and the impasse among the great powers over the use of veto power in the security council cripple the efficiency of the UN. Along with it, the UN doesn't have its own army, which could be used to enforce its laws and rules on other states.

To conclude, the UN has worked for the improvement of the world, and its debacles over many matters are due to its lack of hegemonic stance and its inability to function alone.

The writer is an electrical engineer who is also a CSS aspirant

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Source: <https://dailytimes.com.pk/322162/defining-the-role-of-the-united-nations/>

## **Moscow Format: New hope for Afghan Peace? By Iqbal Khan**

MOSCOW Format Consultations on Afghanistan came at a sensitive time. Of late, newly appointed US Envoy Zalmay Khalilzad has been trying to convince the Taliban to agree to negotiate an end to the war; and Americans fear that Russian initiative could derail those efforts. Americans keep blaming Russians for arming and instigating Taliban, and Russians keep doubting the American intent to bring peace to Afghanistan. Afghan rivals failed to reach a breakthrough on holding direct peace negotiations during Moscow Format talks. Russia had invited representatives from the United States as well as India, Iran, China and Central Asian Republics; all hailed the Moscow Format Consultations on Afghanistan as an opportunity to “open a new page” in Afghanistan’s history and seek an end to the war. This was the first meeting of the Moscow Format with participation of Afghan High Peace Council representatives and Afghan Taliban delegation from Doha (Qatar) Office. During the meeting senior Taliban delegate Shahabuddin expressed the desire to talk to anybody anywhere in the world to end American occupation of Afghanistan.

The first such meeting, proposed for September 4 of this year, was called off at the last moment after the Afghan Government pulled out, describing its involvement in the Moscow meeting as “unnecessary” as the Taliban had “disrespected internationally-sanctioned principles and rejected the message of peace and direct negotiations”. Afghanistan is caught in cross-hair of multiple peace initiatives through more than a dozen processes. Some of these are at cross-purposes to each other, while remaining are non-starters. These days two such process are hyper active: the US-sponsored Doha peace process, with Alice Wells as its focal person, and Russia sponsored Moscow Format Consultations on Afghanistan, under the stewardship of Russian President’s special envoy for Afghanistan, Zamir Kabulov.

Yet another China-led peace process is moving slowly and steadily and is radiating hope of achieving some semblance of Afghan peace in the distant future.

Reportedly, a trilateral meeting of Pakistani, Chinese and Afghan Foreign Ministers is likely to be held soon in Kabul. However, key to peace continues to be with the US, as departure of American residual garrison is key Taliban demand. According to latest report by Special Inspector General on Afghan Reconstruction (SIGAR), Afghan government has lost control over a record number of districts. Report identifies a dangerous trend which could have disastrous consequences for Afghanistan and its neighbours, particularly Pakistan. The US report highlights the increasing ungoverned spaces in Afghanistan. These are utilized as sanctuaries by terrorist elements which cross into adjacent countries for terrorist activities.

Pakistan has always raised its concerns regarding the worsening security situation in Afghanistan, as it is directly affected by it. Violence in Afghanistan arising out of clashes between Taliban and the Afghan National Defence Forces and Foreign occupation forces combine is now an accepted norm. On November 08, militancy in Afghanistan's central and eastern regions due to Taliban attacks left 13 policemen dead; and in a joint operation by Afghan and foreign forces in Dand-e-Ghori area of Baghlan province, sixteen Taliban were killed and nineteen others injured. Taliban also attacked a police outpost in Khugyani district, Ghazni, killing eight policemen. In this backdrop, the US sent an observer delegation composed of staff from its Russian embassy to participate in Moscow Format. The Afghan delegation was made up of four representatives of the High Peace Council, a government body responsible for reconciliation efforts with the insurgents, Government spokesman Sayed Ihsan Taheri said. However, Afghan foreign ministry had emphasized that the delegates did not represent the Afghan government at Mosco Format!

Taliban spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid had said in a statement prior to conference: "The meeting will discuss the end of American invasion, identify problems and deliberate on regional peace. This conference is not about negotiating with any particular side, rather it is a conference about holding comprehensive discussions on finding a peaceful solution to the Afghan quandary and ending the American occupation. Russia hopes "through joint efforts to open a new page in the history of Afghanistan," Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said as the talks opened. While in Kabul, NATO chief Jens Stoltenberg said on November 06 that Afghanistan's chances for peace were "greater now" than in many years, even as the Taliban step up attacks on Afghan forces, which are suffering record high casualties. A US government watchdog last week said

Kabul's control of Afghanistan had slipped in recent months as local security forces suffered record casualties while making minimal or no progress against the Taliban.

Ambassador Alice Wells keeps visiting the region in an effort to close the gaps between various stakeholders. Of late, she visited Islamabad on November 6, 2018. According to a press release by the US Embassy in Pakistan, the US envoy Alice Wells underscored the importance of all actors in the region taking who are steps to advance security, stability and cooperation in South Asia. She also welcomed the commitment from Pakistani officials to work towards this goal. The US envoy and Pakistani officials also discussed the upcoming Geneva Conference on Afghanistan and joint efforts to advance the Afghan peace process. A day later, Pakistan and Afghanistan held second meeting of the Refugee Working Group under the Afghanistan-Pakistan Action Plan for Peace and Stability. The meeting discussed matters related to Afghan refugees and other Afghan nationals illegally residing in Pakistan. Most of the ongoing Afghan peace processes are nothing more than a trash. Afghan peace is the biggest challenge of this century, haunting the comity of nations. It needs a quality peace process under the UN auspices, underwritten by P-5 members of UNSC; and led by UNSG's special envoy of the stature of late Kofi Annan.

—The writer is a freelance columnist based in Islamabad.

Source: <https://pakobserver.net/moscow-format-new-hope-for-afghan-peace/>

## Gaza Ceasefire | Editorial

FOR the Palestinians, particularly the hapless people of Gaza, these are strange times indeed. While Israel continues to unleash violence upon them, their 'Arab brothers' are clamouring to make peace with the Zionist state. Over the last few days, the coastal enclave of Gaza witnessed ferocious violence, said to be the greatest escalation since the 2014 conflict, much of it unleashed by Israel. The trouble began with an Israeli foray inside Gaza; Hamas, which controls the strip, and other Palestinian factions responded with rocket fire into Israel, which, in turn, invited air strikes. Around 15 people have been killed in the violence, most of them Palestinians, and the hostilities only stopped when a ceasefire was announced on Tuesday. However, the cessation of hostilities has not gone down well with extremists within Israel, who perhaps feel not enough Arab blood has been spilt. On Wednesday, Israel's hard-line defence minister Avigdor Lieberman tendered his resignation, saying that the truce amounted to "capitulation to terror". Perhaps Mr Lieberman wanted a repeat of the 2014 atrocities, in which the UN said Israel had killed nearly 300 children.

In these dark times, there seems to be little hope for the Palestinians. Israel knows it can get away with its excesses, thanks to powerful patrons and the silence of the world community. On the other hand, the Palestine question — once raised passionately by the Arab street — is being pushed to the margins by Arab rulers. In fact, Israel has of recent been on a charm offensive, courting the Gulf Arabs; both parties have been coming closer over the years thanks to a common aversion to Iran. Questions of a viable Palestinian state, the right of return, etc seem like a distant dream; right now, the prime concern is to prevent Israel from shedding Palestinian blood at will. Will the UN and all those across the globe who claim to respect human rights hold Tel Aviv to account? Or will Israel continue to display its repugnant behaviour?

Source : <https://www.dawn.com/news/1445730/gaza-ceasefire?>

# **Nuclear Suppliers Group And its November Agenda By Beenish Altaf**

With the impending of the month of November, the group of haughty countries is once again ready to exert their energies for behaving biasedly. The meeting of special group of the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG) is expected in mid-November, 2018. This is an already scheduled activity of the group members for setting up an agenda and aiding the matters of the June's NSG Plenary meeting. The induction of non-NPT states would be on the agenda once again.

Besides, several other dynamics could be weighed out in this regard including the criteria issue, the evolving global nuclear order, the south Asian strategic stability; the regional strategic environment all would have an impact on the South Asia's nuclear future mainly. Along with this, the P-5 state's guarding behavior and the global nonproliferation norms would also be questioned directly.

Admittedly, the recent Indian government of Narendra Modi has stepped-up efforts on its diplomatic fronts since the June 2018, NSG plenary meeting in Seoul, South Korea. It is working hard to secure its entry to the cartel of nuclear trade. Several bilateral meetings and interactions at senior level have been reported to be on record in this regard, which includes meetings and interaction with China at senior levels.

It has been reported that Indian senior officials tried to convince Chinese officials to revisit their stance on the Indian membership bid. They held threadbare discussions in an attempt to narrow down differences over India's aspirations to become an NSG member. However, analytically the situation has not changed much, as by large the Chinese position over India's NSG bid is the same; a criteria based approach.

On the other hand, Pakistan while submitting its application for the NSG membership outlined its credentials such as harmonisation of its export control lists with those of the international export control regimes, its efforts to ensure nuclear security and safety, and its adherence to NSG guidelines. Likewise, Pakistani Ambassador at Vienna stated that "seeking participation in the export control

reflects Pakistan's strong support for international efforts, to prevent the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery."

The nuclear politics of twenty-first century is kept in an ambiguous state, deliberately. The induction of more members, especially the states that are not party to the NPT in to the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG) realm is believed to be the most notable concern of today. The utmost controversial — but of vital importance — is the membership quest of India and Pakistan in the NSG. It is an open surreptitious that the Indian nuclear explosion of 1974, was the cause of the NSG formation. But it would be more surprising to notify here the revised NSG's guidelines of 2013, hitherto did not mention India directly as its basis. This reveals that the membership goal is more of a political game rather than a need based initiative.

The next, special group meeting of the NSG is likely to be held in the coming two days. It is paradoxically narrating the chances of any breakthrough on India's entry into the elite group as slim. Since the revised NSG's provisions talk about the criteria-based principles based on the unanimous consensus between the members, in the upcoming meeting, it would be challenging how the NSG could induct non-NPT states particularly possessing nuclear weapons into the NSG.

They have never joined the NPT rather these states would like to be recognized; obtaining a formal nuclear legitimacy like the P-5 major nuclear weapons states before they could become part of the NPT

There are certain criteria that could be followed, for instance, the NSG could follow its principles and allow only non-NPT states to become part of the NPT as non-nuclear weapon states (NNWS) before they join the NSG respectively. However, this strict criterion may not be acceptable to India or Pakistan which are nuclear weapons states. They have never joined the NPT rather these states would like to be recognized; obtaining a formal nuclear legitimacy like the P-5 major nuclear weapons states before they could become part of the NPT.

The other option is that NSG could relax the conditions through mutual consensus that are acceptable for both India and Pakistan. It is to be noted here that non-NPT members allowing both India and Pakistan in the NSG, is similar to them agreeing to use nuclear technology for peaceful purposes under the IAEA. The IAEA has

comprehensive safeguards without compromising on their nuclear weapons status. Conversely creating an exception for one state and not the other could jeopardise the credibility of the NSG globally, while directly affecting the strategic stability of South Asia in particular. The conclusion of relevant authorities on the matter will by next week, may affect global nuclear politics on a whole.

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## **Sanctioning Iran | Editorial**

WITH the latest set of sanctions targeting Iran, the US has just performed the last rites of the JCPOA, as the 2015 nuclear deal is formally known.

The measures are designed to hit Iran's banking, shipping and — most critically — the Islamic Republic's oil sector, in a strategy to bring Iran to its knees economically. Monday's reimposition of sanctions is, in fact, a follow-up of the American withdrawal from the multilateral deal in May.

While nearly all the signatories, including the IAEA, had confirmed Tehran was abiding by the deal, President Donald Trump decided to go after Tehran for its “malign” activities in the region, a euphemism for Iran's geopolitical manoeuvres, such as its support for Bashar al-Assad, Hezbollah and the Houthis.

America's aims here seem clear: to make Iran's “economy crumble”, as Secretary of State Mike Pompeo was quoted as saying. Iran has struck a defiant tone, with President Hassan Rouhani terming the action an “economic war situation” and vowing to break the sanctions.

### ARTICLE CONTINUES AFTER AD

Interestingly, some of America's closest allies — eg the Europeans — have said they will help Iran continue to do business. The US has also granted its allies waivers to keep buying Iranian oil for the time being, perhaps realising that pushing Tehran completely out of the world market may destabilise the already fragile global economy.

The US efforts — guided by warmongering hawks — appear designed to provoke Iran into an open confrontation. Also, Israeli officials could hardly contain their glee over the latest developments.

This strategy is akin to playing with fire, for if the US starts a conflict with Iran, the Middle East as a whole may burn. Indeed, Iran is a central actor in many of the geopolitical games currently being played across the Middle East.



However, the countries of the region — the Arabs, Turks and the Iranians — need to shun inviting outside powers and, instead, must set their own house in order and come up with regional solutions to local crises.

Moreover, it is hypocritical for Washington to play global policeman and punish Iran for its 'bad' behaviour, when some of its closest allies in the region are guilty of violating human rights; the Jamal Khashoggi murder is a case in point.

Better sense should prevail in Washington and instead of beating the war drums, Mr Trump should think about engaging Iran.

Source: <https://www.dawn.com/news/1443887/sanctioning-iran?>

## **Beyond The AI Arms Race By Remco Zwetsloot, Helen Toner, and Jeffrey Ding**

The idea of an artificial intelligence (AI) arms race between China and the United States is ubiquitous. Before 2016, there were fewer than 300 Google results for “AI arms race” and only a handful of articles that mentioned the phrase. Today, an article on the subject gets added to LexisNexis virtually every week, and Googling the term yields more than 50,000 hits. Some even warn of an AI Cold War.

One question that looms large in these discussions is if China has, or will soon have, an edge over the United States in AI technology. Dean Garfield, the president of a U.S. trade group called the Information Technology Industry Council, recently told Politico that such fears are “grounded in hysteria.” But many prominent figures disagree. Former Alphabet CEO Eric Schmidt, for instance, warned in 2017 that “By 2020, [the Chinese] will have caught up [to the United States]. By 2025, they will be better than us. And by 2030, they will dominate the industries of AI.” And former Deputy Defense Secretary Bob Work, among others, has argued that China’s advances in AI should spark a “Sputnik moment” for the United States, inspiring a national effort comparable to the one that followed the Soviet Union’s early victories in the space race.

One of the most in-depth discussions of U.S.–Chinese AI competition can be found in *AI Superpowers: China, Silicon Valley, and the New World Order*, a recent book by the Taiwanese-American venture capitalist and AI expert Kai-Fu Lee. Drawing on his in-depth knowledge of—and personal experience with—the Chinese and U.S. tech sectors, Lee, like Schmidt and Work, concludes that “China will soon match or even overtake the United States in developing and deploying artificial intelligence.”

There is much to like about *AI Superpowers*. Lee persuasively counters many common misperceptions about China and AI, and he offers thoughtful personal reflections. Unfortunately, the parts of the book that inform his core thesis about China’s relative advantages over the United States are the parts that leave the most to be desired. In the end, Lee’s overly rosy portrayal of China’s AI capabilities both detracts from the book’s other contributions and risks feeding the zero-sum

arms race thinking that he himself warns could hurt humanity's ability to harness AI for good.

## AI AND THE GLOBAL ORDER

AI Superpowers unfolds in three parts, each with its own core argument. The first part is about the Chinese technology sector, a topic that Lee—who led Microsoft Research Asia and Google China before founding Sinovation Ventures, one of the biggest venture capital firms in China—is uniquely qualified to talk about. He traces the sector's evolution from its initial “copycat” approach, in which it sought to replicate Western technologies and business models, to its current state of cutthroat competition and innovation, which makes Silicon Valley look boring by comparison. Along the way, Lee details how China's tech giants, such as the e-commerce platform Taobao, triumphed against competition from established foreign firms such as eBay.

The core reason for Chinese technology firms' success, according to Lee, is that they are willing to engage with the nitty-gritty of the real world. They prefer messy vertical integration, in which one firm controls everything from design to production, retail, and marketing, to Silicon Valley's cleanly siloed digital platforms. Compare the Chinese food delivery giant Dianping—which started out as a reviews site but soon dove into delivery, providing everything from a payment platform to a scooter-riding delivery staff—with the U.S. firm Yelp, which initially offered delivery services that mostly relied on restaurants' own infrastructure before retreating to focus on its function as a review app. This difference is partly cultural, but it also stems from necessity: intellectual property protections are weaker in China than in the United States, so to deter competitors Chinese firms have to invest huge amounts of capital in building hard-to-replicate physical infrastructure. In the United States, by contrast, Lee believes that the combination of intellectual property laws and a cultural distaste for anything that smacks of copying often allows Silicon Valley companies “to coast on the basis of one original idea or lucky break,” leading to complacency.

The second part of the book develops Lee's argument about the U.S.–Chinese technological rivalry, which we will return to below. In the third part, he deals with the socioeconomic effects of AI. Here again, Lee is full of insights. He first takes issue with the argument that the economic impact of AI will resemble that of other general-purpose technologies, such as the steam engine and electricity, which

converted many previously high-skill tasks (such as handcrafting textiles) into low-skill tasks (such as operating a steam-driven power loom), thereby creating new employment opportunities for large numbers of lower-skill workers. In contrast to this “de-skilling” effect, the trend with information technologies has generally been to increase the productivity of high-skill workers, often by reducing their reliance on other auxiliary roles—think, for example, of the decreasing need for secretaries as e-mail and word processors have replaced telephones and typewriters. Lee argues that this “skill bias” in the economic effects of AI will leave large swaths of low- and middle-skill workers unable to contribute productively to the economy. The AI revolution will also come much faster than previous technological revolutions, mainly because software, in contrast to steam engines, can be instantly replicated and distributed across the world. Lee predicts that 40–50 percent of U.S. jobs will be capable of being automated within the next couple of decades, which will probably increase unemployment rates by around 20–25 percent.

AI also differs from many past technologies in its natural tendency toward monopoly, thanks to the self-reinforcing cycles that strengthen the best companies: the more users a company has, the more data it can access, allowing it to develop a better product that will attract even more users. Lee argues that this tendency toward monopoly will exacerbate both domestic and international inequality: domestic, because of the rise of “superstar firms” that tend to decrease labor’s share of national income; international, because most AI talent and resources are concentrated in China and the United States. (The auditing firm PricewaterhouseCoopers predicts that nearly \$16 trillion in GDP growth could accrue from AI by 2030, of which 70 percent will go to the United States and China alone.) Lee sees the main threat from AI as “tremendous social disorder and political collapse stemming from widespread unemployment and gaping inequality.”

## THE RACE FOR AI SUPREMACY

Lee’s treatments of the Chinese technology sector and the socioeconomic impacts of AI are both excellent. But it is the remainder of the book that has received the most attention: the part dealing with the U.S.–Chinese struggle for AI supremacy, in which Lee argues that China is poised to catch up with or overtake the United States in most areas of AI. Unfortunately, this is also the section that leaves most to be desired, both in what it argues and what it leaves out.

China's particular potencies, according to Lee, include "abundant data, hungry entrepreneurs, AI scientists, and an AI-friendly policy environment." Lee points to two underlying trends that play to these strengths. The first is the shift from "the age of discovery" to "the age of implementation." That is to say that, according to Lee, "much of the difficult but abstract work of AI research has been done." He claims that recent progress in AI rests almost entirely on a single breakthrough—deep learning, a class of algorithms loosely inspired by the interconnection of neurons in the brain—and that all that is left is for "entrepreneurs to roll up their sleeves and get down to the dirty work of turning algorithms into sustainable businesses." This will benefit China by making its disadvantage in fundamental research less important while playing to its strengths—entrepreneurialism and the country's vast quantity of good-enough engineers.

Lee's view that today's progress in AI is the product of a single breakthrough, however, is by no means a consensus one, and he does little to defend it. In fact, the conceptual foundations of deep learning were laid decades ago, with later researchers finding clever new ways of implementing existing concepts and exploiting the capabilities afforded by faster hardware and larger data sets. In other words, far from being a one-time breakthrough, deep learning has been advanced by a series of small to medium-sized innovations, which are continuing to this day. This dynamism undermines Lee's argument that the "age of exploration" has ended. In all likelihood, labs that focus not just on applications and products but also on more fundamental research—an area in which Lee concedes that the United States has a strong advantage over China—will continue to push the envelope in ways that profit-hungry entrepreneurs cannot.

The second trend that Lee sees tilting the playing field toward China is a shift from "the age of expertise" to "the age of data." Although he acknowledges that the United States has more elite researchers than China does, he claims that in today's world data is more important than top talent, "because once computing power and engineering talent reach a certain threshold, the quantity of data becomes decisive in determining the overall power and accuracy of an algorithm." And China, as the "Saudi Arabia of data," has much more of it than the United States. The latter claim is indisputable: China has more Internet users than the United States and Europe combined. These users rely on "super-apps" such as WeChat for everything from booking doctors' appointments to filing taxes, and

provide the apps with additional data by using them to process the huge number of mobile payments in China's virtually cashless economy.

Yet just how important data is—and how well Chinese companies can utilize the data they have access to—remains an open question. Andrew Ng, one of the world's leading AI researchers, has argued that “big data is overhyped,” since many problems don't produce big enough data sets to train AIs on. And insiders at Tencent, the owner of WeChat, have revealed that the company struggles to integrate data streams gathered by its different internal departments due to a combination of bureaucratic and technical hurdles.

Exaggerating Chinese advantage risks worsening the increasingly zero-sum conversation around AI competition.

More generally, a big problem with the common comparison between data and oil (implicit in Lee's “Saudi Arabia of data” analogy) is that the utility of any data set is mostly limited to questions relating to that specific data set. It's true that non-Chinese companies would be hard pressed to match their Chinese counterparts at, say, predicting which news stories Chinese consumers will be interested in. And facial recognition based on street-level surveillance footage is likely to remain a stronghold of Chinese companies, given the (highly concerning) amount of effort currently directed there. But it is far from clear that these specific advantages will help China make progress in the domains that policymakers often talk about, such as AI's effect on the military balance of power. Perhaps because Lee's focus is on novel commercial products and services, he is mostly silent on the question of why we should expect these narrow advantages to have the large geopolitical implications the book alludes to.

Lee also provides an overly rosy description of China's top-down, government-sponsored innovation projects. The state has poured billions into developing technologies such as semiconductors and robots—efforts that Lee sees as part of a “techno-utilitarian” approach that is extremely effective despite some inefficiencies. Yet China's overhyped government plans usually under-deliver. For instance, the analysts Gregory Allen and Elsa B. Kania have cited China's \$150 billion semiconductor fund as evidence of the country's edge in spurring the development of strategic industries. But the fund has invested only \$12 billion since its establishment in 2014. (For context, the South Korean firm Samsung spent

nearly \$27 billion in capital expenditures for its semiconductor group in 2017 alone.) Finally, even if money does get spent, the effect can even be counterproductive: historically, Chinese science and technology megaprojects have often furnished pretexts to divert funds from high-quality labs toward more politically connected entities.

To be clear, the picture that Lee paints is not entirely one-sided. He argues, for example, that the United States has a decisive advantage in many business applications of AI due to its corporate culture and more standardized data practices, and that American firms have a sizeable lead in autonomous vehicles. Yet Lee seems so eager to counter those who underestimate China's AI capabilities that he tends to overestimate them instead. This is understandable. But exaggerating Chinese advantage risks worsening the increasingly zero-sum conversation around AI competition that Lee's book is a part of—whether he likes it or not.

#### RESETTING THE ARMS RACE NARRATIVE

Lee is clearly aware of the risk of accelerating a downward spiral in the conversation around AI, and he explicitly tries to address this risk in his final chapter. He argues that the rhetoric around AI races could lead to zero-sum thinking that undermines progress and the ability of China and the United States to reap mutual gains. Instead of militarizing AI, Lee wants us to see that the technology's true value "lies not in destruction but in creation"; he suggests that readers should think of international AI competition as "more akin to the early export of steam engines and lightbulbs than as an opening volley in the global arms race."

These arguments, unfortunately, come as too little, too late within the context of the book. Given the book's title and overall tone, it is hardly surprising that coverage of it has focused on its predictions of geopolitical competition. A headline in *The Economist* summarized Lee's thesis as: "In the struggle for AI supremacy, China will prevail." If Lee had wanted to avoid fanning these flames, he would have done much better to linger on U.S. as well as Chinese strengths, and to acknowledge just how much uncertainty still exists about AI and its impacts rather than speculatively filling in gaps in ways that make China look good.

Ultimately, however, Lee is correct in cautioning against intense arms race dynamics. There are, to be sure, many things the United States can and should be doing to reap the gains from AI, such as funding basic research and development, taking measures against illicit technology transfer, and crafting a supportive regulatory approach. But a full return to a Cold War mindset comes with many significant risks, such as prematurely deploying accident-prone weapons systems or inadvertently proliferating dangerous technological capabilities. This would, in all likelihood, harm rather than help national security, to say nothing of society at large. If this is the path that policymakers choose to follow, they should do so with a full appreciation of the dangers and on the basis of solid intelligence. The stakes are much too high to act on the basis of fear and speculation alone.

Source: <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/reviews/review-essay/2018-11-16/beyond-ai-arms-race?cid=int-flb&pgtype=hpg>



# **The Global Nature of Global Warming By**

## **Remshay Ahmed**

We've beaten it up and torched it out. Parts of it have been taken and destroyed forever. The rhythmic balance on which natural systems operate has been devoid of their self-sustaining mechanisms through barbaric actions of men. While man claims himself to be the center of the universe, because only he is capable of understanding it, the blazing events have drowned all hopes for the creation of man-made system that could make nature sustainable, or contain the effects of what has become more commonly known as global warming.

The effects of climate change are understood best by exposing a carefully-monitored, highly-sensitive environment to temperatures so high that the self-correcting mechanism are unable to match up to the pace of extraneous variables. In such a situation, the pre-set systems start to function abnormally, which results in erratic weather patterns that have proven to threaten the livelihoods of people, all over the world. To say that weather effects are more adverse for agrarian economies would actually be a gross exaggeration.

Climate change is at the center of much debate, and has recently been making rounds as one of the most potent regimes that governments are trying to incorporate globally. Apart from the multitudes of issues facing this global dominion, climate change is one of the worst man-made calamities that requires rigorous planning, not just at the single state level, but needs to be dealt with, at large. This would ensure that a larger part of the world is more inclusively dealt with and the dire consequences of unchecked human actions are brought down. But where do we start?

Much like the sand that slips from one's clenched fist the stronger you hold it, global warming is a phenomena with which the world leaders are at odds with. They've tried to deny it for decades, understand it for a few decades more, and are now battling with how best to contain it, when the situation has blown out of proportion. With each winter season being the coldest than the previous one, summer months elongating beyond their stipulated time, and weather patterns changing drastically, there is very little that can be predicted at present. The earth is choking on plastic,

gasping for air under the thick smoke that engulfs our livelihoods, while evidences for its breakout remain largely unaddressed.

In Pakistan, too, weather patterns have only been worsening. Few days of heat waves have transformed into entire weeks and are becoming increasingly recurring during much longer summer months

The more recent California wildfire, and the pace at which it exacerbated, has highlighted what little control man has on the inferno it unleashes itself. The devastation has killed more than 50 people so far and has been termed as the deadliest in the state's history. Recent news reports have highlighted that the smoke from these fires has now reached all the way to Chicago via Jet Stream. This 'moving nature' is an indication of how steadily the effects can be translated from one region to another, making it more recurring phenomenon. Albeit the reports go on to show that the smoke would obviously not be as thick as in California, but would be hazardous by way of its components. Something as easily overlooked as 'too dry weather' has caused this catastrophe, with probably much more to follow.

This shows that the earth is actually too small, and that whatever part of it is used, is actually altered from being a useful resource to one that is lost- and beyond a certain point-unable to replenish itself, thereby disrupting the balance it was maintaining.

During August this year, the Indian state of Kerala was flooded, killing more than 400 people. The Tamil Nadu coast has been warned of a cyclone during the next week and goes on to show that the weather conditions are getting more and more precarious, especially for coastal regions.

In Pakistan, too, weather patterns have only been worsening. Few days of heat waves have transformed into entire weeks and are becoming increasingly recurring during much longer summer months. Winter months are shorter but much colder, however, the effects of the changing environment don't just end here. The summer of 2018 was the most critical as both of the two major dams in the country had reached below dead level. With the heat drying up the water, the only respite offered was through the above-normal levels of seasonal rainfall and the melting

of glaciers. The latter is a calamity in itself and further contributes to problems associated with global warming.

Climate refugees is a thing and the migration of people from Thar towards metropolis like Karachi is a case in point. In an article published in Foreign Policy Magazine, the author shed light on Pakistan being more vulnerable to climate-change problems rather than any security threat. My friend chuckles sadistically when she says that even terrorists don't lay siege during the merciless summers of Pakistan. Going with this dictum, the two problems can be labelled as seasonal, however, as slogans for construction of dams are raised, concerns of adversarial weather conditions should also be raised.

Crowd funding for this might actually work as well. But we need to look at the bigger picture. The winds know no boundaries and the world is a single homogenous whole. We need a single direction that takes into consideration the global nature of global warming.

Source: <https://www.pakistantoday.com.pk/2018/11/19/the-global-nature-of-global-warming/>

# **Post–Election Foreign Policy Trouble By**

## **Paul R. Pillar**

On the day after the U.S. midterm elections, European politicians and analysts are bracing for disruption from Donald Trump that will be even greater than what he has perpetrated so far. Their concerns are well-founded, for reasons related both to the election result and to Trump's methods of operation.

Some now-familiar characteristics of Trump's presidency, especially pertaining to foreign relations, are relevant. Trump places highest priority on applause from his political base, which means he cares little about damage to national interests so long as the applause keeps coming. He has become, with much practice, a master in the art of distraction and diversion through manufactured crises and outrageous statements. Crisis and outrage have positive value for him. And his overall approach to foreign relations has largely been one of knocking down and destroying things, especially anything institutional or multilateral. Even when a constructive result finally comes, as with North American free trade, it is only after the storm and stress of a Trump-manufactured crisis.

The election results play into these tendencies in two basic ways. Although it is questionable whether Trump would have been inclined to make any course corrections even if the election had produced a blue wave, there was no blue wave. The president almost certainly sees aspects of the results—especially the increase in Republicans in the Senate, who are the candidates for whom Trump did most of his campaigning—as reason to keep doing what he is doing. Thus, one consequence of the election is to reinforce the familiar Trumpian tendencies.

The other set of consequences flows from the Democrats gaining control of the House of Representatives. The specific implications here are twofold. One is that there will be even less prospect than there was before for anything that can be called a GOP legislative accomplishment. So attention-getting action will have to be, from the White House's perspective, less in domestic policy than in foreign policy, in which presidents are able to do more while disregarding congressional sentiment.

The other implication of the changed control of the House is the likely marked increase in investigations and hearings that will draw attention to much of what is questionable and scandalous in the administration and to which the president's partisans in Congress have turned a blind eye over the past two years. Thus, there will be that much more from which Trump will have to divert and distract attention. This is especially true of, but by no means limited to, the Russia-related inquiry of special counsel Robert Mueller. There already were reasons to expect that the post-election period would be one in which Robert Mueller accelerates his investigation toward a conclusion. Democratic control of the House also provides some protection against any White House or Republican moves to bury the results of Mueller's probe.

The stage is now set for some sort of attention-getting, either a White House-initiated confrontation or crisis abroad. Although the whole world is a stage on which such a drama can be produced, confrontation with Iran is the likeliest place that drama will appear. The administration's single-minded campaign of stoking hostility and tension with Iran already has created the necessary atmosphere. Although Trump probably would like eventually to reach some kind of deal with Tehran that he would claim, regardless of its contents, was better than what previous administrations had reached, such a denouement of the administration's current course is, as Barbara Slavin explains, quite unlikely. This is partly because the administration has provided no proposition to which any Iranian leader could say "yes" and survive politically to tell the tale. A more likely consequence of the Trump administration's course is the outbreak of war. War, of course, is the ultimate political distractor. Trump's national security advisor, who long has itched for a war with Iran, is able to make things happen that would increase further the chance of such a war, even without any micromanagement from his boss.

Military confrontation with China is a less likely but still substantial possibility. The geopolitical context of U.S.-Chinese competition makes limited war in a place such as the South China Sea possible without high risk of escalation to the nuclear level.

Economic warfare is sure to be part of any escalated Trumpian foreign-relations crisis, and of course the administration already is waging much economic warfare already. China is the principal target of Trump's trade war, and the campaign against Iran entails economic warfare against not only Iran itself but also against European allies and much of the rest of the world.

The loss of the House to the Democrats plays into how Trump will use and spin the economic warfare. The loss gives him someone to blame for further undeniable hits to American pocketbooks, which in his eyes will lessen the risks to him of intensifying the economic warfare. A major Trump talking point in the 2020 campaign will be that House Democrats brought on the recession that is now likely as the decade-old economic expansion, currently sustained by a tax-cut sugar high, runs into the negative effects of a ballooned deficit, consequently higher interest rates, and tariff-induced reductions in demand and foreign trade.

Plausible speculation before the election held that Trump not only was resigned to loss of the House—as his own rhetoric clearly indicated—but that he welcomed it, for reasons of blame attribution. That is not the way a good Republican Party loyalist would see things, of course. But this is one more indication that in Trump's world and in his eyes, it's all about him—and about the applause lines in his next campaign.

Paul R. Pillar is a contributing editor at the National Interest and the author of *Why America Misunderstands the World* .

Source: <https://nationalinterest.org/blog/paul-pillar/post%E2%80%93election-foreign-policy-trouble-35477>

# **The Coming War Over Ukraine? By Jonas Driedger**

On November 25, Russian warships attacked and seized three Ukrainian navy boats that tried to cross the Kerch Strait. The Ukrainian navy reports that Russian vessels opened fire and wounded at least six Ukrainian naval officers.

On the same day, Ukrainian President Poroshenko and his Military Cabinet passed a resolution to impose martial law in Ukraine. The Ukrainian parliament is scheduled to decide on the resolution on November 26.

Russia's aggressive actions in the Kerch straits and the unprecedented Ukrainian response highlights the increasing danger of military escalation between the two countries.

The Kerch strait represents a major geostrategic asset. It is enclosed by Russian mainland to the east and by the Russian-occupied Crimea peninsula to the west. The Kerch Strait is the only water connection between the Sea of Azov and the Black Sea. Passage of the strait is crucial for the major port cities in the Sea of Azov, such as Russia's Rostov-on-Don and Ukraine's Mariupol, which Russian separatists had repeatedly tried to conquer.

Not surprisingly, Ukraine and Russia have clashed over the strait well before 2014.

With the break-up of the Soviet Union, the Kerch strait became an object of legal and political contention. Ukraine unilaterally claimed a boundary line in the strait in 1999 and made moves to declare parts of the Sea of Azov as internal waters.

Russia countered in 2003 by building a dike from its mainland towards Tuzla island, a speck of land in the very part of the Kerch strait Ukraine claimed as its own. The incident, to this day, is cited by Ukrainian leaders and experts as an early proof of Moscow's aggressiveness.

Russia's continuous attempts to control the Kerch Straits have long been connected to its designs on Crimea. Ukraine has always resisted these efforts, which got the two countries close to military conflict well before 2014.

For instance, on May 23, 2005, a Russian amphibious marine unit attempted to land troops near Feodosiya in Crimea and was repelled by Ukrainian border troops. This served as a reminder for 1994 when Ukraine and Russia almost came to blows after Russia had seized a disputed Black Sea Fleet ship with expensive military equipment on it.

After annexing Crimea in 2014, Russia started to build a bridge over the Kerch Strait to connect the Peninsula to the Russian mainland, as attempts to build a land connection by conquering Ukraine's Sea of Azov coastline had previously failed. To try and stop the trans-Kerch bridge and grant access for its vessels through the straits, Ukraine sued Russia by invoking the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea.

The danger of military escalation between Russia and Ukraine, with all of its unforeseeable consequences, is real and rising.

Russia is largely unaware of this, as it has moved its attention away from Ukraine and towards operations in Syria, countering U.S. efforts to modernize its nuclear arsenal, and improving Russian gas supply capabilities to the European Union and Germany.

At the same time, mainly for domestic purposes, Russian state-controlled media continues to trash the Ukrainian government while celebrating the finalization of the Kerch bridge and supposed economic miracles in Crimea.

Such triumphalism fans the flames of revanchism in Ukraine. The list of grievances in Ukraine is as long as it is understandable. Crimea remains occupied, and the West has quietly acquiesced to this fact by making sure that existing sanctions are primarily tied to advances in the Minsk process over Donbass, not Crimea. Ironically, no such advances in the Minsk framework taken place, which suits Russian interests, but remains a thorn in Ukraine's side, where the Minsk process is seen as illegitimate to begin with.



At the same time, Russian president Vladimir Putin has permitted the stationing of bombers and Iskander missiles in Crimea, both of which are dual-capable missile delivery systems. Since 2014, Russian support for the Putin regime is less dependent on the country's economic well-being, and more so on the continued performance of Russia as a great power. While the effect is declining, the annexation of Crimea has long boosted Putin's popularity. Therefore, Russia is unlikely to back down in a crisis with Ukraine.

Ukraine, simultaneously, has significantly beefed up its military forces and improved its on-the-ground-control. The anti-tank Javelin launchers provided by the United States are only a small part of these efforts. A replication of the confused and feeble Ukrainian response in 2014 is unlikely. The Ukrainian military is now even regarded by some in Kyiv as a possible tool to establish some new facts on the ground.

However, Ukrainian domestic politics worsen the situation. The country will hold presidential elections in March 2019. In the most recent polls, incumbent president Petro Poroshenko trails his main competitor Yulia Tymoshenko, who has made Donbass, Crimea, and Russia core topics in her attacks on Poroshenko.

Tymoshenko's strategy, the stalling Minsk process, Ukraine's ongoing economic woes, rampant corruption, and allegations of Poroshenko being involved in shady business deals increasingly narrow down the incumbent's options for holding on to power. His most promising option is to present himself as a successful, or at least assertive, war president. Poroshenko's recent move to impose martial law corroborates this view. Considering the traditionally cut-throat nature of Ukraine's elite struggles and Yulia Tymoshenko's questionable record, there is little reason to be optimistic.

The West, at the same time, looks inward and has shown little interest in effectively ameliorating the danger of military escalation between Ukraine and Russia. This is likely to continue, due to the ongoing twists and turns surrounding Trump and the continuing Brexit process in Europe. Incidentally, the United Kingdom is likely to formally leave the European Union two days before the Ukrainian presidential election.

War over Ukraine might not be very likely, but the danger is real.

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Source: <https://nationalinterest.org/feature/coming-war-over-ukraine-37177>

## **‘Historic But Tragic’ | Editorial**

Britain is now a step closer to leaving the 27-nation European Union — after 45 long years. European Union leaders have approved a historic deal with British Prime Minister Theresa May for Britain’s ‘smooth’ exit from the EU on March 29, 2019. The only hindrance left for the divorce to come into effect is a nod by the British and European parliaments. The 585-page withdrawal agreement — happening on Sunday after 18 months of gruelling negotiations — covers financial matters, citizens’ rights, provisions to keep open Britain’s border with Ireland and arrangements for a 21-month post-Brexit transition phase.

While European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker calls it ‘no time for champagne’ — and other EU leaders mourning the ‘tragic’ deal — British Prime Minister Theresa May is void of regrets and is ‘full of optimism about the [UK’s] future.’ May warns rebellious MPs in London that ‘this is the best and only option available,’ fearing that eurosceptic Conservatives and their Northern Irish allies are all set to throw a spanner in the works as they believe the deal keeps Britain too close to the EU.

Should, then, there have been a Plan B? No — if EU officials, in general, are to believe. They think that the only Plan B was preparing a possible no-deal scenario in which Britain crashes out on March 29 into legal limbo, roiling Europe’s economy. Then, what if the deal fails to get the seal of approval from British MPs? Here are the several scenarios as quoted by Lithuanian President Dalia Grybauskaitė, “If [British] parliament blocks the package: Britons would hold a second referendum; hold a new election to replace May or return to Brussels to try and renegotiate the package.”

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Source: <https://tribune.com.pk/story/1854787/6-historic-but-tragic/>

## **ASEAN – Search For Synergy? By Dr. Imran Khalid**

In many ways, unlike the previous gathering in April, the second ASEAN summit of the year in Singapore last week was certainly a much better show. In addition to all the leaders of the ASEAN member states, a number of dignitaries from the key partner states including Russian President Putin, Chinese Premier Li Keqiang, US Vice President Mike Pence attended the summit. Yes, President Trump, owing to his engagements with the post Mid-term polls compulsions at home, was conspicuously absent but his absence did not make any impact on the proceedings of the gathering. The high profile summits, twice every year, along with the attendance of global power brokers, have evolved into one of the most robust and influential platforms in the region once considered to be the backwaters at the periphery of Asia. In the last few years, the ASEAN region has suddenly acquired a more strategic position in trans-Pacific politics. The prevailing uncertainty in the global politics, particularly when the existing economic order is being threatened by the sudden rise in protectionism of the world's largest economy, has further accentuated the role of regional blocs like ASEAN to counter such a trend.

In his opening address too as the outgoing Chairman of the ASEAN , Singapore's Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong also touched upon seriously this very issue that has all the potential to disrupt the global trade balance to the point of total collapse. "The international order is at a turning point. The existing free, open and rules-based multilateral system which has underpinned ASEAN's growth and stability, has come under stress. Countries, including major powers, are resorting to unilateral actions and bilateral deals, and even explicitly repudiating multilateral approaches and institutions," said Loong. Throughout the summit, such questions about the uncertain trade environment kept on resonating in each session in different forms. Not surprisingly, the current Sino-US trade war dominated the tone and texture of the summit in an inordinate way. The difference between two countries on their respective versions for the Asia-Pacific region was further highlighted at the summit. The collision between their contrasting strategic interests in the region is now regular feature at all global or regional multi-lateral gatherings. The ASEAN summit was also not immune to this rivalry between the two biggest economies of the world.

The South China Sea, which has graduated from a paltry local territorial disputes to a potential flashpoint in the last two years, was also another topic of sarcastic exchanges between the US and China at the summit. China's claim of sovereignty over a large part of the South China Sea and its ambitious plan of militarising and developing infrastructures at various islands there has resulted in a major regional dispute that has eventually evolved into a stumbling block in the way regional cooperation. On the other hand, in order to counterbalance the Chinese aggressive presence in the South China Sea, the US has been carrying out aggressive freedom of navigation missions in the area. The positive things is that, despite some sarcastic remarks by the Mike Pence on the China's "aggression" in South China Sea, Chinese Premier Li Keqiang divulged that China is expecting the Code of Conduct proposal on the disputed South China Sea to be finalized soon in hopes that it will contribute to enduring peace and stability in the South China Sea.

The ASEAN meetings traditionally focus on enhanced trade and security in a region of more than 630 million people. Being the third largest trading partner with a two-way trade worth US\$235.2 billion in 2017, the United States is perhaps one of the key trading partner of the region. Interestingly, the regional players are also quite aware of the trading leverage of the United States as well as China and other emerging economies. That is why, a lot of trade talks happened on the side-lines of the summit with other major economies outside the ASEAN, including South Korea, Japan and India. However, the major thrust on trade was visible at the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) negotiations which were also carried out at the summit. The RCEP if completed could be the largest trade and investment agreement since the General Agreements on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) as it would embody 25 percent of global gross domestic product (GDP), 45 percent of the total population, 30 percent of global income and 30 percent global trade. Many optimistic observers were expecting the negotiations to be swathed this year, however it was announced at the summit that it would be not be possible to finalize the matters before 2019. The encouraging thing was the pace with which negotiations advanced to the final stage.

Centrality is one of the unique feature of the ASEAN that has completed almost half century of its existence. The same centrality was also quite evident at the Singapore summit. There were two clear-cut but parallel themes: ASEAN-US chapter and ASEAN-China chapter. But the Chinese, because of their extreme

urge to create a positive image that has been damaged due to their adventurous policy in the South China Sea, were quite active – and generous too – in enticing its neighbours in the region to with some big-hearted concessions. Beijing has assured the ASEAN members to upscale its efforts to meet the agreed target of US\$1 trillion in trade volume and US\$150 billion in investment by 2020. ASEAN and China also announced a roadmap titled “ASEAN-China Strategic Partnership Vision 2030” in a bid to bolster ties between the two. The ASEAN region has tremendous inherent strength within that can be utilized but the association has so far failed to explore it properly. Despite such a cultural and physical proximity to each other, intra-regional trade has been stagnant at 25 per cent for many years, which is far below that of other economic groupings such as the European Union and the North American Free-Trade Agreement (NAFTA). Indubitably, ASEAN is evolving fast but still it is struggling to create a synergy to take the benefits from their mutual trade – perhaps the biggest source of frustration for the member states.

The writer is a freelance columnist.

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