

October 2019

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*Compiled By Shahbaz Shakeel*

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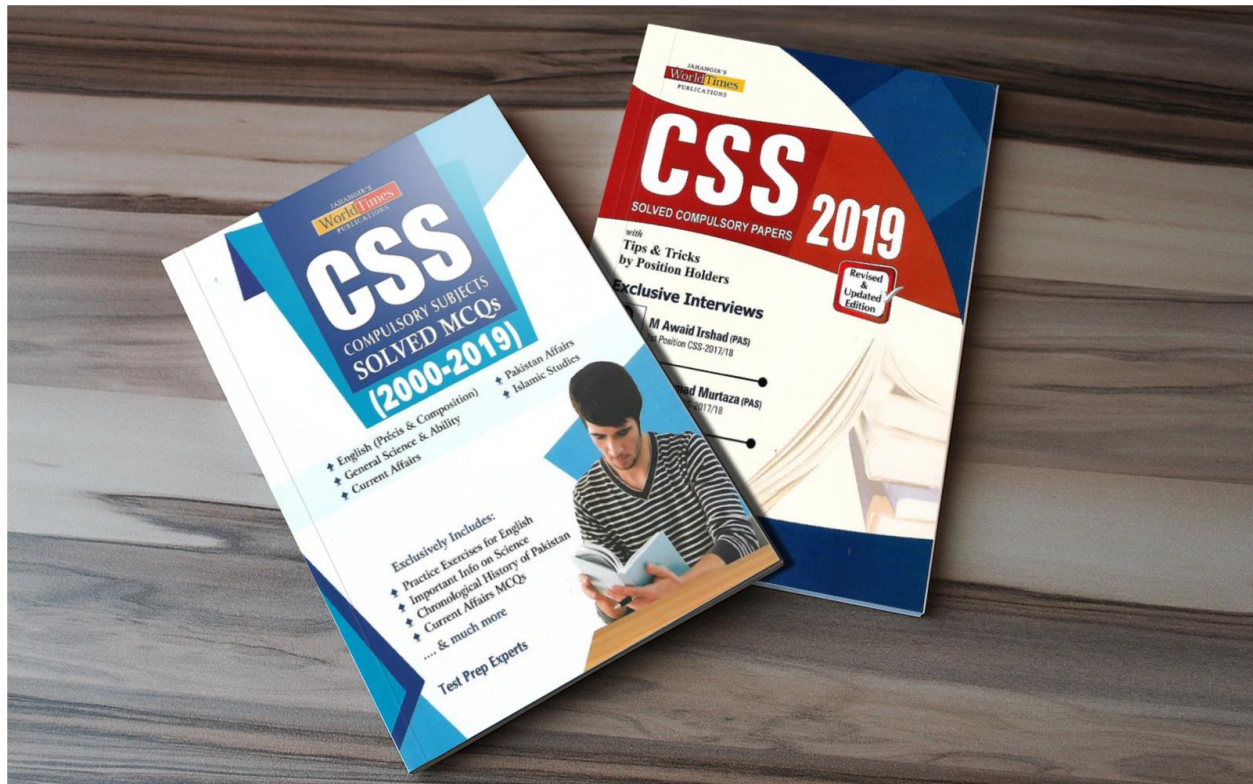
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# PAKISTAN

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## **Runaway Population | Editorial**

Pakistan is a resource-stretched country with a runaway population. According to the 2016 national census, the country's population is 208 million and increasing at a high rate of 2.4 per cent and stands at sixth position globally. Unless effective steps are taken to stop the trend, the country's population could exceed 300 million by 2050. The current rate of population growth shows lack of proper interest on the part of the government, physicians, and leaders of public opinion. The Pakistan Demographic and Health Survey of 2018 has found the contraceptive use to have been stagnant over the past five years. In fact, from 35 per cent in 2012, it dipped to 34.2 per cent in 2017. This is worrisome given Pakistan's commitment at the 2012 London Population Summit that it would bring it up to 50 per cent by 2020. Senior gynaecologists and obstetricians say even their junior physicians do not have enough understanding of modern contraceptive methods, so how can they be expected to give proper advice to married couples on how to limit their family size. There are several social and cultural issues involved that are constraining the country's efforts to control the population growth.

The world population stood at 7.7 billion as of April 2019. Most developing countries are confronting the problem of keeping their population within manageable limits. In the European Union, the birth rate is 1.9 live births per woman per year. In Pakistan, it stands at 3.46 live births per woman per year. Historically, families in countries of Asia have preferred to have a large number of children. In the 19th century, an Indian king had 22 sons and 32 daughters from several wives. The wife of King Louis XIVth of France gave birth to six children. Only one survived into adulthood. The present trend needs to be reversed because there has to be a balance between the world's resources and the population that it can support.

Published in The Express Tribune, September 27th, 2019.

Source: <https://tribune.com.pk/story/2066070/6-runaway-population/>

# **Pakistan's Foreign and Domestic Policy**

## **Challenges By Talat Masood**

The current regional and global situation once again presents Pakistan with a formidable challenge at the foreign policy front. Foremost among them is clearly the enduring hostility of PM Modi's government against Pakistan. Its unilateral abrogation of the special status of Kashmir by revoking Article 370 and Article 35(A) of the Indian Constitution has generated a storm of protest across Kashmir and a wave of strong support for the beleaguered Kashmiris in Pakistan. Adding to the rising tension between the two countries is PM Modi's refusal to engage with Pakistan despite PM Imran Khan's repeated gestures of peace. With Modi unrelenting, Kashmiris fully determined and Pakistan unwavering in its support, where would this lead to? The firing on the Line of Control by India has been stepped up with casualties of civilians and military personnel on both sides becoming a common feature.

PM Imran Khan presented the Kashmir issue effectively at the United Nations General Assembly and in subsequent engagements with his counterparts from other countries. His impassioned speech articulating in detail the pathetic conditions in Kashmir and projecting the real face of the BJP won laurels from the Kashmiri and Pakistani people. He tried to unmask the real face of the ruling BJP elite and arouse the conscience of the world. To what extent international and domestic pressure would bear on PM Modi's government, only time will tell. In all likelihood this is going to be a long-drawn struggle for the Kashmiris and Pakistan.

Assimilating Kashmir into India was a well thought-out decision of the BJP, as it was integral to its designs of changing the country from a secular to a Hindu-dominated state. The blatant and deliberate change in the status of Kashmir reflects the mindset of the Indian power elite. Considering India's overall hegemonic designs, the rivalry with Pakistan goes beyond Kashmir. Pakistan, while asserting its independence, is challenged by India at every regional and global level. It has converted SAARC into a meaningless organisation and would like to push Pakistan into the blacklist if it were not for the United States and other friendly states like Turkey, Saudi Arabia, etc. While planning terrorist ventures in Pakistan through agents like Kulbhushan Jadhav, India blames

Pakistan for promoting terrorism. It is essentially Pakistan's highly professional and motivated conventional armed forces and the danger of a nuclear conflict that prevents India from adventurism.

There ought to be no unrealistic expectations of support from the world powers and Muslim countries for the Kashmiri's just struggle, as we have already experienced. For them economic, political and strategic compulsions will trump any considerations of justice and human rights.

Drawing attention on Kashmir by raising the specter of a potential conventional and nuclear conflict would shift the focus away from the struggle of the Kashmiri people. In any case, it neither suits India nor Pakistan to endanger their entire populations and the world at large, to escalate to that hazardous level of confrontation. Moreover, past experience shows that the danger of nuclear conflict leads to major powers stressing on status quo, which suits India ideally. In 2001-02 when Indian and Pakistani forces were eyeball to eyeball at the border, president Clinton was promoting the freezing of borders.

Nonetheless, Pakistan is expected to raise the world conscience by exposing Indian brutalities through intensive interaction with human rights organisations and major media channels that have a global reach. Unfortunately, the response of the Muslim countries with the exception of Turkey and Malaysia has been generally disappointing. As has been pointed out by eminent writers, apart from deep economic and commercial interests and regional rivalry, it is the internal power structure that prevents Middle Eastern countries from supporting the freedom struggle in Kashmir. Regrettably, for similar reasons the Arab countries have left the Palestinian people at the mercy of Israel.

Recent efforts by President Trump to mediate or facilitate negotiations between India and Pakistan have been frustrated by India on the pretext that it would engage with Pakistan bilaterally — a false commitment that it has never honoured or is expected to do so in future.

Since the last few months, relations between the United States and Pakistan have improved. Washington expects Pakistan to play a major role in influencing the Taliban to a peace agreement. Acute tension between India and Pakistan becomes a major distraction from the Afghan reconciliation process. Moreover,

the United States realises that the increasing hostility of India towards Pakistan would draw it even closer to China.

From a Pakistani perspective, better relations with Washington are crucial. It is the lone superpower and likely to stay unchallenged for a decade or so. Its economic and military power is unmatched. No doubt, India is its strategic partner and meant to counter the rising power of China but this does not prevent the United States and Pakistan from having a mutually-beneficial relationship. Just as Japan, India and several major European and Asian countries have strong economic and commercial relations with China despite serious political differences and strategic rivalry. Given this, why should Pakistan not benefit by developing wider options in trade and commerce? We need to increase the volume and content of our trade with United States — it is far below the potential that exists. This would indeed require major improvement in manufacturing standards regarding textiles and leather goods as well as cereal products, etc. Even with China, who is Pakistan's closest ally and strategic partner, the volume of trade is miniscule in comparison to what it has with India or other Far Eastern countries.

Internal strength of a country in terms of its economy, political stability and strategic cohesion is central in influencing the quality and content of foreign relations. An educated and healthy population that extends fair treatment to women contributes in improving the economy and raising the profile of the country. Moreover, mobilisation and empowerment of the people through promotion of fair democratic practices will strengthen Pakistan to successfully encounter external and internal challenges.

Published in The Express Tribune, October 2nd, 2019.

Source: <https://tribune.com.pk/story/2069899/pakistans-foreign-domestic-policy-challenges/>

# **Imran, Trump, Modi and The Kashmir**

## **Puzzle By Iqbal Khan**

US President Donald Trump urged India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi on September 24 to improve ties with Pakistan and "fulfil his promise to better the lives of the Kashmiri people," the White House said after Trump-Modi meeting on the sidelines of the annual UN gathering. Earlier, talking to reporters at joint press conference with Modi before their bilateral meeting, Trump suggested Pakistan-India summit on Kashmir, expressing his optimism that the "good things" would happen when the "two great gentlemen" will meet. He said he believed that Prime Minister Imran and Prime Minister Modi would "get along when they get to know" each other. In a series of tweets after the meeting, India's Foreign Secretary Vijay Gokhale said that Kashmir issue came up during the Trump-Modi meeting.

Tension between India and Pakistan reached a feverish pitch on 5 August, when New Delhi unilaterally annexed occupied Kashmir, revoking a constitutional guarantee that gave a special status to the disputed territory. A strict lockdown and communications blackout was imposed in the region that has snapped off ordinary people's internet and mobile telephone service across occupied Kashmir. And when Trump and Imran met, crackdown had crossed its 50th day. Trump was asked about his opinion on the lockdown in the IoK. Instead of answering the question put up by a Pakistani reporter, Trump started praising the journalist. "He is a good reporter. Where do you find these reporters?" he asked PM Imran.

While Imran Khan was still queuing up for a meeting with Trump, latter was hobnobbing with Modi in a 50,000 gathering in Houston and pledging to, jointly with India, counter Muslim extremism. He also announced the schedule for first ever joint tri-service military exercise with India. According to ABC news, "Justice for All", an interfaith human rights group, and its allies had organised a massive protest demonstration outside the Houston venue with protesters chanting "Go back Modi" and "Modi is a terrorist". Trump has once again reiterated his offer for mediation between Pakistan and India on the Kashmir dispute but emphasised that arbitration could not be carried out unless both the parties involved welcome it; what a useless offer it is, embedded with a non-starter, both by default and

design. Avoiding to directly answer a question about UN resolutions on Kashmir, Trump emphasised that he is ready to play his role in South Asia if both India and Pakistan are willing.

Imran met Trump on September 23. PM explained Pakistan's clear, categorical and firm stance on Kashmir. When asked if he was concerned about human rights violations in occupied Kashmir (IoK), Trump said, "Yes...I am, I want both sides to come to the negotiating table... I'd like to see everything work out. I want everybody to be treated well. There is always a solution and I do believe that there is a solution." Trump added that he had heard a "very aggressive" statement from Modi on September 22, but "I hope they (Pakistan and India) are going to be able to come together and do something that's really smart and good for both".

Imran Khan, who has declared himself an Ambassador of Kashmiris, spent most of his time out of seven-day visit to the US, briefing US lawmakers, scholars, human rights activists and media on the repercussions of the Indian annexation of the disputed territory of Kashmir. Premier met with the founder the Kashmir Study Group, Farooq Kathwari, during which he urged Kathwari to continue informing the world about India's illegal occupation and human rights violations in occupied Kashmir so that they could see the real face of Modi's government. The Prime Minister also met Amnesty International's Secretary General Komi Naidoo and discussed with him the dire human rights situation and ongoing humanitarian crisis in IoK. Naidoo briefed PM Imran on Amnesty's advocacy work on Kashmir including its social media campaign captioned "#LetKashmirSpeak". PM Imran appreciated the lead role that Amnesty was playing in presenting the real state of human rights in the occupied territory and amplifying the voices of the Kashmiri population in a state of perpetual lockdown. Premier also lauded Amnesty's report on the use of pellet guns by India and their devastating impact on the Kashmiri youth.

After it was confirmed that Trump would meet both Indian and Pakistani prime ministers, diplomatic observers in Washington had guessed the strong possibility that he may use the meetings to discuss the situation in Kashmir. About a week before meeting the two prime ministers, President Trump had told reporters at a White House briefing that "a lot of progress" has been made in defusing India-Pakistan tension. Trump's recent comments on Kashmir and India-Pakistan

relations have triggered speculations about direct or indirect dialogue between the two, with Washington playing the role of a facilitator.

The silver lining is that After PM Imran’s powerful presentation of Kashmir cause at the UNGA, the US has, at official level, urged India to ease restrictions on the people of loK. However, Reuters has reported, “Authorities in India-occupied Kashmir tightened restrictions on people’s movement to prevent possible protests... Soon after the speech, hundreds of Kashmiris came out of their homes, shouting slogans in support of Khan and calling for the independence of Kashmir”. In the weeks since Kashmir’s lockdown, thousands of elected politicians, activists and trade unionists have been imprisoned or put under “house arrest”. Over 13000 young men, including minors, have been arrested in night raids by the police, with many transported to jails outside the loK. World is all about money and power, unfortunately. Kashmir does not have oil or strategic significance. That is why it is not receiving much world attention.

—The writer is a freelance columnist based in Islamabad.

Source: <https://pakobserver.net/index.php/2019/10/02/imran-trump-modi-and-the-kashmir-puzzle/>

## **Afghan Peace Process By Iqbal Khan**

AFGHANISTAN was one of the top agenda items during Imran-Trump summit. Soon after President Donald Trump's abrupt walking away from the peace process, Pakistan had begun its diplomatic efforts to bring the dysfunctional Taliban-US peace talks back on track, fearing that an absence of negotiated settlement would trigger a new phase of civil war. Another controversial election has taken place in Afghanistan. This may partially satisfy the egos of Presidents Donald Trump and Ashraf Ghani. Marred by low turn-out, electoral mal-practices, violence and technical glitches, this election reinforces the tradition of low credibility election in Afghanistan. Since disruption of US-Taliban talks, independent assessments had projected that the process would resume once America has a new regime installed in Afghanistan, even though, through questionable elections. Trump had halted talks with the Taliban at a time when both sides had said they were close to reaching a deal.

First round of electoral process concluded on 30 September. Ability of Taliban to launch hundreds of small attacks throughout the length and breadth of Afghanistan on Election Day alone, of which just 68 were acknowledged by Afghan government; and Afghan government's resolve, to still manage to hold election, though having a historic low turnout are the barometer of current balance of power in Afghanistan—indeed a New Normal. Yet, billion dollar questions are: Will this power equilibrium stand for itself minus the occupation forces? And would Taliban have different approach towards the upcoming regime than with the incumbent Afghan government? Notwithstanding, Ambassador Zilmay Khalilzad arrived in Islamabad on 01 October; followed a day later by high-level delegation of Afghan Taliban led by Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar. The two sides held extensive talks between October 3-7; ostensibly for creating enabling environment for resumption of stalled peace process. Reportedly, both sides showed eagerness to resume the process. Both delegations also held talks with Pakistan's Foreign Minister.

Interestingly, both rivals Ashraf Ghani and Abdullah Abdullah were quick to claim victory, just when the vote count began and the final tally was more than two weeks away. Moreover, there are 12 other candidates in the fray and the winner is to bag at least 51 per cent of the cast votes; none of the candidate is likely to



cross the mark. If so, there would be a run-off election or a second round in November, when people would vote again for two lead candidates. If claims by Ghani and Abdullah are credible then Afghanistan may be heading for continuation of existing Unity Government setup with little bit variations. Election officials have slammed victory claims as premature.

Abdullah said at a news conference 01 on October: “We have the most votes in this election”. “The results will be announced by the IEC [Independent Election Commission], but we have the most votes”. Likewise, Ghani’s running mate Amrullah Saleh said that the President had won a clear first-ballot victory. Senior IEC official Habib Rahman Nang immediately slammed the claims of victory as premature.” No candidate has the right to declare himself the winner,” he said. Results are not expected until October 19. Like earlier elections, voter turnout was low because of attacks and threat of attacks, a muted campaign and concerns over electoral fraud. Abdullah claimed in remarks that “some government officials” meddled in the election process. His statements follow the release on social media of several videos purporting to show election workers “stuffing” ballots. Parliamentarians have called for an official inquiry into the videos. The Complaints Commission has received 2,569 complaints.

Low voter turnout was reported across the country. Al Jazeera’s Tony Birtley said the turnout appeared to be low compared with the 2014 presidential polls. Out of 9 million registered voters, only 2.5 million voted; while during 2014 election seven million had voted. Election Commission extended voting by two hours. Election Commission said it had lost contact with 901 of the country’s 5,373 polling centres where telecom services were not active. Moreover, 464 polling centres in 17 provinces were closed, including 33 centres which lacked election material. Five years ago, they were promised big changes, such as the economy and security will be improved, but none of that happened. So people here think if they vote it’s going to be more of the same. People in Afghanistan faced a tough choice: vote, and risk being killed, or, stay at home and remain safe; majority preferred personal safety over national duty. Afghan government heralded the election as a success because the Taliban were unable to pull off a large-scale attack resulting in high casualty numbers, and there were fewer technical difficulties than some had feared. President Ghani hailed the election as a sign of strengthening democracy in Afghanistan.

Felicitations poured in, from international community, to appreciate the Afghan people. United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres earlier commended “all Afghans who exercised their democratic voice”, and congratulated them on their “commitment to selecting their leaders through the ballot box”. Pakistan government has also felicitated the government and the people of Afghanistan for holding the election. On request of Afghan government, Pakistan had opened the entry/exit points between the two countries for facilitating Afghans residing in Pakistan to help them exercise their right of vote. Abdullah and Ghani shared power over the past five years in a so-called Unity Government formed by the United States after a standoff in the wake of allegations of widespread fraud and corruption in the 2014 poll. This has been, by and large a dysfunctional government, with President and Chief Executive exchanging barbs, too frequently and publically.

—The writer is a freelance columnist based in Islamabad.

Source: <https://pakobserver.net/index.php/2019/10/09/afghan-peace-process-2/>

# **Pakistan's Kashmir Mission By Durdana**

## **Najam**

Pakistan and India have fought three full and one half-baked war on Kashmir. Until the Kargil fiasco, India had hard time justifying its atrocious and blatant position on Kashmir, especially in the face of 700,000 soldiers and some Draconian laws, which have made Kashmir a garrison state. It was after the Kargil that Pakistan's involvement in the Kashmir affair was seen hostile and aligned with the Indian claim that Pakistan had been stoking insurgency in the region. Instead of internationalising the Kashmir issue, as Musharraf later described the reason behind starting the Kargil conflict, the war affected Pakistan's credibility as a responsible nation. Another price that Pakistan paid for this ill-thought-out adventure was a shift in US policy towards Kashmir. To take Pakistan out of the Kargil conflict, White House instructed Pakistan to withdraw troops from Kargil. It was a message that India and the US were now on the same page, vis-à-vis Kashmir.

It was expected that with the rise of electronic media, the issue of Kashmir would get mainstream. Instead, it was restricted to reporting firing and casualties on the Line of Control (LoC). The most that the ISPR, the media wing of the armed forces, could do was to ask the television channels to conduct programmes on LoC, showing how valiantly our soldiers were defending Azad Kashmir and consequently the rest of Pakistan. Two army divisions comprising 45,000 soldiers are deployed on the LoC. Other operational resources are in addition to this manpower. It is incomprehensible how reporting on LoC keeps the Kashmir issue alive.

India's Kashmir policy, since the Kargil fiasco, rested on two factors. One, equating the Kashmir's freedom struggle with terrorism. Two, calling Pakistan a rogue state supporting terrorism in Kashmir and elsewhere in India. After 9/11, Indian and the US-supported governments in Afghanistan have successfully painted an image of Pakistan being an unreliable and hostile nation.

Having spent years in the Afghan war and providing thousands of refugees a safe haven, Pakistan is still held responsible for the crisis in Afghanistan. Scapegoating Pakistan has been so easy. Being a dependent economy, how

much leverage do we have in reminding the US that the recurring terrorism in Afghanistan is because of US policy failure?

In a similar vein, India has politicised the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) proceedings by repeatedly demanding Pakistan's blacklisting. In its latest report, the Asia Pacific Group on Money Laundering (APG) has noted that Pakistan has partially complied with 36 of the 40 parameters — which is a welcome act. However, keeping to its conspiratorial behaviour towards Pakistan India has been spreading rumours about Pakistan getting blacklisted at the FATF.

Pakistan has done a remarkable job since the revocation of Article 370 in highlighting India's abusive behaviour in Kashmir, but the opportunity cost of not pursuing the Kashmir cause actively throughout has been exponential — now it is difficult for Pakistan to rally the international support against India.

It is ironical that in the entire process starting from taking away Kashmir's autonomy to the ranting against India from the International press, the voice of the Kashmiris is missing. The Kashmiri leadership instead of being the handmaiden of Pakistan has turned into mere protestors.

It might be a matter of great comfort that Pakistan has one of the most exceptional nuclear arsenal and highly motivated armed forces, making India think hundred times before attempting a war, but the question arises whether this makes us any better as a country with which the international world would be proud of developing economic and business ties. It's time we came out of the geo-strategic position syndrome and acknowledged that the new tilt is towards geo-economics.

Pakistan has no alternative except holding on to this governance structure of the international order. There is no heroism in Modi; it is the commercial attraction of India's market that has earned him laurels.

Published in The Express Tribune, October 9th, 2019.

Source: <https://tribune.com.pk/story/2075119/6-pakistans-kashmir-mission/>

## **PM's China Visit | Editorial**

THE high-level visit to China by the top political and military leadership of Pakistan has yielded some positive movement in this country's attempts to draw international attention to the atrocities being perpetrated by New Delhi in India-held Kashmir. The joint statement released at the conclusion of the visit mentioned the Kashmir dispute as well as the UN resolutions, which is an advance on previous such statements. There is room for Beijing to build on this, since there is an overlap in the concerns of Pakistan and China regarding the arbitrary change of status of IJK that is internationally recognised as part of a disputed territory. In fact, the statement leaves the door open for further diplomatic action as it says that "China is paying close attention to the current situation in Jammu & Kashmir and [the Chinese side] reiterated that the Kashmir issue is a dispute left from history, and should be properly and peacefully resolved based on the UN Charter, relevant UN Security Council resolutions and bilateral agreements". China, the statement says, is opposed to "any unilateral actions that complicate the situation". Hopefully, Beijing will highlight the same concerns at the summit in Mammallapuram between China and India that begins today, and call for the matter to be resolved either within or with the assistance of the United Nations.

Pakistan renewed its commitment to the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor at the meetings, and presented the promulgation of an ordinance creating the CPEC Authority as a sign of its intention to fast-track the building of the corridor. The second phase of CPEC, which envisages the inflow of vast Chinese investments from the private sector into Pakistan, has been stuck for almost two years now. Progress is also at a standstill on an agreement on financing arrangements for the main railway upgradation project known as ML-1, the multibillion-dollar project that is supposed to upgrade the main line of the railway system from Peshawar to Karachi, enabling the high-speed movement of passengers and cargo. There was also an agreement between both sides to move ahead with the second free trade agreement. So it seems that the overall framework of China-Pakistan cooperation in the 21st century, which includes the corridor, the FTA and security cooperation has received a boost from the meeting, and one hopes that the government here seizes the opportunity.

The statement shows that the government may well have renewed Pakistan's commitment to this overall framework, but does not seem to have brought any new elements of its own to the table. If all this is agreed on, one is left wondering why there has been so little progress in the past one year, given that these same elements have been emphasised in the statement released after the December Joint Cooperation Committee meeting in Beijing. If the government is serious, we should now see material progress on the ground.

Published in Dawn, October 11th, 2019

Source: <https://www.dawn.com/news/1510212/pms-china-visit>

# **Pakistan's Water Crisis By Waqar Ahmed**

For the past several years, Pakistan has been facing a severe water crisis and it is showing no signs of abating.

According to a 2016 report by UNDP titled 'Water security in Pakistan: Issues and challenges', between 1990 and 2015, per capita water availability declined from 2,172 cubic metres per inhabitant, to 1,306 cubic metres per inhabitant. Also Pakistan extracts 74.3% of its fresh water annually thereby exerting tremendous pressure upon renewable water resources.

The Pakistan council research in water resources (PCRWR) in a recent report mentioned that Pakistan will approach 'absolute scarcity' levels of water by the year 2025. In the past, PCRWR has described that the country reached the 'water stress line' in 1990 and crossed the 'water scarcity line' in 2005.

The dominant sector which eats up approximately 91.6% of the total annual water use within the country is agriculture. This is followed by environment at 3.3%, domestic use which is around 2.6% and the industrial sector which stands at 2.5%.

All of the above mentioned statistics present a gloomy picture. Several reasons can be attributed to the alarming state of water crisis in the country.

The first major reason is water wastage. According to Water and power development authority (WAPDA) chairman Lt. Gen. (retd.) Muzamil Hussain, Pakistan wastes Rs. 25 billion worth of water every year. Additionally, two-thirds of irrigation water is lost due to system leakages.

Another big reason of the prevailing water crisis is our limited water storage capacity. Pakistan currently has a water storage capacity of just 30 days and of the total 145 million acre feet (MAF) that flows annually through the country, up to only 14 MAF can be stored. Compare this with our neighbor India which has a storage capacity of 130 days and the United States which has a capacity of 900 days.

Another big reason of the prevailing water crisis is our limited water storage capacity. Pakistan currently has a water storage capacity of just 30 days and of the total 145 million acre feet (MAF) that flows annually through the country, up to only 14 MAF can be stored. Compare this with our neighbor India which has a storage capacity of 130 days and the United States which has a capacity of 900 days.

Furthermore, Pakistan has witnessed rapid population growth over the years. According to the population census conducted in 2017, the population stood at 207 million, a 57% increase from the previous census which was conducted in 1998. The annual population growth rate is stated to be around 2.0%. If the population continues to grow at this rate, Pakistan would be ranked the fourth most populous country by 2030. This scenario would prove to be catastrophic for the already resource stretched country.

The United Nations (UN) in 2015 set 17 sustainable development goals (SDGs) for the year 2030. These 17 goals are broad based and cross-cutting and are the successors to the Millennium development goals (MDGs) which ended in 2015. The SDG 6 concerns itself with water and sanitation and to ensure the availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation. Pakistan being a signatory to the SDGs has a responsibility towards ensuring that it achieves the targets by effectively implementing them by beginning from the federal level and moving right down to the district and tehsil level.

There are a number of ways through which the water crisis can be mitigated.

One way is to increase the public awareness by running awareness campaigns regarding water wastage and responsible use of water in household chores. There is also a dire need to construct new small dams in the country which would aid in conserving more water. Modern and innovative solutions can also be implemented such as the use of drip irrigation, micro-irrigation, and low-energy precision sprinklers.

In light of the current water crisis, all the relevant stakeholders should focus their collective energies towards resolving this critical issue on which our entire future depends since without water no life is possible. There is a drastic need to change our mindsets in order to avoid endangering our future generations.



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Source: <https://dailytimes.com.pk/481708/pakistans-water-crisis-3/>

# **New impetus to Pak-China Bilateral Relationship By Mohammad Jamil**

FEW relationships in the history of international relations have endured so long as that between Pakistan and China; and even fewer have been described as “higher than the mountains, deeper than the oceans”. This description of the all-weather friendship is based on shared principles and interests, and forms the foundation of cooperation in diverse fields. Indeed, Pakistan-China relationship is the cornerstone of Pakistan’s foreign policy; and friendship with China represents national consensus and the common desire of all Pakistani people. On Thursday, China said it believed that Prime Minister Imran Khan’s recent visit to Beijing would inject a new impetus into bilateral partnership between the two all-weather friends, adding there were a lot of fruitful outcomes from his visit. Pakistan and China agreed that the implementation of the second phase of China-Pakistan Free Trade Agreement (FTA) would lead to more trade, economic and investment opportunities between the two countries.

During a meeting between visiting Prime Minister Imran Khan and his Chinese counterpart, Li Keqiang at the Great Hall of the People, both sides noted that frequent bilateral exchanges were contributing to taking the bilateral cooperative partnership to new heights. Prime Minister Imran and Premier Li also discussed bilateral trade and economic partnership as well as the regional security, including the serious human rights and humanitarian situation in the India-occupied Kashmir, especially during the lockdown for more than two months. Imran Khan thanked the leadership and people of China for their warm hospitality and invited Chinese leadership to visit Pakistan at a mutually convenient time. China appreciated Pakistan’s unrelenting efforts and tremendous sacrifices while countering terrorism. It also supported Pakistan in implementing National Action Plan and called on the international community to objectively recognize Pakistan’s contribution to regional peace and security through its fight against terrorism.

The two leaders reviewed excellent bilateral defence cooperation and agreed to further strengthen the cooperation in the areas of military exercises, training cooperation, personnel exchanges and equipment and technology. The two sides held in-depth exchange of views on deepening bilateral cooperation in areas of

trade, investment, finance, education, agriculture, social sector, people to people contacts and cultural linkages. Chinese investment in specialized Economic Zones and collaboration in Small and Medium Enterprises sector would further expand Pakistan's industrial base and diversify its export base. Prime Minister Imran Khan felicitated Premier Li on the 70th anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of China. During the talks, Prime Minister Imran informed his Chinese counterpart that expeditious completion of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) projects was the foremost priority of his government. The transformational project was pivotal to accelerating Pakistan's economic development and regional prosperity, he said.

He also apprised Premier Li of the actions taken recently by the government to fast track the CPEC projects and to push the development momentum in Gwadar. Imran Khan underscored that the cooperative partnership between Pakistan and China served the fundamental interests of the two countries and their peoples, and contributed to peace, development and stability of the region. Prime Minister Imran apprised Premier Li of the latest developments and the importance of urgent action by the international community to alleviate the sufferings of the Kashmiri people. Other areas of potential collaboration, which were discussed in the meeting, included railways, steel, oil and gas, industry and science and technology sectors. The two leaders also witnessed signing of various agreements and memorandum of understanding (MOUs) aimed at deepening Pakistan-China ties in a range of socio-economic sectors. Anyhow, Pakistan is poised to overcome economic challenges with the help of China.

According to ISPR, the Army Chief met Chinese military leadership, including PLA Army Commander, Vice Chairman of the Central Military Commission and Commander Southern Theater Command. General Qamar Javed Bajwa also joined the Prime Minister in meetings with Chinese Prime Minister and President. Commenting on the Prime Minister's visit and his meetings with the top Chinese leadership, Chinese Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Geng Shuang said that Beijing attached great importance to the visit of Imran. He also reiterated that China's position on Kashmir dispute had been consistent, and China supported the principled and sane stance of Pakistan. With Prime Minister Imran Khan and COAS' visit and meetings with their counterparts would further boost already existing warm and friendly relationship, and sent a message loud and clear that

both countries stand shoulder to shoulder in facing the challenges irrespective of time.

In November 2018 during his four-day visit to China, Prime Minister Imran Khan had met President Xi Jinping and Prime Minister Li Keqiang. He had discussed matters of mutual interest and sought Beijing's assistance in tackling financial crisis. Reviewing with satisfaction the historical development of China-Pakistan relations and the great strides made both sides in the joint statement had agreed to further strengthen the China-Pakistan All-Weather Strategic Cooperative Partnership in line with the principles set forth by the Treaty of Friendship, Cooperation and Good-neighbourly Relations signed in 2005. The Chinese side had reiterated that China's relationship with Pakistan is always a matter of highest priority in its foreign policy. China reaffirmed its support and solidarity with Pakistan in safeguarding its sovereignty, independence, territorial integrity and security. Last but not the least; despite the fact that Chinese President is to visit India, yet China's leadership was candid in supporting Pakistan's stance on Kashmir.

—The writer is a senior journalist based in Lahore.

Source: <https://pakobserver.net/index.php/2019/10/12/new-impetus-to-pak-china-bilateral-relationship/>

## **The Royal Visit | Editorial**

The British Royal Couple, Duke and Duchess of Cambridge, Prince William and Kate Middleton have arrived in Pakistan for a five-day trip. This is a monumental moment for the country and a result of the rigorous diplomatic strides of the Foreign Ministry, as this tour will reinvigorate Pakistan's ties with the United Kingdom (UK). Pakistan has been fighting relentlessly for the cause of Kashmir and the UK has been closely linked to it. The country at this point needs strong backing to push for the rights of the Kashmiris along with redirecting the focus on the Pakistani economy for investment and tourism.

The last Royal visit was back in 2006 when Prince of Wales and Duchess of Cornwall, Charles and Camilla visited Pakistan. Pakistan needs to reposition itself in the global political regime and assert a narrative that focuses on a development driven Pakistan, willing to welcome all cultures and expand on the globalist paradigm. In fact, the visit of TRH has already brought attention to several location ventures, one of which is the jewellery brand that has come to attention after Kate Middleton wore them. This shows how the Pakistani market has expanded exponentially and people are working in different sectors to empower themselves.

The Royal Couple will be given an extensive tour of the country showing the urban developed centres to the scenic Northern areas. This trip will develop an image favourable to Pakistan because for long the country has been associated with orthodoxy and terrorism. The trip has been planned so that The Royal Highnesses (TRH) can meet several people from different backgrounds working for the empowerment of the marginalised sections of the society. It is to also show the development that Pakistan has achieved over the years by controlling the security situation, improved law-making, and a provision of economic opportunities to several impoverished segments of the society.

Pakistan used to be a frequent visiting spot for the British but post 9/11 that influx has reduced to a very minimum level. This Royal visit will open the doors of the economy to the foreign tourists, who can certainly use the scenic beauty that Northern Pakistan offers. At a time when soft power plays a very important role,

Pakistan can certainly welcome visits from the Royal family, who only add to the efforts of the government.

Source: <https://nation.com.pk/16-Oct-2019/the-royal-visit>

# **The Saudi-Iran Conflict and Pakistan By**

## **Shariq Jamal Khan**

The audacious and debilitating drone attacks on two of Saudi Arabia's most important and secure oil facilities at Abqaiq and Khurais last month have considerably upped the geopolitical ante in the Arabian Peninsula. With the war drums getting perceptibly louder in the region, the attacks, apparently perpetrated by Yemen's Iran-aligned Houthi militia, are a chilling reminder of the perilous volatility of the Yemen conflict. Being part of this regional rodeo, Pakistan has prudently decided to try and prevent the lurking Saudi-Iran war which could escalate into a full-blown US-Iran conflagration. Prime Minister Imran Khan is visiting Tehran and Riyadh shortly for the purpose.

A tragic corollary of the much-lamented Arab Spring, the Yemen crisis reached a crescendo in 2012 when the beleaguered dictator, Ali Abdullah Saleh, handed over the reins of government to his vice president, Abdrabbuh Mansour Hadi. However, Hadi was also deposed in 2015 when the Houthis overran the capital Sanaa. A horrified Riyadh fabricated an eight-nation coalition, buttressed by the US, the UK and France, and initiated a ferocious bombing campaign against the Houthis in order to reinstate Mr Hadi and counter Iranian influence in the country. The fighting led to mass killings and triggered the world's largest humanitarian catastrophe.

Since the early 1900s, the region has remained embroiled in myriad crises, wars, coups, generation of petro-money on a grand scale and poverty replication on an even grander scale. It is a contemporary El Dorado where the Middle Eastern version of the Great Game is being played by Saudi Arabia, Iran, the US and others. Battle-hardened non-state entities like the Hezbollah, the Houthis and various Iraqi militias are also part of the potpourri. The swashbuckling Abqaiq-Khurais assault, a watershed event in the chequered history of the Middle East, should be seen as a peculiarity of this geopolitical matrix. Its shock and awe testify to the meticulousness of the offenders who decimated Saudi Arabia's much-touted global oil management and distribution system in a bizarrely nonchalant manner.

How should Riyadh react to this provocation? When juxtaposed with the lackadaisical US response to the attacks, a Saudi strike against Iran would appear reckless. A politically-besieged President Trump would not like to stir up a military hornet's nest in the region. The Gulf states, though rattled by the sheer brazenness of the attacks, also seem averse to the eruption of a full-scale war as it could damage their energy infrastructure, obstruct maritime cargo lanes and dramatically ratchet up the cost of the war. Diplomacy should, therefore, take centre stage. This is where Pakistan comes into the picture.

A few hiccups notwithstanding, Islamabad's association with both Tehran and Riyadh has remained meaningful. Prime Minister Imran Khan is trustworthy, has no axe to grind and is flamboyantly spontaneous. His remarkable speech at the 74th UNGA session has manifestly added to his stature and he can approach both Tehran and Riyadh self-assuredly.

Indeed, the Prime Minister promptly initiated a diplomatic move in this regard after President Trump invited him to intervene in the matter. He met Iranian President Hassan Rouhani on the sidelines of the UNGA session in September and then held talks with Prince Mohammed bin Salman in Riyadh. It is now time to move up a gear.

The Prime Minister should present a multi-pronged diplomatic plan to the Saudi and Iranian leadership, UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres and President Trump.

The Secretary General should ask the Security Council, which has the requisite legal authority, to nominate a team of impartial weapons and forensic investigators with an unambiguous mandate to probe the Abqaiq and Khurais attacks. This is essential as no action should be taken against anyone without irrefutable evidence. Interestingly, the Secretary General had himself proposed the creation of such an entity to investigate the tanker attacks in the Gulf in June. The same mechanism could be employed now.

A UNSC-sponsored ceasefire should take effect in war-stricken Yemen whereby both Riyadh and the Houthis should stop targeting each other. Likewise, oil tankers in the Gulf waterways should not be attacked by the parties to the



conflict. A missile attack on an Iranian tanker near Jeddah last week is a case in point.

As a parallel development, aid should be allowed to reach the 14 million distressed Yemenis to avert a catastrophic humanitarian crisis. A separate comprehensive plan should be devised in this connection with the help of the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), the UN Human Rights Council, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), Unicef, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and the International Rescue Committee (IRC). Evidently, the success of the peace initiative greatly depends on the efficacy of the humanitarian endeavour in Yemen.

During the investigations, Prime Minister Imran Khan should visit Iran and Saudi Arabia to keep the leadership of the two countries updated. A core group of senior Pakistani diplomats should assist him.

Once the investigation report is presented to the Security Council, further action could be contemplated as per the edicts of International Law.

This peace initiative by Prime Minister Imran Khan has the capacity not only to tame the chaos in the Middle East but also to catapult Pakistan to a position of eminence and respect. Pakistan possesses the requisite diplomatic finesse to act as the diplomat-in-chief of the Muslim world. It is time to put that finesse to good use.

The writer is a global affairs, public policy and security analyst, and a senior civil servant.

Source: <https://tribune.com.pk/story/2078539/6-saudi-iran-conflict-pakistan/>

## **Poverty Eradication in Pakistan | Editorial**

Since its inception in 2018 the Imran Khan-led government has focused more on poverty eradication than any other programme. Without disturbing the landmark poverty alleviation project of the Benazir Income Support Programme, the Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf government initiated its own projects – innovative and sustainable. Panahgahs have been functional in major cities to provide shelter to the homeless, while Ehsaas is on its way to a phased completion to provide instant supplies of food, clothing, education, health and subsistence to deserving people. These steps reflect the government's determination in pursuing Article 38 (d) of the Constitution under which the state is to ensure citizens' access to fundamental rights such as shelter, clothing, health and education. Despite facing hard financial issues, the PTI government cut development allocations in the budget for 2019-20 but still allocated Rs80 billion for the underprivileged segments of society. In 2020, the sum would be increased to Rs120 billion.

As it is the World Poverty Eradication Day today, the government, the private sector and the public at large to need to redefine their vows to fight poverty. So far the government, through its Ehsaas programme, has several policy windows such as the "National Poverty Graduation Initiative, financial inclusion strategy, and prize funds for innovative solutions such as garbage collecting rickshaws to create jobs. Still, state's capacity to fight poverty is far from the desired goal. The private sector, though, has partnered with the government in its Langar programme, but its corporate social responsibility programme needs to be streamlined, scrutinised and documented. Pakistan has made a name in philanthropy, and in every nook and corner, charity work is ongoing selflessly. These initiatives must be documented under a governmental window so that they are facilitated and strengthened. The creation of a poverty alleviation ministry can do the needful.

Moving from instant relief to the provision of jobs and other basic needs, the government will need to pursue pragmatic targets of holistic socio-economic development to eradicate poverty. CPEC is likely to bring about a new phase of jobs and other opportunities, which will in turn raise the standard of living. We can learn a lot from China in agriculture, livestock, fishery, and other sectors which engage people from the downtrodden segments. To meet the modern

challenges and opportunities of CPEC, it is time for technical and vocational education and training programmes. Poverty reduction is a huge task which needs iron political will and commitment. The good thing is the government has made it a top priority. \*

Source: <https://dailytimes.com.pk/484145/poverty-eradication-in-pakistan/>

# **The Emerging Peace Promoter Pakistan By**

## **Syed Qamar Afzal Rizvi**

BUILDING and maintaining close friendly relations with Muslim States is the cornerstone of Pakistan's foreign policy. In case of a conflict between Muslim states, Pakistan has always remained equidistant. As peace promoter and facilitator, Islamabad leaves no stone unturned not only to defuse tension between the Muslim states but to also mend the fences between the West and the Muslim world. While already engaged with the Afghan Taliban to conclude a peace deal with the US (currently restarted) PM Khan has been involved in shuttle diplomacy to defuse tension in the Gulf after President Donald Trump and the Saudi Crown Prince Mohammad Bin Salman have had asked him to do so. Just when Khan was addressing the news conference at the UN last month, Trump separately confirmed to reporters that the Pakistani leader was involved in mediatory efforts to help ease tension with Iran. Prime Minister Imran Khan's latest visits to Tehran and Riyadh are positive peace initiatives.

Pakistan is committed to addressing emerging peace challenges — to defuse US-Iranian nuclear standoff, and to restore an atmosphere of amicability between Tehran and Riyadh —whereas finding ways for concluding a peace agreement between the US and the Taliban. PM Khan said he had been in Saudi Arabia before New York and spoken with Prince Mohammed bin Salman who also asked him to talk to Rouhani. “We assured the Saudis of our solidarity but also emphasized the need for caution,” said Pakistan's Foreign Minister. PM Khan's current visit to Iran and KSA comes after Khan last month said US President Donald Trump had asked him to help defuse tension between Saudi Arabia and Iran. Washington blamed Tehran for 14 Sept attack on the world's biggest crude oil processing facility in Saudi Arabia. Iran denies involvement. On 12 October, King Salman approved the deployment of additional U.S. troops and equipment in response to the Pentagon announcement that it was sending some 3,000 troops to the Persian Gulf State.

First, as for the US-Iran nuclear conflict, one has to remember that the conclusion of the JCPOA between Iran and the P5+1 powers in 2015 seems to have been pragmatically concluded between the global powers—and virtually espoused by the Obama Administration. This nuclear deal or the document

servers to be the best blueprint for any nuclear conflict resolution. For Pakistan, as with so many other countries in the region, the JCPOA marked an important moment to reconsider the economic opportunities posed by Iran that would no longer be frozen out of the global economy by international nuclear-related sanctions. However, the Trump Administration's May 2018 decision to withdraw from the JCPOA threatens to break the pact.

If Iran were to fail to reach an acceptable arrangement with the JCPOA's European participants, it has been tantamount to allowing the deal to unwind and would resume its previously restricted uranium enrichment activities. Factually, Iran has diluted much of its nuclear stockpile so that it contained no more than 5% uranium-235. In addition, Tehran has implemented various restrictions and provided the IAEA with additional information about its nuclear program pursuant to the July 2015 Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), which Tehran concluded with the P5+1.

Second, Pakistan has made strong efforts to balance the competing desires and interests of its regional allies in the face of strenuous tests. In two particular incidents—Saudi Arabia's actions against Houthi rebels in Yemen and Iran's explosive reaction to the execution of a Saudi Shia cleric—Islamabad's diplomatic intervention-cum-pacification has been stretched to their utmost. "Regional issues need to be resolved through peace dialogue. We also emphasised that any goodwill gesture will be responded with a goodwill gesture and good words," said the Iranian President Hassan Rouhani.

A closer look at the circumstances surrounding these regional crises presents an informative picture of Pakistan's motivations and methods for responding to tension between Saudi Arabia and Iran. And yet pragmatically, the closeness of Iran's trading relationship with India and the development of the Chabahar Port is not an opportunity cost for Pakistan. The sooner regional trade projects can go forward, the better for Islamabad. A de-escalation of tension between the United States and Iran is beneficial for Pakistan in and of itself — acting as mediator will increase its prestige on the world stage. If the Trump Administration genuinely seeks a resolution to rising tension with Iran, then it should cautiously approach Pakistan to serve as a catalyst for dialogue. And third, Prime Minister Imran Khan called on US President Donald Trump to restart peace talks with the Afghan Taliban and said Washington has a "duty" to calm the Kashmir standoff with

India. “Stability in Afghanistan means stability in Pakistan,” Khan said on 23 September at the start of his meeting with Trump on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly session in New York. As for the Trump’s secret talks with the Taliban at the Camp David Trump currently revealed his remarkable idea — he would not only bring the Taliban to Washington, but to Camp David would have met the Taliban at Camp David — scene of secret 1978 talks as Jimmy Carter brokered peace between Israel and Egypt — days before the 18th anniversary of 11 September attacks, which triggered the US invasion that toppled the militants’ regime.

The Afghan Taliban denounced President Donald Trump’s decision to call off peace talks with the insurgent group, claiming American interlocutors were happy with a deal both sides had negotiated in Doha, and that 23 September had been decided as a date to move to the next step—the start of negotiations with other Afghan factions. Because of the recently revived peace process— wherein Pakistan is playing a key role a meeting has been held in Islamabad, between Taliban officials and the American diplomat, Zalmay Khalilzad. “We still [...] believe that the American side will come back to this position [...] Our fight for the past 18 years should have proven to the Americans that we will not be satisfied until we witness the complete end of the occupation,” the group said in a statement released on Twitter by spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid.

It is a truism, “Pakistan is very aware of its strategic importance here,” said Madiha Afzal, a visiting fellow at the Brookings Institution. Pakistan may also be trying to leverage its role to press for foreign intervention in its conflict with India over the disputed Himalayan territory of Kashmir, something India rejects. Pakistan finds itself in a unique position to serve as a peace facilitator between Washington and Tehran. Despite the unravelling of negotiations building towards a once-imminent US-Taliban peace deal, Imran Khan’s acumen undoubtedly crafts newfound confidence on the world stage. Pakistan is emerging as a regional peace negotiator. Nonetheless, Islamabad cannot tolerate Modi’s coercion strategy in the loK. Yet, Islamabad’s any positive peace- promoting role should not go unrewarded in terms of Kashmir issue.

Source: <https://pakobserver.net/index.php/2019/10/17/the-emerging-peace-promoter-pakistan/>

# **Pak-Turkey Naval Diplomacy By**

## **Muhammad Sohail Ahmed**

The Pakistan Navy is the naval warfare uniform service branch of the Pakistan Armed Forces serving the motherland in forefront of the seaside. Pakistan Navy is playing a commendable role in National security of Pakistan, the security of nation, state including citizens, economy and institutions are considered to be the national security and regarded as a duty of government. Pakistan Navy is the guardian of nations to avoid sea threats from all sides. In recent visit to Turkey, the Navy chief of Pakistan signed a contract for 4 type MILGEM Class anti-submarine corvette equipped with stealth technology and designed by Turkish shipyard. The enormous mechanism is that the president of Turkey was the chief guest in the ceremony. In his address, he spoke with a clear vision about the future. It encompassed Turkish will and desire to take Pakistan shipbuilding Industry and Pakistan Navy in its pursuit for self-sufficiency, through designing, building and maintenance. This a capability that so far only ten countries in the world enjoy. What is so great about it is that Allah has gifted us with an enthusiastic partner which is treading on this path.

Due to intellectual property rights, the existing ten countries may not be able to help Pakistan or Turkey. President Erdogan informed that out of one hundred top defence companies, there are already five Turkish companies. Defence imports have come down to only 30 percent and are to bring it to zero, by 2023. Since the Pakistan Navy is the user of this corvette, it must be very keen to operate these assets without facing the problem of spares. Therefore, by the time these platforms out of which two will be constructed at Karachi Shipyard would be commissioned, there will be self-sufficiency with Turkey for spares. There is probably some portion of spares that would be outsourced to Pakistan.

This is going to be self-sufficiency cum assurance of spares for Pakistan navy. The president highlighted that Turkey had already suffered due to sanctions in the past by the supplier countries. Pakistan has also faced the same problem through famous Pressler's amendment and Kerry-Lugar bills etc.

His Excellency informed that his country after being able to construct Unmanned and manned aerial vehicles as well as satellites, would soon achieve self-

sufficiency in designing and manufacturing fighter air crafts for turkey. Pakistan can also engage in its pursuit of designing and manufacturing its indigenous fighter programs. So our children will have more jobs, better standards of education and a greater understanding and control over technology.

Speaking at the steel cutting ceremony the president unveiled the future program to design and construct a conventional submarine for Turkey. Turkish navy ship, KINALIADA was also commissioned during the ceremony. Turks call it their National warship program. He appreciated the quality of equipment, high standard of discipline and well-qualified men who would make these platforms a highly competitive program in warship construction and operation. Pakistan would certainly benefit from this cooperation as it has its development plans to pursue. Availability of a trusted friend would be of great help.

This is going to be self-sufficiency cum assurance of spares for Pakistan navy. The president highlighted that Turkey had already suffered due to sanctions in the past by the supplier countries. Pakistan has also faced the same problem through famous Pressler's amendment and Kerry-Lugar bills etc

Once again Turkish people have proven their unflinching support to Pakistan. This time it was on Kashmir issue as the most unambiguous stance forcefully supporting Pakistan came from Turkey. President Erdogan not only mentioned it in his address to UNGA, but he also highlighted during the ceremony that eight million Kashmiris were in an open prison and facing atrocities. He emphasized that he will continue to raise the issue at all forums and levels. This convergence of thought and alignment of National objectives must be utilized for future cooperation with Turkey in defence, diplomacy, science and technology by both the governments. Besides highlighting the sufferings, Pakistan Navy Chief thanked the Turkish leader for his unwavering support to Pakistan.

No doubt the Turkish nation has proven the adage that a friend in need is a friend indeed.

Besides turkey, Malaysia has supported the right of self-determination for Kashmiris, a principled stance that Pakistan has always supported. The Iranian parliament has sympathized with the Kashmiri Muslims besieged in the Indian occupied territory. The recent visit of the foreign ministers Saudi Arabia and UAE



has been a great support to Kashmiri brothers in the Indian occupied territory. They are in a state of curfew since 5th August. The overwhelming support from China has convinced our leaders to plan a visit to China to thank its leadership for providing full support to Pakistan and the Muslims of Kashmir.

Indian move to attempt and announce illegal annexation of Kashmir was well thought out and planned in such a way that soon after the announcement, Modi would start official tour of Gulf states, known to have support for Pakistan. This trap created an embarrassment to these states as the state visits are planned well in advance. However, photo sessions of Modi with the leaders in the Gulf countries generated the false impression that they were supportive or ambivalent to Indian move. As the dust settles and the picture is getting clear, it is emerging that there is reasonable diplomatic support to Pakistan from the above-stated countries in particular and Muslim Ummah in general. However, within India, there are some diverging views and one such view is that has come from a retired judge of Indian supreme court who has predicted that Kashmir will be Vietnam for India. I believe that India is not the USA, and Pakistan is not Cambodia for taking the wrath of India as Cambodia had to take from USA before it pulled out of Vietnam.

It can be also visualized that since both USA and Russia have asked Pakistan and India to sort out the matter directly between themselves, they are not yet clear on the likely outcome of this conflict. Therefore, Pakistan stands at the high moral ground in front of the world community and likely to emerge as successful in this standoff, Insha-Allah. Pakistan should also support Turkey in its efforts to establish peace in Syria.

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Source: <https://dailytimes.com.pk/485014/pak-turkey-naval-diplomacy/>

## **Indian Water Aggression | Editorial**

Experts said it long ago that future wars will be fought over water. India's government from the first day tried to convert Indo-Pak as a hotspot for "hydro-political issues." India and Pakistan had gone to wars over water in the past. But the two sides entered into Indus Waters Treaty (IWT) 1960 that the World Bank (WB) facilitated. But with Narendra Modi as the Prime Minister (PM) of India, New Delhi's overtures on water do not bode any good for the two sides.

Being a former member of Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) Modi's desire to assimilate Pakistan in India should not surprise anyone. Akhand Bharat is what RSS fed into the minds of many. And for many Indian politicians, the dream of Akhand Bharat can be materialised if Pakistan is made dry. Saying that the water belongs to the farmers of the Haryana state, he wants to further RSS's ideology. The Indian PM's remarks regarding diversion of water flows go against the principals of the international law, in general, and the articles of the IWT, in particular. His statement is a clear-cut demonstration of water aggression of India against Pakistan.

Nevertheless, Foreign Office (FO) spokesperson Dr Mohammad Faisal has correctly reminded India that Pakistan holds "exclusive rights" over three Western rivers. FO maintaining that any Indian attempt to divert the flow of these rivers will count nothing short of an act of aggression is not incorrect. Any Indian step along these lines will disturb the life in Pakistan in every respect. And Pakistan's retaliation will not be unjust to control the damage, for Pakistan is already one of the most water-stressed countries in the world.

India, under Modi, is all set to turn Pakistan into a water-starved country. But India is not considering the political and economic fallout, not forgetting that India's water aggression is posing a significant threat to international peace and security. Modi probably forgets that arbitrary blockage of rivers amounts to 'aggression' to which Pakistan's military response will be justified.

The ball is in India's court. Modi has to decide if he wants a peaceful region or a one ravaged by the war. Despite all Indian belligerences, Pakistan needs to adopt a proactive response rather than falling for a reactionary one. Islamabad

should engage in intense lobbying to tell the international community of India's water aggression that can prove detrimental for global peace and stability. Given the fact that India has many a time violated IWT due to our lack of vigilance, Islamabad has no other option but to act proactively against any future Indian aggression.

Source: <https://nation.com.pk/18-Oct-2019/indian-water-aggression>

### LoC Violence | Editorial

IT was a bloody Sunday in the vicinity of the Line of Control as at least six civilians and an army Soldier embraced martyrdom in AJK due to "indiscriminate shelling" by Indian forces.

The Pakistan Army replied in kind to the provocation, with the ISPR saying that around nine Indian soldiers were killed in the Pakistani counterattack.

The Indians have claimed that "terror launch pads" were targeted on the Pakistani side, but this claim is hardly credible as all evidence shows that innocent civilians were murdered in cold blood by New Delhi's forces.

According to the Foreign Office, since 2017, the Indians have committed nearly 2,000 ceasefire violations. Such reckless behaviour on the part of New Delhi is totally unacceptable, and in the highly charged atmosphere currently prevailing in South Asia it is akin to playing with fire. Emotions are running high, mainly due to India's brutal lockdown of India-held Kashmir, and such flagrant violations are sure to draw a response from Pakistan. It would be fair to ask if ultra-hawkish elements within the Indian establishment are purposely seeking to escalate matters with Pakistan.

If India claims it has smashed what it calls terrorist infrastructure in this country, where is the evidence?

The FO has rightly called upon the five permanent UNSC member states "to ask India to provide information about the alleged launch pads".

The fact is that the state has cracked down on militant groups, and there is no evidence that infiltration into India or across the LoC is occurring from this country. Rather, it seems that the Indians are attempting to promote a psychological warfare campaign against Pakistan.

This is also being done to take the world's focus away from the atrocious human rights situation in occupied Kashmir.

It seems that the Indian establishment is using a mixture of lies, brinkmanship and violence to cook up another crisis. However, beating the drums of war is one thing; managing a fight between two nuclear-armed states is quite another.

It is hoped that the Hindu extremist clique that rules India realises that should tensions increase to the point of conflict, it will wreak massive devastation in this region.

India needs to immediately cease its hostile behaviour along the LoC and end the siege of IJK. A new conflict in South Asia will be in no one's interest — and will only worsen matters for the toiling masses.

Published in Dawn, October 22nd, 2019

Source: <https://www.dawn.com/news/1512203/loc-violence>

# **Without Making Peace With Pakistan, India Cannot Become a Major World Power By Col (R) Muhammad Hanif**

If India wants to become a major world power, it has to engage in making peace with Pakistan by resolution of the Jammu and Kashmir dispute. Otherwise, because of the Kashmir dispute, India's brutal use of force to crush the Kashmiris' ongoing freedom struggle and the gross human rights (HR) violations and genocide being committed there, the threat of a nuclear war between Pakistan and India will prevail. Because of this scenario, the local and the foreign investors will be scared to invest in India and India's economy will further suffer, as it has already slowed down because of the ongoing tensions due to India abrogating Article 35A and 370 of Indian constitution, and taking away the autonomy of Jammu and Kashmir and allowing Hindus to settle there to change its demography.

While these major changes were done in violation of the UNSC resolutions, Simla Agreement, the Lahore Declaration, and even against India's own constitution, due to the fear of the Kashmiris reaction, India also clamped curfew in the state on 5 August 2019, and arrested all Kashmiri leaders and about 13000 young men, to crush the freedom struggle. India's these HR violations are still continuing despite that these were highly condemned by the world media, like the New York Times, Washington Post, CNN, the Guardian, UK, The Independent UK, The BBC, The DW TV Germany and Channel 24 France, and in view of PM Imran's active diplomacy on Kashmir the world leaders, including, President Trump, the UK Prime Minister, the Malaysian Prime Minister and the Turkish President have also asked India to lift the curfew and release the arrested people.

And since now the Kashmiri women have also joined the freedom struggle, no amount of Indian brutalities and changes in the constitution, etc. can stop the peaceful freedom struggle in Kashmir, because the people have suffered so much since 1987 and due to the current genocide that their reconciliation with India is impossible. Hence, Pakistan-India tensions will prevail and the threat of a war with nuclear connotations will exist, which will negatively impact India's

economy because of the lack of investors' trust. The Moodys and the World Bank have already downgraded the projected growth rate of India's economy to a mere 4.8 to 5 percent in the next few years. And, about 70% of the Indian population, which is below poverty line will further suffer.

And, if a war breaks out between India and Pakistan, then the damage will be colossal as no country will be ready to accept the defeat, and there is all the probability that ultimately the nuclear weapons will be used by both, Pakistan and India. If this happens, then the human and material losses will be so much that the remaining India will exist only as the poorest nation in the world.

But it appears that the Prime Minister, Modi and his government ministers are not even ready to recognize this fact, that by carrying on with its enmity with the nuclear Pakistan by keeping the Jammu and Kashmir dispute unresolved, India will lose its chances of becoming a world's major power. Instead of realizing this fact, India's current leaders are boasting by propagating short anti Pakistan narratives, and even indicating their annoyance towards the countries that have supported Pakistan's stance on Kashmir, as if India is already a super power. Even India has also politely denied President Trump's mediation offer for resolving the Kashmir dispute, while PM Imran Khan had accepted President Trump's offer for mediation.

India blames Pakistan for sponsoring terrorism just to hide the fact that actually it is an epicentre of terrorism in the region

For example, as per the Times of India dated 10 October 2019, while Indian leaders are asking Pakistan to forget about Kashmir, they have also rejected China's correct stance that the Jammu and Kashmir dispute should be resolved through a dialogue as per UNSC resolutions on Kashmir, by stating that India did not welcome China's comments on its internal matters in response to a reference to UN resolutions by China. India is also undermining China, as according to the Financial Times of 10 October 2019, India was jubilating when Trump had put economic sanctions against China. India has even thought of cancelling economic cooperation with Turkey and Malaysia, because they had supported Pakistan's stance on Kashmir at the UNGA session in September 2019.

India blames Pakistan for sponsoring terrorism just to hide the fact that actually it is an epicentre of terrorism in the region. In this context, the recent killing of Asim Umar in Afghanistan, a top al-Qaeda terrorist from India and chief of AQIS, who, according to 'India Today' had no digital footprint, indicates that India sponsors terrorism through proxies like Daeish and AQIS in the sub-continent. Similarly, terror attacks on Sri-Lanka this year had their links in Indian Tamil Nadu.

Also, according to 'The News', Pakistan, on 17 October 2019, the Indian Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Sunday gave a so-called 'polite suggestion' to Pakistani leaders, asking them to change their direction of thinking or else Pakistan will be divided into several parts. This indicates that the BJP stalwarts are out of their senses as they do not understand they are talking to a strong military and nuclear power. Probably the Indian leaders have become arrogant, because India is a close defence partner of the US.

But, the Indian leaders fail to realize that the US is also aware that as a close defence partner, India is not sincere to it as India does not act in line with the US interests when needed, and is only interested in getting the US technology and economic investments. That is the reason that now the US is also advancing its relations with Pakistan, as it has realized that Pakistan is an important country to fight terrorism and keep peace and stability in Afghanistan, the Middle East and the Central Asia.

In view of the above discussion, it can be concluded that if India wants to become a world's major power, it should stop playing a zero sum game with Pakistan. Instead, India has to have a sustained and result oriented dialogue with Pakistan and build peace with it by resolving the Jammu and Kashmir dispute in the light of the UNSC resolutions. And, from thereon India has to leave the old enmity and live in peace with Pakistan, as France and the UK, both nuclear powers, are living like friends by forgetting their bitter past.

If India adopts this attitude and strategy, not only the South Asian economic integration will take place by activating the SAARC, the poverty in South Asia can also be addressed. And, with peace in the periphery of India, it will be possible for it to become a major power in the world.

Source: <https://dailytimes.com.pk/487942/without-making-peace-with-pakistan-india-cannot-become-a-major-world-power/>

# **The Kartarpur Corridor's Completion By** **Col (R) Muhammad Hanif**

It is highly praiseworthy that the Pakistan Government has ensured the completion of the Kartarpur corridor on time, as promised, and its inaugural ceremony is being held on 9 November 2019. This corridor has been constructed for the Sikh pilgrims from India and the world over for visiting the most sacred Sikh shrine of Baba Guru Nanak, located in the Kartarpur village in Pakistan in the Narowal District, just a few kilometres from the Pakistan-India border. As stated by the project director Atif Majeed the Corridor is a visa-free border crossing from India to Kartarpur, which is being opened just ahead of the 550th birth anniversary of Sikhism founder Baba Guru Nanak on Nov 12, to enable the Sikh community of India and the foreign countries to attend one of the Sikh religion's most sacred festivals.

The provision of the corridor facility for the Indian Sikh pilgrims, which will remain open throughout the year, is a clear proof that Pakistan earnestly respects its religious minorities and religious minorities of the neighbouring countries, and ensures their religious freedom. The provision of this great facility for the Indian Sikhs is an example for India, where the BJP sponsored Hindu mobs are damaging the Muslims' worship places, like the historic Babri mosque, which was demolished by Hindu mobs and the then government kept looking. And, if the Hindu temple is constructed there by the Modi Government, then Hindu mobs will start demolishing other historic mosques in India.

Moreover, since 2014, when the BJP and Modi Government came into power, the extremist Hindus are killing the Muslims, on the pretext that if somebody is taking a cow, he is beaten to the death by the Hindu mobs because it is assumed that the cow is being taken to slaughtering and eating its meat. That is why, as per the New York times of 25 June 2019, in its annual report for 2019, the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom, has listed India as among the worst countries in the world for religious freedom.

In view of the religious intolerance in India, especially of the Muslim minority, the construction and opening of the Kartarpur corridor on the initiative of the Pakistan Government is an example for the Modi led BJP Government in India that it



should also respect the religious places and the rights of its religious minorities, especially the Muslims, as Pakistan is doing for the Indian Sikhs and Hindus, as their many religious shrines are located inside Pakistan and they are welcomed and facilitated to visit those.

Other than respecting the religious rights of the minorities, the construction of the Kartarpur corridor for the Indian Sikh community to visit the shrine of Baba Guru Nanak is also a goodwill gesture by Pakistan for the Sikhs of India, that indicates a Pakistan's desire to build peace with its neighbours. Such gestures and Pakistan's repeated offers to India to start a dialogue to resolve the Kashmir and other disputes are a clear evidence that Pakistan wants to build sustainable good neighbourly relations with India and other neighbouring countries.

Based on previous experiences, it is now obvious that Pakistan and India cannot resolve the mutual disputes by the use of force, as both the countries being the nuclear powers cannot fight a conclusive war, without causing unbearable damage to each other

It is only with the resolution of the Jammu and Kashmir and other outstanding disputes that Pakistan and India, along with other SAARC member countries can work together towards South Asia's economic integration and economic development of all the SAARC members for poverty alleviation in South Asia and ultimately moving towards achieving the prosperity in the region. This will be only possible if Pakistan and India, as nuclear powers, respect each other and build mutual peace.

Based on previous experiences, it is now obvious that Pakistan and India cannot resolve the mutual disputes by the use of force, as both the countries being the nuclear powers cannot fight a conclusive war, without causing unbearable damage to each other. In this context, India would also finally come to the conclusion that the use of too much force in the occupied state of Jammu and Kashmir since 1987, and the ongoing genocide being committed there by the Indian security forces by clamping the curfew and closing telephone and internet communications for the last 77 days and even more will further strengthen the freedom struggle of the Kashmiris, rather than India succeeds in crushing that struggle.

Therefore, there is no option for Pakistan and India other than having a bilateral dialogue or accept a foreign mediation to resolve the Kashmir dispute in the light of the US resolutions, so that both the nuclear powers can live together in peace and cooperation and help the SAARC to achieve its objective of realizing an economic integration of South Asia to address the poverty and attain prosperity. And, in this context, the construction and opening of the Kartapur corridor for the Indian Sikh community should act as a first step.

The writer is a former Research Fellow of Islamabad Policy Research Institute (IPRI), Islamabad

Source: <https://dailymtimes.com.pk/488506/the-kartapur-corridors-completion/>

# **The Russia-Pakistan Perception Paradigm**

**By Sarfraz Ahmed Rana**

The tales of Russia and Pakistan relations and how the perception paradigm evolved, over time, originates when the twins named, India and Pakistan, emerged in 1947 from the womb of a frail and sickly British imperialism. Despite sharing the common womb of the mother, two were poles apart in nature. The former brother, namely India, was constitutionalist, secular and democratic, whereas the latter younger twin comparatively weak, confronted the grave issues and problems from its early days, however, chose to pursue the discourse of confessionalism.

Pakistan, the first-ever confessional state of its kind, however, embarked her journey on a bumpy road has a lot of arduous challenges to sail through. The internal factors however vital to run a sovereign state from political institutions, constitutional arrangements to strong defence and economy lacked completely. Whereupon the external factors had been as worst as the internal one, the world had not been recovered fully from the aftershocks of the Second World War and witnessed yet another expedition at a global scale. The policy of two great powers, the US and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR), had a shift in the approach from wartime cooperation to the postwar ideological conflict.

Given the brief historical overview and considering the internal and external factors, Pakistan has to build her foreign relations in such an apprehensive international environment in which the world had been squeezed between the withering ideological conflicts of two powers. Since the beginning, Pakistan adopted somewhat less careful approach in finding the diplomatic equilibrium between the US and the USSR and seemed to have lost the equilibrium from the early days of its creation; opening the first American diplomatic mission to Pakistan almost the next day of its independence on August 15, 1947, whereas Pakistan established its diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union, as late as in December 1949, after the delay of two years and four months.

In contrast, the diplomatic equilibrium had been the central tenet of the Indian foreign policy following the nonaligned approach during the cold war. Despite the Soviet paramount leader, Joseph Stalin's contempt to Nehru, who once cited

Nehru as a “running dog of imperialism,” writes the former Indian Prime Minister I K Gujral in his book named foreign policy of India, had not changed the Indian diplomatic position of nonalignment. The Nehru’s acclaimed leadership skills were cognisant of the fact that foreign relations have always been driven either by objective factors or policy preferences, not by personal preferences or individual likes and dislikes.

The first real direct contact between the Soviet and Pakistan was materialised in the efforts of Raja Ghazanfar Ali, the first ambassador to Iran who enjoyed a warm relationship with the Russian diplomat stationed in Iran. The effort was initiated at the behest of Prime Minister Liaqat Ali Khan, who felt deprived and offended by the US President Truman’s invitation to Nehru to visit the US first. The attempt made appeared to have carried quick results of formal invitation letter to visit Moscow signed by Joseph Stalin was handed over to Pakistan on June 4, 1949 (though the nonexistent of invitation letter in official archives from Moscow made the fact of receiving the written invitation ever fiercely contested one in Pakistan) which was never honored but the following year in May 1950 Liaqat Ali Khan paid the maiden state visit to the United States. Pakistan’s dismissal of Moscow’s overture was the first blow to the perception of Pakistan.

As Burke and Ziring accurately describe the sentiments of soviet leadership in their book on Pakistan’s Foreign Policy, “Liaquat’s cold-shouldering of the Soviet Union sorely wounded the pride of the Soviet leaders who are highly sensitive to political snubs of any sort. Moscow’s grievances on the subject were amply expressed to Pakistani diplomatists for years to come.”

The crucial moment to adopt one of the careful neutral foreign policies was wasted at the price of the wrong perception in the minds of soviet leadership. Yet the relation between the Soviet Union and Pakistan remained relatively calm and managed under civilian role from 1947 to 1954.

In the following years, Pakistan virtually has no independent foreign policy but guided by Uncle Sam who just replaced the role of John Bull in United India. In 1955, Pakistan bit more than it could chew by declaring the war against communism by entering the US-led military alliance of the Central Treaty Organization (CENTO). And this point followed the American “Do More” Mantra

which exists till this day. However, the policy of the Soviet Union was changed; compelled to toe the pro-Indian line and backed the Indian stance on Kashmir.

In 1955, Pakistan bit more than it could chew by declaring the war against communism

A few years later, in 1959, the fatal decision was made, when the Field Marshal Ayub Khan in order to ensure the American interests, signed a ten years lease for an American base at Badaber, Peshawar in Northwest of Pakistan to fly the Lockheed designed U-2, known as the spy in the sky from Pakistan into Russian territory. A small country took the much more risk in letting the covert U-2 fly out from its territory against nuclear power to who the even US fear.

And then, On May 1, the damn thing happened when Soviet underestimated special ground-to-air missiles SA-2 downed the American state-of-the-art U-2 plane number 360 in Soviet airspace nearing Sverdlovsk and captured the pilot Francis Gary Powers alive. The Plane took off from the Pakistani territory on a mission assigned to take the photographs of some of the key launching facilities by violating the Soviet frontiers. The tragedy of the US plane took the world by surprise. The American self-confidence was shattered. A panic and threat of nuclear war followed but somehow common sense prevailed and the second nuclear war was avoided.

On May 9, at Kremlin, Nikita Khrushchev, cornered Salman Ali, the then Pakistan's Ambassador to Russia and heard quoted "Peshawar has been marked red on our map". It was believed that Khrushchev took the U-2 incident as a personal insult. Yet another blow to Pakistan's perception has registered in the Soviet leadership circles. The matter of U-2 sowed the seeds of permanent suspicion and animosity between Soviets and Pakistan in the years to come.

The Soviet retribution was exacted on Pakistan in the seventeen-day war of 1965 with the massive provision of military hardware to India and later in 1971 by signing the twenty years of Soviet-Indo treaty of friendship and cooperation which helped achieve India enough to dismember Pakistan. In the end, it was Pakistan's own bad foreign policy decisions that pushed the Soviet Union hard towards India that once considered the "running dog of imperialism" now was the strategic partner. But the American so-called friends and their Sixth Fleet never

appeared to rescue a friend in need. The disgruntled people of Pakistan, however, took the Soviet role in the breakup of Pakistan on their hearts and the perception about the Soviet an enemy grew in strength.

Under the first elected government of Pakistan, despite the destructive role of the Soviet Union in East Pakistan, a clear foreign policy tilt towards the USSR was witnessed, as a result, the relation between two countries improved massively. In 1972, Pakistan's Parliament passed the resolution to establish ties with the Soviet Union. The first elected Prime Minister of Pakistan Zulfikar Ali Bhutto embarked on his first-ever lengthy trip to Moscow which helped reduce the tensions between the Soviet Union and Pakistan to the great extent. Arguably the two decisions proved to be the death warrant of the Prime Minister of Pakistan; his firm stance to acquire nuclear capability even eats grass and goes hungry and his refusal to accept the dictation over the matters considered vital for Pakistan especially to adopt the balanced foreign policy between US and USSR.

The American having extensive experience in imposing and deposing regimes within the six months of hurling a threat of making a horrible example out of you removed the elected Prime Minister in a staged military coup and installed the military dictator Ziaul Haq who kept his allegiance well to the United States in the final years of Cold War.

A decade under a military dictatorship whose due course lasted little more than ten years was one of the worst periods in the country's history. Pakistan turned as a mercenary state on the US assigned engagement and become the vital pawn of a Western grand alliance against the Communism. Zia stoked the religious sentiments that led to the arousing of national fervour through a religious appeal against Communist infidels. The Politics-Pulpit alliance under a military dictator played an important part in the first Afghan war against the Soviets. The Operation Cyclone was accomplished, and the American friends took the next flight back home left Pakistan behind to deal with the mess they created and how much price Pakistan was made to pay is part of history.

Pakistan, however, had proven itself a vital hand servant in the service of Americans at the cost of its own broken international relations and endangered foreign policy and created an eternal enemy in the extended neighbourhood,

therefore, created the perception gap between Russia and Pakistan in the years to come which is yet to be bridged.

The people of each side guided through the sequence of mishaps during the cold war made the strong case of perception against one another and viewing each other an enemy country to this day. There is an urgent need of active diplomacy to push the agenda in the fields of culture, supports, tourism, academia, interparliamentary dialogues and in other policy spheres to sweep over the memories and wounds of the cold war and to reset the perception paradigm.

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Source: <https://dailytimes.com.pk/490597/the-russia-pakistan-perception-paradigm/>

# **Climate Change: A Serious Threat to The World and Pakistan By Abdul Rasool Syed**

Indubitably, climate change is a real existential threat, which has not only jeopardised the survival of the whole human race but also of flora and fauna. If this grave issue is not taken seriously, its consequences would be quite catastrophic, as underlined by premier Imran Khan in his address at 74th UNGA. The world should, therefore, make a common cause against this geological mayhem since it is the question of our safety and security as well as of our posterity. If we, God forbid, fail to arrest this colossal calamity in making, not to mention us, our future generation would also be suffering from the devastating effects of this global catastrophe, caused by our utter indifference and apathy.

The climate can be described as the average weather over a while. “Climate change” means a significant change in the measures of climate, such as temperature, rainfall, or wind, lasting for an extended period – decades or longer. The Earth’s climate has changed many times during the planet’s history, with events ranging from ice ages to long periods of warmth. What’s different about this period of the earth’s history is that human activities are significantly contributing to natural climate change through our emissions of greenhouse gases. The factors contributing to climate change are of two types i.e. natural and the anthropogenic (human-induced). Naturally, climate changes due to the following reasons:

**Orbital changes:** Earth has natural warming and cooling periods caused by Milankovitch cycles or variations in the tilt and/or orbit of the Earth around the Sun. If there is any change in such periods, it will cause a change in the earth’s climate.

**Volcanic activity:** During a volcanic eruption, carbon dioxide is released into the atmosphere that results in global warming. **Solar output:** There can be fluctuations in the amount of radiation from the sun. If there is a high amount emitted, there will be an increase in Earth’s temperatures.



However, anthropogenic factors causing climate change are of more concern than natural since they are contributing extensively to global warming and, hence, causing a great change in the overall atmosphere of the earth.

Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) affirms this fact that “Most of the observed increase in global average temperatures since the mid-20th century is very likely due to the observed increase in anthropogenic (produced by humans) greenhouse gas emissions.”

Examples of human activities contributing to climate change include:

Burning fossil fuels: coal, gas and oil release carbon dioxide into the atmosphere.

Deforestation: Trees absorb carbon dioxide during photosynthesis. If they are cut down, there will be higher amounts of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere.

Dumping waste in landfill: When the waste decomposes, it produces methane that contributes to global warming. Agriculture: Agricultural practices also lead to the release of nitrogen oxides into the atmosphere that aids global warming.

The impact of global warming is so devastating that it might endanger not only human species but also all the biological kingdoms. Therefore, the future of the world seems precarious as projected by climate change experts. Climate models predict that Earth’s global average temperature will rise in the future. For the next two decades, warming of about 0.2° Celsius is projected. If we continue to emit as many, or more, greenhouse gases, this would cause more warming during the 21st Century than what we saw in the 20th Century. During the 21st Century, various computer models predict that Earth’s average temperature would rise between 1.8° and 4.0° Celsius (3.2° and 7.2° F). Climate change is predicted to impact regions differently. For example, temperature increases are expected to be greater on land than over oceans and greater at high altitudes than in the tropics and mid-latitudes.

Warmer average global temperature will also cause a higher rate of evaporation; causing the water cycle to “speed up.”

More water vapour in the atmosphere would lead to more precipitation. According to models, global average precipitation would most likely increase by about three to five per cent with a minimum increase of at least one per cent and a maximum increase of about eight per cent. Yet, changes in precipitation will not be evenly distributed. Some locations will get more snow; others will see less rain. Some places will have wetter winters and drier summers.

Moreover, as the climate warms, snow and ice also melt. The amount of summer melting of glaciers, ice sheets, and other snow and ice on land is predicted to be greater than the amount of winter precipitation. The amount of sea ice (frozen sea water) floating in the ocean in the Arctic and Antarctic is expected to decrease over the 21st Century too, although there is some uncertainty as to the amount of melt.

To add, earth's oceans are predicted to act as a buffer against climate change by taking up some of the excess heat and carbon dioxide from the atmosphere. This is good news in the short run, but more problematic in the long run. Carbon dioxide combined with seawater forms weak carbonic acid. Scientists believe this process has reduced the pH of the oceans by about 0.1 pH since pre-industrial times. Further acidification of 0.14 to 0.35 pH is expected by the year 2100. More acidic ocean water may cause problems for marine organisms.

Some climate scientists also believe that hurricanes, typhoons, and other tropical cyclones will (and may have begun to already) change as a result of global warming. Warm ocean surface waters provide the energy that drives these immense storms. Warmer oceans in the future are expected to cause intensification of such storms.

“Climate change is one of the greatest challenges facing humanity, and it is the world's most vulnerable populations who are most immediately at risk. The actions of the wealthiest nations-those generating the vast majority of greenhouse gases-have tangible consequences for people in the rest of the world, especially in the poorest nations.” (Michel R. Bloomberg)

Additionally, Climate change will also alter many aspects of biological systems and the global carbon cycle. Temperature changes will alter the natural ranges of many types of plants and animals, both wild and domesticated. There will also be

changes to the lengths of growing seasons, geographical ranges of plants, and frost dates. Models of the global carbon cycle suggest that the Earth system will be able to absorb less CO<sub>2</sub> out of the atmosphere as the climate warms, worsening the warming problem.

Pakistan is also one of the worst-hit countries of the world by climate change. PM Imran Khan, while addressing the 74th UNGA, also voiced the same concern; saying that Pakistan was the seventh most vulnerable country in the world to global warming despite that it contributed less than one per cent to the total greenhouse gas emissions.

A World Bank report, “Pakistan’s Hotspots – The Impact of Temperature and Precipitation Changes on Living Standards,” released in July 2018, claimed that by 2050, annual average temperatures were projected to increase to 2.5°C under the climate “sensitive scenario” (which represents a future in which some collective action is taken to limit greenhouse gas emissions) and up 3.0°C under the carbon “intensive scenario” (in which no serious actions are taken). Approximately 49 million or 25 per cent of Pakistan’s total population, lives in locations that will become “moderate hotspots” by 2050 under the carbon-intensive scenario. Therefore, containing the temperature is essential to prevent major areas of Pakistan from becoming uninhabitable in a future not too far away. What is more, to worry is that climate change poses a serious threat to the living standards of the vast population of Pakistan. The report further indicates Sindh province as the most vulnerable hotspot. With a GDP per capita of US \$1,400, Sindh is the second-largest economy of Pakistan and contributes 30 per cent to the national GDP. Its economy is highly diversified, ranging from heavy industry and finance centred in and around Karachi to a substantial agricultural base along the Indus River. Changes in precipitation and temperature threaten to impede the future growth of this region. According to the report, Hyderabad district in Sindh emerges as the top hotspot, followed by Mirpur Khas and Sukkur districts.

The second most vulnerable hotspot is the densely populated province of Punjab. Punjab has the largest economy, contributing 53.3 per cent to Pakistan’s GDP, and is known for its relative prosperity with the lowest poverty rate of all the provinces. However, its wealth is unevenly distributed, with the northern portion being relatively well off economically and the southern portion being one of the

most impoverished areas in the country. Long-term climate vulnerability thus carries implications for both shared prosperity and poverty reduction of this province.

Interestingly, some of the most densely populated cities – including Lahore, Multan, and Faisalabad – emerge among the top 10 hotspot districts. This indicates that we must prepare not only the more impoverished areas for the adverse effects of climate change, but also protect the economic hubs of the provinces. Inter alia, with the changing cropping calendar, and more erratic and unpredictable monsoon season, Pakistan's food insecurity is also under increasing threat of climate change. We are also, on one hand, fast losing our coastline to seawater intrusion, while at the other, glaciers are fast melting, resulting in permanent reductions in water flows in our rivers. The swelling unpredictability in river flows has also made planning for hydro-energy much more difficult and unreliable. As environmental degradation takes place, livelihood options shrink, forcing people to migrate to cities in search of economic opportunities. Climate-induced migration has already made Pakistan one of the most urbanized counties in South Asia.

In the light of preceding discussion, it can be safely concluded that climate change is a serious threat to the world therefore, it requires collective efforts of all the stakeholders to make a synergy against this global geological mayhem since it is not only a matter of our survival but also of our posterity, That's why we must act together to meet this imminent challenge effectively. The premier Khan, in his address at 74th UNGA, also suggested to the world community that climate change is something, which cannot be dealt with by any individual country until the world gets together.

The writer is a legal practitioner-cum-columnist based in Quetta, Balochistan

Source: <https://dailytimes.com.pk/491675/climate-change-a-serious-threat-to-the-world-and-pakistan/>

## **The Kashmir Show | Editorial**

The Indian government cannot hold together the farce of peace in Kashmir much longer. While the DGISPR is allowing for international journalists to visit Azad Jammu & Kashmir, the Indian side is busy pretending nothing is wrong and orchestrated a stage-managed show in Indian Occupied Kashmir (IOK), inviting far-right European leaders to visit the tumultuous region on Tuesday. This invitation was extended in a personal capacity and those in attendance are not an official delegation.

What these parliamentarians will see is obviously going to be heavily curated by the Indian state – with access to telephone and the internet still severely limited in IOK and the curfew still in full force for the past eighty days – there is not much to see except what the Indian states wants to be seen. Add that to the fact that the Indian administration refused to cancel the board examinations of students in IOK, even though most have been boycotting schools entirely for the past two months, tells us that India is trying hard to make things look like they are normal.

27 European leaders from predominantly far right or extreme right-wing parties have been handpicked for this trip – in all likelihood due to their hardline views – which is only indicative of the falseness of the Indian narrative. Islamophobia continues to be a cornerstone of the European far-right movement and the fact that the Modi government has invited those that have nothing but hatred for Muslims to witness their subjugation is nothing short of evil and outrightly fallacious.

Most, if not all of these parliamentarians stand against the migration of Muslim refugees from war-torn countries and would gladly have them sent back to a life of conflict and bloodshed as long as they don't have to see them in their streets. For many of these individuals, Islam and terrorism are two sides of one coin; hence it will not be surprising if none of them come out in defence of the Kashmiris being marginalised by the Indian state.

By orchestrating this visit, the Indian government has only further solidified the idea that the Modi government is systematically trying to oppress Muslims in India. All those that hate Islam are now seemingly unified under one banner, and

the Modi government gets all the credit for this. If the past 80 days of curfew did not make his intentions transparent enough, the world should now realise that Prime Minister Modi is looking to exploit religious divides in his country and this will only lead to more Muslims attacked and losing their rights in the future.

Source: <https://nation.com.pk/28-Oct-2019/complying-fatf-requirements-a-herculean-task>

# **Indo-Pak conflict vs 5th gen warfare By**

## **Senator Rehman Malik**

PM Modi has been the byproduct of hard core militancy monitored by RSS, his mindset is tuned to war and terror so we should not expect any move of peace from his side.

Indian former PMs used to believe in the Cold War doctrine while PM Modi being exceptional has enhanced 5th warfare generation. In order to promote his 5th generation warfare agenda, he has taken following initial steps;

1. Conversion of Kashmir issue into an even more complex issue by scraping its legal status through abrogation of article 370 & 35A.
2. Violation of Indus Water Treaty in a bid to grab control over Pakistan's share of water. PM Modi does not only want Pakistan's side of river to go dry but also to hit its agricultural sector directly.
3. He took steps to pull our economy down by lodging a false complaint against Pakistan in FATF with the help USA.
4. He has constantly been trying to destabilize Pakistan through its intelligence agencies which play dirty tricks against our country by planting seeds of terrorism through anti-Pakistan elements on our soil.
5. Doing propaganda against Pakistan, painting it as a terrorist state.
6. He keeps trying to block the development in Pakistan through CPEC.

India has also been mercilessly committing brutalities in Kashmir as it is the 78th day of curfew in IJK which was imposed by Indian Interior Minister Amit Singh who is likely to replace Modi as next rising leader of BJP that might become the next Prime Minister as well.

The Indian government under PM Modi was too scared of Kashmiris before snatching their right of special status that they had already started taking the following measures in Kashmir:

1. Blocked internet and telephone services
2. Ousted beforehand the local and International media persons
3. Sealed the valley
4. Increased the number of Indian troops
5. Increased its own lobbying to counter the reaction in defense of international opinion for Kashmir

In fact India divided the Kashmir operation into three phases:

In Phase 1, Pulwama plot was created as PM Modi engineered the Pulwama attack himself to win election and also projected bad name to the Kashmiris.

Phase 2: PM Modi rigged elections as per the agreement between himself and RSS – as a part of election manifesto, Modi announced his plan on Kashmir and did exactly the same during phase 2 after winning the elections.

Phase 3. After scraping the status he propagated the change as part of Indian constitution hence propagated this change as its internal affairs of India that he is still advocating in the whole world.

Phase 4 – He worked out the strategy to contain Pakistan in the given situation as it is the main stake holder of Kashmir with India. He knew it well that Pakistan would never stop its moral support of Kashmiris and Pakistan's opposition over this matter was rightly expected. Hence during the 4th phase of his plan he made sure India continues to increase pressure on Loc in order to engage Pakistan on the borders so that it would talk more on LOC rather than Kashmir issue.



India has deliberately disrupted the LOC to engross the attention from Kashmir issue which can be proved by looking into the statistics of human rights violations in Kashmir from year 2017-2019.

Now if we analyze, it would appear as to be true that India is killing civilians on the LoC and making false claims under the policy of PM Modi who is behaving more a like film actor than a statesman. In fact Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi has been consistently acting like a Bollywood actor as previously as well he did the drama of fake surgical strikes at Loc. PM Modi used this tactic of fake surgical strike during his election campaign to attract the attention of voters by engineering Pulwama attack and eventually blaming it on Pakistan. Even the media in his country is no less as the aired the news of these imaginary surgical strikes in complete Bollywood style. These immature attitudes of Modi as statesman and the irresponsible media working at his payroll are bringing bad name to India.

Prime Minister Modi should behave like a real statesman and come out of this fake surgical strike illusion. He is only trying to impress his opponents by doing so as surgical strike on Pakistan could only happen in his wild imagination. PM Modi is converting a secular India into an extremist state rapidly by extending full support to Indian terrorist organization RSS which is expanding from Nagaland to East Punjab in India. I appeal to the Indian opposition parties to stand against Narendra Modi to block his agenda of converting India into an extremist state. I would like to continue to expose the RSS and Modi's mindset against Pakistan, India has had a history of false and persistent motivated flag operations.

In few of the above facts, it looks as if Pakistan is on purpose being engaged on LOC to divert its attention from Kashmir issue.

The public is noticing the government has soft approach towards Kashmir as India is continuously violating the cease fire on LOC yet it is doing nothing about it.

The government should have brought the section of ceasefire violation of the Truce agreement 1949 in to light which was designed by the United Nations Commission on India and Pakistan constituted by UNGA as according to this agreement both countries have signed the following declarations:-

Para B: The delegation of India and Pakistan, duly authorized have reached the following agreement:

(1) "Under the provisions of Part I of the Resolution of 13 August 1948, and as a complement of the suspension of hostilities in the State of Jammu and Kashmir on 1 January 1949, a cease-fire line is established".

Para F: ....There shall be no increase of forces or strengthening of defenses in areas where no major adjustments are involved by the determination of the cease-fire line.

India has violated these sections hence Pakistan needs to file a serious complaint against and claim damages which would be a perfect legal proceeding.

India has to be brought to international level taking into consideration the following actions:

A: Drag PM Modi to the ICC court under Rome Convention for being involved in ethnic cleansing of Muslims in India.

B- Lobby in the UNGA for announcement of date for self-determination.

C. Make out a case for investigation by UNGA to ascertain the delay in implementation of self-determination.

Source : <https://nation.com.pk/27-Oct-2019/indo-pak-conflict-vs-5th-gen-warfare?>

# ECONOMY

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## **Reviving CPEC | Editorial**

The Prime Minister (PM) Imran Khan will be in China on 7-8 October. The main agenda of Khan's visit will be discussing China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) with the Chinese authorities. Since Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) has come to power, all the enthusiasm surrounding CPEC has died down. Things were going at a fast pace until the previous government of Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz (PML-N) was overseeing the project. However, the PTI government, facing an economic crisis as soon as it came to power, decided to slow down the economy to get out of the financial crunch. But is it correct to say that it was only natural that the government's decision of slowing down the economy would have an impact on the pace of CPEC projects?

Ideally, the government should not have allowed the CPEC projects to suffer from its reforms and decisions that it made to boost up its economy. The government should have thought of a financial arrangement that could ensure carrying of the CPEC projects. If one can ask, then it is pertinent to ask what will change now in the government's policies to revive the stalled projects of the economic corridor? All local news reports inform one that the government is holding one meeting after another on gauging the progress of the commercial corridor ventures. But the outcome of all such meetings is nothing but vows of "accelerating work on the stalled projects."

China considers CPEC the flagship project of its ambitious One Road One Belt (OBOR) mega project. Many have thought of the flagship project as a game-changer for the region. Both China and Pakistan believe that the project is a win-win endeavour not only for Beijing and Islamabad but also for the whole region. PM Khan will be in China to persuade the Chinese authorities regarding Pakistan's commitment to do all that is necessary to complete the CPEC projects. However, the real challenge before the PM will be to remove the bottlenecks that are causing delays in CPEC projects, as he has conceded himself.

That said, PM Khan must reissue directions to all concerned with the economic corridor to live up to Chinese expectations. Needless to say that timely completion of CPEC is a practical test for the incumbent government that claims that it will attract foreign investments by focusing on “ease of doing business”. So far, the government has failed in bringing private Chinese investment leave alone thinking of foreign direct investment from other countries.

Source: <https://nation.com.pk/04-Oct-2019/reviving-cpec>

## **E-commerce in Pakistan By Amjad Ali**

With the advancement of technology and the availability of the fastest internet connections at our disposal, the entire world is virtually at our fingertips. Due to these innovations, the concept of globalisation emerged and the world is getting more and more integrated with every passing day, we are now the citizens of the global village. This integration process, with the help of these technological tools, gave rise to e-commerce—a virtual space where buyers and sellers exchange goods and services. On the one hand, this market is booming in different countries while it has not yet realised its full potential in Pakistan.

In advanced countries, e-commerce has almost replaced the traditional markets by offering online goods and services. For instance, Alibaba and Amazon are connecting buyers and sellers by providing them with space at their platforms. This has also facilitated the consumers to seek the products of their choice at the most competitive rates and even without physically visiting the markets. More often than not, the consumers have to struggle to find the products of their choice keeping in view the variety, price and quality. They run up to many shops and markets in search and procurement of that article. Thus, e-commerce has facilitated to acquire that product with one click on our computer screens or phone calls as e-commerce and tele-business are interlinked. Not to speak of saving-time. After all, “time is like money or even more precious than that”.

This writer also has a satisfactory experience with the mushrooming e-commerce industry. Lately, I purchased a tablet from Saudi Arabia, which had not yet been launched in Pakistan. For the safety of the tablet, I embarked on a journey to search for the foldable protective cover. After searching a few famous markets, I abandoned asking for the tablet cover shop after the stop from the bustling streets of Karachi, as it was a very exhaustive exercise. Convinced that my issue could be remedied by the online search, I came across the famous Alibaba, which offered unique options. Though hesitant as it was my first experience with the online purchase, I ordered and surprisingly received the product of the standard quality. Thereafter, I am convinced no one can stop the thriving e-commerce juggernaut.

Though there is a vast scope for e-commerce in Pakistan, it remains untapped

Recently, a friend took me to visit young entrepreneur Mr Javed's Urban Tailor House, which offers home pick up and delivery tailor services. During the visit, my friend questioned Mr Javed, how did he get this idea? He responded that he got inspiration from the e-commerce giants such as Alibaba, Amazon and Daraz, as they are also offering similar services choose-order-delivery of the product. Similarly, his start-up Urban Tailor House is following their footsteps by picking up the unstitched clothes, after getting them stitched from his dynamic team as per the wishes of the customer such as designing, are delivered back to the customers within the stipulated time at reasonable service charges. I was surprised to see that the young entrepreneur is offering an innovative idea that we may get our clothes stitched with one click or call. This has reposed my confidence in the positive usage of technology. While visiting the site, I came across the shopping bags and the owner apprised that these shopping bags are in compliance with the environmental standards and are bio-degradable bags. We appreciated his vision and care for the environment and his unique idea of home-pick and delivery of tailor-services.

Though there is a vast scope of e-commerce in Pakistan, it remains an untapped resource. According to the Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA), there are 162 million mobile and 71 million 3G/4G subscribers in Pakistan. Despite these staggering figures, e-commerce remains an unexploited market. There are many reasons for this underutilisation such as lack of awareness amongst the masses, trust-deficit between the customers and owners of e-commerce brands, government's disregard to promoting it, etc.

Notwithstanding these issues, it is incumbent on the government to promote and encourage entrepreneurs like Mr Javed for many reasons. Firstly, it helps in facilitating the people to get their desired goods or services at their home without much trouble. Secondly, with the help of e-purchases, people may find the products at competitive prices. Thirdly, it can also be the source of employment generation as scores of people can be adjustment in this field. Fourthly, exportable products can fetch the dollars for the cash-starved national kitty. Lastly, it boosts economic activity which needs the country most.

It is high time that the government promotes e-commerce for the benefit of the citizens, entrepreneurs and boosting the crippling economy. The government

should make necessary efforts for ensuring that the buyers are provided with the best quality of goods and services. For this purpose, legislation can be introduced that in case a customer finds the quality of the product as substandard then the seller be made liable to refund the principal accrued amount. Bridging the trust between the buyers and sellers would be another such step in the right direction. Above all, it is the state's responsibility to provide opportunities to the citizen's for tapping the emerging e-commerce market and utilise it to the optimum level in the globalised world.

The writer is a development sector practitioner

Source: <https://dailytimes.com.pk/479523/e-commerce-in-pakistan/>

# **Asia, Pacific Economic Growth Amid Global Trade Tension By Rashid A Mughal**

GLOBAL economic growth is presently under dark clouds due to man-made policies and deliberately created environments which hinder and stall rather than promote and flourish international trade thereby helping global economic growth. The signs of Recession in USA are getting more clearer and dominant, prompting Fed to cut interest rates twice within current year. Across the Atlantic, Brexit has played havoc with not only the UK economy but has seriously jolted the European power house — Germany and equally affected Italy, Greece, Portugal and Spain. The World Bank and IMF along with OECD have revised down wards the growth rate in Europe and USA, thrice during the last ten months and repeatedly warned of the fragility of future outlook. All of these institutions cite trade wars as the main reason for this bleak outlook and derailing the global economic growth. It is, however, interesting that much of the effects of these manmade crisis are affecting Europe and Americas while Asian economies do not seem to be showing signs of weakness of that magnitude. While the growth rate in Europe and USA is down to 2.6%, the Asian economies are still achieving a rate of almost 6-7% which in the present scenario is remarkable.

According to a recent Asian Development Bank report, developing Asia will maintain strong but moderating growth over 2019 and 2020, as supportive domestic demand counteracts an environment of global trade tensions. In a supplement to its Asian Development Outlook (ADO), ADB maintains growth forecasts for developing Asia at 5.7% in 2019 and 5.6% in 2020 unchanged from its April forecast. These growth rates are slightly down from developing Asia's 5.9% growth in 2018, mainly due to uncertainties. Excluding the newly industrialized economies of Hong Kong, China the Republic of Korea, Singapore and Taipei China the regional growth outlook has been revised down from 6.2% to 6.1% in 2019 and maintained at that rate in 2020.

Deepening trade tension between the People's Republic of China (PRC) and the United States (US) remain the largest downside risk to this outlook, despite an apparent truce in late June that could allow trade negotiations between the two countries to resume. "Even as the trade conflict continues, the region is set to maintain strong but moderating growth" said ADB Chief Economist Mr. Yasuyuki



Sawada. “However, until the world’s two largest economies reach agreement, uncertainly will continue to weigh on the regional outlook.” The growth outlook for East Asia in 2019 has been revised down to 5.6% because of slower than expected activity in the Republic of Korea. The sub region’s growth outlook of 5.5% for 2020 is unchanged from April. Growth for the sub region’s largest economy the PRC is also unchanged with forecasts of 6.3% in 2019 and 6.1% in 2020, as policy support offsets softening growth in domestic and external demand.

In South Asia the economic outlook is robust, with growth projected at 6.6% in 2019 and 6.7% in 2020, albeit lower than forecast in April. The growth outlook for India has been cut to 7.0% in 2019 and 7.2% in 2020 because the fiscal 2018 outturn fell short. The outlook for Southeast Asia has been downgraded slightly to 4.8% in 2019 and 4.9% in 2020 due to the trade impasse and a slowdown in the electronics cycle. In Central Asia, the growth outlook for 2019 has been revised up 4.3% on account of an improved outlook for Kazakhstan. Central Asia growth outlook of 4.2% for 2020 is slightly changed from earlier 4.3% . The growth outlook in the Pacific is 3.5% in 2019 and 3.9 in 2020. It remains unchanged as the subregion continues to rebound from the effect of Cyclone Gita and an earthquake in Papua New Guinea, the subregion largest economy.

The major industrial economy has had slight revisions to their growth forecasts with the US revised up 2.6% for 2019 and the Euro area revised down to 1.3%. The growth outlook for Japan is unchanged at 0.8% in 2019 and 0.6% in 2020. Developing Asia’s inflation projections were revised up from 2.5% to 2.6% for both 2019 and 2020, reflecting higher oil prices and various domestic factors such as the continuing outbreak of African swine fever in several Asia economies. ADB is committed to achieving prosperous inclusive resilient and ... sustainable Asia and the Pacific while sustaining its efforts to eradicate extreme poverty. In 2018, it made a commitment of new loans and grants amounting to \$ 21.6 billion. ADB was established in 1966 and is owned by 68 members-49 from the region.

Of the many successes in Asia in recent times, China stands out. The country is by its sheer size economic giant and while it grows at the rates observed in recent years, it is obvious that its transformation will have profound effect, not just internally but for the rest of the world. Such effects, already in evidence, are

a combination of new market opportunities arising from enhanced purchasing power and greater competitiveness of these mega-economies as producer of selected products. It is important to assess the likely impact in order to put in place policies and strategies that anticipate the changes so as to best capitalize on emerging opportunities, while also attenuating whatever anomalies could arise in subsectors that cannot meet the challenges.

It is clear that the rising incomes in China will continue to create pressure for structural reforms of agriculture/rural development and food sectors to cope with changing demand size and evolving consumer tastes. According to a United Nations report, changing incomes will also offer expanded two-way trade opportunities with countries in the region and the rest of the world. The continued growth of China, Indonesia, Bangladesh, Singapore, Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia will, therefore, significantly affect the balance and direction of trade, trading opportunities and level playing field for countries in the region. The report calls for timely diagnosis of the growth pattern in these emerging economies in order to put policies in place to optimize gains and minimize losses and marginalization.

— The writer is former DG (Emigration) and consultant ILO, IOM.

Source: <https://pakobserver.net/index.php/2019/10/09/asia-pacific-economic-growth-amid-global-trade-tension/>

# **SME Growth in Pakistan: What is Missing?**

**By Dr Zubair Iqbal**

The economic growth of developing and emerging economies is invariably entwined with the growth of their small and medium enterprises (SME's). Countries such as Japan, China, Brazil, India, Malaysia and Sri Lanka, among others, have heavily relied on SME development for economic growth, through adoption of intensive policies and strategic private sector development. Therefore, given the rightly guided policies and stringent implementation, SME sector can become the back bone of Pakistan's economy.

The numbers tell it all. Though, due to our traditional lack of planning, fatalist attitude and peculiar dislike towards data collection and its analysis – little information is available. However, whatever dated data we can put our hands on, is simply eye opening. Here are some of them. According to some careful estimates, Pakistan's estimated 3.6 million SME's accounts for almost 90 percent of all private business entities. It gives employment to about 80% of non-agriculture workforce. The SME contribution to GDP is about 40 percent. SME's typically account for 4 out of 5 jobs created. Additionally, the SME numbers are being incedingly used as economic indicators by the entities like world Bank, Asian Development Bank and UNDP. Typically, they use the number of SME's per thousand people in an economy. Pakistan has 20 SME's as compared with 32 in India.

So what is missing? The political will and management decisions by the people sitting in Islamabad and all the provincial capital. It is particularly appalling to learn that the last SME policy was given some thirteen years ago in 2017 by the government. This indicates the lack of interest in such a vital sector of our economy which can also be detrimental to allay our financial woes.

The present PTI government needs to adopt a pentangular approach in this regard. They have to target the issue from multiple angles to get the desired results. Firstly, the government needs to strategize its preferences to facilitate and help SME's in various sectors. The world has changed altogether in the last decade after the emergence of 2007 policy. For this a new SME policy is the

need of the hour. The policy should envisage the strategic visions, goals and clear objectives to be achieved in the next few years.

Second is the triple helix focus on politico-legal, regulatory and monetary environment. After the promulgation of eighteenth amendment many subjects have been devolved to the respective provincial governments which directly relate with the development of SME's. The Federal government should take the lead in cutting the political barriers to identify the potential areas of convergence with the provincial governments. The former also needs to hold hands of the latter in strategizing and implementing various initiatives to improve the situation. On regulatory front, it is unnerving to learn that the SME's in Pakistan have to face of a host of more than 50 taxes and their related regulatory laws and departments. Federal Board of Investment and its respective counterparts can take the lead as the former has already been tasked by the Prime Minister to come up with practical suggestions for ease of doing business in Pakistan. The monetary environment also needs focus. Out of an estimated 3.2 Million SME's, only 1.8 lacs have access to formal financing through banking sector. This can be changed by State Bank of Pakistan in conjunction with other commercial banks to simplify the interest regime by introducing certain SME indicators in the credit evaluation criteria to give a handicap to the SME's. It should be a holistic effort and should not be left only with SME Bank and other smaller entities.

It is particularly appalling to learn that the last SME policy was given some thirteen years ago in 2017 by the government. This indicates the lack of interest in such a vital sector of our economy which can also be detrimental to allay our financial woes

Thirdly, there has to be keen impetus on developing of capacity of technical as well a human capital. Many industrialists have been complaining on the poor quality of human resource available in the market. There should be holistic capacity development programs on specialized key disciplines as well as about general areas of business-like management, finance and accounting. Similarly, the production and import of technical infrastructure should be encouraged and facilitated through innovative and futuristic ideas.

Fourthly, a culture of entrepreneurship should be encouraged in Pakistan. This can be done by forging and developing relations with HEC, academia, think tanks

and various trade and industry organizations. There has to be wave of techno parks, innovation centers and commercialization. Wholesale general education should be shunned in favor of creative industries and problem solution attitude among the students. Pakistan has already witnessed a sharp growth in IT services in the world and an estimated \$ 1 billion annual return was registered last year.

And finally, market constraints should be taken by the horns. Typically, SME's have less access to information and communication channels; and they face difficulties complying with labor, environmental, social, and international standards therefore, operate in limited markets. There is a cumbersome payment processing system particularly if the payments have to cross borders.

We need a strong and thriving SME sector which is indispensable for a country like Pakistan with high employment ratio, lower levels of capital, youth abundance and partially developed large scale industries. If other nations like India, China and Brazil can do it, why we can't?

The writer is an Ex Member Planning commission of Pakistan

Source: <https://dailytimes.com.pk/481200/sme-growth-in-pakistan-what-is-missing/>

## **Economy on the Mend | Editorial**

There have been distinct indicators that, slowly but surely, the economy is on the mend. Despite some persistent troubles, such as low growth in exports, the twin monsters of trade and fiscal deficit appear to have been largely reined in. According to a quarterly review of how the nation's economy fared, the two indicators have shown improvement by approximately 35%. Adviser to the Prime Minister on Finance Dr Abdul Hafeez Shaikh told a press conference on Saturday that the trade deficit shrank 35% while the budget deficit shrivelled 36% during the first quarter of the current fiscal year (July-September) when compared to the corresponding period of last year. The 'difficult decisions' taken by the government have started showing positive results, he enthused, although he chose to conveniently gloss over the issue of inflation that has harried the people no end, and the constant decline in foreign direct investment (FDI).

The federal budget deficit that had been recorded at Rs738 billion or 1.9% of GDP in the first quarter of the last fiscal year, was brought down to Rs476 billion or 1.1% of GDP, said the finance adviser. As a result, the government has also met the International Monetary Fund (IMF) condition on the primary deficit. The IMF's condition was that the primary deficit can be Rs102 billion in the first quarter, we actually have showed primary surplus of about Rs200 billion, beamed Finance Secretary Naveed Kamran Baloch.

The fiscal deficit narrowed down due to increase in revenues and reduction in expenditures, as the finance ministry did not issue any supplementary grant in the first quarter aimed at ensuring fiscal discipline, said Shaikh. The de facto finance minister went on to extol the surge in non-tax revenue as 'one thing that we have really improved on'. He revealed that Rs406 billion had been collected in non-tax revenue which was a 140% increase over the previous year. He also told reporters that the exchange rate had been brought to a stable level over the past three months, as also the foreign exchange reserves.

Published in The Express Tribune, October 14th, 2019.

Source: <https://tribune.com.pk/story/2078677/6-economy-on-the-mend/>

## **Shrinking Trade Deficit | Editorial**

According to the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS), the country's trade deficit contracted by a significant 35 percent in the first quarter of the financial year 2020. This is a great leap for the government due to the constant stream of criticism against the lack of a coherent economic policy. This contraction has resulted due to the management of imports, which decreased significantly by 20.59 percent during the first half of the fiscal year. The trade deficit now stands at \$5.727 billion during the quarter ending September 30 as compared to an \$8.791bn deficit during the same period last year.

The policy to hold off imports is working in favour of the government and they need to build on it in order to facilitate the industries and businesses in Pakistan. At this point, due to the tariff war between China and the United States of America (USA), several investors are looking towards cheaper economies, one of which is Pakistan. The government should facilitate these potential investors in order to retain the boost in the economy along with developing industrial hubs that will allow Pakistan to eventually turn towards self-sufficiency. With the ban on imports in place, the government has to make the policy more holistic by giving incentives to domestic investors to invest in local production instead of relying on foreign economies.

At the same time, the government should also look towards the drawbacks of such policies, one of which is the rampant increase in smuggling. This agitates the importer in Pakistan because smugglers then take over the local trade. This has been happening for small scale and large scale businesses in Pakistan post the no import policy. A task force should be formed to stop smuggling and penalise those who indulge in such criminal activities in order to ensure that businesses work on white money. With the pressures from the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) as well, there is a need to streamline revenue channels and that would include eradication of all illegal monetary activities in the country.

Another aspect of this contraction in trade deficit is increase in exports. The federal government now wants to invest in and incentivise exports. For this purpose, the government needs to create a business-friendly environment through its policies – something they have not been able to achieve since day

one. Individuals with domestic market acumen need to be brought on board to help reform the Pakistani market.

Source: <https://nation.com.pk/13-Oct-2019/shrinking-trade-deficit>



## **Pakistan Avoids FATF Blacklisting**

Pakistan has avoided being blacklisted by the Financial Action Task Force (FATF), thanks to the staunch support by Turkey, China and Malaysia.

The country however will remain on the 'grey list' until February 2020, the Plenary Meeting of the global money-laundering watchdog announced on Friday.

The friends of Pakistan reportedly put their weight behind Islamabad and counted the steps it had taken to counter money laundering and terror financing, thereby frustrating India's efforts to damage Pakistan's interests.

The FATF meeting held in Paris from October 13 to 18, acknowledged some concrete steps taken by Islamabad recently but directed it to take more measures and move swiftly for complete elimination of terror financing and money laundering.

The decision to keep the county on the grey list means that Pakistan will escape the tough sanctions on its banking system that would have accompanied any downgrade to the FATF blacklist.

The International Monetary Fund had warned that moving Pakistan to the blacklist could cause capital inflows to freeze up and jeopardize its \$6 billion program agreed to in May.

"Thank God, we have been successful," Foreign Minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi, told a foreign news agency after the announcement of FATF decision.

Currently, only Iran and North Korea are on FATF blacklist. In its recent meeting, the Task Force threatened Iran with even tougher restrictions on its international financial activity.

Expressing "disappointment" that Iran isn't taking the necessary steps to be removed from the blacklist, the watchdog said it's asking all member countries to tighten scrutiny of any financial transactions involving Iran.

Virtual currencies such as bitcoin and Facebook's Libra are also prompting concern from the FATF, which warned of "new risks" from such products. It said they're being "closely monitored" to ensure they're not used to finance terrorism or launder money.

Earlier, the plenary session considered Pakistan's progress report on the FATF Action Plan and Pakistan's Mutual Evaluation Report (MER) with Asia-Pacific Group on Money Laundering (APG). It decided to maintain status quo on the Action Plan and allow the usual 12 months observation period for the APG MER.

The Pakistan delegation was led by Minister for Economic Affairs Division, Muhammad Hammad Azhar, a finance ministry press release Friday said. Pakistan's delegation reaffirmed its political commitment to fully implement the Action Plan.

The delegation also held sideline meetings with various delegations and briefed them about the progress made by Pakistan on the FATF Action Plan and steps taken for strengthening its AML/CFT framework.

A session on technical assistance and training needs of Pakistan was also organized in collaboration with UNODC and APG Secretariat which was attended by a number of interested countries and multilateral agencies including China, USA, UK, Canada, Japan, EU, World Bank, IMF, ADB, and UNODC.

Pakistan has been on the global money laundering watchdog's radar since June 2018, when it was placed on a grey list, after an assessment of the country's financial system and security mechanism. The move backed by the US, the UK, and Pakistan's arch-rival India was opposed by Turkey. Islamabad's long-time ally, China abstained.

In recent months, Pakistan acted in accordance with the action plan, which includes measures like no foreign currency transactions without a national tax number, and ban on currency change of up to \$500 in the open currency market without submission of national identity card copy. Islamabad has also proscribed several militant groups and seized their assets.

The 36-nation watchdog agreed in the recent meeting that Islamabad had made progress towards implementation of the action plan — negotiated between Pakistan and the FATF members — in June last year but still sought “effective prosecution” in this connection, local media reported quoting unnamed foreign ministry officials.

“Since June 2018, when Pakistan made a high-level political commitment to work with the FATF and the Asia-Pacific Group to strengthen its anti-money laundering and counter terror financing regime and to address its strategic counter-terrorist financing-related deficiencies, Pakistan has made progress,” observed the FATF meeting.

### Warning

FATF however said the country has until February to improve its counter-terror financing operations in line with an internationally agreed plan or face actions against it, failing which could result in its blacklisting.

“The FATF strongly urges Pakistan to swiftly complete its full action plan by February 2020,” it said in a statement. “Otherwise, should significant and sustainable progress not be made across the full range of its action plan by the next Plenary, the FATF will take action.”

Pakistan has been asked to swiftly complete its full action plan by February 2020 and failure to do so can lead to a downgrade to the blacklist, FATF President Xiangmin Liu said at a briefing on Friday at the end of the plenary meeting. Pakistan has only largely addressed five of 27 action items, with varying levels of progress made on the rest of the action plan, according to a statement.

Despite a high-level commitment for Pakistan to fix these weaknesses, it “has not made enough progress.” said Liu. “Pakistan needs to do more and it needs to do it faster.”

But, Foreign Minister Qureshi insisted that Pakistan has “taken maximum steps against terror financing”. He added that “we will continue to take all the required steps, and all conspiracies against us have failed.”

Some experts believe that retention on the grey list also would have negative consequences for Pakistan as every international financial transaction with the country would be closely scrutinized and doing business in Pakistan would become costly and cumbersome.

Moreover, international agencies could place restrictions on lending money to Pakistan, including key creditors such as the International Monetary Fund, the Asian Development Bank and the World Bank.

“FATF is pressuring Pakistan so that it can bring the Taliban to a peace settlement. The ‘black list’ threat is being used to force Pakistan to serve American interests,” said an analyst.

The breather Pakistan has gained however is likely to disappoint neighbour and rival India, which has long argued and lobbied at previous FATF meetings that Pakistan belongs on the blacklist.

Source: <https://nation.com.pk/19-Oct-2019/pakistan-avoids-fatf-blacklisting>

# **Trade Will Continue to Grow Despite US-China Tensions** By José Viñals

Global trade has been expanding more slowly since the 2008 global financial crisis, and US-China trade tensions have created fresh uncertainties. However, those who fear that disputes between the world's two biggest exporters will sound the death knell for trade are missing the bigger picture. Trade is a key driver of economic growth so we must get it right.

The risk of disruption in global trade is real — and would be very damaging for the world economy. But if we look at what is going on away from the China-US axis, there is good news.

A new study by Standard Chartered, Trade20, shows that a wide range of economies in Asia-Pacific, Africa and the Middle East have significantly improved their potential for trade growth by opening up their markets, diversifying their exports, improving their economic dynamism, and strengthening their physical and digital infrastructure.

Buoyed by regional trade deals and liberalising policies, several members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations — Vietnam, Indonesia and Thailand — have been making strong progress in opening for trade, as has India. With supply chains via China under threat, international companies are already diversifying into these economies, making them more interesting as investment opportunities, export markets and supply chain partners.

Of course, larger economies have the greatest trade potential in absolute terms, but smaller countries may rival them in terms of speed of progress and potential for trade growth relative to their size. Côte d'Ivoire, Kenya and Oman are on an upward trajectory, progressing at pace from a relatively low starting point. Smaller countries such as these could also benefit, as multinationals diversify their supply chains.

Even if the US and China do manage to agree on a new trade deal — which would bring huge benefits — the push for diversified supply chains will continue. Having tasted uncertainty, many companies will want to protect themselves

against future interruptions to trade or new tariffs by producing or sourcing the same product in more than one country.

While this may be disruptive initially, and less efficient, it will make global trade more resilient in the long term. Further trade growth is likely, no matter what happens to the US and China. Most countries recognise that trade is a critical lever to accelerate economic development, increase competition and improve productivity. Patterns of trade will continue to become more complex and diversified, as new markets move into prominence — particularly India and the Asean economies.

Another positive sign for global trade is that a wide range of new free trade agreements are being signed or are under negotiation. The EU is negotiating numerous trade deals and has recently reached agreements with Japan, Vietnam and the South American trade bloc Mercosur. There are also several regional pacts in Asia and Africa. A post-Brexit Britain will also be looking to negotiate new trade deals and will want to do them quickly.

Trade agreements boost exports and gross domestic product over time, studies have shown. Larger-scale regional trade deals increase competitive pressures in the participating countries, which drives local businesses to become more efficient and productive. It also offers the chance for countries to specialise in the most productive industries.

The real question we should be asking now is how we ensure free trade is recognised as a true force for good. We must never forget that voter unease about globalisation led to rising protectionism and much of the hostility to trade in the first place. The 2008 crisis highlighted the unequal distribution of the benefits from globalisation. The resulting economic downturn hit vulnerable populations hard, causing them to question the merits of immigration, free trade and investment.

Undoubtedly, free trade has tremendous power to drive prosperity across the globe. But rising populism and current trade disputes remind us that we must work harder to ensure the benefits are felt as widely as possible within countries. Political leaders have a responsibility to implement inclusive social and economic

policies, and private companies must act responsibly and invest in the communities they serve.

If no US-China trade agreement can be reached, this will be very unfortunate and disruptive to the global economy, but the trend toward increasing world trade is far from over. It remains our best hope for growth.

The writer is group chairman of Standard Chartered

Source: <https://www.ft.com/content/b7c8d400-f01a-11e9-a55a-30afa498db1b>

## **IMF Review | Editorial**

First quarter review of Pakistan's implementation on the IMF programme is coming up – by the end of this month. Prior to the approaching review, the incumbent government's economic team, led by PM's adviser on finance Dr Hafeez Sheikh, held an "extensive session" in Washington over the weekend with Fund's Managing Director Kristalina Georgieva and other senior officials to give them an overview of the implementation of the bailout programme. As claimed by the PM's adviser, during the meeting, Georgieva recognised the "tough decisions" being made and implemented by Pakistan to stabilise the economy, and assured continued support to the reform process being carried out under the IMF programme.

While this assurance of continued IMF support, as claimed, is indeed welcome, the forthcoming assessment by the Fund is awaited in the country amid apprehensions of a mini-budget in view of the tax collection falling short by more than one hundred billion rupees in the first quarter of the ongoing fiscal year. As agreed with the global lender for the sake of the \$6 billion loan facility, the government was to collect Rs1,071 billion in the first three months of FY2019-20, with the target for the full year being Rs5,550 billion. But the government could only manage Rs955 billion tax revenue in the July-September quarter which means a shortfall of Rs116 billion or nearly 10 per cent of the target.

Experts fear that government measures of make up for the shortfall and satisfy the IMF would force the masses into further belt tightening at a time when the prices of the items of daily use have already rocketed into the sky, the power and gas tariffs have undergone repeated increases, and petrol rates are unprecedentedly high. The government's plan to abolish 400 departments and carry out cost-cutting would be an equally painful alternative. One can only hope the masses emerge from the month of October unscathed.

Published in The Express Tribune, October 22nd, 2019.

Source: <https://tribune.com.pk/story/2084355/6-imf-review/>



# **Economic Turnaround Now in Sight By**

## **Mohammad Jamil**

PTI government has taken right policy decisions for reviving the economy as their implementation has started bearing fruit, which is obvious from the economic indicators. The government measures included documentation of economy to increase tax revenue, discouraging luxury imports and increase exports to control trade deficit. The inter-bank market rupee has stabilized around Rs. 156 per US dollar; and the KSE-100 index has crossed 34000 points, which shows confidence of investors. Chairman FBR said on the completion of first quarter that FBR collected Rs. 960 billion in the first quarter of current fiscal year 2019/2020, which is about 90% of the target for the quarter. In a message on social media, he said that tax collection up to 90% of highly aggressive target for quarter ended September 30, 2019 has been achieved. He added that the imports had been contracted by \$3 billion during the period.

Pakistan's current account deficit has decreased by 64 per cent for the first quarter of the financial year 2019-20, due to the reduction in the trade gap between imports and exports. According to the State Bank of Pakistan, the current account deficit has narrowed to \$1.548 billion in July to September 2019 as compared to \$4.287 billion recorded last financial year, showing a massive difference of \$2.739 billion. In July 2019, the current account deficit stood at \$678 million, in August \$610 million and in September \$259 million. The trade deficit has been reduced by 34 % during the period, from \$9.45 billion to \$6.202 billion. The remittances from Pakistani expatriates in the first quarter stood at \$5.47 billion; hence total remittances are likely to be more than \$22 billion for the year. IMF program-related inflows and Saudi oil facility helped build SBP's foreign exchange reserves.

The improvement in exports is due to devaluation, and with inflows of remittances and consistent control over imports may further stabilize the situation of balance-of-payments in the coming months. The government must continue its strict economic policies for the stability of the balance of payments in the remaining months of the financial year, which will enable it to meet at least its target for the current financial year. On September 26, Prime Minister Imran Khan met the executives and teams of a number of world leading companies like

Exxon group and AKD group – a security company which is owned by a Pakistani American and convinced them to invest in Pakistan, which is a lucrative market. Exxon Mobil, the world's biggest Oil & Gas Company has already announced that it will reinvest in Pakistani market after a gap of nearly three decades.

New tourism zones are being formed in KP; 20 new tourist spots have been identified in KP. Industrial sectors profit year ending 30th June 2019: Banking Rs. 147 bn, Cement Rs. 31bn, Auto sector Rs. 121bn; Oil & Gas Rs. 221bn; Fertilizer Rs. 68bn; and Power Rs. 27bn. PIA completes overhauling of Boeing 777 indigenously; government awards license to foreign firms for renewable energy projects. FBR struck a deal with UAE government for exchanging details of Pakistani asset owners; issue of Aqama abuse is also being handled. Global investors bought Pakistan's local currency bonds for \$342 million i.e. Portfolio Investment. Total export quantity increased by 12%, in 2019 YoY basis; textile exports cross \$13 bn due to 26% increase in quantity. Imports fall by 20.5% and exports increased by 2.7% FQ FY, trade deficit shrinks by 35% to \$5.72 billion and telecom sector revenue will be Rs. 338 bn.

Due to the flawed economic policies of the previous governments, Pakistan's external debt had mounted to around \$90 billion; economic reserves (including SBP and commercial banks) had declined to \$12 bn, not enough for even three months imports. As regards payment of installments of previous loans, the country was on the verge of default. Therefore, Prime Minister Imran Khan had to approach Pakistan's friends Saudi Arabia and the UAE who were generous to deposit \$2 bn each in State Bank of Pakistan in addition to supply of oil on deferred payment basis. Thus Pakistan averted the default due to Imran Khan's efforts. As stated above, the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) has collected Rs. 960 billion in the first quarter of current fiscal year 2019/2020, which is about 90 percent of the target for the quarter. All of this shows that economic turnaround is now in sight.

It is important to recount the achievements and measures by the PTI government to put economy on the path to recovery and to increase employment opportunities, which includes Pakistan Post launching of National Internship Program with 35000 vacancies. Textile industry showed 26% growth in quantitative terms according to APTMA. Remittances in September 2019

increased by 17.5% compared to September 2018. Despite financial constraints, the government is alive to the problems faced by the people; hence it is focusing on education sector and other projects for the welfare of the people. As many as 7000 children were enrolled in Islamabad under a campaign led by Federal Education Ministry. And first balloting of Naya Pakistan Housing Scheme in Lodhran took place, and to start with 700 people awarded and 100 kept on waiting list. With expeditious implementation of such schemes, people would start realizing that the economic mess was created by the previous governments.

—The writer is a senior journalist based in Lahore.

Source: <https://pakobserver.net/economic-turnaround-now-in-sight/>

## **Pakistan Improves Ranking | Editorial**

PAKISTAN emerged as one of the biggest improvers in World Bank's latest Ease of Doing Business Index 2020, jumping up 28 places on the index and clinching the 108th position, as compared to 136th spot last year. Pakistan was also among the most notable improvement in Doing Business 2020, sitting alongside Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Togo, Bahrain, Tajikistan, Kuwait, China, India and Nigeria.

This is, indeed, a heart-warming development in the otherwise gloomy economic environment and sends positive signals to the prospective investors. The improvement in ranking is due to the hard work done by the economic team of the Government and complementary measures taken by the governments of Punjab and Sindh, as highlighted in the World Bank report also. Prime Minister Imran Khan has a point in expressing joy over the achievement vowing that the country, by the end of 2020, would become one of the top destinations for investment. One hopes the Government would remain focused on streamlining procedures, offering incentives and removing bottlenecks in the way of establishment and running of businesses. The reforms that helped the country improve its ranking are, of course, important. Pakistan has made starting a business easier by expanding the functionalities of the online one-stop-shop. This reduced the number of procedures required to set up a business from 10 to five and improved the economy's score for starting a business. No doubt, Pakistan has improved significantly, which is a source of inspiration, but the fact remains that the country was still at number 108 meaning thereby that we will have to work still hard to realize the dream of one of the most attractive places for investment. In fact, the country was moving towards that end in the past due to a multitude of steps taken by some previous governments but these could not be sustained and political instability and uncertainties made the situation worse. The desired progress requires elimination of corruption from ministries and departments dealing with approvals and licensing as well as provision of necessary infrastructure and facilities to investors. Cost of input and higher interest rates are also impeding investment and the Government should review this aspect as well. Investment is a key to industrialization and Pakistan can address its economic woes by attracting investment in different sectors of economy by taking required measures and projecting them in right perspective.

Source: <https://pakobserver.net/pakistan-improves-ranking/>

## **US and China ‘Close to Finalising’ Parts of Interim Trade Deal By James Politi**

The US and China are “close to finalising some sections” of an interim agreement to ease trade tensions between the two countries, the US trade representative said on Friday.

The comments from Robert Lighthizer followed a phone call between him; Steven Mnuchin, US Treasury secretary; and Liu He, China’s vice-premier. Mr Lighthizer’s office said they had “made headway on specific issues” during the conversation and that negotiations would continue among deputies ahead of another call between the top negotiators in the near future.

The statement from USTR suggests the two countries are on track to strike what Donald Trump has described as a “phase one” deal with China by the time the US president meets with Xi Jinping, his Chinese counterpart, at the Apec summit in Santiago, Chile, next month.

The agreement under discussion is limited as it primarily involves larger purchases of US farm goods by China, along with small concessions from Beijing in the realm of intellectual property and currency. It does not address some of the longstanding sources of trade tension between the two countries, such as cybertheft and industrial subsidies, which are core to China’s economic model.

As the US and China closed in on the smaller deal, Washington agreed to suspend a planned increase in tariffs from 25 per cent to 30 per cent on \$250bn of goods, which was due to take effect on October 15. If enough progress is made, Beijing also hopes to see the planned imposition of 15 per cent tariffs on a further \$156bn of goods, due to take effect on December 15, deferred or scrapped.

The progress described by Mr Lighthizer’s office comes a day after Mike Pence, the US vice-president, delivered a wide-ranging speech on America’s relationship with China, in which he said Mr Trump was “optimistic” that an interim deal could be completed.

Mr Pence warned that China had grown increasingly “aggressive and destabilising” over the past year, attacking Beijing on military expansionism, building a surveillance state and restraining religious liberty. He added, however, that the US was not seeking “confrontation” with China nor a decoupling of the two economies, leaving the door open to compromise on the commercial front.

“America is reaching out our hand to China and we hope that soon Beijing will reach back, this time with deeds not words, and with renewed respect for America,” the vice-president said.

In his speech, Mr Pence also criticised US multinational companies — and singled out Nike — for kowtowing to China in order to keep access to the Chinese market. Speaking in New Hampshire on Friday, Pete Buttigieg, the South Bend mayor who is running fourth in the Democratic presidential primary race, questioned the way the White House was tackling China and said US companies should be free to comment or act as they wanted.

“The whole point is American companies are free to do or say things in the political space,” Mr Buttigieg told the Financial Times after a campaign event in New London. “But I’ll tell you the United States government should never be afraid to speak out for democracy and human rights. News that the president may have suppressed speaking about democracy as some kind of deal with [Chinese president] Xi Jinping is extremely disappointing.”

A truce in the US-China trade war will allow Mr Trump some breathing room on the economic front as he grapples with the impeachment inquiry threatening his presidency. However, it could trigger a backlash from China hawks on Capitol Hill and beyond who argue that agreeing to a small deal sends a signal of weakness to Beijing and allows Chinese officials to delay making any changes to a number of policies that Mr Trump has been trying to overhaul.

While the economic confrontation with Beijing is broadly supported in Congress, it is not particularly popular among US voters. According to a Gallup poll released this week, 45 per cent of Americans thought the China tariffs would make the US economy worse, while only 31 per cent thought they would make the economy better.

Source: <https://www.ft.com/content/ceefefea-f73d-11e9-9ef3-eca8fc8f2d65>

## **FATF: Beijing's Backing | Editorial**

In what constitutes a clear official stance, Beijing has declared support for Pakistan over its efforts to break through the FATF web. A senior official of the Chinese foreign ministry has, at a recent press talk, hailed Pakistan's progress to comply with the taskforce's action plan, alongside declaring his country's aversion to the "political designs" that "go beyond the purpose" of the 39-member inter-governmental organisation working to tackle the menace of money laundering and terror financing around the world. The official had no hesitation in saying that "there are some countries which want to include Pakistan in the blacklist. They have political designs which China is against" and "we made it clear to the US and India that we cannot do it."

Beijing's unequivocal backing over the FATF must be a source of relief for Pakistan which has been handed a four-month lifeline, till February 2020, to ensure implementation on the global watchdog's 27-point action plan. Pakistan was put on the FATF's grey list in June 2018 and was given 15 months to come clean, along with a warning that in case of failure, it would be added to the blacklist — which also comprises the likes of Iran and South Korea, and which means global economic sanctions.

Even though Pakistan has, in recent months, taken several major steps in line with the FATF action plan — like proscribing several militant groups and seizing their assets as well as ensuring that foreign currency transactions in the country are not left undocumented — it has been told to 'do more' in what does substantiate China's contention about the US and India harbouring political designs. And that leaves little doubt that Pakistan's FATF woes are political in nature; and that the blacklist threat is one of the several ways for the world powers to keep Pakistan under pressure in pursuit of their diplomatic goals.

It is no denying, however, that the FATF's assessment coming up in four roughly four months from now also serves as an opportunity for the incumbent government to focus on ridding Pakistan of the nuisance of money laundering and terror financing.

Published in The Express Tribune, October 31st, 2019.

Source: <https://tribune.com.pk/story/2090190/6-fatf-beijings-backing/>

# EDUCATION

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## **Education Reforms | Editorial**

IT is the first time that a serious effort is being seen on the part of the government to bring genuine reforms in the education sector as well as streamline the religious seminaries.

Addressing the students of seminaries on Wednesday, Prime Minister Imran Khan said the government plans to synchronize the entire education system to create social harmony in the country. Indeed providing equal opportunities of education to the children and ensuring standard in the educational institutions as per the modern day requirements is the only way forward if we really want to take forward the country on the path of progress and development and willing to build a harmonious society. Present government as per its manifesto has made some strides and credit for this definitely goes to Minister for Education Shafqat Mahmood who is determined to bring a uniform syllabus in the country and in this regard he has also held extensive talks with the stakeholders including those who operate the seminaries. Following talks with the religious scholars, the government has also recently approved Deeni Madaris Reforms to streamline religious seminaries which if implemented in letter and spirit will undoubtedly enable the students of religious schools to excel in the fields of their interests. We, therefore, expect that modern syllabus which is the amalgam of both religious and science subjects will soon be introduced in the religious seminaries so that their students could also compete with those of other formal educational institutions and build a career in different fields. The process of bringing uniform syllabus also needs to be expedited. Certain vested interests will try to throw the spanner but time really warrants that such a syllabus is introduced at all levels in the educational institutions which meets the contemporary requirements and enable our youth to compete with the world. Focus must also be given to the technical and vocational education as it is the key factor to help the country's economy develop. Our youth can only greatly benefit from the industrialization envisaged under the CPEC, if they are equipped with market-oriented skills.

Source: <https://pakobserver.net/index.php/2019/10/04/education-reforms/>



## **Put to the test By Anjum Altaf**

ONCE again, claims are flying around about the astounding results achieved by the Higher Education Commission (HEC) in an earlier period and attempts are being made to return to that dispensation, with promises of a revved-up 'knowledge' economy that will propel Pakistan into the future. Such claims need to be taken seriously because of the importance of education for the country's progress.

There are many who remain deeply sceptical of these claims. While the 1965, 1971 and Kargil wars caused immense setbacks to Pakistan, it is possible for a country to recover from such disasters. But the combined havoc wreaked by the nationalisation of schools by Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, their Islamisation by Ziaul Haq, and the quantification of higher education by the HEC under Pervez Musharraf, has done damage that is well-nigh irreversible. Those who have graduated from the resulting education system are now imparting education as teachers to subsequent generations. In addition, there are so many vested interests involved — ideological, political and financial — that it is simply not possible to undo the damage. All this is at the expense of the young who should be the country's future and whose parents are shelling out hard-earned money to have them educated.

The bottom line is that there are claims and counterclaims with no real objective evidence on the basis of which citizens can assess the truth of either. Given the immensity of the consequences, we cannot continue with a situation characterised by one word against another, because when that is the case it is always the party painting the rosy picture that prevails in an environment of uninformed governance.

Our education systems need to be independently assessed.

How then do we resolve the controversy? I propose a very fair test — an independent assessment of Pakistan's school and higher education systems. These assessments need to be conducted by agencies that have no stake in the outcomes, ie those who have neither contributed to the design nor funded the

implementation of existing systems, and also not by those who are wary of antagonising the government, which is the case for most local NGOs.

Each assessment should be conducted by two teams, one local and one external, and their findings should be compared and discussed at the conclusion of the exercise. For schools, a local organisation already carries out the Annual Status of Education Report which, incidentally, does not paint a rosy picture but has not been taken seriously enough as an input into policy. The ASER team, strengthened by the addition of individuals with the credibility of, say, Zubeida Mustafa and Abdul Hameed Nayyar, can leverage their already existing resources to deliver the required output.

For the external evaluation, I would recommend a team from a small country with no political axes to grind in Pakistan; Ideally one like Finland, which has reputedly the world's best school system. This external evaluation should include administering the Programme for International Student Assessment test to obtain a comparison of the state of school education in Pakistan relative to other countries.

Assessing higher education would present more difficult challenges. For the local team, I would consider eminently qualified individuals like Kamran Asdar Ali (dean of the school of humanities and social sciences at Lums), Syed Nomanul Haq (dean of the school of liberal arts at the University of Management and Technology), Muhammad Hamid Zaman (endowed professor of biomedical engineering at Boston University), and Sayed Amjad Hussain (emeritus professor of surgery and humanities at the University of Toledo). Eminent scientists Attaur Rahman and Pervez Hoodbhoy are excluded from the list as the assessment would essentially involve a validation of their respective claims.

For the external team, one would have to search for academics with stellar reputations in the field of education and an understanding of the role of higher education in postcolonial countries. With my limited experience, I can think of Martin Carnoy from Stanford (author of the celebrated *Education as Cultural Imperialism*) and Philip Altbach (founder of the Boston College Centre for International Higher Education, and a long-time analyst of higher education in India). They could recommend other experts to be included in the team.

The aim of this suggestion is not to identify the teams but to stress that such an independent evaluation of Pakistan's education system is long overdue and badly needed. Without an assessment of how much our students know and the quality of what they are being taught, the entire future of the country will be at stake. Such an evaluation should also be a legitimate demand of students and those investing their hopes and money in their education.

If the government declines an objective and fair test of the present state of education in the country, one would have to wonder why.

The writer was dean of the school of humanities and social sciences at Lums.

Published in Dawn, October 5th, 2019

Source: <https://www.dawn.com/news/1509075/put-to-the-test>

## **Only 2.5% Clear This year's CSS Written Exam**

In a glaring example of falling standards in the country's educational system, only 2.56% of the students who took the Central Superior Services (CSS) competitive exam's written part this year managed to pass.

According to the Federal Public Service Commission (FPSC) of Pakistan, 23,403 candidates applied for the CSS competitive examination 2019. Of them, 14,521 appeared for the written part of the exam and only 372 cleared it.

The FPSC notified that the candidates who had passed the written exam would be intimated the schedule of the medical examination, the psychological assessment and the viva voce (oral exam) in due course of time.

In comparison, 567 (4.77%) of the 11,887 candidates who appeared for the exam last year had passed. The number of candidates who had cleared the written exam was 569 but two of them were unable to clear the viva voce. Of those who had cleared the CSS exam, 281 were recommended by the commission for appointment to BS-17 posts in the federal government.

CSS aspirants to first undergo 'screening test'

In 2017, 312 (3.32%) of the 9,391 candidates who appeared for the exam had managed to clear it.

Of them, 261 were recommended for appointment to government posts.

The exam this year was held for recruitment to BS-17 posts in various government services including the Commerce and Trade Group, Foreign Service of Pakistan, Information Group, Inland Revenue Service, Military Lands & Cantonments Group, Office Management Group, Pakistan Administrative Service, Pakistan Audit and Accounts Service, Pakistan Customs Service, Police Service of Pakistan, Postal Group and the Railways (Commercial and Transportation) Group.

To revamp the civil service in the country, the government has decided that candidates would first undergo a screening test before being permitted to take the CSS exam.

The screening test was proposed by the FPSC earlier this year. In a report, the commission suggested that a screening test was necessary to filter out non-serious candidates, improve the quality of competition, ensure objectivity in paper assessment, and speed up the process of exam to reduce the timeframe and reduce the financial cost.

The commission noted that the number of applicants for the exam was continuously rising, resulting in delays in the examination process, difficulty in maintaining objectivity in assessing the answer papers and portraying a highly imbalanced ratio of passing candidates.

“The civil service that once carried prestige, respect and social status amongst the university graduates and the society as a whole has lost that image,” the report read.

Source: <https://tribune.com.pk/story/2077717/1-2-5-clear-years-css-written-exam/>

# **Employability, Skills and Higher Education**

## **By Professor Dr. Muhammad Mukhtar**

An article in the Harvard Business Review entitled “Does Higher Education Still Prepare People for jobs?” challenged the existing systems of universities across the globe and logically sounds most pertinent. This article to answer the titled questions mentions “Today, people often take on leadership positions without much formal management training. Often, the strongest individual contributors are promoted into management, even though they haven’t developed the skills needed to lead a team. But if more schools invested in teaching those skills, organizations would have a larger amount of candidates with leadership potential.” The authors of this interesting article conclude with remarks that university education is not linked with employability due to lack of necessary skills needed for a job. A recent advertisement for the prestigious position of Executive Director, Higher Education Commission of Pakistan very much allude to this notion. This advertisement has been floated twice or more over the past few months; however, the country higher education system is unable to recruit an incumbent for this post. A careful analysis is required, whether suitable candidates with necessary skills for this position in the country or abroad are lacking or the organization has certain internal flaws in the recruitment procedure for this position.

Coming back to the topic of skills in higher education, the Global Human Capital Report 2017, World Economic Forum recognizes top ten countries for skill and education in the order, Norway, Finland, Switzerland, United States, Denmark, Germany, New Zealand, Sweden, Slovenia and Austria. In this article, I will briefly discuss the skills education system of the world No 1, the Norway, the one of my favorite Australia not in this list and neighboring India. A brief of these nations’ efforts related to bridging the gap between skills and academic credentials thus making universities/colleges more relevant follow:

The Norwegian Ministry of Education and Research through ‘Skills Norway’ promotes lifelong learning in the era of fast changing knowledge and technological advancement. This initiative has a wide net and incorporates formal, non-formal and informal adult education based on rigorous qualitative and quantitative parameters. The strength of ‘Skills Norway’ can be ascertained from

the fact that it also coordinates with the European Agenda for Adult Learning, Electronic Platform Adult Learning Europe (EPALE) and Nordic Network for Adult Learning (Nordisk Nätverk för Vuxnas Lärande, NVL). According to an article published in the OECD Education and Skills Today, the Norwegian universities are preparing student for the challenging labor markets by focusing on domain and discipline specific knowledge. Curricula taught at universities are updated continuously and mainly relevant to the world of work; a strong social network among the universities, public, industry and job places is the major guidance system prompting universities to produce graduates with necessary skills and qualifications requisite for economy and society of the future.

The second one close to my heart and not listed in the top ten is the Australian Government, Department of Employment, Skills, Small and Family Business empowers people with vocational education and training necessary for workplace. Relevant initiative known as “myskills” provides information for aspirants to choose their choice field. The qualifications framework for this setup is limited to Certificate (level 1- IV), diploma, advanced diploma, graduate certificate and graduate diploma. Entry requirements for certificate programs are senior secondary certificate of education, whereas the graduate certificate/diploma including bachelor honors degree fall in level 8 category for which level 7 qualifications (bachelor’s degree) is a prerequisite. Pertinent to mention here is that there are ten levels of qualifications in the Australian education system. Hundreds of different occupations and industries comes under the umbrella of specific prioritized domains including agriculture & food processing; arts & culture; business, education & training; construction & mining; defense industry; design; government, safety & environment; health & community services; manufacturing & engineering; retail, hair & beauty services; science & technology; sports & recreation; tourism & hospitality; transport and utilities. A brief description about every field, contribution in Australian economy and employability statistics is described through Australian Bureau of Statistics and Government Department of Industry, Innovation and Science.

Third one is the neighboring system of India. The Indian government’s Skill Development Bureau in the University Grants Commission, Ministry of HRD, Govt of India mandated via three schemes including community colleges, B.Voc degree program and Deen Dayal Upadhyay Centers for Knowledge Acquisition and Upgradation of Skilled Human Abilities and Livelihood (KAUSHAL). Human

resources and skill requirements have been ascertained through efforts of the Government of India, Ministry of Skill Development & Entrepreneurship and National Skill Development Corporation in consultation with the KPMG Advisory Services Pvt. Ltd. A roadmap for skills universities in India led to emergence of Shri Vishwakarma Skill University – India’s First Government Skills University; Rajasthan ILD Skills University and several others in the pipeline.

In Pakistan skill education is regulated, facilitated and mandated by the Government of Pakistan, National Vocational & Technical Training Commission (NAVTTTC). Major functions of this apex federal body are formulation of national policies, strategies and regulations; developing national qualifications framework (NQF); accreditation, certification, skill standards and curricular development, devising a performance evaluation system; TVET (Technical and Vocational Education and Training) besides providing necessary information about job opportunities in each field. This commission on its official web site very clearly identify that “TVET sector is highly fragmented and unstructured in Pakistan and requires reforms at all levels from policy formulation to delivery. The reforms based on the principles of quality, access and relevancy have been identified under National Skill Strategy (NSS) through consultation with all the stakeholders. However, the implementation of NSS is crucial due to lack of relevant expertise and capacity at institutional level.” This scenario reflects that NAVTTTC and the Higher Education Commission of Pakistan have a complete disconnect and working on different models than the one I have exemplified above Norwegian, Australian, and Indian. It is hard to predict whether well recognized, accepted and time-tested models will be successful or the unique one we have in Pakistan. Anyway, in an era having industrial revolutions 4.0 in place, artificial intelligence facilitating decision making, higher education, technological and general education systems need to be integrated for the overall economic benefits and facilitating quality of life for every individual.

Source: <https://nation.com.pk/17-Oct-2019/employability-skills-and-higher-education>



## **The CSS Enigma | Editorial**

The government is currently in the process of introducing a pre-screening test before participants can appear for the actual CSS examination. Following the PM's approval, the proposal is now all set to come before parliament. The PM's Special Adviser on Establishment says these changes are synonymous with the PM's vision of transparency, integrity and efficiency-based governance. According to the adviser, the screening process will also split candidates into three groups: the Pakistan Administrative Service, Inland Revenue Service, and the International Relations group. Even though federal officials claim these reforms aim to eradicate the "superiority complex and lingering colonial mindset", they seem to forget that the Civil Service itself is a derivation of the colonial legacy.

The deplorable CSS results paint a dismal picture of the country's intellectual strength. Only 3.35% of candidates were able to pass the exam in the last four years while this year's success rate was a mere 2.56%. Bureaucrats and CSS experts give two major reasons: 'non-seriousness' of CSS applicants, evident from the thousands not bothering to appear even after applying; and the varying standards of the education system in Pakistan that increasingly perpetuate class segregation. In contrast, the participants question the credibility of the FPSC marking practices and also blame teaching institutions for their lack of proper guidance.

Even though international institutions pride themselves on their low acceptance rate as a show of rigorous and careful selection, the situation here is quite different. Pakistan's education system revolves solely around the dogmatic method of rote learning while the CSS exams are based on IQ, critical thinking and concept understanding — meaning that the bar is set high while the quality of candidates remains low. The FPSC system may be riddled with problems, like having an outdated curriculum, but it is important for educational systems to follow the core fundamentals of critical thinking and concept understanding rather than relying on memory as the only mental tool. It is only after we are able to upheave the intellectual capability of students that we can move on to revamping the structural systems of the civil service.

Source: <https://tribune.com.pk/story/2086472/6-the-css-enigma/>

## WORLD

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# **Can Trump Afford War in Middle East? By Inam Ul Haque**

Despite the Houthis claiming responsibility for the coordinated missile and drone strikes on the Abqaiq and Khurais oil facilities in eastern Saudi Arabia on 14 September — temporarily shutting down almost 50% of Saudi oil production and reducing 5% of the global oil supply — Iran is the suspect. Formal apportioning of blame awaits the Saudi-led investigation with the United Nations (UN) participation. The Houthis only have drones and no cruise missiles like the Shiite rebels in Iraq. Iran has cruise missiles but has denied any role. Communication intercepts and increased activity on military bases in western Iran on the day of the attack — according to United States (US) intelligence — and the recovery of Iranian components and technology from the attacked sites, implicate Iran. Forensic analysis of the circuit board from one cruise missile may trace the missile's point of origin. So the theory gaining traction is that drones, including jet-powered ones, were fired by the Houthis and/or pro-Iran Shiites from Iraq, with some probably launched from the sea. Iran fired the 17 or so cruise missiles programmed to fly low over the northern Persian Gulf and Iraq instead of directly across the Gulf, to camouflage the flight path and let the attack appear from Iraq.

Before dilating upon the wider implications of the attack, a word about the technology and its employment. The attack was an inexpensive mix of armed drones and cruise missiles with diversionary posturing for deception. Recently, Iranian cruise and ballistic missiles (Fateh, Zelzal, and Ghadr and Sejl from the Shahab series) have grown in accuracy and sophistication. This changes the threat matrix, emanating from large, expensive missile systems as drones are affordable weapons, untraceable over the radar and able to swarm potential target(s). This is a new “revolution in warfare”. PW Singer in “The Future War is Here”, published in the International NYT on September 20, 2019, warns, “the lower barrier to entry for the new technology of war [drones plus missiles] demands a higher barrier to entry for joining one”.

Geo-strategically, the cited attack seems to have changed the military paradigm in the region. Sneaking over hundreds of miles through six battalions of the expensive US-supplied Patriot Anti-Missile System, US intelligence, Saudi Air Defence and air surveillance; Iran — in one stroke — has altered the Saudi threat perception by striking two of the numerous economically most vulnerable targets which were not defended robustly.

Pending investigations, the Kingdom has shied away from pointing fingers and only said the attack was not from Yemen. Till the investigations are complete and Iran is sure about the nature and extent of the US response, the Kingdom will downplay the attacks. Saudi Arabia has traditionally avoided a military confrontation with Iran despite provocations. After the 1996 bombing of the Khubar Towers complex, which killed 19 USAF personnel, KSA deliberately sought to shift the blame away from Iran, despite the US confirming Iranian complicity.

In case of the US, after the initial bluster, shaping the environment is more measured as the attack is perceived to shatter the US security umbrella over the Kingdom and other rich Persian Gulf states since 1945. It was then worked out under President Franklin D Roosevelt with the first Saudi king, Abdulaziz bin Saud, that “doing nothing” is not an option and “doing something” should not appear to be “doing the Saudi bidding”.

Although sceptics like Rex Tillerson, former secretary of state, cautioned about the difficulty of building a case against Iran and striking Iran proper, US military has been mulling an array of response options including bombing missile-launching sites, storage areas in or outside Iran and conducting covert cyber-operations; the emphasis being on proportionate and non-escalated retaliation. Announcing the defensive deployment of another patriot battery with some 200 troops at the “Saudi request” is aimed at mitigating the US credibility problem under President Trump.

President Trump, on the other hand while mired in the impeachment storm, cannot afford another war in the Middle East and endangering the global oil supply in an election year. He generally shies away from military conflicts. North Korean bonhomie despite provocations, and last-minute dithering from retaliation after Iran downed a US drone and Iranian naval mines damaged five oil tankers

this year are some examples. Apparently, the war for Saudi oil on which the US has less if no dependence considering the American shale oil production does not make sense.

From the Iranian standpoint, their calculated military escalation stems from political desperation. Their strategy of “maximum resistance” to the US policy of “maximum pressure” has a shelf life. Sanctions are biting. Europe is perceived to be taking too long to salvage the nuclear deal and lift or ease the crippling economic sanctions. Hence this strike was intended to goad the European to a hurry, besides strengthening Iran’s leverage with the West. Trump’s inconsistency is considered a weakness by Iranian hardliners who call him “a rabbit, not a lion”. There is also a view that Iranian hardliners wanted to torpedo the likely Trump-Rouhani meeting at the UNGA session.

Iran has demonstrated the capability to threaten the global economic lifeline by closing the Strait of Hormuz plus striking at targets of immense economic value and cities like Dubai. The brilliance of the Iranian posturing has resulted in the unprecedented spike in crude oil prices besides imperilling the privatisation of Saudi Aramco and weakening the UAE-Saudi coalition. The UAE has avoided blaming Iran, reportedly sent a secret delegation to Iran and has called back troops from “Operation Decisive Storm” in Yemen.

However, above considered, if the strike was aimed at getting out of the “economic warfare” of sanctions and was reliant upon European support, Iran has seemingly miscalculated. The European sentiment after the current UNGA has been negative with Britain, Germany and France urging Iran to “begin negotiations on broader issues [like prisoner swap, etc] than its nuclear program”. France’s proposed \$15 billion lines of credit for Iran seems dead. China’s \$290 billion “potential” investment in Iran, import of Iranian oil, and Iran’s convergence with Russia in Syria and over Afghanistan may not be enough.

Therefore, Iran should expect some limited response, most likely a cyberattack although the US military wants to combine this with some hard power. In the broader picture, the US would tolerate the Iranian military threat to keep selling arms to the Arabs and remain relevant. So the Iranian have caused limited damage but given a loud message to the royalty, which in turn is not trumped but adjusting to living with a belligerent Iran, despite the US security umbrella.

Source: <https://tribune.com.pk/story/2069018/6-can-trump-afford-war-middle-east/>

# **Successful Poll a Good Sign For Afghanistan**

## **| Editorial**

Saturday's Afghan election was the victory of the people's resilience and belief that continuity of the process is the only way to defeat the militant mindset. Voters did defy Afghan Taliban threats against casting votes in the presidential elections, though turnout was as low as about 20 per cent of the registered voters. Low turnout, however, should not be an excuse to wrap up the process. The Afghan government used extraordinary arrangements to ensure the security of polling staff and voters and to their credit, polling took place in a relatively calm and peaceful atmosphere. The areas dominated by Taliban saw disruption in the voting process and as many as 400 small scale attacks were reported.

The world bodies should join the Afghan officials to analyse the factors leading to widespread disinterest in the election process and the reported flaws in polling. It is not unusual on an election day in a developing country that biometric machines do not work properly, election materials land in wrong hands and rigging allegations ensue. The third consecutive Afghan presidential election was not without its share of flaws but these shortcomings should be taken as lessons, not excuses against the system. Let us wait for preliminary results, which are likely to be out by October 19 and the final results will be declared by November 7.

Developments regarding the election process prove that Taliban do not want modern-day democracy and that engaging them in dialogue for a power-sharing formula was a flawed strategy. Even during the dialogue, they kept on with their militant activities, targeting innocent citizens. The continuation of the elections, hopefully, will heal the wounds inflicted by decades-long civil war, foreign invasions and fighting between factions across the country.

This time, the main contenders for the top slot are incumbent president Ashraf Ghani and chief executive Dr Abdullah Abdullah. Ghani and Abdullah shared the government for five years after a power sharing agreement brokered by the Americans. This time, it is hoped, the election results would have a clear majority for one of these two contenders and that both sides accept the results. By doing so, both Ghani and Abdullah both would do a great service to democracy and Afghanistan.

Source: <https://dailytimes.com.pk/476063/successful-poll-a-good-sign-for-afghanistan/>

# **Climate Change: A Way Forward By Hafiz Muhammad Azeem**

Climate change is the change in global or regional climate patterns, in particular, a change apparent from the mid- 20th century onwards and attributed largely to the increased levels of atmospheric carbon dioxide from using fossil fuels. It has caused drastic effects in the world climate such as the rise of carbon dioxide levels and global temperature, melting of ice sheets, the rise of sea levels, and ocean acidification, etc. A range of human activities are responsible—NASA says 97 per cent of climate scientists agree that climate-warming trends over the past century are very likely due to human activities— for instance, the rapid emission of carbon dioxide. Thus, we need a broad-based international consensus and firm national commitments to fight it.

Human activities are the major cause of climate change. Burning fossil fuels like coal and oil has increased the concentration of carbon dioxide. Due to expansion of greenhouse effect, global warming increases. In this, gases like water vapours, carbon dioxide, methane, nitrous oxide, and chlorofluorocarbons in the atmosphere prevent heat leave the earth's atmosphere, resultantly the ozone layer depletes and the temperature rises.

In its Fifth Assessment Report, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change concluded that there is a 95 per cent-plus probability that human activities over the past 50 years have warmed our planet. The industrial activities that our modern civilisation depends upon have raised atmospheric (IPCC) carbon dioxide levels from 280 parts per million to 400 ppm in the last 150 years. The Panel also concluded there is a better than 95 per cent probability that human-produced greenhouse gases such as carbon dioxide, methane and nitrous oxide have caused much of the observed increase in Earth's temperatures over the past 50 years. In addition, about half of the CO<sub>2</sub> emissions between 1750 and 2010 have occurred in the last 40 years.

Deforestation and increased chemical use in domestic and agriculture life is another reason. Deforestation is the second leading cause of global warming and produces about 24 per cent of global greenhouse gas emissions. Scientist say that deforestation in tropical rainforests adds more carbon dioxide than all the

world's cars and trucks. The surge in the uses of chemicals in domestic as well as in agriculture, in the shape of fertilizers, also plays its role. The high rate of application of nitrogen-rich fertilizers has effects on the heat storage of cropland (nitrogen oxides have 300 times more heat-trapping capacity than CO<sub>2</sub>) and the run-off of excess fertilizers creates 'dead zones' in our oceans. In addition to these effects, high nitrate levels in groundwater cause concern for human health.

These causes resulted in climate change, and in this regard the IPCC was created by the United Nations Environment Programme and the World Meteorological Organization in 1988, now engages with 195 Member countries, and provides policymakers with regular scientific assessments on climate change, its implications and potential future risks, as well as puts forward adaptation and mitigation options.

The foremost hazardous evidence is the rise of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere. According to NASA, for a millennium the CO<sub>2</sub> level was below 300 ppm, started to rise since 1950 and is now above 400 ppm.

Pakistan alone cannot do it. It is a global issue. It is high time for the UN, along with all 195 countries, to not let the grass grow under its feet and act now to save the mother earth

Second, the rise of global temperature. NASA says the planet's average surface temperature has risen about 1.62°F (0.9°C) since the late 19th century, a change driven largely by increased CO<sub>2</sub> and other human-made emissions into the atmosphere. Most of the warming occurred in the past 35 years, with the five warmest years on record taking place since 2010. This is also established by the UN report prepared by the WMO on 22 September 2019. It states that the period "is currently estimated to be 1.1°C above pre-industrial era of 1850-1900, and 0.2°C warmer than 2011-2015".

Third, the oceans are getting warmer, and ice sheets are shrinking. NASA says the oceans have absorbed much of this increased heat, with the top 700 meters of ocean showing warming of more than 0.4°F since 1969. Further, the Greenland and Antarctic ice sheets have decreased and lost an average 286 billion tons of ice annually between 1993 and 2016, while Antarctica lost about

127 billion tons of ice annually. The rate of Antarctica ice loss has tripled in the last decade.

Fourth, the glaciers are melting and sea level is rising. Around the globe glaciers are retreating including in the Alps, Himalayas, Andes, Rockies, Alaska and Africa. Moreover, the global sea level rose about eight inches in the last century. The rate in the last two decades, however, is nearly double that of the last century and is accelerating slightly every year.

There is other drastic evidence. Arctic sea ice is declining rapidly. Disturbed rainfalls and extreme weather events have increased. Also, ocean acidification has increased about 30 per cent since the industrial Revolution. There is also has a negative impact on crop yields.

Moreover, the IPCC Fifth Assessment Report says there are numerous risks, which include pf of death, injuries, health or disturbed livelihoods due to storms, flooding and sea-level rise. Moreover, the water or electric supply, and emergency situations are also at risk. Also at risk is food security due to droughts, flooding, and precipitation variability. There is risk to marine and coastal ecosystems, and biodiversity, also.

Although Pakistan is not contributing much to global warming or climate change, it is the seventh most affected country. The Global Change Impact Studies Centre of Pakistan shows that that mean annual temperature has increased over Pakistan more in Sindh and Balochistan. During the last century, the average temperature over Pakistan has increased by 0.6°C, which is in conformity with the average global increase. Future climate change projections based on all the four IPCC-AR5 RCP scenarios show that the average rise in temperature over Pakistan by the end of the century will be about 1°C higher than the global average. This increase is links to such adverse impacts as the increasing frequency of extreme events (floods, droughts, heat waves, and cyclonic activity), steady regression of most glaciers (except a small minority in the Karakoram) that supply the bulk of the country's water supply, and changes in the rainfall patterns.

Pakistan's water cycle is primary area affected area. Agriculture is a major sector likely to be adversely affected. Climate change can disrupt food availability.



Projected increases in temperatures, changes in precipitation patterns, changes in extreme weather events, and reductions in water availability may all result in reduced agricultural productivity. Moreover, seasonal smog is also due to pollution.

Pakistan has also suffered economically. Pakistan has faced around 150 freak weather incidents in the past 20 years: flash floods and smog in winter, forest fires in summer, melting glaciers, freaky heatwaves, landslides, displaced population, etc. During floods in 2010-11, almost 10 per cent of Pakistan's population was displaced in two provinces. Last year, the costs of extreme weather were \$384 million and in the past 20 years, the overall loss has been almost \$2 billion.

As the handwriting is on the wall, the world is responding to the danger, like with the Global Climate Strike call on September 20, through which protest was recorded in around 150 countries at over 4,500 places.

Similarly, internationally, the world's organisations have shown commitment. There various agreements and protocols for climate change. The IN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) is the main international agreement, one of three conventions adopted at the Rio Earth Summit in 1992. To date ratified by 195 countries. It started as a way for countries to work together to limit global temperature increases and climate change, and to cope with their impacts.

Besides, in the mid-1990s, the UNFCCC signatories realised that stronger provisions were needed to reduce emissions. So they agreed to the Kyoto Protocol in 1997, which introduced legally binding emission reduction targets for developed countries. Next comes the Paris agreement at the Paris climate conference took in 2015. The agreement presents an action plan to limit global warming 'well below' 2°C. There is also the Montreal Protocol 1987, a global agreement to protect the stratospheric ozone layer by phasing out the ozone-depleting substances. Moreover there is also United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) 1994 to combat desertification and mitigate the effects of drought in countries experiencing serious drought/desertification.

We must change course by 2020, as UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres has said, we risk missing the point where we can avoid the “disastrous consequences for people and all the natural systems that sustain us.”

Here are some suggestions to tackle global warming. Dramatically reducing our use of fossil fuels especially carbon-intensive coal-is essential. There are many ways to begin. Key action steps include: not building new coal-burning power plants, initiating a phased shutdown of coal plants, and capturing and storing carbon emissions, for which the technology exists.

Tropical deforestation and emissions from agriculture represent nearly 30 per cent of the world’s heat-trapping emissions. We can fight global warming by reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation and by making our food production practices more sustainable.

Besides, using alternative sources of energy is more efficient and meets the problem of global warming. Energy from solar, wind, tidal, biomass are more clean and renewable. An increased share of nuclear power in the energy mix could help reduce global warming.

Above and beyond, a successful global compact on climate change must include financial assistance from richer countries to poorer countries.

The energy used to power, heat, and cool our homes, businesses, and industries are the single largest contributor to global warming. Energy efficiency technologies are direly needed.

Efficient fuel consumption modes of transport and switching to low-carbon fuels is the requirement of time.

In a nutshell, we must develop a two-pronged approach: firstly, we must reduce emissions and stabilise the levels of greenhouse gases, secondly, we must adapt climate-friendly lifestyle and pursue sustainable economic growth.

Although Pakistan is facing environmental challenges, because of the deteriorating economy, the country could not do much. But still, the present government has launched Ten Billion Trees Tsunami Programme for revival of

forestry and control air, weather, wildlife, forestation, watershed management and soil conservation. Furthermore, the country is amongst pioneers who established a climate change ministry. In addition, the country has also launched the Climate Change Policy 2012. The National Climate Change Policy comprehensively addresses all possible challenges and provides a foundational framework. But Pakistan alone cannot do it. It is a global issue. It is high time for the UN, along with all 195 countries, to not let the grass grow under its feet and act now to save the mother earth.

Source: <https://www.pakistantoday.com.pk/2019/09/29/climate-change-a-way-forward/>

## **Reviving The Peace Deal | Editorial**

The President of the United States (US) is in hot waters, at home and abroad. The fights at home – democrats' desire to impeach Trump over his dealing with Ukraine – and the battles abroad – a trade war with China, containment of Iran, and withdrawal of US troops from Afghanistan – must have made Trump understand how tiresome President's job is. The visit of the US Special Envoy for Afghan Reconciliation Ambassador Zalmay Khalilzad to Islamabad suggests that the Trump administration is reconsidering resuming peace talks with the Afghan Taliban. Is Trump resuming the peace talks as a smokescreen to avoid the new Pandora box at home, i.e., the looming impeachment enquiry by House Democrats? Well! Who knows?

Meanwhile, a Taliban delegation has also landed in Islamabad. The visits of the key members of both the parties to Islamabad are signals of a possible resumption of the US-Taliban dialogue in the days ahead. Moreover, these recent visits show that both sides' dependency on Pakistan to break the stalemate on some of the most critical points of the deal. What does the US want from Pakistan? Perhaps, Trump sent Khalilzad to Islamabad to ask Islamabad to exercise its influence over the Taliban to convince them of accepting the US demands of an immediate ceasefire and intra-Afghan dialogue.

And Taliban! They, probably, have realised that excessive reliance on violence is not the best solution at all to drive the US out of Afghanistan. But whether the Taliban have decided to show some kind of flexibility to revive the talks or they just landed in Islamabad to inform Pakistan's leadership of the factors that derailed the discussions with the US. Even a layperson can guess that the Taliban delegation is not in Islamabad to brief Pakistani government on how the negotiations went sore. The efforts of the Taliban to use other countries' influence to bring back the US to the talks are on the record. Therefore, it is logical to conclude that the Taliban also want the peace deal to ripen that Trump had called off earlier last month.

Given the fact that both sides have made visits to Pakistan, it is not wrong to say that the US and Taliban both want to end fighting each other. Is the Trump administration concerned about the post-withdrawal Afghanistan? Perhaps, not

much, as history informs us of the US indifference, it shows to any region it once leaves. Can Pakistan convince the Taliban to accept the US demands? Maybe. The Taliban desperation for resuming peace negotiations, at least, suggests so.

Source: <https://nation.com.pk/03-Oct-2019/reviving-the-peace-deal>

## **China's Phenomenal Development | Editorial**

CHINA marked its National Day on Tuesday with a massive parade through the centre of Beijing featuring missiles, tanks and thousands of marching troops, along with tributes to the country's Communist Party leaders and the striking economic and social developments achieved since the People's Republic was founded 70 years ago. Following the show of military might, the parade continued with floats representing the vast nation's far-flung regions and key events such as the opening of the economy in the 1980s, the return of Hong Kong and Macao to China in the late 1990s and the 2008 Beijing Olympics.

The ceremonies held in China as well as the country's Missions world-wide also highlighted the phenomenal development that the great nation made in different spheres of life. But the most important aspect of all these celebrations was the solemn pledge reiterated by the untiring leader of the country — President Xi Jinping — who vowed to continue to pursue the policy of peaceful development and at the same time delivering a firm message that the armed forces were ready to defend China's sovereignty. These were not mere slogans as China has taken practical measures like 'One Belt, One Road' and 'Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank' to share the fruits of its development and prosperity with neighbours and beyond. Pakistan is lucky to become partner of China in the flagship programme of OBOR — China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) that has already started contributing to the growth and development of Pakistan especially in the realm of energy and infrastructure. China is also offering scholarships to students from Pakistan and other developing countries in technologies and disciplines that are no-go areas for them in the Western world, which is yet another indication of sincerity of Beijing in extending meaningful assistance to these countries in accelerating their pace of development. China has also experienced an impressive growth in agriculture, a green revolution, followed by rapid industrial growth and reduction in poverty and in this backdrop it is satisfying that it is extending fullest possible cooperation to Pakistan in tapping its agricultural potential and harnessing industrial growth through special economic zones under the umbrella of CPEC. It is rightly said that China has transformed from an economy with basic agriculture and technology to a global manufacturing powerhouse, and it is now transitioning to an economy driven more by consumption and services. Chinese government has not only lifted 740

million people out of poverty since China adopted an opening-up policy about 40 years ago but that the country has also contributed around 30% of the growth of the world economy in recent years. It has become a front-runner in areas such as e-commerce and shared economies and new technology and entrepreneurs are fostering the emergence of innovative industrial clusters. China has been among the world's fastest-growing economies, with real annual gross domestic product (GDP) growth averaging 9.5% through 2018, a pace described by the World Bank as "the fastest sustained expansion by a major economy in history." Such growth has enabled China, on average, to double its GDP every eight years and helped lift an estimated 800 million people out of poverty. China has become the world's largest economy (on a purchasing power parity basis), manufacturer, merchandise trader and holder of foreign exchange reserves. It is because of this inbuilt strength and hard work of the leadership and people of China that the country is successfully withstanding the pressure of the trade war initiated by the United States. China is on a firm path of rise and that is why President Xi declared "No force can shake the status of our great motherland, and no force can stop the progress of the Chinese people and the Chinese nation." China reached this miraculous level of progress and development due to innovation, stability and continuity of policies and the third world countries have much to learn from this experience. China has now embarked on what is called "high quality economic development" in which it is poised to become a world leader in science and technology, research and innovation. There are deliberate efforts to steer the country to a higher value chain production where 'made in China' will dominate the quality domain on the international market. We are sure that countries of the world especially third world would enter into cooperative arrangements with China to help them lift to the path of sustainable development.

Source: <https://pakobserver.net/index.php/2019/10/03/chinas-phenomenal-development/>

## **Secular India's Demise | Editorial**

On the 150th birth anniversary of one of the greatest revolutionaries of the Indian subcontinent, Mahatama Gandhi, his remains were stolen from a memorial in central India. The remains had been placed there since his death in 1948. Along with stealing those remains, the thieves also defaced his portraits at the memorial. This is a sign of the growing hatred and bigotry in the Indian society post Bharatiya Janata Party's (BJP) rise to power. Their ideology is a complete shift from the narrative of Mahatama Gandhi, who was a supporter of Hindu Muslim unity, whereas, BJP has built a stronghold based on its anti-Muslim narrative.

With the Kashmir issue being blatantly discussed around the world and its mention at the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA), the Indian leadership along with its radical supporters feel the need to disassociate themselves from Mahatama Gandhi and his message of unity. Gandhi lost his life for this narrative and once again, this desecration is a message for all those who speak in favour of peace and against the religious bigotry being practiced in India – a country that once was proud of its secular roots.

In the last couple of years, India has witnessed a radical uprising resulting in a security issue for its Muslim population. India is home to 201 million Muslims, that are now being forced to either convert to Hinduism or face lynchings because of merely taking up space in the Hindu majority country. The situation can turn into a refugee crisis – the early signs of which are already apparent by what the state is doing in Indian Occupied Kashmir (IOK). The actions of the state will validate the prejudices of the people and give them the confidence to act out on them because, with an anti-Muslim government, the chances of penalisation are bare minimum.

Source: <https://nation.com.pk/05-Oct-2019/secular-india-s-demise>



# **The Usurpation of U.S. Foreign Policy By**

## **Mira Rapp-Hooper**

Last week's revelation that Donald Trump pressured Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky to investigate former Vice President Joe Biden was explosive even by the standards of this scandal-prone administration. Had the president of the United States conditioned the restoration of military aid to Ukraine on his counterpart's willingness to investigate a political rival—a quid pro quo that is all but explicit in the record of the Trump-Zelensky call released by the White House? Much has been made since of Trump's demand as an abuse of presidential power. But it was also an abuse of American power—and that, in the long run, may do more lasting damage.

Power is the organizing principle of international politics. That endows the United States with an extraordinary ability to coerce others—that is, to make them follow its lead through a mix of inducements and penalties. As a result, Washington has had a unique ability to promote its political and economic agenda abroad.

A United States that transacts in arbitrary coercion will not hold on to its commanding position for long.

Being in this position is a privilege—one that allows Washington to shape a world favorable to American interests—but it is neither an entitlement nor a simple function of military and economic might. Because the United States has generally used its coercive power in a disciplined fashion (with a few notable exceptions), it has experienced less international resistance than one might expect. But partners and rivals alike will continue such cooperation with Washington only as long as it wields its authority with subtlety and quickly corrects its excesses. Trump, in his phone call with Zelensky, blatantly tossed that principle aside and used the United States' power to advance his own political interests—a usurpation of foreign policy that has lasting consequences for the United States.

American power is already being challenged by rivals, such as China, that are keen to replace Washington as the one to write the rules of global conduct. A United States that transacts in the flagrant and arbitrary coercion of vulnerable partners will not hold on to its commanding position for long.

## CARROTS AND STICKS

In international relations, power is influence over outcomes. It takes many forms, from military to diplomatic, and its distribution among states is always uneven, usually favoring the materially endowed. Whether in the Roman Empire, the Chinese tribute system, or the Concert of Europe, the strongest and richest states sat atop the system, set the terms of its governance, and reaped disproportionate benefits—including the power to induce, coax, and threaten less powerful actors to bend to the leader's will.

Scholars have written reams about negative coercion—threats to use violence or political and economic punishments—but its converse, positive coercion, is no less powerful. By offering incentives such as defensive alliances, economic aid, or political support, and then threatening to withhold or remove those inducements, powerful states can create dependencies and radically change the behavior of their less potent counterparts. If the state in question is powerful enough, it need not even make explicit its threats and promises. Its weaker consorts require no explanation of the power differential—it inflects each and every one of their interactions, in every issue area and at every level of government.

The United States today is the coercive power par excellence. Although constrained by the Soviet Union, its power reached commanding heights after World War II. Its leadership in international institutions allowed Washington to coax others into supporting its global agenda. U.S. economic might and the dollar's role as the global currency of choice meant that Washington could make its aid conditional and wield powerful economic sanctions. U.S. military force, meanwhile, deterred adversaries, and mutual defense treaties protected allies while keeping them dependent on their benefactor.

Potent by midcentury, the United States' coercive capacity bristled beyond compare by the Cold War's end. With no major rivals, and a bountiful supply of aid, sanctions, and defensive threats and promises, it had the unique capacity to condition its global political environment to its liking. Unlike an empire, however, the United States never employed a system of compulsive hierarchy. Friends and rivals allowed Washington to amass tremendous geopolitical currency and to spend it, because it generally did not abuse it, or did not do so excessively. As

the scholar John Ikenberry has noted, the United States' particular brand of hegemony allowed others to benefit as well, contributing to a relatively enlightened hierarchy that was positive-sum, even if the gains were unequally distributed in Washington's favor.

Trump's misuse of U.S. power is so brazen that historical analogs are few. To be sure, U.S. partners have fretted when the United States has threatened to end alliances or to cancel aid. In cases of egregious American overreach, as in Vietnam or Iraq, their vocal objections eventually helped Washington correct its course. But even when friends and allies have rejected Washington's coercive logic altogether, U.S. policymakers have been able to explain its actions as genuine efforts to achieve dearly held national or global aims. The United States' global position has therefore been secured not by its military and economic might alone; because the system had positive benefits for others, too, they had reason to support it.

Without that consensus, the power to coerce begins to wane. If Washington's forays are conspicuous and its aims perfidious, its partners will not abet the next undertaking. There will be no coordinated sanctions effort, no further multilateral coalition of the willing. As the power to coerce begins to wither, so too does the ability to shape foreign affairs.

#### BREACHES OF PROTOCOL

Trump's misuse of U.S. power to enlist Ukraine and, according to the latest reports, allies such as Australia in the pursuit of his personal political vendettas is so brazen that historical analogs are few. One must go back to candidate Richard Nixon's attempts to sabotage the 1968 Paris peace talks to end the Vietnam War—a flagrant effort to win an election by prolonging the carnage in Southeast Asia. Later known as the “Chennault Affair,” this indiscretion went undiscovered until after Nixon's death, owing in no small part to his studious efforts to bury it; his own secretary of state argued that the gambit was likely illegal. Trump's foreign policy misappropriation, however, is even more dizzying in its scope. Nixon, after all, was merely a deceitful presidential candidate at the time; the coercive powers of the presidency itself are far greater.

The founders failed to envision a world in which the president himself was the national security threat.

It is difficult to overstate the extent to which the Trump administration contorted U.S. foreign policy to pressure Ukraine. A set of studious national security processes was subverted for personal gain, with the resources of the State Department, including the secretary of state himself, engaged to execute extortion and subsequently bury it. A veteran career ambassador was undermined, recalled, and threatened. Intelligence capacities tasked with protecting the nation's closest-held national security secrets were used to execute multiple cover-ups. Inspired though they were, the founders failed to envision a world in which the president himself was the national security threat.

The excess lay as much in the target as in the means. The president could scarcely have chosen a more vulnerable partner to exploit than Zelensky. Invaded by Russia in 2014, Ukraine has watched its sovereignty being gnawed at during five years of low-level conflict; the prospect of its complete dismemberment looms. The military aid package that Trump suspended and then dangled in front of Zelensky constituted nearly seven percent of Kiev's defense budget. Even if Trump had never cut off the aid, his well-known affinity for Russia and repeated suggestions that Moscow and Kiev "make a deal" would have been ominous enough to make Zelensky feel his fate was at risk. Against the backdrop of Ukraine's abject and existential dependency on U.S. support, no mention of aid or request for a favor was remotely necessary on Trump's part. Likewise, long-standing U.S. treaty allies that depend on Washington for their national security have little recourse when the U.S. attorney general personally makes investigatory requests intended to overturn the findings of their intelligence communities in an attempt to provide domestic political cover for Trump.

#### A PRIVILEGE SQUANDERED

This misuse of U.S. power could not have come at a worse time. The global order that endowed Washington with such extraordinary privilege is changing fast. As China continues its rapid ascent, the United States' relative power erodes and with it the ability to set the terms of the international system. On issues ranging from defense to technology, trade, climate policy, North Korea, and Iran, only the support of U.S. partners can now steady the balance of power. U.S. strategists and policymakers have sought to enlist that support by invoking China's nefarious activities on the global stage—the debt-trap diplomacy of Beijing's Belt and Road Initiative, the militarization of the South China Sea, and China's chilling use of digital surveillance. They paint a picture of an increasingly

shuttered world that runs on conspicuous Chinese coercion. This narrative bears more than some truth, and in it the United States is the only alternative or retort.

The president's decision to put the full thrust of U.S. foreign policy behind the naked extortion of vulnerable states has consequences that cannot be adjudicated in the House or Senate. They are bigger than one corrupt chief executive or one tainted election. They are nothing less than the durability of American preeminence when it is already under historic duress. The subtle power to coerce is an outgrowth of the United States' strength, but it is consensual and contingent. If this infraction goes unanswered or, worse, becomes de rigueur, less potent states will divest themselves of American power. Abject abuse will beget nullification. With a competitor in the wings, eager to write its own set of rules, it is a privilege that will not soon be restored.

Source: <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/ukraine/2019-10-03/usurpation-us-foreign-policy>

## Water Scarcity | Editorial

A new World Economic Forum (WEF) report posits that water crises are among the most significant risk factors in doing business in South Asia. Water, according to the report based on a survey of over 12,000 business leaders from around the world, presents the greatest challenge to business in India and is the second-biggest risk in Pakistan. Incidentally, the only greater risk for Pakistan, according to the report, is “energy price shock”, a reference to the rising demand for energy as populations and economies grow. Pakistan is heavily dependent on imports to meet demand, and because the sector is highly subsidised, governments bear most of the repercussions of market fluctuations.

As for water, the report quotes a description of the issue as “a problem of scarcity amid abundance”, explaining that despite the presence of major rivers, many citizens must queue for limited supplies of drinking water. It notes that South Asia is home to around a quarter of the global population but has less than 5% of the world’s renewable water resources. Low per-capita water availability and relatively high levels of water use are also troubling, with Pakistan having the fourth-highest rate of water usage in the world, despite being on the brink of officially being tagged as “water-scarce”.

The lack of proper infrastructure to deliver clean drinking water is highlighted as a significant problem, while dependence on a single source – the Indus system – makes the country more at risk of disruptions from extreme weather events, which will only increase and grow harsher due to climate change. The report also brings up the geopolitical challenges presented by water scarcity. “Water is a potential weapon in cross-border disputes, as countries have at times threatened cutting off flows because of outbreaks of violence in disputed territories.”

Many have gone hoarse exhorting the government to address water waste, but amid an ever-evolving list of challenges, this one keeps getting pushed down on the agenda. It is easy to cast blame on India. It is much harder to convince the agricultural elite to reduce water waste and work to improve supply efficiency. But, to quote Hillel, if not now, when?

Source: <https://tribune.com.pk/story/2074263/6-water-scarcity-2/>

# **North Korea And US Diplomacy: Toward A New Paradigm – OpEd By By Nicolas Jouan**

To the despair of international observers and amidst overwhelming international condemnation, North Korea is making its way toward a capable nuclear deterrence. On Thursday October 3, Pyongyang announced the successful testing of a long-range ballistic missile from an underwater platform, raising the prospect of an operational sea-based component to the country's growing nuclear capabilities (which have so far been limited to the ground leg of the traditional triad).

This new technical feat could potentially bring American coastlines into range of North Korean strategic weapons.

On Saturday 5, two days later, talks in Sweden between the United States and North Korea broke down almost immediately for the second time in a year since a failed meeting between President Donald Trump and Kim-Jong Un in Hanoi back in February. A short "friendly" meeting between Trump and Kim happened in June on the 38th Parallel, but with no outcome. The collapse of the negotiations is reportedly due to a structural disagreement between the two parts on sanction relief, one that no amount of back-patting between the two leaders has been able to resolve.

The general conduct of negotiations between the two parties has left a number of analysts dispirited. The Trump administration seems eager to engage with North Korea, but has lacked a consistent framework to work with so far, besides the long-term goal of "denuclearization." The actual extent of concessions that each party is ready to put on the table (let alone to accept) is still unclear, and this desynchronization of expectations was already apparent in the failed Hanoi summit.

In order to understand the uncanny diplomatic gymnastics at play between the US superpower and its third-world challenger, one must forget the traditional framework of arms control analysis and, by extension, of diplomacy. It must consider each sides' positioning in the international system and their subsequent objectives.

President Trump's diplomatic policy is characterized by a transactional vision of the international order, in rupture with the rule-based framework of the Obama administration. The withdraw from the Trans-Pacific Partnership Agreement in January 2017 and the abandonment of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) in May 2018 epitomizes Trump's tendency to reject postponed benefits and trust-building for more immediate, bilateral and organic resolutions.

It is tempting to analyze Trump's policy as an inability to perceive long-term peace prospects hiding behind multilateral agreements and soft diplomacy. But a more profound paradigm shift might be at play here. When the P5+1 agreed on the JCPOA under President Obama, it was within the framework of customary international law and constructive dialogue supported by control-checks and coordinated sanctions among others. It is clear that this framework has been abandoned by the new administration.

The transactional conduct of President Trump's diplomacy, impersonated by his like-minded Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, does not follow a principled solipsistic pattern of negotiations. It is based on the intersubjectivity of international agents, necessarily reducing diplomatic objectives to moving targets. By intersubjective we mean the definition of reality through the subjective experience of participating agents without preexisting sets of values. Hence the absence of "red lines" such as President Obama's unfortunate Syrian diplomatic experience.

Back to North Korea, the Trump administration is not primarily committed to denuclearize the Korean peninsula, or to protect Seoul, or to prevent the regime to achieve complete nuclear capabilities, or to counter Chinese influence in the region, or to overthrow Kim's regime. The aim of the current American diplomatic effort (besides securing the safety of US territory) is to reach as many of these targets as possible for the smallest military, diplomatic and economic tradeoff possible.

The Kim regime seems to have understood this reality very well, which would explain its willingness to develop its nuclear capabilities and to keep pressuring its neighbors. The intersubjectivity of international relations favors short-term wager in order to create a more advantageous status quo independently from the



fact that Pyongyang will be considered a rogue state in breach of international law. This is of few concerns for North Korea, since the redefinition of the status quo will crystalize a new set of values upon which the international system will function. Or so the regime believes.

This situation is problematic at two levels. First, it seriously increases the risk of losing control of events. A game of chicken such as this tends to lead to a zero-sum perception of reality, only mitigated by regular meetings of leaders and fragile declarations of friendship. The absence of defined aims can create misunderstandings between the two parties and make them lose too much credibility in the long run. Second, this situation is the result of US fatigue over military shows of force, which started under the previous administration. The questionable US-backed operation in Libya in 2011, followed by the Syrian red-line crisis in 2013, were early signs of an American temptation to return to isolationism after nearly two decades of fighting in the Middle East.

In all likelihood, the upcoming year will reproduce the same pattern of events: negotiations regularly breaking down under a lack of common expectations, punctuated by minor adjustments and relentless North Korean missile testing. The 2020 presidential elections will define the medium-term future of the negotiations, possibly returning US diplomacy to a rule-based order that will struggle to deal with a nuclear-armed rogue state breaching every imaginable rule. But over the long run, a new status quo will necessarily emerge – for better or for worse.

Source: <https://www.eurasiareview.com/11102019-north-korea-and-us-diplomacy-toward-a-new-paradigm-oped/>

## **Nobel Peace Prize | Editorial**

It is in recognition of the importance of peace in Africa that this year's Nobel Peace Prize has been awarded to Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed. The Nobel committee has selected Ahmed for the prize for his peacemaking efforts with Eritrea. The Nobel Institute said Ahmed was named for his moves to end his country's conflict with next door Eritrea within months of coming to office in 2018. In a statement, the Nobel committee said, "...Abiy Ahmed has initiated important reforms that give many citizens hope for a better life and a bright future. He spent his first 100 days as Prime Minister lifting the country's state of emergency, granting amnesty to thousands of political prisoners, discontinuing media censorship, legalising outlawed opposition groups, dismissing leaders who were suspected of corruption, and significantly increasing the influence of women in Ethiopian political and community life. He has also pledged to strengthen democracy by holding free and fair elections."

Though richly endowed with natural resources, a large part of Africa and Asia is ridden with conflicts. As a result of corruption and conflict people in many countries of the two continents are facing hunger, poverty and large-scale displacements. Conflict and corruption are forcing many Africans and Asians to leave their countries and seek refuge in peaceful environs where they can at least get their minimum needs fulfilled. It is because of rampant corruption and favouritism that prosperity in these countries has bypassed the common people. The local elites have pocketed the large chunk of the national income. There are few well-off people here and there and the majority lives a hand-to-mouth existence. The elites have no faith in their own healthcare and education systems. They seek medical treatment in Europe and America. Their children get education in First World countries. In these countries, now there is a growing realisation of the importance of peace and putting an end to corruption. The Ethiopian PM's efforts will act as a ray of hope for countries experiencing conflict and corruption.

Published in The Express Tribune, October 12th, 2019.

Source: <https://tribune.com.pk/story/2077583/6-nobel-peace-prize-4/>

# **The Demolition of U.S. Diplomacy By**

## **William J. Burns**

In my three and a half decades as a U.S. Foreign Service officer, proudly serving five presidents and ten secretaries of state from both parties, I've never seen an attack on diplomacy as damaging, to both the State Department as an institution and our international influence, as the one now underway.

The contemptible mistreatment of Marie Yovanovitch—the ambassador to Ukraine who was dismissed for getting in the way of the president's scheme to solicit foreign interference in U.S. elections—is just the latest example of President Donald Trump's dangerous brand of diplomatic malpractice. His is a diplomacy of narcissism, bent on advancing private interests at the expense of our national interests.

Ambassador Yovanovitch is not the first professional diplomat to find herself in political crosshairs in the history of the State Department. Trump is not the first demagogue to bully career personnel. And Secretary of State Mike Pompeo is not the first secretary of state derelict in his duty. But the damage from this assault—coming from within the executive branch itself, after nearly three years of unceasing diplomatic self-sabotage, and at a particularly fragile geopolitical moment—will likely prove to be even more severe to both diplomatic tradecraft and U.S. foreign policy.

### THE NEW MCCARTHYISM

Almost 70 years ago, in the early years of the Cold War, Senator Joseph McCarthy conducted a savage campaign against “disloyalty” in the State Department. Partisan investigators, untethered to evidence or ethics, forced out 81 department employees in the first half of the 1950s. Among them was John Paton Davies, Jr., an accomplished China hand. His sin was to foresee the communist victory in the Chinese Civil War. Davies was subjected to nine security and loyalty investigations, none of which substantiated the paranoid accusation that he was a communist sympathizer. Nevertheless, in a moment of profound political cowardice, Secretary of State John Foster Dulles fired him.

Purging Davies and his colleagues was not only wrong but also foolish. The loss of such expertise blinded American diplomacy on China for a generation and had a chilling effect on the department and its morale. One of the United States' most distinguished diplomats, George Kennan, was also pushed out of the Foreign Service during this era. He tried to defend Davies, who had served with him in Moscow and on the Policy Planning Staff, to little avail. Years later, Kennan wrote in his memoirs that McCarthy's onslaught and the department's failure to defend its employees was the most "sobering and disillusioning" episode of his long career.

That Senator McCarthy's chief counsel, Roy Cohn, was also Donald Trump's lawyer and mentor is one of history's sad ironies. Trump's scorched-earth tactics, casual relationship with truth, and contempt for career public service bear more than a passing resemblance to the playbook that Cohn wrote for McCarthy. And when Trump cried out for a "new Roy Cohn" to replace the late original, it was hardly a surprise that former New York Mayor Rudy Giuliani appeared—or that he dove into the muck of the Ukraine scandal and agitated for the removal of a career ambassador whose integrity and expertise proved to be an obstruction.

One might imagine that the State Department's leadership would stand up to the president and for its personnel—so many of whom are doing hard jobs in hard places around the world. If only that were the case.

Trump's scorched-earth tactics, casual relationship with truth, and contempt for career public service bear more than a passing resemblance to the playbook that Cohn wrote for McCarthy.

Instead, today's leaders have shown no more spine than Dulles did. Secretary Pompeo apparently worked around the embassy in Kiev to advance the president's private agenda, allowed specious opposition research about Yovanovitch to circulate around the department, and sat on his hands as Trump slandered Yovanovitch on the infamous call with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky and warned ominously that "she's going to go through some things." The ghost of Roy Cohn was smiling somewhere.

Even before the Ukraine mess, the Trump administration had been waging a war on diplomacy for nearly three years. The White House regularly pushes historic

cuts to diplomacy and development spending, which is already 19 times smaller than the defense budget. Career diplomats are sidelined, with only one of 28 assistant secretary-rank positions filled by a Foreign Service officer, and more ambassadorships going to political appointees in this administration than in any in recent history. One-fifth of ambassadorships remain unfilled, including critical posts.

Not coincidentally, applications to join the Foreign Service have declined precipitously, with fewer people taking the entrance exam in 2019 than in more than two decades. The pace of resignations by career professionals is depressing, the pernicious practice of retaliation against individual officers just because they worked on controversial issues in the last administration is damning, and the silence from the department's leadership is deafening.

#### AGAINST THE AMERICAN INTEREST

Last spring, I wrote an essay in *Foreign Affairs* called "The Lost Art of American Diplomacy." It was meant less as an elegy than as a reminder of diplomacy's significance. I'm feeling much more elegiac today.

To clean up the institutional wreckage in the State Department will take many years. The damage to our influence and reputation may prove to be even longer lasting—and harder to repair.

The practical consequences are not hard to discern. If a U.S. ambassador doesn't speak for the president, and the embassy is seen as an enemy of the White House, why would the local government take seriously its diplomatic messages? Why use official channels, rather than speak directly to the president's personal lawyer and his grifting confidants? If the key to unlocking aid is stroking the president's vanity, why undertake the hard work of economic or political reform, with all the risks that entails?

For dictators, Trump is the gift that keeps on giving, a non-stop advertisement for Western self-dealing.

The president's actions distort diplomatic practice and decapitate the American interest. Because of them, a new Ukrainian administration is all the more exposed to corruption and democratic backsliding, and all the more vulnerable to

Russian manipulation and aggression. Russian President Vladimir Putin, professionally trained to manufacture compromising material on all sorts of opponents, couldn't have produced a more disruptive document than the summary of the Trump-Zelensky call last July, which has sowed political dysfunction in both Washington and Kiev.

By using his public office for personal gain, Trump has affirmed Putin's long-held conviction—shared by autocrats the world over—that Americans are just as venal and self-absorbed as they are, just more hypocritical about it. For dictators, Trump is the gift that keeps on giving, a non-stop advertisement for Western self-dealing. So much for enlightened self-interest. So much for the power of our example. So much for our credibility.

We are digging a deep hole for ourselves in a world that is changing fast, filled with players who won't wait for us to stop digging and a landscape that is quickly hardening against U.S. interests. Our allies are confused. Our adversaries are quick to take advantage. The institutions and coalitions we shaped over decades are wobbling. The confidence of the American people in the power and purpose of disciplined American leadership is evaporating.

#### THE URGENCY OF RENEWAL

The Trump administration's dereliction of duty takes place at a time when the United States will need to rely on diplomacy more, not less, to advance its interests and values in an ever more competitive world.

I closed my essay six months ago on a reasonably optimistic note. I acknowledged that a long, tough journey lay ahead—that American diplomacy would take a lot longer to fix than it has taken to break. But I also emphasized the opportunity before us, which the malpractice of the Trump administration has thrown into sharp relief. The journey toward renewal will be even more arduous now, and even more urgent.

Joseph Welch, the legendary attorney in the Army-McCarthy hearings, burst the balloon of McCarthyism in 1954 when he posed his unforgettable question: "Have you no sense of decency, sir? At long last, have you left no sense of decency?"

The question was rhetorical then, just as it is today for the McCarthy imitators in and around the Trump administration. Their sense of decency is well hidden, their venality and vindictiveness on full display.

But the decency that burns brightly, and that gives me some lingering faith even in these dark times for American diplomacy, is that which career officers like Yovanovitch have displayed. Their honor and commitment characterize professional diplomacy and public service at their best. So long as those qualities remain intact, however much they are battered in the age of Trump, there is still hope for diplomacy's renewal.

Source: <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/2019-10-14/demolition-us-diplomacy>

## **Brexit Deal Finalised | Editorial**

The United Kingdom (UK) after long has struck a deal with the European Union (EU) this Thursday. The news broke after European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker disclosed the deal hours before the summit of the bloc's leaders in Brussels. According to British Prime Minister Boris Johnson, the new deal benefits both parties greatly and does push Britain into isolation due to this radical Brexit decision. Although the terms of the deal have not yet been disclosed, based on the remarks of both the leaders, the compromise reached sounds promising. Ties between the EU and the UK seem cordial after the deal as well, which shows the inclination to maintain a healthy relationship that does not affect economies on both ends. According to the tweet by PM Johnson, the deal still offers free trade and friendly cooperation between both sides.

The result of that news also translated positively for the British economy because as soon as the news broke out, the price of the pound went up and British share prices also improved considerably. This is certainly a testament to the fact that both parties involved were solution-oriented and the idea was to minimise damage as much as possible. The next big challenge for Boris Johnson now is to get the British parliament to approve the deal. The deadline they had set for themselves was October 31, however, at this point support looks a bit difficult. The voting session is on Saturday but the Northern Irish Party, Democratic Unionist Party, and the Labour Party have refused to support the deal, each based on different reasons.

These differences are over custom, consent and sales tax arrangements, while the Labour Party believes firmly that the decision should be made by giving people the final say in a public vote. Based on the timeline, it is highly unlikely that the PM will pursue a public vote, however, without significant support in the parliament, weeks of efforts to strike a deal with the EU will go to waste. Choosing to persist in the conflict not only impacts the British economy but also dampens its foreign relations. PM Boris Johnson's tweet shows a strong will to take back control, a right-wing narrative that is emerging in several economies around the world after the strong pursuit of the globalisation paradigm. This will trigger economies to focus primarily on self-sufficiency and growth.

Source: <https://nation.com.pk/18-Oct-2019/brexit-deal-finalised>



# **Will Turkey Be Able To Establish A ‘Safe Zone’ In Syria? – Analysis By Md. Muddassir Quamar**

On October 09, Turkey launched Operation ‘Springs of Peace’, a military excursion into north eastern Syria to establish a ‘safe zone’ with the objective of preventing the Syrian Democratic Forces (Quwwāt Sūriyā al-Dīmuqrāṭīya or SDF) from controlling areas along the Turkish-Syrian border. This is part of Turkey’s longstanding goal to have a military presence in Syria to neutralise the alleged “terror corridor” run by the SDF. Ankara has been opposed to the formation of an autonomous Kurdish region (Rojava) in north eastern Syria because of the insurgency led by the Kurdistan Workers’ Party (Partiya Karkerên Kurdistanê or PKK) in southeast Turkey.

In his address at the 74th session of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) on September 24, President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan gave a detailed account of Turkey’s plan to establish the safe zone, along Turkey’s south eastern border. According to Erdoğan, the safe zone will be 480 kilometres long and 30 kilometres deep inside Syria. He argued that the safe zone east of River Euphrates will be able to house nearly two million Syrian refugees who were forced to flee to Turkey after 2011. According to the Turkish official estimates, Turkey currently hosts about 3.6 million Syrian refugees and has spent nearly US\$ 4 billion on their housing and welfare. While underlining that talks with the United States (US) on establishing the safe zone is still under progress, Erdoğan expressed Turkey’s determination to continue with the plan.

Turkey’s plan for a safe zone in Syria is not new. Erdoğan has on several occasions in the past talked about the need for a safe zone inside Syria. For instance, in early September this year, while addressing a gathering of provincial leaders of the ruling Justice and Development Party (Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi or AKP), he had stated that “Turkey is determined to actively initiate formation of a safe zone in Syria along the eastern line of the Euphrates River.” Between 2014 and 2018, Turkey had undertaken a number of limited military operations in northern Syria to execute its safe zone plan. There are two major objectives that Turkey seeks to achieve through the establishment of a safe zone in northern

Syria. One, breaking the nexus between the SDF and the PKK which Turkey feels undermines security in its southeast. And, two, establishing a Turkish-controlled zone inside Syria to repatriate the Syrian refugees languishing in Turkey.

Turkey has since 1984 faced Kurdish insurgency led by the PKK, which was declared a terrorist organisation by the government the same year. Several past efforts at ending the insurgency, including the most recent one in July 2015, have failed to achieve peace due to lack of political accommodation by Turkey. The failure of peace talks with the PKK saw the revival of the Kurdish insurgency in the following years. Ankara fears that an autonomous Kurdish region in northern Syria could become a safe haven for the PKK militants and leaders to spearhead the insurgency in southeast Turkey. It believes that Syria's Democratic Union Party (Partiya Yekîtiya Demokrat or PYD), founded in 2003, is a sister organisation of the PKK and has been aiding and supporting the PKK to continue its activities inside Turkey. The PKK was listed as a Foreign Terrorist Organisation (FTO) by the US Department of State in 1997 and by the United Kingdom (UK) and the European Union (EU) in 2000 and 2002, respectively. Ankara insists that the PYD and its armed wing, the People's Protection Unit (Yekîneyên Parastina Gel or YPG), and by extension the SDF which is dominated by the PYD-YPG, too should be considered as terrorist groups.

Through the Turkish-controlled safe zone, Ankara also wants to eliminate the SDF. At the UNGA, Erdoğan made it clear that Turkey considers the SDF as a terrorist organisation and that it is committed to eliminate this national security threat. He stated that the "elimination of the PKK-YPG terrorist structure in the east of the Euphrates" is significant for a credible resolution of the Syrian crisis.

Furthermore, Turkey sees the creation of a large safe zone in northern Syria as an easy way out of the problem it faces due to the presence of a large Syrian refugee population within its borders. As stated earlier, Ankara wishes to repatriate and resettle about two million Syrian refugees in the safe zone under its control. Some reports suggest that Turkey has already started the process of repatriating them to areas in northern Syria which are currently under its control. Erdoğan during his address at the UNGA invited other countries, especially from the EU, to join the Turkish efforts to resolve the refugee problem. According to Ankara, new townships can be developed in the proposed safe zone through

international efforts which will help Turkey as well as the EU countries to repatriate Syrian refugees and migrants to their home country.

Until recently, Syrian migrants and refugees were more a foreign policy issue in Turkey used as leverage during negotiations with the EU countries. However, with the downward economic spiral, domestic anger against illegal migrants and refugees has been growing. Incidents of violence against migrants and news of their involvement in petty crimes are often reported in the local media. For the ruling AKP, the issue is now of serious concern because of its poor performance in the local elections held in March 2019. Many Turkish political analysts were of the view that the anger against illegal migrants and continued economic problems were major factors responsible for the poor performance of the ruling AKP in the municipal elections. Political calculations have forced the AKP to also recognise the financial burden of hosting the Syrian refugees, which the party earlier projected as a case of humanitarian assistance to enhance its domestic support.

Ankara's plan, however, runs contrary to the interests of other important actors in the Syrian theatre. Turkey's North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) ally, the US, is not in favour of a large safe zone. Until recently, US depended on the SDF to defeat the Islamic State (IS). It was the most effective local force against the IS terrorists and now, with the US support, controls the de facto autonomous Kurdish region in northeast Syria. Therefore, the US is not inclined to accept the Turkish plan that might undermine the SDF and the autonomous Kurdish region. The key difference is on the expanse of the safe zone. The US in consultation with its Syrian Kurdish partners wants it to be as narrow as eight kilometres. Turkey, on the other hand, wants a 30-kilometre-deep territory that will eventually expand up to Deir-ez-Zor, creating a large Turkish-controlled area in northern Syria.

The issue became a major point of friction between Washington and Ankara earlier this year as the latter threatened unilateral military action against the SDF. Turkey has been opposing the US support to the SDF even after the defeat of IS. On August 07, even as officials from Turkey and the US announced reaching an agreement on establishing a safe zone, there was a lack of clarity over the extent of the zone. However, President Donald Trump's sudden announcement on twitter to withdraw the US forces from northeast Syria indicates that the White House is willing to go along with the Turkish plan for the time being.

Nonetheless, it is not only the US which has had problems with Turkey's safe zone plan. Russia and Iran, which together with Turkey spearhead the Astana peace process on Syria, too have been opposed to the Turkish proposal. Both countries, though sympathetic to Turkey's security concerns, believe that Turkey's safe zone plan undermines Syria's sovereignty and seeks to return a large number of Syrian refugees who fled the country. While Russia's position on the return of the refugees is unclear, Iran is opposed to the Turkish plan as the Syrian refugees in Turkey largely support the anti-regime groups and militias which it fears will undermine the regime's authority. Although, Erdoğan has moderated his views on the question of Syrian unity under the Bashar al-Assad regime as was reflected in his UNGA speech, he continues to blame the Assad regime for aggravating the crisis and massacre of the opposition groups and militias in Idlib and argues that this will lead to a new round of influx of Syrian refugees into Turkey.

The Assad regime and the Syrian Kurds too are opposed to Turkey's safe zone plan. The regime is opposed to the Turkish military presence and does not want refugees back as they are considered traitors. For the regime, this will also undermine the territorial integrity of Syria. On the other hand, Kurds see the Turkish pursuits as an existential challenge. The majority of Syrian refugees in Turkey are Sunni Arabs and Turkmen, while the area being touted as the safe zone is predominantly Kurdish and hence the SDF fears 'ethnic cleansing' of the Syrian Kurds by the Turkish forces.

Turkey's Operation Springs of Peace faces serious hurdles. While the Trump administration and the SDF are fine with a narrow 'peace corridor', the wider safe zone is not acceptable to both. The Syrian Kurds counted on the US support and the EU sympathy to counter Ankara's belligerence but now feel betrayed by the Trump administration. This might push them to seek Russian support. The Assad regime and its supporters in Moscow and Tehran too are opposed to the idea of Turkish intervention in northeast Syria and have escalated their assault on the Turkish-backed opposition in northwest Idlib. In reaction to the Turkish incursion, Iran has launched a military drill in its north western region bordering Turkey. Though Erdoğan has made Syrian safe zone a domestic political issue linked to Turkey's national security and economic revival, given the complexities in Syria

and lack of support for the plan, establishing the proposed safe zone will be a difficult task.

Views expressed are of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of the IDSA or of the Government of India.

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# **Why It Would Be Hard to Stop World War III Once It Starts By Robert Farley**

How does the unthinkable happen? As historians continue to contemplate the various historic anniversaries around World War I through next year, the question of unexpected wars looms large. What series of events could lead to war in East Asia, and how would that war play out?

The United States and China are inextricably locked in the Pacific Rim's system of international trade. Some argue that this makes war impossible, but then while some believed World War I inevitable, but others similarly thought it impossible.

In this article I concentrate less on the operational and tactical details of a US-China war, and more on the strategic objectives of the major combatants before, during, and after the conflict. A war between the United States and China would transform some aspects of the geopolitics of East Asia, but would also leave many crucial factors unchanged. Tragically, a conflict between China and the US might be remembered only as "The First Sino-American War."

Fifteen years ago, the only answers to "How would a war between the People's Republic of China and the United States start?" involved disputes over Taiwan or North Korea. A Taiwanese declaration of independence, a North Korean attack on South Korea, or some similar triggering event would force the PRC and the US reluctantly into war.

This has changed. The expansion of Chinese interests and capabilities means that we can envision several different scenarios in which direct military conflict between China and the United States might begin. These still include a Taiwan scenario and North Korea scenario, but now also involve disputes in the East and South China Seas, as well as potential conflict with India along the Tibetan border.

The underlying factors are the growth of Chinese power, Chinese dissatisfaction with the US-led regional security system, and US alliance commitments to a variety of regional states. As long as these factors hold, the possibility for war will endure.

Whatever the trigger, the war does not begin with a US pre-emptive attack against Chinese fleet, air, and land-based installations. Although the US military would prefer to engage and destroy Chinese anti-access assets before they can target US planes, bases, and ships, it is extremely difficult to envisage a scenario in which the United States decides to pay the political costs associated with climbing the ladder of escalation.

Instead, the United States needs to prepare to absorb the first blow. This doesn't necessarily mean that the U.S. Navy (USN) and U.S. Air Force (USAF) have to wait for Chinese missiles to rain down upon them, but the United States will almost certainly require some clear, public signal of Chinese intent to escalate to high-intensity, conventional military combat before it can begin engaging Chinese forces.

If the history of World War I gives any indication, the PLA will not allow the United States to fully mobilize in order to either launch a first strike, or properly prepare to receive a first blow. At the same time, a "bolt from the blue" strike is unlikely. Instead, a brewing crisis will steadily escalate over a few incidents, finally triggering a set of steps on the part of the US military that indicate to Beijing that Washington is genuinely prepared for war. These steps will include surging carrier groups, shifting deployment to Asia from Europe and the Middle East, and moving fighter squadrons towards the Pacific. At this moment, China will need to decide whether to push forward or back down.

On the economic side, Beijing and Washington will both press for sanctions (the US effort will likely involve a multilateral effort), and will freeze each others assets, as well as those of any co-belligerents. This will begin the economic pain for capital and consumers across the Pacific Rim, and the rest of the world. The threat of high intensity combat will also disrupt global shipping patterns, causing potentially severe bottlenecks in industrial production.

How do the Allies Respond: Whether US allies support American efforts against China depends on how the war begins. If war breaks out over a collapse of the DPRK, the United States can likely count on the support of South Korea and Japan. Any war stemming from disputes in the East China Sea will necessarily involve Japan. If events in the South China Sea lead to war, the US can probably

rely on some of the ASEAN states, as well as possibly Japan. Australia may also support the US over a wide range of potential circumstances.

China faces a less complicated situation with respect to allies. Beijing could probably expect benevolent neutrality, including shipments of arms and spares, from Russia, but little more. The primary challenge for Chinese diplomats would be establishing and maintaining the neutrality of potential US allies. This would involve an exceedingly complex dance, including reassurances about Chinese long-term intentions, as well as displays of confidence about the prospects of Chinese victory (which would carry the implicit threat of retribution for support of the United States).

North Korea presents an even more difficult problem. Any intervention on the part of the DPRK runs the risk of triggering Japanese and South Korean counter-intervention, and that math doesn't work out for China. Unless Beijing is certain that Seoul and Tokyo will both throw in for the United States (a doubtful prospect given their hostility to one another), it may spend more time restraining Pyongyang than pushing it into the conflict.

Source : <https://nationalinterest.org/blog/buzz/why-it-would-be-hard-stop-world-war-iii-once-it-starts-91656?fbclid=IwAR2CoJfH7mOrnzXu1gZDxvJDVTXsoLmIG3gRQL61tzWvbDZPyJlnlal4VM>