

globalPoint

September 2019

KHAN IMRAN

A silhouette of a man's head and shoulders in profile, looking towards the right. He is positioned behind a chain-link fence. The background is a dark night sky filled with stars and a crescent moon. The overall mood is contemplative and somber.

**Khan Stands with Kashmir
Pakistan Stands with Kashmir**

DOWNLOAD

CSS Notes, Books, MCQs, Magazines



THE CSS POINT
Yes We Can Do It!

WWW.THECSSPOINT.COM

- **Download CSS Notes**
- **Download CSS Books**
- **Download CSS Magazines**
- **Download CSS MCQs**
- **Download CSS Past Papers**

*The CSS Point, Pakistan's The Best
Online FREE Web source for All CSS
Aspirants.*

Email: info@thecsspoint.com



BUY CSS / PMS / NTS & GENERAL KNOWLEDGE BOOKS
ONLINE **CASH ON DELIVERY** ALL OVER PAKISTAN

Visit Now:

WWW.CSSBOOKS.NET

For Oder & Inquiry

Call/SMS/WhatsApp

0333 6042057 – 0726 540316



www.danzoman.com

Kids Clothing Online Shop

Best available Kids Dresses in Pakistan



CSS Compulsory Solved MCQs from 2000 to 2019

&

CSS Compulsory Solved Subjective Papers from 2016 to 2019

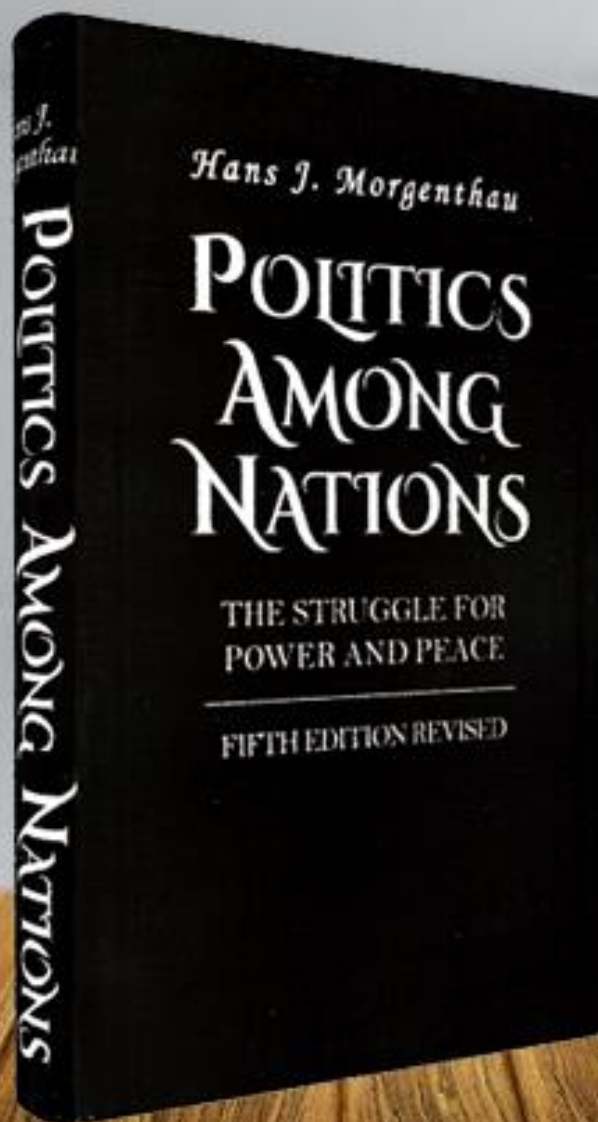
ORDER NOW!



Politics Among Nations: The Struggle for Power & Peace

By Hans Morgenthau

Order Now



30% OFF

CALL OR SMS
03336042057

Table of Contents

PAKISTAN

1. PM at the UNGA Editorial	9
2. Pakistan: The Way Forward By Javid Husain	11
3. No to War Editorial	15
4. Pakistan's Defence Day By Reema Shaukat	16
5. Keeping Kartarpur Open Editorial	19
6. Population Problem Editorial	21
7. Pak- Oman: A Unique Relationship Editorial.....	22
8. Trilateral Dialogue Editorial	23
9. Fighting For Kashmir on the Diplomatic Front Editorial.....	24
10. Pakistan-Turkey Ties By Muhammad Usman Ghani.....	25
11. Future of Water in Pakistan By Murtaza Talpur	28
12. Climate Change to Increase Flood Risk in Pakistan By Ahmad Ahsan	31
13. Kashmir in EU Parliament Editorial	35
14. Torkham Crossing Editorial	36
15. Pakistan's Three-way Foreign Policy Challenge By Kamran Yousaf.....	37
16. Blossoming Pak-Saudi Relations By Dr Nasreen Akhtar.....	39
17. Earthquake Crisis Editorial	42
18. Pakistan-China Ties By Amna Ejaz Rafi	44
19. Politics of SAARC Summit Editorial	46
20. Kashmir: US Concerns Editorial.....	47
21. CPEC Under Present Regime By Syed Ali Imran.....	48

ECONOMY

1. Renewed Commitment to CPEC Editorial	51
2. Pakistan May Face Serious Financing Issues: Moody's By Salman Siddiqui	53
3. Trade And Economy in Focus Editorial.....	56
4. Towards an Inclusive World Economic Order? By Dr Rakhshinda Perveen	58
5. Pak-India Trade Realities Editorial	61
6. Indian Designs Against CPEC Editorial.....	64

7. Economic Targets | Editorial..... 65

8. The US-China Trade War By Aneela Shahzad 67

9. IMF’s Positive Outlook | Editorial..... 70

10. ADB’s Assessment | Editorial..... 71

EDUCATION

1. Pakistani Universities | Editorial..... 72

2. Higher Challenges in Higher Education of Pakistan By Dr Hazir Ullah 73

3. Education Versus The State | Editorial 76

4. Peace Building Through Higher Education By Muhammad Murtaza Noor 78

WORLD

1. A Deal With the Taliban Is Only the First Step Toward Peace By Johnny Walsh 81

2. The Brexit Mess | Editorial 86

3. Trump Taking The World Towards Another Recession By Shahid Javed Burki..... 87

4. Halting Afghan Talks | Editorial 90

5. International Rebuke For India | Editorial..... 92

6. Planned Trump-Moon Meeting Rekindles Hopes of North Korea Talks By Edward White..... 93

7. The Problem With Trump’s Foreign Policy – Analysis By Adam Garfinkle..... 95

8. Energy And Poverty – OpEd By Todd Royal 100

9. The Afghan Peace Agreement — The US Perspective By Inam Ul Haque 104

10. UN Report on Rohingya Crisis | Editorial..... 107

11. Defeat For Netanyahu | Editorial 108

12. Iran-US Ties Since Trump Came to Power 109

13. World Peace | Editorial..... 112

14. Global Climate March | Editorial 113

15. Trump’s Trade Wars: A New World Order? – Analysis By James M. Dorsey..... 114

16. Tensions Simmer in ME | Editorial 125

PAKISTAN

PM at the UNGA | Editorial

Prime Minister Imran Khan hit the target full on when he spoke at the 74th UN General Assembly on Kashmir and the outrages being committed there. The effective annexation of Kashmir by India, as the prime minister said, was of course his chief reason for attending the summit and delivering what was by the end of it a powerful address commenting on the manner in which the fate of eight million Kashmiris was being ignored by the world and by the UN which had itself passed resolutions defending its right to self-determination.

Imran warned of the dangers of radicalisation in Kashmir, and possible bloodshed when the curfew is lifted and 900,000 troops are unleashed against the Kashmiri people. The people of Kashmir have of course now been under lockdown for over 55 days, and Imran Khan made it clear that in his view they were being targeted because they were Muslims, just as Nazi Germany had targeted the Jews. The reminder of how quickly the world can descend into a place of ruin, as happened during World War II, was important so that Western leaders could make a connection with the analogy. The prime minister's somewhat detailed explainer on the RSS and Narendra Modi's life-term membership of the fascist organisation was also significant. Perhaps world leaders will now think a little harder about quite what is happening in Kashmir and about the 13,000 young boys Imran Khan reminded us have been picked up and taken to unknown places.

While PM Imran linked Islamophobia to 'radical Islam' as he has done in the past, it is true that in India at least, hostility against Muslims is growing and has been seen in places outside Kashmir virtually on a daily basis. The world needs to take note of this. Imran's other warning about the possibility that India would blame Pakistan for another terrorist attack and of the huge risks involved if a conventional war began between two nuclear-armed nations should also not be forgotten. The two countries had clashed early this year. Pakistan has, since Imran came to power last year, made repeated efforts to call on India for talks, peace and friendship. The lack of response from New Delhi has brought us to the

point where we stand today, with people in border villages reporting a heavy Indian troop buildup along the LoC or working boundary.

It is not insignificant that in his own address, Prime Minister Narendra Modi made no mention of Kashmir. This is perhaps a further Indian attempt to stress that the fate of the territory is India's internal matter. Instead he spoke about the need for the world to unite to fight terrorism. Both the Pakistani and Indian leaders have spent the last week or so in the US meeting world leaders including President Donald Trump and updating them about their stance on the present situation in the Subcontinent and on Kashmir. PM Imran's speech at the UN delivered a powerful message; it was unrelenting in its description of what was happening and what could happen. We must hope it does not go unheard by the UN and the world leaders gathered at the General Assembly.

Source: <https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/533037-pm-at-the-unga>

Pakistan: The Way Forward By Javid Husain

Hence to fight and conquer in all your battles is not supreme excellence; supreme excellence consists in breaking the enemy's resistance without fighting.”

–Sun Tzu, The Art of War

Since independence, India has been the source of a grave and enduring threat to Pakistan's security and economic well-being. This threat has manifested itself in outstanding disputes especially the Kashmir dispute, the dismemberment of Pakistan by India in 1971, continuous tensions in Pakistan-India relations, Indian efforts to dominate Pakistan economically and isolate it diplomatically, and, more recently, Indian sponsorship of terrorism and subversion in Pakistan as reflected by Kulbhushan Jadhav's case.

The rise of Hindu bigotry in India combined with its hegemonic ambitions has brought about a qualitative change in the grave threat posed by it to Pakistan's security. In my last article, Rise of a bigoted Hindu India (Nation, 20 August, 2019), I drew attention to the implications of this development for Pakistan's security and the regional peace and stability. Briefly, it would aggravate the enduring threat posed by India to Pakistan's security by giving the tensions between the two countries the character of a civilizational confrontation in the long run and by making the Kashmir dispute even more intractable. India's decision to transform its illegal occupation of Kashmir in violation of UN Security Council resolutions into outright annexation of the territory reflects the aggressive approach that New Delhi is likely to pursue in the future.

Recent developments in Pakistan-India relations have also put paid to the unrealistic goal of a South Asian economic union within the framework of SAARC, which in any case was undesirable from Pakistan's point of view as it would have allowed India to dominate Pakistan economically and even politically. Further, the rise of an India steeped in Hindu bigotry and driven by hegemonic designs is bad news generally speaking for regional and global peace and security. India's smaller neighbors and countries in the Persian Gulf and the

Indian Ocean regions should, therefore, be prepared for the adverse consequences of India's hegemonic ambitions.

At this watershed moment, Pakistan's policy makers need to assess the national, regional and global realities carefully to devise a long-term strategy for overcoming the dangers lurking ahead, ensuring Pakistan's security, promoting its economic well-being, and attaining the goal of a satisfactory resolution of the outstanding Pakistan-India disputes, especially the Kashmir dispute. Emotional responses, sloganeering, and a short-term approach will not take us far. It is important to remember that in this world of realpolitik, power rather than international law or morality is the ultimate arbiter of strategic issues of war and peace. The need for building up our national power for safeguarding our national interests, therefore, cannot be over-emphasized. Further, we need to adopt a comprehensive approach in building up our national strength covering political stability, economic development and military muscle.

Nation building is not a short-term enterprise. It involves continuous struggle by a nation, spanning over decades, in which the people as a whole have to brave hardships and overcome obstacles which may come their way. Economic power and advancement in science and technology hold a special position in the calculus of national power in the modern times. Ideally, at the initial stages of its development, a country should assign a higher priority to the growth of its economic power than to building up its military might because a sound military superstructure can be built up only on the solid foundation of its economic strength. Reversing the order of priorities can lead to disastrous consequences. The Soviet Union collapsed primarily because its weak economy could not sustain the enormous burden of its strategic commitments and heavy military superstructure. Further, we should keep our national aims within the reach of national resources and power to avoid the dangers of strategic over-stretch and exhaustion.

It is, therefore, deplorable that our GDP growth has declined to about 3% per annum as against 6.7% currently, despite some slowdown, in the case of India whose GDP (\$2.8 trillion) is already eight times the size of Pakistan's GDP. Our slower GDP growth rate means that with the passage of time we are falling further behind India which is gaining greater prominence and influence internationally. Modi's presence at the recent G7 meeting should drive home that

point. This may also explain why the response of the governments of the world as a whole to the recent Indian illegal annexation of Kashmir has been so disappointing.

To enhance our chances of success in the future, we must accelerate our GDP growth rate to about 9% per annum on a sustainable basis by assigning economic development and advancement in science and technology top priorities in our national planning. This in turn would require us to raise our national saving and investment rates to over 30% of GDP as against their current low levels. Our national saving rate currently is about 11% as against 30% in the case of India because of the ostentatious life style of our elite. If we want to do better economically, we would have to adopt austerity, self-reliance, and economic and social justice as our national mottos. Obviously, this would necessitate painful sacrifices by the Pakistani elite.

Political stability and the strength of state institutions are important elements of national power. It is imperative to reform the institutions of the state so that they function cohesively within their constitutional limits in the best interest of the country. None of them has the monopoly of wisdom or loyalty to the country. The principle of civilian supremacy must be firmly established in our polity. This is the only way to strengthen political stability so as to provide a solid framework for ushering in a just social and economic order in the country. It is worth underscoring that political stability comes through the strengthening of the institutions and not through the aggrandizement of the individuals. Further, whereas accountability of individuals is the function of the state institutions concerned through a fair trial and a non-partisan judicial system, accountability of elected governments is the responsibility of the people of Pakistan through fair and transparent elections.

The formidable external threats to Pakistan's security call for a grand strategy rooted in realism and based on a synthesis of the country's political, economic, security and foreign policies for the attainment of our national goals. As recommended in my book, "Pakistan and a World in Disorder—A Grand Strategy for the Twenty-First Century", the linchpin of Pakistan's grand strategy should be assigning the top priority to the goal of rapid economic growth while maintaining a credible security deterrent. This in turn would require us to pursue a low-risk and non-adventurist foreign policy. Our long-term India and Kashmir policies

must be informed by these fundamental considerations while responding appropriately to tactical developments in the short-term.

In view of our credible nuclear deterrent, the Indian threat to Pakistan will materialize most likely in the form of efforts to destabilize us politically through subversion and terrorism, weaken us economically, and undermine our cultural identity, with the objective of bringing us down on our knees without fighting an all-out war as recommended by Sun Tzu in his above quoted maxim. Our pre-occupation with the tactical at the cost of the strategic may lead us to a situation where we may lose the war while winning a tactical battle here and there. My next article would try to show how we can give a practical shape to these considerations while formulating and executing our India and Kashmir policies.

Source: <https://nation.com.pk/03-Sep-2019/pakistan-the-way-forward>

No to War | Editorial

While Prime Minister Imran Khan has said that Pakistan will not start a war with India, he has also warned of the risk to the world if a nuclear war breaks out in South Asia. “We are two nuclear-armed countries. If tensions rise, then they present a danger to the world,” Prime Minister Imran said on Monday while speaking at the International Sikh Convention at Governor House in Lahore, where attendees included Indian Sikhs. “From our side, we will never act first.” The PM also noted that the Indian government seems to have forgotten that it is not yet a global superpower. “Whatever effort I made, India was acting like a superpower telling us to do this and not to do that. It was giving us dictation,” Imran said.

Given Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s outright lies and mismanagement of the economy, it is clear that India cannot become an economic superpower under his watch. But a fascist superpower? Maybe. Prime Minister Imran’s remarks were initially reported by Reuters as promising not to use nuclear weapons first, but the foreign ministry was quick to clarify that the remarks had been “taken out of context”, adding that “While conflict should not take place between two nuclear states, there’s no change in Pakistan’s nuclear policy.”

PM Imran, meanwhile on Tuesday, had a telephonic talk with Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, and the two sides reportedly discussed the situation in India-occupied Kashmir. Imran apprised Salman of the current situation in the region. This was the third phone call between the prime minister and the Saudi crown prince in three weeks. There has also been excitement regarding the upcoming visit of the Saudi foreign minister to Islamabad, but given the recent Saudi investment in India and the close relationship between Salman and Modi, it would be highly unlikely that anything groundbreaking would emerge from the visit. At best, it may help resolve the issues facing Pakistani doctors in Saudi Arabia, up to 1,000 of whom face sacking and deportation due to recent changes in Saudi laws.

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

Source: <https://tribune.com.pk/story/2048445/6-no-to-war/>

Pakistan's Defence Day By Reema Shaukat

WAR surely is not an easy business and may go on for ages. Its outcome persists for years to come and relations between the warring countries are dependent on the bitter experience of the past. Still, if a nation takes the risk of going to war, it should do so with tenacity, engaging all available elements of national power to achieve the anticipated objectives. The same goes for the India-Pakistan 1965 War, which could not bring about those desired goals that both nations thought of. Rather, the Indo-Pakistan War of 1965 symbolises the deep distrust and relentless hatred between the two countries, which endures even today. The present situation in Kashmir and war hysteria by India always keeps the situation tense between both nuclear armed neighbours.

Since partition, Indo-Pak traditional rivalry continues at present where Kashmir, left as an unfinished agenda of partition, seeded the beginnings of conflict that is persevering under Indian hegemonic designs, even now. India started legal ploys to wear away the disputed status of Kashmir through constitutional changes and to bring it at parity with other Indian states. It imposed presidential rule apart from extending other Indian laws in Kashmir. Shocked by such a move, the Kashmiri people launched a movement against India which was largely supported by the Kashmiri masses. But an unfortunate incident of the theft of Moo-e-Muqaddis (holy hair of Prophet Muhammad PBUH) from Hazratbal shrine amplified tensions in Kashmir.

Pakistan again moved for settlement through the UNSC in February and May 1964, however, threat of a USSR veto caused unsuccessful actions. To resolve the Kashmir dispute, in 1964 talks were held in Karachi to look for other means to resolve this issue. In April 1965, Indian armed forces engaged Pakistan into border clashes in Rann of Kutch, which ended with a ceasefire but brought global and domestic humiliation to India. Therefore, the efforts of resolving Kashmir dispute diplomatically were in vain and Indian chauvinism was well exposed by the Rann of Kutch skirmish. The global environment at the time was based on Bloc Politics and Pakistan was seen as ally of the Western Bloc whereas the Sino-Indian border dispute in 1962 happened during the Cuban missile crisis and the developing differences between China and the then Soviet Union gave new

room to world politics. The USA saw an opportunity to prevent India from falling into Soviet influence and wanted to clinch it into the Western Bloc.

The USA offered Pakistan assistance in the form of entry into SEATO (1954), CENTO (1955) and Bilateral Defence Cooperation Agreement (1959). US helped Pakistan militarily on the conditions that the equipment provided will be not be used against non-communist countries but following Rann of Kutch episode, USA first reduced and later stopped Pakistan's aid during 1965 war. After Hazratbal incident, US became more indifferent towards Pakistan blaming that it brought the Kashmir issue to the UNSC purely for its internal propaganda. Indian inclinations towards the Soviet Union and the Sino-India conflict brought about a major alteration in US policy in this region. After the Sino-Indian War of 1962, United States became more closely associated with India by providing it military and economic aid. Pakistan launched Operation Gibraltar and Grand Slam to free Kashmir militarily but India waged a full-scale military attack on Pakistan in September 1965.

With lesser number of combat forces on ground, water and air, Pakistani soldiers fought valiantly and proved that despite limitations in equipment their determination was not limited. However, Pakistan was not stronger on the political front and it was felt that the Pakistani leadership with little knowledge about operational strategy, launched a perfunctory war. The war with much ups and downs could not bring an outcome to Kashmir other than deadlock. It is interesting to note that at the end of the war, both sides claimed victory. India fabricated its victory with the capture of territory and warranting security of Kashmir, while the Pakistan's claim centred upon the notion of successful defence against meaningless Indian aggression in spite of limited resources.

Now when both India and Pakistan have become nuclear powers, both cannot afford to go for any kind of war as they risk nuclear catastrophe. Kashmir has remained a bone of contention between the two countries, giving way to many other small debacles. For Kashmir, a dialogue process involving all stakeholders is a must and India should accept peace offers by Pakistan as Kashmiris have suffered enough for many decades. As far as military capability and proficiency of Pakistan is concerned, it should not be undermined like 1965 war, as today Pakistan shines bright in its efforts of curbing an imposed war against terrorism on it regardless of many constraints. Pakistan's defence today is much stronger

and every year 6th of September is marked as Defence Day to pay tribute to the soldiers and heroes who despite limited resources fought courageously to prove to the world they are second to none. Today when Pakistan has proved its struggle in war against terrorism and is successful in eradicating extremism from its soil, it acknowledges every war hero because of which Pakistan's defence outlooks sturdier. Therefore, 6 September which is commemorated as Defence Day is to pay tribute to all Shuhadas and Ghazis. The brilliance and grandeur of all the three armed forces is remembered and elicited on this day who till date are contributing their best for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of motherland.

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

Source: <https://pakobserver.net/index.php/2019/09/05/pakistans-defence-day/>

Keeping Kartarpur Open | Editorial

FOLLOWING the latest round of talks in Atari, Pakistan's announcement on Wednesday that it was ready to open the Kartarpur Corridor in November is in keeping with its preferred route of engagement with India. It is now the other side's responsibility to fulfil its end of the bargain and realise the agreement struck between the two countries to create the corridor in time for the 550th birth anniversary of Baba Guru Nanak. Pakistan has also committed to hosting 5,000 pilgrims or more daily at the Gurdwara Darbar Sahib in Narowal, which this Kartarpur stretch will link with India. The access will be without visa "to pilgrims of all faiths, seven days a week, throughout the year", says a statement by the Foreign Office. Taking a break from war rhetoric, provided that India demonstrates the same willingness as Pakistan, the two appear poised to enter a new (as well as return to a bygone) era of people-to-people contact, with Sikh pilgrims being allowed travel across the corridor, only needing to be issued an identification card issued by the authorities on side of the border.

The movement along the Kartarpur Corridor is significant in that it reflects Pakistan's consistent position of pushing for dialogue between its leadership and those who must make decisions on the behalf of the Indian people. It is not difficult to understand why, in recent times, this offer for dialogue may have been replaced with a sterner tone in reaction to India's refusal to hold talks over Kashmir. And, surely, this does not represent a departure from the principle that places faith in humanity and its ability to find a joint solution without having to come to blows. Pakistan's leadership has clearly called out Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his associates over their aggressive posturing. And it has also made clear that it is alert to any kind of danger posed to it without losing its balance, and without irrationally allowing it to be taken hostage by the hoarse cries of war.

The Pakistani delegation's handling of the Kartarpur Corridor in the recent round of talks, even at a time of serious bilateral tensions, signified both maturity and candidness. Earlier this week, Pakistan lifted a ban on import of medicines and raw material from India to prevent a shortage of crucial drugs, even as a general bar on bilateral trade remained effective. The exemption was given "in the best interest of the public". The same mature and confident approach by Pakistan

may be required in dealing with other aspects of the bilateral relationship — for instance, resumption of the bus service in order to benefit families divided across the border. It displays an openness that, along with bringing other positives, will best serve the country's image internationally.

Published in Dawn, September 6th, 2019

Source: <https://www.dawn.com/news/1503837/keeping-kartarpur-open>

Population Problem | Editorial

ONE of the persistent yet lesser talked about challenges facing Pakistan is its growing population. From the distribution of essential healthcare and education services, to tackling unemployment and raising the general standards of living, the failure to control population rates has had far-reaching implications. Some have also put forth the argument that rising populations not only place a burden on a country's limited resources, but they also contribute to the climate change crisis (of course, though, it is still largely the wealthiest countries that contribute the highest global greenhouse emissions). At 2.4pc, Pakistan's population growth rate is much higher than in many parts of the world. Worryingly, the vast majority is under the age of 30. But when the long-awaited 2017 census results were announced, the realisation that we had now surpassed Brazil as the fifth most populous country in the world seemed to create no urgency amongst lawmakers. Currently, Indonesia, the US, India and China have higher populations than Pakistan. Unless concrete steps are taken to halt this trend, the country's population could exceed 300m by 2050, warned a UN report this year. Past attempts to introduce family planning schemes and greater access to contraceptives have met with little success. Due to a lack of foresight and long-term implementation of population control policies by successive governments, along with societal stigma and resistance from right-wing quarters each time the topic of birth control is brought up, the problem has been allowed to fester.

At a recent event in the capital city, the Special Assistant to Prime Minister for National Health Services Dr Zafar Mirza highlighted the shocking fact that approximately half of all married women in the country do not use modern contraceptive methods, resulting in 3.8m unintended pregnancies each year. Early marriages, and the lack of knowledge about contraception and birth spacing, have all contributed to the position we are in today. Until these underlying causes are addressed, any and all other progress made will amount to zero.

Published in Dawn, September 7th, 2019

Source: <https://www.dawn.com/news/1504000/population-problem>

Pak- Oman: A Unique Relationship |

Editorial

NO lexeme is sufficient to describe the warmth and uniqueness of friendship that exists between Pakistan and Oman. The fact of the matter is that this is not a just traditional relationship or ties based on trade figures, but this is far beyond that, much deeper than that. The reason simply is that peoples of both the countries have historic bonds.

The same empathy was witnessed during the recent visit of a ten member Omani Parliamentary delegation led by its Chairman Majles Al Shura Sheikh Khalid Bin Al Maawali which during its stay in Islamabad held wide ranging and extensive talks with the country's top leadership on a host of issues including regional peace and security as well as economic cooperation. Certainly these people to people contacts and parliamentary exchanges are very important to give further impetus to the relationship and explore new avenues of cooperation that are a win-win for the two countries. Given the geographical proximity, there is a great scope of economic cooperation and trade between the two friendly countries and we have no doubt in saying that under the sagacious and visionary leadership of Sultan Qaboos Bin Said, this relationship will gain further strength and substance to the mutual advantage of our two peoples. The people of Pakistan see Sultan Qaboos Bin Said with great respect and admiration for the way he transformed Oman into a truly magnificent and modern country with a strong economic base. Undoubtedly, it is under his Majesty's wise and sagacious leadership that Oman has emerged as an oasis of peace and a progressive country. Pakistan indeed has so much to learn from the success story of Oman and its innovative approaches, and it can be done by reinvigorating exchanges and contacts at different levels including the political and parliamentary. There is also a need to transform the historical linkages between the two countries into a strong economic partnership and Gwadar port provides a strong base for it – a gateway to Muscat to access the Central Asian States. We are confident that the top leadership of both the countries will work towards that end to reap the benefits of connectivity.

Source: <https://pakobserver.net/index.php/2019/09/09/pak-oman-a-unique-relationship/>

Trilateral Dialogue | Editorial

BEIJING'S initiative of trilateral dialogue involving also Pakistan and Afghanistan is proving to be significant and positive one to build trust and remove misunderstanding between Islamabad and Kabul. With this China has once again proved its peace credentials and shown its commitment towards building a peaceful and prosperous region.

The third round of trilateral dialogue between the three countries was held in Islamabad on Saturday during which they reiterated the resolve to boost counter terrorism efforts and it was reaffirmed that no terrorist organization, element or individual would be allowed to use their soils against any country. As regards Pakistan is concerned, it has always rightly stressed for better management of border and for this reason it has also started work on fencing its border. Nonetheless, these steps have been seen with suspicion and not reciprocated by Kabul. And the reality is that Pakistan continues to face terrorist attacks from across the border. This trilateral dialogue in fact has provided both the countries an opportunity to address these issues and we are confident with China acting as a primary mediator between them, the situation between the two countries will further improve with the passage of time. At the same time, it is important that this trilateral forum is also effectively used to enhance economic and trade cooperation amongst the three regional countries. China is a global economy and both Pakistan and Afghanistan having close geographical proximity with it could immensely benefit if they build trust and confidence with each other. The regional trilateral trade can witness a sharp upsurge with restoration of peace in Afghanistan and the completion of connectivity projects. Addressing a news conference after the trilateral dialogue, Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi showed great interest in the construction of Peshawar-Kabul motorway. Indeed the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) offers a great opportunity to all the regional countries and by building rail and road infrastructure, a great economic activity can be generated up to the Central Asian States. Physical barriers that have served as the sources of poverty and hindrance to development for ages need to be removed. Indeed the BRI of visionary President Xi Jinping offers the solution.

Source: <https://pakobserver.net/index.php/2019/09/09/trilateral-dialogue/>

Fighting For Kashmir on the Diplomatic Front | Editorial

Prime Minister Imran Khan's third visit to Azad Jammu and Kashmir in four weeks was aimed at sending a strong message to the world to help end the continuing siege of the Indian-Occupied Kashmir and the horrors being committed there by the Indian occupation forces. Imran Khan warned that atrocities tend to promote extremist thinking. The rally was simultaneously meant to tell Kashmiris that Pakistan stands resolutely by them. Mr Khan once again exposed the BJP administration's fascistic policy of Hindutva and its consequences for peace in the region and the world at large. He also made it clear that while Pakistan wants the issue of Kashmir resolved peacefully in line with the UN resolutions, it is prepared to respond to any brick with a stone.

Delivering speeches in Pakistan amounts to preaching to those who are already converted. The test lies in persuading the world community to not only condemn the lockdown, cessation of mobile-cum-internet services and restrictions on free movement and speech, but also to demand that India allow the Kashmiris to exercise their right of self-determination. If Scotland and Quebec can exercise their democratic right to decide whether they want to live with Britain and Canada despite centuries-old unions, how can Kashmiris who were forcibly made a part of India only 72 years back be denied the right of self-determination?

Mr Khan has commended 58 countries as well as the EU for support over IOK. The atrocities that have been committed by India have shaken the world's conscience. There is thus a wave of sympathy for the Kashmiri people in the comity of nations. What is expected from Pakistan's leadership is to build upon the support through a qualitatively better diplomacy and persuade the world that a referendum under the UN is the only way to resolve the Kashmir issue which may otherwise act as a powder keg in South Asia. It remains to be seen how Mr Imran Khan fights the Kashmiris' case at the UN General Assembly.

Due to wanton and indiscriminate killings by the terrorist networks the world is fed up with violent groups. The Kashmiris have gained the world's sympathy through their peaceful and heroic struggle. This has to be complemented by Pakistan's fight on diplomatic front.

Pakistan-Turkey Ties By Muhammad Usman Ghani

Cooperation between the two Islamic countries is indispensable as their nexus can hinder any heinous design aimed at Muslims.

The Kashmir issue has given a wake-up call to the Pakistanis. They now know Pakistan is the subject of isolation from many countries. The cold response on the Kashmir issue from many countries implies Pakistan's isolation on the diplomatic front. Even the KSA, which remained Pakistan's ally through thick and thin, has not adopted a warm stance on the Kashmir issue. The US's offer of mediation on Kashmir has remained an unrequited bid. Russia decided to favour the Indian camp on the Kashmir issue. The ties between the European clouts, including France and Germany, and Pakistan never became warm. Meanwhile, India garnered its support.

Being an all-weather friend of Pakistan, China supported Pakistan's stance on Kashmir. However, in another good development, Pakistan earned the courtesy of Turkey. Turkey has voiced its concerns against the brutalities in Indian held Kashmir (IHK) and given the strength to Pakistan's stance.

Pakistan shares a decent history of its ties with Turkey. Both countries have enjoyed strong bonds of cooperation since Pakistan's inception. During the pre-partition era, Turkey had a special sense of reverence towards Indian Muslims as they opposed the splintering of the Ottoman Empire and initiated a Khilafat movement in its favour. Following the independence of Pakistan, Turkey cemented unprecedented diplomatic ties with the former. Since then, both countries have never witnessed a downgrade in their ties.

Cooperation between the two Islamic countries is indispensable as their nexus can hinder any heinous design aimed at Muslims.

With access over the Black Sea and the Mediterranean Sea as well as shared borders with several Middle Eastern and European states, Turkey has very substantial geography.

Healthier Pak-Turkey bonds can favour Pakistan in diverse ways. Ceremonial links with Turkey are capable of significantly boosting Pakistan's trade as Turkey can provide Pakistan with access to the European states. Apart from that, our sole trade links with Turkey can expedite Pakistan's shabby economy. As of 2017, the trade volume of Turkey and Pakistan has reached \$900 million. However, the Turkish government has presented its proposal on the Strategic Economic Framework to enhance bilateral trade five times.

Turkey's major exports to Pakistan are machines, boilers, electrical appliances and aluminium. Turkey has also expressed interests in developing a legal framework for tourism infrastructure planning, determination, and classification of qualities of hospitalities based on international standards. Pakistan's ties with the European countries have never been at a warm verge.

However, Turkey shares a border as well as warm ties with EU states, It can, therefore, help Pakistan cultivate better ties with them. At present, Turkey enjoys an improved economy and has witnessed substantial progress.

However, in the past, the story was different. In the leaves of days gone by, Turkey had a feeble economy and faced multiple internal and external problems. Pakistan is transitioning with a similar phase from its worst economy and less development. Pakistan ought to learn from Turkey how to overpower these economic snags.

The cooperation between Turkey and Pakistan is not confined economically. The former has helped Pakistan on international forums as well. Pakistan was on the verge of making its entry to the blacklist of Financial Action Task Force (FATF). However, it was Turkey, with the support of Malaysia and China, which repudiated the entry of Pakistan in the blacklist. Turkey-Pakistan ties are also crowned by defence sales as Turkey is the second-largest weapon seller to Pakistan. Turkish defence exports to Pakistan have amounted at \$400 million as the future sale of Turkish-made helicopters and war-ships are expected to bring that figure up to billions.

When it comes to Pakistan, it is also tantamount to carte-blanche for Turkey. With access to the Indian Pacific and Central Asian Republics, Pakistan offers the worthwhile option to Turkey to trade and enhance connectivity with the South

and Central Asian region. Turkey imports cotton, beverages, vinegar and apparel from Pakistan. The bitter response of the US towards Turkey has brought Turkey closer to Russia and China; likewise, Pakistan is the good friend of China, therefore, Pakistan is capable of cementing further China-Turkey ties. The efficacious consummation of CPEC is likely to bring manifold prospects for Pakistan, thus, good Pak-Turkey ties can benefit Turkey as well. Over the last ten years, Pakistan has forged healthier ties with Russia; on the other hand, Russia and Turkey are on the same page in Syria. Likewise, these three countries are sharing fraught ties with the US. Consequently, the nexus of these three countries can counter the US designs aimed against them. Pakistan is the land of diverse cultures and traditions, so, people to people contact of Turkey and Pakistan has much to offer for the Turks. The land of Pakistan is abundant in resources, deep cooperation between Pakistan and Turkey would profit Turkey in this regard as well. The collaboration between Turkey and Pakistan can help the former in the Syrian turmoil. Turkey is looking towards Islamic countries to boost its tourism. Thus, Pakistan, with the bulk of its population, can give a pulse to the Turkish tourism department. For this purpose, Turkey is pondering to award visa on arrival to the Pakistani nationals.

Another interesting entity that brings both countries together is that they have many communal things. Both are Islamic countries. They are top refugee-hosting countries. Both countries are besieged by unstable countries. These states have democratic governments. Pakistan and Turkey are the dynamic members of OIC. All these factors have helped Pakistan and Turkey in fostering upright links.

Prime Minister Imran Khan's visit to Turkey earlier this year has added further impetus to the Pak-Turk ties. However, both countries ought to establish more decent ties to protect Islamic ideology and improve their respective economies and societies.

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

Source: <https://dailytimes.com.pk/466878/pakistan-turkey-ties/>

Future of Water in Pakistan By Murtaza Talpur

Historically, every living being has been associated with water. No water means no existence, and no existence means no world. It is a vastly prized and precious natural resource that we have. But it is to pronounce with profound grief that with time it is becoming a highly scarce resource.

Pakistan, among the South Asian countries, is going to be a vastly water-scarce country by 2025 as per government's statistics. The leading reason of water stress is reckless population increase in the country; Pakistan is now placed at number five in population growth in the world. The majority of the rural population depends on water for their livelihoods. In southern Pakistan, extreme water shortage has left millions of people unemployed. Currently, agriculture's contribution to Pakistan's economy accounts for 19.5 percent of the GDP, employing 42.3 percent of the labour force and providing raw material for several value-added sectors. A decade ago, it was more than 23 percent.

Water issues experts claim that the quantity of water is the same as it was six decades ago, but the consumption has increased manifold due to rapid population escalation and ever-increasing industrialisation. In 2009, the per capita water availability in Pakistan was 1,500 cubic metres, and in 2017, it was reduced to 1,017 cubic metres. In Pakistan, 90 percent of water is consumed for agriculture purposes, of which 50 percent goes waste due to a poor irrigation system and old farming patterns.

According to a recent report by the International Monetary Fund, Pakistan ranks third in the world among countries confronting a severe water shortage. In terms of water consumption, Pakistan has the world's fourth highest rate. Also, its water intensity rate-amount of water in cubic metres used per unit of GDP-is highest in the world. It is alarming to know that no country's economy is more water-intensive than Pakistan's. According to the World Resources Institute, Pakistan is at number 14 as an extremely water stressed country.

There are a number of mounting challenges related to water facing Pakistan in the last couple of years-growing population, politics on water, climate change,

industrialisation and urbanisation, an obsolete irrigation system, water theft, monopoly of big landlords on water resources, conventional patterns of farming, little or no knowledge of modern farming tools and techniques. These challenges, if tackled with the strong and sincere will of government, can likely reduce the impact of a growing acute water shortage.

In Pakistan, 90 percent of water is consumed for agriculture purposes, of which 50 percent goes waste due to a poor irrigation system and old farming patterns

Some of the global figures reveal an overall water scarcity that directly or indirectly contributes to Pakistan's water situation too. According to researchers, by 2020 about 30-40 percent of the world will face water scarcity. With only seven percent of the world's freshwater, China plans to produce 807 million gallons a day from purification by 2020. Around 2025, a projected 1.8 billion people will live in regions overwhelmed by water scarcity, with two-thirds of the world's population living in water-stressed areas. There will be about one billion more mouths to feed worldwide by 2025, and global agriculture alone will entail another one trillion cubic metres of water per year. The global middle class will surge from 1.8 to 4.9 billion by 2030, which will result in a substantial upsurge in freshwater usage.

If the present water consumption tendencies do not alter, there will only be 60 percent of the present water by 2030. According to the International Energy Agency, by 2035, the world's energy consumption will increase by 35 percent, which will increase water use by 15 percent. In addition, the number of people living in river basins under severe water stress is expected to reach 3.9 billion by 2050, adding over 40 percent of the world's population. Feeding nine billion people by 2050 will require a 60 percent increase in agricultural production and a 15 percent increase in water withdrawals.

To cope with the increasing future water challenges Pakistan needs to alter the course of thinking. The cropping and farming patterns need to be changed. Water mismanagement should be controlled. Government should devise a robust mechanism to sincerely control the speedily growing population. Distributaries, canals and watercourses ought to be lined. A modern irrigation system needs to be introduced, including the drip irrigation system and sprinkler. Collective actions need to be taken for water conservation as a scarce public resource,

stressing the need to ensure that it is managed responsibly, sustainably and equally.

For water conservation, local communities, NGOs, media, government and civil society should have a deep awareness for sustainable water management. Nestle Pakistan's sustainable agriculture team has introduced the water sense technology to help save water through digital intervention. The technology allows farmers to monitor soil moisture levels for crops thus ensuring sustainable use of water resources. The farmers regularly receive information about which areas to irrigate via a cloud-based monitor.

The writer works at AWARE based in Badin

Source: <https://dailytimes.com.pk/466856/future-of-water-in-pakistan/>

Climate Change to Increase Flood Risk in Pakistan By Ahmad Ahsan

Torrential downpours flooded huge swathes of Northern Pakistan in July; leading to nearly 50 deaths and damage and destruction to residences, infrastructure, and crops. These rains came atop the monsoon season, which historically has been the harbinger of flooding for decades. Over to the East, monsoon-fueled storms and floods have ripped through Nepal, Bangladesh, and India; displacing as many as five million people from their homes, and leaving well over 600 dead.

As with the rash of rains we saw in recent days, the factors that fueled flooding have been brewing for years in advance. Extreme rainfall aligns with the impact of climate change. It is crucial to point out that as the average temperature rises, the amount of moisture the atmosphere can carry also increases. Researchers point out that for nearly every degree Celsius rise in temperature, seven percent more moisture can be absorbed by the air. This moisture, in turn, is then released through progressively increasing precipitation.

The widespread availability of Information and Communication Technologies, including mobile phones can be used to enhance water data management, modeling, flood risk mapping, and forecasting, at local, provincial, and federal levels. It will also strengthen the monitoring and reporting of water distribution and use; and improve data, modeling, and forecasting to guide preparedness and response to extreme events

The stage had been set with the melting of an above-normal snowpack earlier this year. Rains in the first quarter of the year caused rivers to swell, and higher than average temperatures led forecasters to realize that monsoon-fueled rains would exacerbate the risk of riverine, urban, and flash flooding, due to isolated extreme precipitation events characterized by localized heavy downpours.

This is evidenced by data from the Pakistan Meteorological Department, which reported above-normal precipitation in mountainous areas during winter, followed by above normal rainfall in February accompanied with higher than average temperatures. This trend continued, with temperatures above average by as much as 2oC in March, April, and May; leading to heat wave conditions

developing in late May. The monsoon season has also witnessed variations in average temperature by 1oC-2oC. The department warned that warmer temperatures would increase glacial melt, and enhance water flow in rivers.

Irregular rains are likely to stress the cotton crop, and may exacerbate the ongoing drought in Baluchistan and Sindh post-monsoon. Areas of both provinces are expected to face “moderate” drought conditions by PMD. Even worse, these parts of the country may be moving toward a drought-to-deluge cycle, a phenomenon referred to as “Weather Whiplash”, which describes a cycle of extreme weather events rapidly shifting between two conditions.

While no individual weather event can be attributed to climate change, in these things there are signs for those who understand. For example, the duration of heat waves has increased five times over the past three decades, while annual precipitation has shown higher variability and a slight overall increase. Rising temperatures will increase the likelihood of heavy rainfall, and the severity of that rainfall is also on the rise.

The consequences of climate change in the years to come include more extreme floods and droughts, accelerated melting of glaciers increasing the risk of Glacial Lake Outburst Floods (GLOFs). GLOFs occur when ice walls retaining a lake fail, sending humongous volumes of stored water downstream in a devastating flash flood. Pakistan, home to over 2000 glacial lakes, faces GLOF risks in the Kashmir and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa regions where nearly seven million people are at risk. Accelerated glacial melting due to higher temperatures will not only increase the risk of glacial lake outburst flooding in Northern Pakistan, but could potentially alter river flows, creating a high risk of inundation in densely populated and cultivated areas downstream. Another risk, often overlooked, is sediment deposition, which may increase the risk of flooding even at lower flows.

According to experts, the following years will see increasing rain instead of snow, wide yearly variations in precipitation, and varying intensity and frequency of extreme discharge events. River flood risk may double at the sub-national level within the next two decades, hitting Punjab and Sindh the hardest. Floods are the most common and destructive natural hazard in Pakistan, with 30 major floods having devastated the country over the past 65 years. Flooding has caused historic damage to the country; thousands of lives have been lost, and the

economic impact is in the billions. From 1950 to 2016, around 15,000 fatalities were reported from riverine floods.

The 2010 “mega flood” impacted the lives of nearly 20 million people, or 10 percent of the country’s population. The 2010 floods alone are estimated to have caused losses worth \$10.5 billion (or 6% of that year’s GDP) in lost productivity due to damages to infrastructure, agriculture, and ecosystem services. During the following five years, a major flood event occurred at least once each year; affecting at least one million people annually.

Flooding causes direct financial losses due to widespread damage to homes and infrastructure, and loss of livelihoods due to reductions in agricultural, livestock, and business productivity. The impacts on an already overloaded healthcare system, adverse effects on water and sanitation services, disruption of supply chains and public transport, and a host of interlinked social impacts make floods the most expensive of natural disasters.

Given the significant damage and disruptions from floods over the past 50 years, Pakistan needs continuous improvement in flood risk management and reduction. Over the years, major investments have been made to enhance flood protection infrastructure; however, increasing flood hazard risk due to climate change, and the probability of large-scale flood exposure due to population growth and economic development necessitate additional protective measures.

These measures include complementing flood protection infrastructure with “soft” measures such as floodplain zoning, improved flood forecasting, and early warnings. Timely warnings during the 2010 flood allowed timely mitigation measures, thereby reducing downstream impact and economic loss. Construction of new reservoirs can help mitigate floods and seasonal flow variations due to climate change. It is crucial to point out that as climate change increases the frequency and intensity of floods, greater investment will be required in the years to come. Increased financing will be required for major infrastructure, reforms and institutional strengthening, urban services, flood mitigation, monitoring, early warning systems, and environmental management. From a legislative standpoint, land-use planning regulations with considerations for flood risk management should be adopted and implemented from the provincial level.

The widespread availability of Information and Communication Technologies, including mobile phones can be used to enhance water data management, modeling, flood risk mapping, and forecasting, at local, provincial, and federal levels. It will also strengthen the monitoring and reporting of water distribution and use; and improve data, modeling, and forecasting to guide preparedness and response to extreme events.

Source: <https://www.pakistantoday.com.pk/2019/09/17/climate-change-to-increase-flood-risk-in-pakistan/>

Kashmir in EU Parliament | Editorial

Pakistan is building up nicely to the 74th session of the UN General Assembly at which Prime Minister Imran Khan will raise the Kashmir issue on the 27th of this month, besides holding a one-on-one meeting with world leaders, including President Trump. After Pakistan's successful diplomatic lobbying at the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva where 58 countries supported Pakistan's stance on occupied Kashmir, the longstanding dispute has now reverberated in the European Union Parliament as well — after a gap of 12 years. During a debate on Sept 17, Members of the European Parliament came up with sharp rebuke of the Indian clampdown in occupied Kashmir, and called upon India and Pakistan to engage in direct talks to ensure a peaceful resolution of the conflict that has the potential to escalate into a nuclear showdown.

EU Minister Tytti Tuppurainen — speaking on behalf of European Commission Vice President Federica Mogherini — described talks as the only way to resolve the Kashmir issue to avoid instability and insecurity in the region, and made it clear that the EU's position on the longstanding dispute remains unchanged. The minister said the EU would continue to closely monitor the situation, while demanding that freedom of movement and means of communication in the besieged territory should be fully restored as well as access to all essential services. There were other members who were extremely vocal against the illegal Indian action in Kashmir, with some calling for using all possible means to mount pressure on New Delhi to ease the military curfew.

The incumbent government's efforts to internationalise India's illegal annexation of Kashmir on August 5 and the barbarism that continues there ever since are commendable. The PM and his team are leaving no stone unturned to keep the issue burning bright.

Published in The Express Tribune, September 19th, 2019.

Source: <https://tribune.com.pk/story/2059598/6-kashmir-eu-parliament/>

Torkham Crossing | Editorial

THE launch of round-the-clock operations at Torkham — one of the two key trade and travel routes between Pakistan and Afghanistan, the other being Chaman in Balochistan — is one of the rare confidence-building measures taken by either side in recent years. The availability of day and night customs and immigration facilities at Torkham is expected to rapidly boost bilateral trade and make it easier for people travelling to and from Pakistan. The new data shows that the trade volume across Torkham has increased by about 55pc since upgradation of the border post early this month; hopefully, it should continue to surge in the months ahead. Similarly, the cross-border traffic of Afghans for medical treatment in Pakistan and for other reasons is also expected to jump once the government here upgrades its visa-processing section at its embassy in Kabul and reconstructs its Jalalabad consulate, which is in very poor shape because of being subjected to repeated militant attacks. Encouraged by early results from Torkham, a federal minister has hinted at the provision of round-the-clock immigration and customs services at Chaman too, if and when required.

Although the initiative was undertaken on the instructions of the prime minister, KP Chief Minister Mahmood Khan's active interest in it expedited work on the project. Indeed, closer business ties with Afghanistan are an important aspect of the provincial economy. Brisk bilateral trade will help create new jobs in the region, improve public services and attract investment in transport and other infrastructure. China has already expressed its desire to set up cold chain facilities and a hospital at the border, and its foreign minister has spoken about Beijing's plan to build a motorway connecting Peshawar with Kabul. This initiative could be a first step towards enhancement of regional connectivity. Peshawar as a regional trade hub could help Pakistan access the Central Asian markets for its export cargo once differences over road transit facilities through Pak-Afghan territory are resolved. Also, the goal of regional connectivity and improved trade ties cannot be achieved without concerted efforts from both sides to bridge their political differences. There has been a visible improvement in bilateral ties at the political level in recent months due to Islamabad's efforts to convince the Afghan Taliban to sit across the table with the elected government in Kabul. Both countries should use this to build trust and an enduring relationship for the future of their people.

Source: <https://www.dawn.com/news/1506465/torkham-crossing>

Pakistan's Three-way Foreign Policy

Challenge By Kamran Yousaf

Prime Minister Imran Khan visited Saudi Arabia last week before heading to New York to attend the United Nations General Assembly session. The main purpose of his visit to Riyadh was to garner the support of the Kingdom for Pakistan's row with India over Kashmir. But just days before his meeting with the Saudi King and Crown Prince, the Saudi oil facilities were struck by missiles. The unprecedented attacks carried out through drones shut down the Kingdom's half of oil production but significantly sparked fears of a war in the already volatile Middle East. Saudi Arabia and the US have accused Iran of being behind the attack, although Houthi rebels in Yemen claimed the responsibility. Against this backdrop, Prime Minister Imran visited Saudi Arabia and naturally much of the discussions remained focused on the brewing tensions between Saudi Arabia and Iran. An official handout issued by the Prime Minister Office in Islamabad said Imran briefed the Saudi leadership about the current situation in Kashmir. The statement went on to say that the Saudi King and the Crown Prince expressed concerns over the situation and reiterated their support for the Kashmir cause. Interestingly, the statement carried by the official news agency of Saudi Arabia did not mention Kashmir. The Saudi statement only talked about the attack on oil facility and Prime Minister Imran's condemnation. This shows that the developing situation in the Middle East has thrown yet another challenge for Pakistan on the foreign policy front. Any conflict between Saudi Arabia and Iran will have serious implications for Pakistan. The major challenge for Islamabad is to stay away from this brewing Iran-Saudi tension. But it is not going to be easy given the fact that Pakistan has a strategic pact with Saudi Arabia, according to which, it has to come to the rescue of the Kingdom if it comes under attack. Suppose if the US and Saudi Arabia launched an attack against Iran, and Tehran retaliates, will Pakistan take sides or stay neutral? And this is not the only repercussion that Pakistan may face. The Iran-Saudi conflict will surely raise oil prices in the international market and this naturally will impact Pakistan's economy which is already reeling from one shock to another.

Also if current tensions in the Middle East translated into a serious conflict, this will certainly distract the world's attention from the unrest in India-Occupied Kashmir. And this is something that Pakistan would never want. Since India

revoked the special status of the disputed territory on August 5, Islamabad has launched a diplomatic offensive against India. One of the reasons that Kashmir gets global traction is because of the unprecedented converge given by the international press. This naturally has benefited Pakistan's narrative. But the developing situation in the Middle East can potentially change that proposition.

What has made Pakistan's work cut out is the sudden deadlock in the Afghan peace process. With tension growing by the day with India over Kashmir, Pakistan was hoping that a peace deal in Afghanistan would help its cause. Peace in Afghanistan would not only have secured the western border but also opened a real possibility of reviving otherwise faltering ties with the US. And an improved relationship with Washington could only enhance Islamabad's options on Kashmir. It was because of this reason that Pakistan felt more disappointed than any other country when President Trump suddenly pulled out of the peace talks with the Taliban. At a time when Pakistan wanted to solely focus on Kashmir, it now also has to deal with increased instability in Afghanistan as well as lurking fears of a possible conflict in the Middle East. Islamabad never wanted this three-way challenge. These testing times will undoubtedly test the mettle and skills of those sitting at the helm in Pakistan.

Published in The Express Tribune, September 23rd, 2019.

Source: <https://tribune.com.pk/story/2062699/6-pakistans-three-way-foreign-policy-challenge/>

Blossoming Pak-Saudi Relations By Dr

Nasreen Akhtar

PRIME Minister Imran Khan's exclusive visits to Saudi Arabia have reinforced the existing interconnection between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia. Khan has convinced the Saudi government that Pakistan would play its role in defusing tension between Iran and Saudi Arabia visa-avis Yemen and Iran. Mutual trust and cooperation has strengthened relations between the two leading Muslim countries. Presently relationship between Saudi Arabia and Pakistan are blossoming. Historical visit of Muhammad Bin Salman is making history of trust, cooperation, and friendship between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia. Crown Prince would kickoff commendable agreements and Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) with Khan's government which is determined to make Pakistan a progressive and strong country. Muhammad Bin Salman is known as moderate, visionary and reformist Prince in the world. He has introduced many social changes in Saudi Arabia.

During his visit to Saudi Arabia, Prime Minister Khan, revealed his socio-economic policies and impediments in Pakistan. Consequently Saudi Arabia offered colossal economic support of \$6billion to Khan's government. Crown Prince Muhammad Bin Salman's visit to Pakistan shows his country's commitment to Pakistan and its people. This is the time when Pakistan is facing grave economic challenges and his visit would help Pakistan to boost up its economy. Diverse MoUs would strengthen strategic and economic relations between the two Muslim countries which have never let down each other (whenever they needed) in the time of need. Since its independence, Pakistan heavily relied on three countries – America, China and Saudi Arabia for its economic, security and political needs. Saudi Arabia is an important country in the Middle East and in the Muslim world. Pakistani people have strong emotional attachment with Saudi Arabia owing to two sacred places- Mecca and Madinah. Pakistani governments and people are always ready to protect Saudi Arabia because of the holy places. In the Muslim world these two countries cover broader strategic, military and economic ties. Saudi Arabia values Pakistan not only due to its strong defence but also its role in the Islamic world. Since Pakistan is commanding Islamic Military Alliance of 34 Islamic countries, under retired General Raheel Sharif, the Saudi government seeks Pakistan's role in

eliminating terrorism in the Middle East because Pakistan has successfully eliminated terrorist network from its soil.

Increasing global security alliances and cooperation between the countries have changed the dynamics of world politics. In the present global environment Saudi Arabia and Pakistan's relations are emerging. Let us have a brief and candid look at Pakistan and Saudi Arabia's cordial relations. Since Pakistan's inception, strong ties exist between these two countries. Evidently, Saudi Arabia never disappointed Pakistan during its internal or external crises. Pakistan never forgets its support during wars with India in 1965-71 and politically it supported Pakistan's stance on 'non-recognition of Bangladesh' and supports Pakistan on the Kashmir dispute. History tells us, the US, the most trustworthy ally of Pakistan did not help Pakistan in 1965 and 1971 (wars with India). In 1979, Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan and threatened Pakistan's security. Saudi Arabia, the Muslim country, helped Pakistan the most.

In Pakistan's history different governments (civil-military) have ruled and all political and military establishments strengthened cordial relations with Saudi Kingdom and assured Pakistan's security and political support to Saudi Arabia. All Pakistani rulers pay frequent visits to Saudi Arabia to show their affection and support to the King of Saudi Arabia. Strategically, "since 1950s, all Pakistani governments have assured, many times, Saudi Arabia that whenever there is a threat to Saudi security" Pakistan would protect its territory, though commitment is not "documented" but both regard each other. There is a general (public) perception in Pakistan that Saudi Arabia's security is Pakistan's security. The reason is simple; majority middle and working class is in Saudi Arabia are playing pivotal role in the development of Saudi Arabia. As far as defence is concerned, in 1979, the blockade of Ka'ba and "Grand Mosque was ended with the help of Pakistani special units" and Pakistani forces were deployed in Saudi Arabia for its internal security and close military cooperation between the two countries continues today. Though critiques and critics both have established their assumption that Pakistan would provide nuclear technology to Saudi Arabia (if needed) but they neglect the US-India nuclear deal and Israel's nuclear weapons which have imbalanced power in the region.

Since 1970s, Pakistan and Saudi Arabia are having multiple defence and economic cooperation, this cooperation continues between Pakistan and Saudi

Arabia. In the early 1990s when Saddam Hussain invaded Kuwait, Pakistan sent its forces to defend Saudi Arabia's border. When international sanctions were imposed on Pakistan, after its first nuclear test in 1998, Saudi Arabia, the only Muslim country, "promised 50,000 barrels per day of free oil so Pakistan could cope with the economic sanctions". No doubt, Saudi Arabia has supported Pakistan during economic depression and natural disasters. For example, Saudi Arabia provided \$20 million during the 2005 deadly earthquake and \$170 million during the worst flood of 2010 in Pakistan. In 2014, Pakistan faced economic crisis and Saudi Arabia granted \$1.5 billion and helped stabilise Pakistan's fragile economy.

Prime Minister Khan inherited an economically weak Pakistan and he needed immediate funds to run his government. Khan preferred seeking help from Saudi Arabia which provided "\$6 billion bailout package" for Pakistan's fragile economy. Saudi Arabia is setting up Oil Refinery at Gwadar Sea Port 'at a cost of \$10 billion. Blossoming and emerging relations between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia would make and mark a new history between the two strong Muslim countries.

—The writer is Assistant Professor, IIUI, Islamabad.

Source: <https://pakobserver.net/index.php/2019/09/23/blossoming-pak-saudi-relations/>

Earthquake Crisis | Editorial

THE earthquake in northern Punjab and parts of Azad Kashmir has brought with it bitter memories from the 2005 catastrophe that claimed almost 75,000 lives. So far, some 40 people have been reported dead in Tuesday's quake while over 500 have been injured. Cellular network services remained suspended in many places, preventing a more accurate assessment.

While rescue efforts this time were quicker and better than before — perhaps owing to the smaller scale of destruction — the loss of life could have been averted had the authorities put to use the lessons learnt from the 2005 tremor.

The statement given by the National Disaster Management Authority chairman shortly after the quake speaks volumes for the state's apathy when disaster strikes. Responding to a question, the NDMA chairman said aftershocks could not be ruled out, but the situation was 'nothing serious' since there were several fault lines in the country.

Considering that the affected area of New Mirpur lies on the active Samwal-Jharik Kass fault line, which, experts say, was also activated in the 2005 earthquake, this statement is simply absurd and insensitive, and the people who lost their homes and loved ones would disagree with it. The quake was the second major one to have hit the area — that lies in seismic zone 4 (the most at risk) — in two decades. The devastation of the 2005 earthquake should have made a deep impact on how the government views and deals with natural disasters, but unfortunately, we do not seem to be any wiser. The fact that an earthquake preparedness strategy approved by the Planning Commission in 2007 has been lying in cold storage is evidence of this lackadaisical approach.

In terms of geographical location, Pakistan is more prone than many other countries to natural disasters, the incidence of which has drastically increased owing to global warming.

According to a report by the disaster management authority in KP, all 26 districts of the province are now vulnerable to natural calamities because of the increased

frequency of extreme weather events (in addition to seismic activity in the region) as compared to only 13 districts a decade ago.

This is also true for the rest of the country that now witnesses torrential rains, floods and droughts on a routine basis. Pakistan's largest city, Karachi, with all its urban perils including substandard construction, also lies in a zone of 'noticeable' seismic danger, according to the Geological Survey of Pakistan. Many areas are so densely populated that only a mild tremor would be enough to incur large-scale loss of lives.

Regrettably, our collective approach towards disaster management leaves much to be desired. It is time the government moved on from 'first-aid rescue' — the short-term provision of tents, medicines and food to the affected — to developing and then implementing a comprehensive and sustainable policy to counter disaster and deal effectively with its aftermath.

Published in Dawn, September 26th, 2019

Source: <https://www.dawn.com/news/1507448/earthquake-crisis>

Pakistan-China Ties By Amna Ejaz Rafi

Pakistan and China bilateral relations established in May 1951, have progressed over the years. During the 1970s, Pakistan played the role of a facilitator in normalizing China-US relations. The US Secretary of State Henry Kissinger meeting with President Zhou Enlai in Beijing was facilitated by Pakistan, which later led to the visit of President Nixon to China. These developments showed the mushrooming of trust between Pakistan and China. Pakistan held significance in Beijing's calculus and was seen by the US as a potential player in melting the ice between the US and China. Pakistan's role as a facilitator opened up door for President Nixon's visit to China.

The regional developments have not been able to impair the Pakistan-China bilateral relations. Rather, both the countries have continued with their ties, whether, it was the Cold war Or the war on terror. Also, the ideological differences, and religion have never been a point of concern between the two Asian countries. In the present scenario, China has become an economic power and has a political clout. But, the regional developments and the emerging power dynamics have set the stage for future cooperation. The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) often referred to as the "corridor of opportunities" is a bilateral initiative by Pakistan and China to promote trade cooperation and explore avenues of regional connectivity. In fact, CPEC is a practical manifestation of both countries strategic, geopolitical and socioeconomic interests. With the launching of CPEC, both Pakistan and China have step up efforts towards regional connectivity and trade. Gwadar seaport will offer route to adjoining regions / countries, thus opening up prospects of trade connectivity.

The corridor though a bilateral initiative foretells a commonality of interest between the two countries. China, in view of its economic growth might be looking for more avenues of trade cooperation, and stable political environment. For Pakistan, the corridor is a realization of the country's geostrategic location. Thus, Pakistan and China's lead efforts towards regional economic integration shows a commonality of purpose towards economic empowerment and building of a prosperous region. While, looking at the trends of regionalism in East Asia, South Asia and Central Asia, the East Asian economies are well-integrated. On the other hand, the countries of South Asia, and Central Asia have not been able

to make worthwhile economic growth based on their resource potential. In this backdrop, Pakistan and China collective effort towards connectivity in the form of CPEC offers prospects of trade connectivity within and with outside world, and un-tapping of resource potential.

China, in view of its economic growth might be looking for more avenues of trade cooperation, and stable political environment. For Pakistan, the corridor is a realization of the country's geostrategic location

The economic activity associated with CPEC is an attraction for regional countries to connect economically. Whether economic interdependence will pool out a way towards regionalism and inter-regional connectivity or the political difference will outweigh the economic approach? In the prevailing political equation regionally, India has opposed CPEC, and has employed covert means to sabotage the development work in Balochistan. Pakistan and China convergence of interest over CPEC stems primarily from economic prowess. China through CPEC will broaden the trade links, while for Pakistan, the corridor and development of Gwadar seaport will transform the country into a regional trading hub. These developments place Pakistan and China on the same page in terms of regional connectivity, and aspiring of regional as well as global goals. However, the adversarial approach to reinforce insinuations of mistrust between the Chinese and Pakistani public. The perception that the corridor will entirely serve China's purpose, and on CPEC related projects Chinese workers will have an edge over Pakistan workforce and industry is part of the simmering campaign to disrupt the corridor. Both Pakistan and China in order to realize their goal of economic ascendancy, and shared regional prosperity require a unanimous politico-strategic approach. In this regard, the need to have a peaceful political environment for operation of CPEC is a must.

The writer is Researcher in Islamabad Policy Research Institute (IPRI)

Source: <https://dailytimes.com.pk/473055/pakistan-china-ties/>

Politics of SAARC Summit | Editorial

FOREIGN Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi Thursday said the member countries of South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) had decided to hold the next summit level meeting in Islamabad. According to him, the summit would be held on mutually convenient dates as proposed by Pakistan, adding that all the member states, except India, agreed to hold the next summit level meeting in Pakistan. The decision was taken in a ministerial level meeting of the SAARC countries held in New York on the sidelines of the United Nations General Assembly session.

Though India did not raise objection to the proposal of Pakistan to host the summit but it surely does not mean that New Delhi would actually cooperate for holding of such an event in Islamabad. This is because the last SAARC summit was held in Kathmandu, Nepal in 2014 and the next was to be held in Islamabad in 2016 but could not be held because of virtual boycott by India. In the absence of regular meetings of the forum, SAARC remains almost dormant and an organization on papers alone. The Association has the potential to take care of common woes of the people of the region but unfortunately progress has been marred due to rivalries between the two major member countries. India is unlikely to cooperate for holding of summit in Islamabad next year as it is currently spending all its energies to cause diplomatic isolation of Pakistan. It is hoped that the member countries including India would realize the importance of holding such summits as they are crucial for augmenting cooperation in sectors like economy and tourism besides providing an opportunity to discuss problems and disputes during bilateral meetings.

Source: <https://pakobserver.net/index.php/2019/09/28/politics-of-saarc-summit/>

Kashmir: US Concerns | Editorial

There is no clear condemnation of the Indian action in occupied Kashmir though, the United States (US) has finally expressed concern over the oppressive curbs the Kashmiris have been braving since August 5. Alice Wells, the top State Department official for South Asia, says the US “hopes to see rapid action” by India to undo the restrictions on supplies and communications in the occupied territory; to set the detained civilians and leaders free, and to resume political engagement with local leaders. Wells, at a recent media briefing, has also reiterated President Donald Trump’s willingness to mediate to ease tensions between Pakistan and India over the disputed territory.

Prime Minister Imran Khan has time and again expressed his belief that the “US, being the most powerful country in the world, is the only country that could mediate between Pakistan and India and resolve the Kashmir issue”. President Trump has, on more than an occasion, offered to mediate between the two countries. But his “only if both agree” condition means that practically there are no chances of mediation as India has historically been averse to a third-party mediation on the Kashmir dispute and continues to stick to the stance. What do then the repeated offers of mediation by President Trump mean? And how far will the US concerns on the ongoing Kashmir situation – expressed by Wells – help ease the sufferings of the Kashmiris?

Should President Trump’s soft-soaping Pakistan and his offers of mediation on Kashmir be seen in the context of the peace talks between the US and the Taliban that have now been stalled? Well, a majority of experts and observers at home don’t want to read too much into the Trump’s mediation offer and think of it as a ploy to string along Pakistan till the time the US achieves its objectives in Afghanistan. Frankly speaking, much, if not all, will depend upon how many headaches can the never-say-die Kashmiris give to the Indian occupation forces. And that there is a Burhan Wani in every other house of occupied Kashmir holds out great hopes.

Published in The Express Tribune, September 28th, 2019.

Source: <https://tribune.com.pk/story/2066816/6-kashmir-us-concerns/>

CPEC Under Present Regime By Syed Ali Imran

Prime Minister Imran Khan recent visit to United Nations General Assembly (UNGA), if established Pakistan an important state of the Muslim world, it also highlighted Pakistan's brotherly relation with China which has become stronger ever since his party came into power. Chinese Foreign Minister addressed Kashmir issue in his speech to UNGA which is also an acknowledgement of this fact that there is no change of plan and China is all weather friend of Pakistan. The way China has supported Pakistan at diplomatic front for Kashmir cause and how it helped present regime to tackle financial crisis by giving funds for maintaining foreign reserves, shows clearly that the rumors created by Indian media shelving China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) projects is baseless. CPEC is first and foremost project of Belt and Road Initiative by China which joins China with Central Asian Republics (CAR), Middle East (M.E) and Africa through Gawadar port of Pakistan. As the junction of CPEC is Gawadar which is in Balochistan, international conspiracies against this region has started from the very beginning lead by Indian agencies which also highlighted by our worthy Prime minister in his UNGA address by stating Gulbushan Yadav. It is worth mentioning here that CPEC is to be completed in three phases out of which first phase of transportation related infrastructure and establishment of Gawadar port including some power projects has almost completed. Now second phase of Special Economic Zones (SEZs) is going to start in October this year which also includes socio-economic benefits for the people of Pakistan.

While answering to a question about Pakistan- China relations, asked by interviewer at the forum of Council on Foreign Relations, the world most sophisticated think tank, Mr. Khan praised the deep rooted friendship with China and highly admired China's great effort in alleviating poverty in its country by uplifting 700 Million Chinese from the poverty line. He thanked China who helped Pakistan financially on his call by giving fund for foreign exchange reserves. He further stated that what China offers us right now is an opportunity from its \$2 trillion import market where with a preferential trade agreement Pakistan can export to China at the same terms as the ASEAN countries. Apart from that, he added; Pakistan has this opportunity now to get Chinese industry to relocate in Pakistan, bring in technology. He concluded in these words; China has given us

a great opportunity to lift ourselves up from where we are right now. Afterwards the interviewer asked about US Pakistan relations where our Prime Minister even responded that the then Pakistani government's decision to become part of War on Terror was the biggest mistake of country's history which cost Pakistan 70,000 lives of innocent people and a loss of around \$200 Billion dollars. Answering to these two questions one after another shows how important is China for Pakistan's foreign policy. It also clearly depicts that the leader of present regime is not only inspired from China regarding its efforts for poverty alleviation but look to Chinese market for earning foreign exchange.

Mr. Khan praised the deep rooted friendship with China and highly admired China's great effort in alleviating poverty in its country by uplifting 700 Million Chinese from the poverty line

Recently a meeting was held between Planning and Development Minister, Mr. Makhdoom Khusro Bakhtiar and the Chinese ambassador Yao Jing over CPEC developments where both the countries expressed satisfaction over the progress and hoped that bilateral partnership between the two friendly countries would strengthen further. Projects which are completed in first phase and those which will become part of second stage in upcoming Joint Cooperation Committee (JCC) meeting were revealed. It is told that the second phase focuses on poverty alleviation, agriculture and industrial cooperation. Highlighted projects also include Dams, petroleum and petrochemical plants, refineries and gas pipelines. Regarding development in Gwadar, 10 projects in infrastructure and social sector development have either been completed or under construction. Among the completed projects, Gwadar port is functional. Most importantly, the Gwadar Smart Port City Master Plan for the integrated development of the city has been approved on 23 August, 2019 and ready for implementation. Moreover, tax concessions and investment incentives issue which was lingering since 2016 has been resolved which will enhance economic activity in Gwadar. The country's largest airport, the New Gwadar International Airport groundbreaking was held on March 29, 2019 by the Prime Minister Imran Khan. Framework Agreements on Industrial cooperation, Agriculture and socio-economic development have been signed in November 2018. As the major obstacle in the establishment of these SEZs was to provide utilities to the Zone, the current government has agreed to provide the utilities at zero point through its own resources. These developments show clearly that the propaganda against CPEC is an international agenda to

check China becoming super power and to disturb brotherly relations of both the countries.

The writer is Corporate Finance Specialist and a Chartered Banker (UK)

Source: <https://dailytimes.com.pk/475310/cpec-under-present-regime/>

ECONOMY

Renewed Commitment to CPEC | Editorial

PAKISTAN and China have reaffirmed that the CPEC, as a pioneering project of the BRI, had entered a new phase of high-quality development and the need to give new impetus to the historic initiative. During extensive dialogue between Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi and Pakistani leadership, the two sides agreed to continue to firmly push forward the construction of CPEC, complete its ongoing projects in a timely manner, and realize its full potential by focusing on socio-economic development, job creation and better livelihood and accelerating cooperation in industrial parks and agriculture.

This renewed commitment is reassuring to people of Pakistan as it comes in the backdrop of reports that progress on the project is slow owing to multiple factors including foreign pressure. Rightly or wrongly, there is an impression that work on ongoing projects have slowed down and there is no launching of any new one despite willingness of the Chinese side to provide necessary finances and expertise for the purpose. However, Prime Minister Imran Khan too has given an assurance that Pakistan was committed to timely completion of projects under the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor, hoping that more Chinese companies would make investment in the country. He has also emphasized the need to have CPEC Authority for speedy execution of the projects and it is hoped that the Authority would soon be set up with necessary infrastructure and powers to undertake the onerous task of expediting execution of ongoing projects and including more in different sectors of the economy. This has become an imperative in the backdrop of economic recession and a fall in foreign investment due to various reasons. Lack of required level of economic activity and a cut in developmental expenditure is also complicated the problem of unemployment further, therefore, there was every justification to fully exploit the opportunity offered by China for accelerating the pace of economic development. It is also satisfying that at a time when Pakistan was facing a serious situation on foreign policy front due to Indian actions in Occupied Kashmir, China has expressed its full support of Pakistani position and solidarity with the cause of Kashmiri people.

Beijing reiterated that the Kashmir issue was 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. The visit has once again highlighted the fact that China and Pakistan are partners in peace, security and development and they are firm to take their relationship to new heights on the basis of shared interests.

Source: <https://pakobserver.net/index.php/2019/09/12/renewed-commitment-to-cpec/>

Pakistan May Face Serious Financing Issues: Moody's By Salman Siddiqui

Moody's credit rating agency has placed Pakistan among countries that may face serious financing issues in the extreme scenario under the ongoing US-China trade tensions as Islamabad's reliance on foreign currency borrowing and thin reserve coverage of external debt payments have weakened its debt affordability.

While Moody's assumes generally stable financing conditions with slowing global growth, ongoing US (AAA stable) and China (A1 stable) tensions and global flashpoints of political risk, sovereigns in emerging markets (EM) and frontier markets (FM) face a material risk of a period of heightened financing stress.

"To gauge exposure to broad or idiosyncratic financing pressure beyond our base case, we have developed a stress test assuming a severe but plausible shock," the agency said. "We quantify the direct effects of such a stress on core credit metrics and the rating ranges they imply to determine the most affected EMs and FMs."

Although second-round effects and policy responses would determine the full implication of any shock, the results highlighted a range of exposure among lower-rated sovereigns and those further up the rating scale, the agency said.

"Greatest exposure is among B-rated sovereigns in Asia-Pacific (APAC), Middle East and North Africa (MENA) and Latin America (LatAm), which see the sharpest deterioration in credit metrics when stressed due to weak debt affordability, reliance on foreign-currency borrowing and thin reserve coverage of external debt payments," Moody's Investors Service said in its sector in-depth report on "Sovereigns – Global: B-rated sovereigns in APAC, LatAm and MENA most exposed to financing stress."

"Jamaica (B3 positive), St Vincent and the Grenadines (SVG, B3 stable), Tunisia (B2 negative), Egypt (B2 stable), Ghana (B3 stable), Angola (B3 stable), Pakistan (B3 negative) and Sri Lanka (B2 stable) are particularly exposed to a shock," it said.

In terms of debt affordability, Sri Lanka, Pakistan, Egypt, Angola, and Ghana would see the most significant deterioration in their interest payments-to-revenue ratios compared to the baseline 2019-20 forecasts.

“This is driven by large gross borrowing requirements of between 15% and 30% of GDP annually as a result of relatively short average maturities of around five years and short-term treasury bills, on average, comprising over 30% of outstanding domestic debt,” it said.

Pakistan’s external financing gap has been alleviated by a \$6 billion, 39-month IMF agreement, along with other bilateral and multilateral borrowings providing an external buffer, “however, external vulnerability remains high following years of wide current account deficits and a lack of substantial non-debt-creating foreign exchange inflows.”

“While we expect that a more market-determined exchange rate and import compression will bolster foreign exchange reserve adequacy against external debt repayments, still low levels threaten the ability of the government to refinance foreign currency debt at affordable costs,” it said.

Pakistan’s fiscal profile has been weakened further by higher interest rates following the central bank’s cumulative 750-basis-point hike over the last two years in response to external imbalances.

With the frequent rollover of short-term treasury bills, these higher domestic interest rates have rapidly increased the government’s borrowing costs.

The External Vulnerability Indicator (EVI) increases the most among sovereigns with the widest current account deficits and lowest foreign exchange reserve adequacy.

Turning to the direct impact of lower capital flows, among B-rated sovereigns, Pakistan, Belarus, Turkey (B1 negative), Sri Lanka and Papua New Guinea (PNG, B2 stable) see the largest increase in their EVI under Moody’s stress scenario, the report said.

In the stress scenario, Belarus, Ethiopia (B1 stable), Pakistan and SVG experience a two-notch rating range shift by the second year of the shock on account of changes in both fiscal strength and external vulnerability risk, while Turkey, Kenya (B2 stable), the Maldives (B2 negative), PNG and Ghana experience a one-notch rating range shift on account of both factors.

Published in The Express Tribune, September 13th, 2019.

Source: <https://tribune.com.pk/story/2055203/2-pakistan-may-face-serious-financing-issues-moodys/>

Trade And Economy in Focus | Editorial

FINALLY some good news has started pouring in on economic front as government economic team at a meeting on Saturday informed Prime Minister Imran Khan that economic policies are coming to fruition due to considerable reduction in trade deficit, increase in exports and enhanced tax collection while trade deficit has reduced by thirty eight percent during the first two months of current fiscal year.

Indeed bringing down trade deficit is important for the country to effectively deal with challenge of current account deficit. Though government has managed to cut it down by squeezing imports yet despite depreciation of rupee and incentives given to the industries, exports have not witnessed much growth. The country can only stand on its feet by widening its tax base and bolstering exports. Our exports have remained stagnant rather sharply declined over the last five or six years. It is really time to consider out of box solutions to reverse this trend. Since long, we have been waiting for operationalisation of Special Economic Zones (SEZs) under China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) project but there appears to be no headway towards that end. These SEZs are really important to revive industrialisation, which will not only create immense job opportunities for the youth but also bring value addition in our products and give much needed impetus to exports.

Addressing the meeting, Prime Minister Imran Khan very aptly pointed towards revival of sick industrial units and those, which had been closed down consequent to misadministration and other reasons in the past. The first focus should be on reviving Pakistan Steel Mills that in fact was and still can be an asset for the country. The model of public private partnership can be followed to restart its production. Similarly, PIA needs to be steered out of dire straits through a well thought out business plan. The country can no longer afford losses of public sector enterprises and the government will have to take tough decisions so that these important organisations are no longer a burden on the national exchequer. On the tax collection side, we are confident that no effort will be spared to meet the mammoth target set for this financial year without succumbing to pressure from traders who also need to be forthcoming in documenting their business.

Government indeed had to take some tough decisions to stabilise the economy but as situation is now heading for some improvement, it is also time that government starts executing various development projects. There should not be any delay in the implementation of mega housing project as this project alone has the potential to trigger economic activity and inculcate confidence amongst businessmen. Relief must also be provided to masses especially to salaried class who are hit hard by price hike.

Source: <https://pakobserver.net/index.php/2019/09/16/trade-and-economy-in-focus/>

Towards an Inclusive World Economic Order? By Dr Rakhshinda Perveen

Let us not forget that we are living in a world where, Telephones are becoming more pertinent than Toilets ;in 2000, only 12% of the global population had mobile phones subscriptions, and about 60% had access to basic sanitation. Currently the percentage of people with cell phone subscriptions is higher than those using sanitation services. This does not mean that technology is bad but our current over enthusiasm if not obsession with technology especially in the domain of entrepreneurship may need a serious review. It remains a fact that today corporate interests supersede human needs.

The vicious cycle of inequalities is intact and misplaced priorities are nurturing. It is time to challenge every such ineffective policy and divert attention to growth and equality. Very often the spirit of social transformation faces a technical death due to several cost analysis. Is it cost efficient and/or effective? It always sounds so demotivating to awakened dreamers and disrupters. The physician-cum-anthropologist Paul Farmer always dominated my premise when he stated that while providing health interventions to the destitute in Haiti, Peru, Mexico and Boston, he never thought whether his work was cost effective. He simply stated that ‘this was the right thing to do and the humans do right thing to do.’

The only woman Nobel laureate in Economics so far Dr. Elinor Ostrom, who was an intersectional thinker, always worked for women and diverse but excluded social groups. The idea that economics was gender neutral did not fit with her work. Her own experience shaped this approach. She was a pragmatic radical and we can all learn from her. She has warned through her research in her own words that “Inequality is dangerous”.

Recently I was honored to be a part of a distinguished panel, in an international conference, on global economy in DC . Delegates from 24 countries exchanged ideas and meaningful discussion, focusing on the wide-reaching themes and challenges of the global economic landscape. Renowned economist Prof. Dr. Thomas Straubhaar, and author of several books including Radical Justice exposed, in his keynote address, the reality of multilateralism in today’s world and the prevalence of law of power rather than the power of law.

It is disheartening that the modern economic system treats conditions like cultural and physical challenges as liabilities, be it in developed or developing countries. It's time now for all such stigma to end

This platform again endorsed my two most important learnings in connection with women, entrepreneurship and economy: 1: In a rapidly changing world that was once eaten by software (remember famous saying of Marc Andreessen) and where software is now being eaten by AI, monetized profits rather than social purpose is becoming the ultimate monopoly. This would lead to the death of the desired social impact and there are and there would be increased manifestations of discriminations in our cultures, societies and states. 2: Women-led entrepreneurship is the future of social entrepreneurship not only in Pakistan, but globally as well, because when a country invests in women's economic empowerment the profit holder is not an individual woman, but dividends are distributed in the household, family and communities.

For any Pakistani social entrepreneur who works closely with many charismatic women and transgender entrepreneurs of Pakistan, the disturbance, both on digital and actual spaces caused by mere mentioning of the words equality and empowerment of women. In theory, who would not agree that global economy should be more equitable and there should be equal opportunities for all women as well from all countries including Pakistan. War, conflicts or even the threat must not be used as an excuse to strengthen structural patriarchy and cause more deprivation to women and marginalized communities.

Communities of women who face both physical and cultural disabilities do exist in Pakistan, but these factors do not hinder their undying passion for their work. Some credible Non-profits and social enterprises are working with them to facilitate their journey towards self-reliance. In practice one finds clear and not so clear contradictions. Many young entrepreneurs and older elites are using disadvantaged communities of women as their salvation, as their passport to win project funds and gain media attention.

It is disheartening that the modern economic system treats conditions like cultural and physical challenges as liabilities, be it in developed or developing countries. It's time now for all such stigma to end. If, we want to strengthen our economy, if

our government wants to reduce poverty, if our leaders want the GDP to cope with the population growth, one inevitable tool will be the empowerment of all women and dismantling of structural patriarchy as an official policy. The time has arrived to move away from an economy that is based on top down directives, inequalities and cruel corporate control. The question is ;are we ready to take this intellectual risk?

The writer is a free thinker and alumna of world Economic Order/Friedrich Nauman Foundation

Source: <https://dailytimes.com.pk/465927/towards-an-inclusive-world-economic-order/>

Pak-India Trade Realities | Editorial

In wake of the heightened political tensions, Pakistan suspended bilateral trade with India on August 9, 2019. This was after exercising restraint from retaliating in February 2019 when India had suspended cross-border trade through LoC, withdrawn Pakistan's MFN status (whatever its worth), and imposed 200% import duty on Pakistani products in contravention of commitments under the South Asian Free Trade Agreement (SAFTA). Since then the bilateral trade reduced to unilateral trade — Indian exports continued unabated at a monthly average of \$150 million while Pakistan's decreased from \$30 million to \$4 million. Pakistan's decision to suspend bilateral trade has pulled the plug on this one-way trade.

Neither Pakistan nor India is critically dependent on each other's market, though the suspension of bilateral trade might, in the short term, affect the consumer welfare by increasing prices of a few agricultural and other products, necessitate diversion of raw material sources for certain industries, and further reduce regional integration and inter-dependence of economies.

In absolute terms, India stands to lose a market of \$2 billion compared with Pakistan's loss of \$0.38 billion. Pakistan's exports of \$383 million to India in 2018 constituted 1.6% of Pakistan's global exports. Since Pakistan's value-added products are systematically excluded through NTBs, Pakistan's exports to India are concentrated in a few primary and intermediate products — dried dates (\$92 million), cement (\$63 million), sugar (\$23 million), gypsum (\$19 million), sesame seed (\$15 million), leather (\$14 million), steel scrap (\$13 million), disodium carbonate (\$12 million) and surgical instruments (\$11 million). There is little dependence of Pakistan's exports on the Indian market for these products except for dried dates, though the reliance has been reduced through an aggressive market diversification strategy since February 2019.

Similarly, Indian exports to Pakistan constitute a mere 0.7% of her global exports but value nearly \$2 billion in absolute terms. The major export items include cotton (\$522 million), organic chemicals (\$473 million), cotton yarn (\$230 million), plastic articles (\$139 million), dyes and pigments (\$114 million), machinery (\$93 million), pharmaceutical products (\$65 million), iron and steel (\$64 million) and tea and spices (\$56 million). Most of the products are industrial raw materials for

which multiple global sources of supplies exist. The trade diversion would, therefore, be rather smooth, despite some initial pains of adjustment.

There is a protracted history of bilateral political conflicts trumping Pak-India trade relations. The trade became the first victim of the war in 1965 when on 6th September, Pakistani Customs officials at Wagah were taken as the first civilian prisoners of war and bilateral trade was suspended before resuming seven years later under the 1972 Simla Agreement. From 1972 to 1995, both the countries traded on the basis of restrictive positive lists. With the advent of the WTO in 1995, India granted Pakistan the Most Favoured Nation (MFN) status, while Pakistan continued with a positive list that gradually expanded from 328 items in 1995 to around 2,000 items in 2012. The positive list regime was liberalised in 2012 to a negative list of 1,209 items, which boosted Indian exports by 34% in two years.

Despite India granting the status of MFN to Pakistan, Pakistani exporters have faced an impregnable wall of overt and covert non-tariff barriers (NTBs). So effective were the barriers that Pakistan's "favoured" exports could never exceed \$0.4 billion in an Indian import market of more than \$500 billion, while Indian "unfavoured" exports claimed a \$2 billion share in Pakistan's annual imports of \$60 billion. Though India's level of trade restrictiveness under the Overall Trade Restrictiveness Index (47.6) is more than double the Pakistani restrictiveness (22.2), the concealed Pakistan-specific NTBs have been the most constricting. A hostile mindset (considered to be the most restrictive of the NTBs), limiting visa policies, long waiting periods at borders and, above all, the harassment of Indian importers doing business with Pakistan have greatly restricted trade. A report by Ms Nisha Taneja, commissioned by the Indian Ministry of Commerce, acknowledged that Indian businessmen importing from Pakistan were subjected to surveillance by Indian intelligence agents and their import goods were subjected to multiple security screening. Unsurprisingly, every round of trade liberalisation during the last two decades led to only one-side gains. Since 2005, Pakistan's exports have remained stuck at \$350-400 million but Indian exports increased more than three-fold from \$577 million to \$1.9 billion.

While many regions in the world have integrated during the last few decades, Pak-India trade has drifted apart. In 1948, Pakistan's trade was anchored in the region with reliance on India for 56% exports and 32% imports. In 2018, the

bilateral trade of Pakistan and India was merely 2.76% and 0.35% of their global trade, respectively. The bilateral conflicts and the ensuing trust deficit between India and Pakistan have also impeded the regional integration in South Asia. Pakistani and Indian trade with SAARC partners is merely 3% and 7% of their global trade respectively, even though both the countries have a reasonable level of trade with other immediate neighbours. Indian trade integration with contiguous countries (China, Pakistan, Nepal, Bhutan, Myanmar and Sri Lanka) is around 14%, while Pakistan's with the four immediate neighbours (China, India, Iran and Afghanistan) is 25%.

The World Bank estimates the potential of Pak-India trade at \$37 billion against the actual \$2.3 billion and the SAARC region's potential at \$67 billion against the actual \$23 billion. All hostilities and conflicts have to end eventually. Hopefully, the bilateral political relations will improve sooner rather than later, and trade returns to the bilateral agenda. However, any future attempt at bilateral trade liberalisation must ensure that any gains made from it are reciprocal. To ensure that Pakistan gets an equitable share in gains from the bilateral trade, it is to link the trade liberalisation with assured trade values rather than mere commitments so that covert NTBs do not neutralise the market access agreed on at the negotiating table.

Published in The Express Tribune, September 5th, 2019.

Source: <https://tribune.com.pk/story/2049299/6-pak-india-trade-realities/>

Indian Designs Against CPEC | Editorial

NOBODY can deny the significance of China-Pakistan Economic Corridor project (CPEC) for overall and sustainable economic development of Pakistan and the region at large. But there are certain inimical forces which do not want to see Pakistan making progress and the region cultivating the fruits of peace.

At the forefront of hatching conspiracies against the CPEC is our arch enemy India. Speaking at the inaugural brief of naval exercise 'Shamsheer-e-Bahar VII' and 'Tarseel-e-Bahar II' in Karachi on Monday, President Arif Alvi very emphatically once again exposed the ugly face of India saying it wanted to sabotage the CPEC. The fact of the matter is that this is a mega development project envisaging projects ranging from infrastructure to establishment of Special Industrial Zones for industrialization in Pakistan and both Pakistan and China have repeatedly urged the regional countries to join the corridor project as it is not against any other country. But New Delhi is not ready to shun its intransigence due to the animosity it harbours both for Pakistan and China. The very confessional statement of Kulbhushan Jadhav, the RAW agent, itself is a clear proof how far the extremist government in India can go to hurt and disrupt the corridor project. Apart from carrying out sabotage activities in Balochistan and other areas of Pakistan, Indian leadership is now also involved in wooing other countries not to invest in the CPEC. The Indian media itself reported the other day that the immediate task for Indian Defence Minister Rajnath Singh during his visit to South Korea will be to block Korean funds flowing into Pakistan and that he will also urge his Korean counterpart to stay away from the CPEC. It is a matter of satisfaction that top authorities both in Pakistan and China are fully cognizant of the Indian designs. The best way to counter them indeed is to expedite the work for the early completion of all the pending CPEC- related projects. Then we also need to inform the world the benefits being offered in the SEZs to the businessmen and entrepreneurs so that their investment can be attracted in a big way. As President Arif Alvi himself stated that prosperity of our people is intrinsically linked to the security of our sea lines of communication, it is important that all the requirements of Pakistan Navy are met in order to ensure unhindered flow of traffic in our waters and make Gwadar one of the busiest ports in the world.

Source: <https://pakobserver.net/index.php/2019/09/04/indian-designs-against-cpec/>

Economic Targets | Editorial

The Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaaf (PTI) government is dedicated to tackling the economic challenges faced by the government. On Saturday, Prime Minister (PM) Imran Khan discussed the economic goals of the current fiscal year with his economic team. As per the indicators, the economy seems to be stabilising. The trade deficit has been brought down to 38 per cent due to the strict control of importing goods. The government has also been able to expand its tax net with the last amnesty scheme it offered. Government expenditure is being managed as per the dealings with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and according to PM's advisers, the government is set to meet all the targets for the first quarter of the fiscal year set in coordination with the IMF.

This is an encouraging pathline for the government because the economy and its management have been their biggest criticism. While these policies have managed to sustain the economy in the first fiscal year along with loans offered by ally economies, it is important to note that the government needs to now come up with different solutions to sustain the current progress. The current situation that falls in their favour is the rivalry between China and the United States of America (USA). Several foreign investors are looking towards economies like Pakistan due to the increased tariff on Chinese goods. The government should facilitate and welcomes such investors. Along with that, the government is also looking towards reviving sick industrial units. This will provide a boost to the economy along with the giving the construction sector the status of an industry. This will allow steady taxation and widen the revenue collection base, that has met its mark in the first quarter of the year.

PM has also advised his team to come up with out-of-the-box solutions to sustain the economy. An idea to look into might also be the developmental state model. This gives the states the autonomy to micromanage the economy and help build it towards a direction that is beneficial in the longer run. The economic development of Japan is also based on the same model and most of the East Asian countries also follow the same model. This would, however, increase the pressure on the current government that is already accused of lacking business acumen. In order to implement the model, the government would have to

understand the intricacies of the current set up instead of borrowing foreign ideas.

Source: <https://nation.com.pk/16-Sep-2019/economic-targets>

The US-China Trade War By Aneela Shahzad

After a century of the triumph of capitalists regimes over world trade, it was a spectacle to see Chinese President Xi Jinping at the World Economic Forum in Davos in 2017, saying that protectionism was “like locking oneself in a dark room: wind and rain may be kept outside, but so is light and air”.

This was the same China that had confined itself in socialist norms and a communism that kept it at a clash with the Western world since its creation. This isolation was reversed with president Nixon’s 1971 visit to China, when the US lifted trade barriers that had hampered China’s development as a world economic player.

At that time the US saw in China a huge reserve of cheap labour ready to be harnessed for its backyard economic activities. The political implication of this offer meant the US would also be able to fracture the communist block so tightly knit between China and Russia. And perhaps this was also necessitated because of Japan’s growing monopoly in high-tech industries that were making it a global trade giant, even when the West had defeated its imperial greatness in WWII. China’s opening to Western trade was consequently going to push Japan into the punishment phase of its “two lost decades” of economic stagnation from 1991 to 2010.

For all such gains, the US had rallied the ideal of “globalisation” that facilitated its companies to become multinational under the forces of the free markets preached by the capitalist creed. Free markets meant that “profits” created in the markets would be the sole factor that would drive trade and investments around the world. States were not to protect their commerce from the behemoth of the free market as this force will only add to the resilience of all trading parties.

Yet the same principle when applied by China as it enters a phase when it can potentially dominate the global economy, is being seen by the US as “unfair competition” and according to the US Chamber of Commerce, a “strategy to use state resources to alter and create comparative advantage in these sectors on a global scale” — a strategy the West has been using all along. The critical allegation from the US, however, has been the theft of Intellectual Property from

Western investors, who have been coerced to share the technologies of the industries they want to set in China.

Surely this allegation goes against the ideal of “traders being driven by markets alone” — as the same market profits have been leading US investors to invest in China in spite of their knowing of this obligation of technology transfer. This is only because Chinese partners had offered them cheap land, infrastructure, tax exemptions, cheap loans and hence, staggering profits.

All this was going on calmly but in 2015 China announced its Made in China (MIC) 2025 plan. This 10-year plan focused on intelligent manufacturing in several strategic sectors including aerospace, high-tech ship building, medical equipment, and energy and power. In the plan China would reduce its reliance on import of foreign technology and invest in indigenous innovations because China’s present monetary surplus allows it to invest heavily in its own research and development — a prerogative once owned by the West alone.

The special concentration on Smart Learning and Smart Manufacturing and on innovative fields like “new materials” and “information technology” would soon put China on a par with leading economies with high-tech industries such as the EU, Germany and the US — and in a position to challenge the global dominance of the West. This fear has forced the US into the protectionism that it had despised for so long. The trade war was thus based not on the theft of Intellectual Property, but on China’s growing ability to develop its own. And this war can be an attempt by the US to throw China in a kind of “two lost decades” that Japan has suffered by reducing the lucrativeness of doing business with China and diverting the markets to substitute venues.

One of such potential venues is the set of Southeast Asian states — not so far from China — that are swiftly becoming the intermediary sites for the manufacture of industrial parts and components. In the trade war the US will attempt to substitute its imports from China with imports from Southeast Asia. Global companies will also be shifting their investments away from China to avoid tariffs. However, China has an edge in influencing these states to its benefits as they are culturally and spatially closer. In the same vein China will also attempt to substitute its markets in other places around its world through its Belt and Road projects.

Huge investment diversion and industrial readjustments caused by this trade war would create gaps of both risk and opportunities for the states doing business with the two parties. In turn a substantial number of other countries may be forced to side with their benefactors and join the trade war, potentially dragging the world into another economic recession. According to a report an all-out trade war such as that could decrease the global GDP to about 3.8% lower than present.

Has the free market then been the force that has led China to aspire for a globalised capitalism, forsaking a benevolent socialism; and led the US to let go of the spirit of liberty, and to confine in isolation that was once considered a taboo of the communists? Does the “market” inspire our morals and ideologies? Is this realism or not the all-out advent of matter over human thought!

Published in The Express Tribune, September 19th, 2019.

Source: <https://tribune.com.pk/story/2059616/6-us-china-trade-war/>

IMF's Positive Outlook | Editorial

IN a morale boost to the country's economic managers, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) has acknowledged that the PTI government's economic reforms programme has made a promising start. Concluding its five-day visit here on a positive note, an IMF delegation, led by its director for Middle East and Central Asia Jihad Azour said in a statement the transition to a market-determined exchange rate has started to deliver positive results on the external balance, exchange rate volatility has diminished, monetary policy is helping to control inflation, and the SBP has improved its foreign exchange buffers. It also noted a significant improvement in tax revenue collections, with taxes showing double-digit growth net of exporters' refunds.

When present government came into power, the country was faced with worst economic crisis. In fact the country was close to default because of widening current account deficit. The financial assistance from friendly countries including China, Saudi Arabia, UAE and Qatar helped the government avert the disaster. But it really goes to the credit of PTI government for taking some real painful and political unpopular decisions to put the economy on the right path. Reforms in power sector are really paying off as the volume of monthly circular debt stands significantly reduced. Nonetheless, as stated by the IMF, decisive implementation of the reforms programme is critical to pave the way for stronger and sustainable economic growth. The government is still faced with the issue of budget deficit which had reportedly escalated to 8.9 percent on June 30, 2019. In our view, efforts should be expedited towards privatizing or reviving the loss making state owned enterprises especially PIA and Pakistan Steel Mills. Then as inflation has been anticipated to dip in the coming months, the SBP should cut the policy interest rate as the current one is not suitable to generate economic activity and attract investment. Major focus should be given to the development of agriculture sector on modern lines and provision of relief to farmers as well as revival of industries as only through significantly bolstering exports and tax collection, the country can address its economic woes and move towards achieving sustainable economic growth.

Source: <https://pakobserver.net/index.php/2019/09/22/imfs-positive-outlook/>

ADB's Assessment | Editorial

Pakistan's economy is having a hard time is no revelation. While the incumbent government, led by Prime Minister Imran Khan, is doing all it can to treat the ills, many an economic expert believe it is the remedy that has worsened the malady. The policies adopted by current economic managers, meant to achieve economic stability in a country with negligible FDI and exports totalling half as much as imports, have literally squeezed the common man dry. Fiscal tightening measures, coupled with currency depreciation, have turned inflation into a double-digit demon and led to a notable fall in the economic growth rate. While the government claims that it has achieved the economic stability and is now all set to hit the road to growth and then move on to attain prosperity, there are apprehensions that the economy will be able to turn the tight corner.

A recent report by the Asian Development Bank (ADB) has affirmed all apprehensions about the flagging economy during the ongoing fiscal year i.e. FY2019-20. The Asian Development Outlook Update 2019 released by the bank yesterday has projected that Pakistan's economic growth rate will be 2.8% — the lowest in South Asia — and its inflation rate will be 12% — the highest in the bloc of eight nations — during the current fiscal year. In its previous outlook released six months back, the bank had forecast 3.6% growth rate and 7% inflation for the current fiscal year. With a 2.8% growth rate, Pakistan's economy will be the slowest growing economy in South Asia. Like the last fiscal year, Bangladesh's economy will be fastest-growing at a rate of 8%, followed by India at 7.2%, and the Maldives and Nepal at 6.3%. Even war-torn Afghanistan's economy is projected to grow at a higher rate — 3.5% — than Pakistan's.

What's even more troubling is the ADB predicting yet another round of hikes in electricity and gas tariffs. The warning for the common man is thus pretty clear: hard days are hard to go.

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

Source: <https://tribune.com.pk/story/2066069/6-adbs-assessment/>

EDUCATION

Pakistani Universities | Editorial

Pakistan's ranking in education remains unsatisfactory. We stay at the lower rungs of the ladder in the matter of education. We have not much to show by way of achievements in science and technology. Same is the case with culture. Our intellectual life remains stagnated. One indication of this is that Quaid-e-Azam University (QAU) is the only Pakistani university to be ranked among the top 500 universities in the world, according to the Times Higher Education World University Rankings 2020. The 2020 edition for the annual ranking was released on Sept 11. This includes close to 1,400 universities from 92 countries. In the list are 14 Pakistani universities. QAU is the top-ranked Pakistani university at number 401-500. The list also includes COMSATS University Islamabad (601-800); University of Agriculture, Faisalabad (801-1,000); International Islamic University, Islamabad (801-1,000); LUMS (801-1,000), and some other universities from Punjab and K-P. No university from Sindh and Balochistan finds a place in the list.

The rankings should be a wake-up call for our policymakers, an expert says. Good ranking raises the reputation of the country and of universities. Products of well-reputed universities carry prestige among the international community of the learned. Expertise in science and technology is necessary for progress and development. On it depends survival of nations. Where do we stand in scientific research is illustrated by the fact that from April 2018 to March 2019 Pakistani article count in various scientific disciplines was 182. China is far ahead of us in this respect.

British and American universities dominated the upper echelons of this year's rankings. The US grabbed 60 of the top 200 positions. China and Japan represent 45 per cent of all Asian entries into the rankings. But do we still believe that beyond basic literacy and numeracy further education is superfluous. This mindset ought to change. Pompous rhetoric about space expeditions should stop.

Source: <https://tribune.com.pk/story/2055033/6-pakistani-universities-2/>

Higher Challenges in Higher Education of Pakistan By Dr Hazir Ullah

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The writer is Associate Professor and Chairman Department of Sociology, International Islamic University Islamabad. He can be reached at hazir.ullah@iiu.edu.pk

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

Education Versus The State | Editorial

The battle between private educational institutions and the state seems to be reaching its end, as the most recent Supreme Court (SC) judgement might force private schools to give up the hope of increasing fees for students unilaterally. This decision compels schools to return to the fee rates set in January 2017, and its detailed arguments might force private schools to succumb to government pressure and follow the rules set by this decision.

Apart from striking down any increases since January 2017, the court also decided to adhere to the set cap of increasing fees by a maximum of five percent, but now with the added caveat that this increase must first be approved by a regulatory board – which will probably decide on a case-by-case basis.

What is notable here is that the Supreme Court has decided to uphold the changes made by the former Chief Justice, by reverting fees to the same levels as those in January 2017, the bench has thrown its weight behind the previous decision and established that no change in heart is expected.

Owners of private institutions will not be too pleased with the Supreme Court decision, and their logic is not completely unsound; private businesses generally do have the right to charge whatever price they see fit for their product. However, the Supreme Court has decided the case on the basis of a technicality which does indeed bound private educational institutions to the state; providing trade permits does entail that the state can control the way this trade is being carried out.

Whether the licensing principle is subject to limiting profits is an altogether different debate, however. At the end of the day, schools have reacted to previous judgements of the SC by strong-arming students and parents as a means of retribution. This time however, the state must be on guard before anything of the sort takes place once more. This conflict between the state and the education industry must not affect the students' educational instruction.

Sadly though, given that the SC has taken away the profits of school owners without any means to replace them, it is highly unlikely that the quality of

education being offered will not be affected. The two likely possibilities are that certain teachers might be considered surplus to requirements and certain amenities and services provided will no longer be available, the first of which will directly result in reducing the quality of education. The private education system in the country, regardless of all of its faults, has provided a level of education unmatched by its public counterparts. One can only hope that this judgement has not taken too much away from that.

Source: <https://nation.com.pk/15-Sep-2019/education-versus-the-state>

Peace Building Through Higher Education

By Muhammad Murtaza Noor

Each year the International Day of Peace is celebrated around the world on 21 September to promote the values of peace, both within and among all nations and peoples. The United Nations adopted the 17 Sustainable Development Goals in 2015, realising the fact that it would not be possible to build a peaceful world if steps were not taken to achieve economic and social development for all people everywhere, and ensure that their rights were protected. The Sustainable Goals cover a broad range of issues, including poverty, hunger, health, education, climate change, gender equality, water, sanitation, energy, environment and social justice. Sustainable Development Goal 16 “Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions” calls for promoting ideals of peace and inclusive societies for sustainable development, providing access to justice for all and building effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels. A peaceful society is one where justice and equality are available for everyone.

According to the latest National Human Development Report launched by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Pakistan currently has the largest percentage of young people ever recorded in its history; 64% of the total population is below the age of 30 while 29% is between the ages of 15 and 29 years. Pakistan has become one of the youngest countries in the world and the second youngest in the South Asian region after Afghanistan. During the last few years, the total number of universities has increased to 205 with 114 regional campuses across Pakistan. There is dire need not only to highlight the vital role of universities in peace building but also in promoting values of peace, tolerance, co-existence and harmony among this largest segment of the society.

During South Asia Higher Education Symposium: New Regional Approaches which was successfully organized by Hollings Centre for International Dialogue at Istanbul during April, 2019, there was a consensus among the higher education leadership across the South Asia about the effective role of universities in peace building within the campuses as well as among the regional countries.

In the backdrop of Mashal Khan lynching incident at Abdul Wali Khan University Mardan and other incidents of ethnic and religious violence at the various

university campuses, there is dire need to focus on student societies, faculty and administration/hostel administration. Due to ban on student unions, student societies should be strengthened as effective alternative platform for meaningful engagement of students. Directorate of Student Affairs should not be established in each university but the required funding should be ensured both by the federal and provincial governments. We should look at the universities as integral part of our society. Outside campus societal issues and problems deeply affect the enrolled students and the faculty.

Special training programs should be conducted for faculty, director student affairs and hostel staff along with introducing courses on peace, tolerance and harmony. There is also dire need to review the existing content of Pakistan and Islamic Studies courses being offered at undergraduate level.

Universities should also encourage critical thinking along with problem solving and conflict resolution skills among the students. The students should have ability to take initiatives, risks and the ability to work with others despite having differences of opinion. Culture of dialogue should be promoted through organizing debates, seminars, literary festivals and other student led initiatives.

According to the Roadmap on Peaceful & Tolerant University Campuses and recommendations of recent two Vice Chancellors meeting organized by Inter University Consortium for Promotion of Social Sciences and University of Karachi, new policies in higher education sector should be aimed at to create space for students' involvement in extra-curriculum activities so that their leadership qualities could be utilized with full potential. Students need to be considered as important stakeholder in higher education and they need to be engaged through ensuring their active participation in various academic and extra-curricular activities. Student societies should also be strengthened through continuous technical, financial assistance, capacity building and close linkages with corporate sector. Inter- university and inter-provincial experience sharing mechanism on peaceful and tolerant university campuses should be continued and further strengthened especially among higher education leadership, faculty and student societies

Being diverse country, Pakistan is facing multiple political, ethnic, religious, sectarian and environmental conflicts, which also require attention in research

and teaching at Pakistani universities. Peace and conflict resolution are vital preconditions for sustainable economic growth, democracy and development. Very few Pakistani universities offer courses on understanding violence, extremism, terrorism and conflict resolution.

International Day of Peace calls upon all seeking peaceful resolution of conflicts when disagreements arise around us. We can be part of the solution by taking small steps including preventing any injustice in the society by adopting a non-violent approach to problem solving.

Muhammad Murtaza Noor is associated with the development and education sector for more than 19 years. He is currently working as Country Coordinator Global Academics Leadership Academy (GALA) for Pakistan.

Source: <https://nation.com.pk/21-Sep-2019/peace-building-through-higher-education>

WORLD

A Deal With the Taliban Is Only the First Step Toward Peace By Johnny Walsh

After months of closed-door negotiations in Doha, Qatar, the United States appears close to finalizing a deal with the Taliban that would end Washington's 18-year war in Afghanistan. The agreement would reportedly set a conditional timetable for the United States to withdraw its troops from Afghanistan in exchange for Taliban commitments to suppress terrorist groups and open peace talks with their fellow Afghans.

The deal is controversial. Supporters (and I am one of them) view the agreement as far preferable to the status quo—a bloody battlefield stalemate—and a necessary first step toward any deal among Afghans to end the war. Critics worry that the deal sells out Washington's Afghan allies, places naive trust in an extremist group, and provides cover for a troop withdrawal that Trump wants regardless of whether it makes diplomatic or military sense.

Ultimately, though, no U.S.-Taliban agreement will determine Afghanistan's future. Talks with the Taliban, the Afghan government, and other Afghan parties are far more important, and these are expected to start soon after the U.S.-Taliban deal is announced. Thus the most vital concession that the United States' lead negotiator, Special Envoy Zalmay Khalilzad, has wrung from the Taliban is not the group's well-publicized promise not to support terrorism; rather, it is the group's agreement to at last negotiate with other Afghans, which for years it has refused to do until a timetable was in place for U.S. troops to withdraw. If, as reported, Khalilzad has negotiated a conditional timetable for withdrawal, the actual departure of U.S. troops would be contingent on the Taliban continuing these negotiations in good faith.

If the intra-Afghan talks that follow any U.S.-Afghan agreement succeed, stability is possible in Afghanistan and the U.S.-Taliban deal will have been a necessary

precursor. If they fail, this initial deal's virtues may be for naught. The most important phase in this peace process is just beginning.

MAPPING THE TRANSITION

The primary mission of intra-Afghan talks will be to map out a transition period that ends the war and brings the Taliban into Afghanistan's political system. This will almost inevitably require the Afghan parties to address three issues from the beginning: Afghanistan's forthcoming presidential election, the precise mechanism for incorporating the Taliban, and a cease-fire.

Afghanistan's presidential election is currently scheduled for September 28, but Afghans are split on whether it should take place. President Ashraf Ghani, the front-runner, wants to hold the election so that he can win a fresh mandate for negotiations. The Taliban argue for canceling the vote, which they consider an illegitimate product of the post-2001 "occupation" of Afghanistan. Many other Afghan leaders, notably former President Hamid Karzai, hope to cancel or delay the election because they consider peace a greater priority and fear—rightly—extensive electoral fraud and violence. The election may now be so near that a cancellation is unrealistic, but the parties are likely to debate the issue in the first days of intra-Afghan talks.

Whether or not the election proceeds, Afghans will need to negotiate a process for the Taliban to transition into mainstream politics. Ghani wants the current Afghan government to preside over any transition, while the Taliban and many of Ghani's other rivals want to create a new interim government. Either way, Afghan leaders will need to define what positions will be open to Taliban representatives. The negotiators must also agree on what the interim government's core tasks will be: for instance, reviewing the Afghan constitution, devising a program to reintegrate today's fighters into society, and reforming the security forces. Finally, the Afghan leaders will need to agree on how and when the transition will end and how any interim authority will be dissolved, whether through an election or a national conference to choose its successor.

The top objective for most non-Taliban Afghan leaders will be to negotiate an enduring cease-fire. Like most insurgents at war with governments, the Taliban view violence as their primary source of leverage. They therefore have an

incentive to postpone a permanent cease-fire until the political questions have been resolved. This means that although nearly all Afghans want an immediate end to the fighting—and Khalilzad has emphasized that a cease-fire must be a part of any final deal—an actual cease-fire may have to wait until the start of a transitional period.

DEFINING THE FUTURE

Beyond these immediate issues, intra-Afghan discussions will need to broach the larger questions at the heart of the war—those concerning Afghanistan’s longer-term political future and how the country can begin to rebuild after nearly four decades of civil war. These questions may take years to fully resolve but finding some early convergence will be critical for a successful peace process.

Perhaps the most basic question concerns Afghanistan’s form of government. Nearly all non-Taliban Afghans embrace the post-2001 democratic system, whatever its flaws. Although Taliban leaders rarely demand the literal return of their draconian 1996–2001 emirate, in which the group banned elections and imposed a strict form of sharia law, they reject the legitimacy of the post-2001 system and insist on replacing it with something more “Islamic.” If the Taliban decide that a compromise is possible on this point, they may propose some new balance of secular and religious institutions akin to the Iranian system, in which unelected clerics exercise a check on elected officials. If so, the most important debate in the entire negotiation might be over the respective authorities of elected and religious leaders.

Particularly in light of this fundamental divergence over the role and interpretation of religion, the negotiators will undoubtedly need to address the fundamental rights of Afghan citizens, especially women, who were prevented from working or attending school the last time the Taliban held power. Afghan women’s groups are adamant that the country must not revive the abuses of the Taliban regime, and most Afghan leaders at least claim they will prioritize women’s rights in any negotiation. The Taliban are quick to assert that they, too, will protect women’s rights—albeit “in accordance with Islam.” Basic rights for women are now guaranteed by the 2004 Constitution of Afghanistan. Yet they will inevitably come up for discussion, and the parties might well empower a commission to amend or redraft the document. The international community has long prioritized the

treatment of women as a vital litmus test of its willingness to continue to bankroll Afghanistan, something that even the Taliban quietly recognize; this might prove important leverage for donors to prevent any deal from trading these rights away. Intra-Afghan discussions will need to broach the larger questions at the heart of the war.

Finally, no agreement will be stable unless it meaningfully provides for the enormous population of fighters and prisoners that the war has created. The Afghan government currently holds tens of thousands of battlefield prisoners, most of them Taliban fighters, and the Taliban can reportedly mobilize up to 60,000 men. Most Afghan leaders appear inclined to release the majority of these prisoners, forgive most crimes, and help fighters find gainful employment as the price of peace. Even a magnanimous approach, however, comes with serious challenges. Disillusioned fighters could drift toward groups such as the Islamic State (or ISIS). The Taliban may resist demobilizing even under a peace agreement. Victims may bitterly oppose impunity for murderers. And whatever happens in the negotiations, Afghanistan's poor economy will struggle to absorb tens of thousands of young men. Reintegrating these fighters into society will take years of arduous work, even if the parties agree on principles at the outset.

The Afghan negotiators could begin to address some of the country's most fundamental issues in their first round of talks. Alternatively, they could aim for something simpler and more immediately achievable, such as a suite of confidence-building measures or a schedule of milestones that puts off resolving core disputes.

The parties should be wary, however, of setting their sights too low. Addressing the major questions concerning Afghanistan's future will only get harder over time. The world's attention may move on, Afghan and international parties may become less committed to peace, and outside events may roil the country's domestic politics. Nobody expects an immediate grand bargain, but the negotiators may be able to find a sweet spot—for instance, an agreement on the mechanics of the transition process and on a set of principles to guide future negotiations on the longer-term substantive issues. Early talks may not settle on new constitutional language, for example, but they might empower a commission to do so and give it guidance on what can or cannot be changed. Each guideline

will chip away at the conflict's central disputes at a moment—possibly fleeting—when both the government and the Taliban are willing to talk.

Ending Afghanistan's war will require all parties to make difficult compromises. An intra-Afghan settlement is the only plausible way to achieve stability, however; neither a hasty U.S. withdrawal nor an inertial U.S. presence can bring it about. Washington must do whatever it can to help intra-Afghan negotiations succeed—most importantly by reinforcing that the departure of U.S. troops depends on the talks' progress. This offer of a conditional U.S. withdrawal was necessary to create the current moment of opportunity, but ultimately, peace in Afghanistan depends on Afghans themselves.

Source: <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/afghanistan/2019-09-05/deal-taliban-only-first-step-toward-peace>

The Brexit Mess | Editorial

Boris boxed in

The Westminster Parliament has been witness to many extraordinary scenes after the original fateful decision in 2015 to leave the European Union. However, that extremely messy process, which has already led to the resignation of two Prime Ministers and the holding of one general election, continues without a resolution. After the House of Commons saw the government of Boris Johnson defeated on both the votes it had ever faced, it also refused to allow him a dissolution, thus leaving him in office, but unable to legislate. His government cannot legislate because it has not only lost its majority because one of its members crossed the floor to the Liberal Democrats, but also because the rebellion on Tuesday had been punished by the withdrawal of the whip from 21 backbenchers.

The refusal to allow a dissolution is not absolute, as the Labour Party has made it clear that it wants the act that went through in defiance of the government also to pass the Lords, and to receive the Royal Assent, before it will agree to a dissolution. All this must be done by Monday, after which the government has prorogued Parliament. It was expected that the British establishment would tie itself into knots over leaving the European Union, but that it would tie itself up to such an extent, that there would be doubts expressed about the survival of British democracy, was not.

However, what seems likely to carry the UK through is the record of resilience of the very institutions now facing this challenge. The UK may not have a written constitution, but it does have a wealth of precedents that should help it manage Brexit, even if it is not necessarily the Brexit it wanted.

Source: <https://www.pakistantoday.com.pk/2019/09/05/the-brexit-mess/>

Trump Taking The World Towards Another Recession By Shahid Javed Burki

Is the world heading towards another economic downturn? If the answer is “probably yes” what is the main reason for this development and how can the situation be reversed if the recession does occur? These are important questions to ask and answer even for a country such as Pakistan which is not well integrated through trade and capital flows with the global economy. If global recession does come around it would coincide with Pakistan’s attempts to bolster its exports and thus reduce its balance of payments deficit.

Anytime soon would be the result of the actions and pronouncements by Donald Trump, the American President. These came at a fast clip. There were tit-for-tat announcements by Washington and Beijing regarding steps the two capitals took to hurt each other. Trump started by saying on August 22 that he was ordering an increase of tariffs on some Chinese imports. Beijing responded that it would impose new tariffs on \$75 billion imports from the United States. Trump, having called himself the “Trump Man”, decided to broaden the scope of his attacks.

What surprised the American business community was the order to have their firms stop dealing with China. Several conservative groups were displeased with the President’s approach. The President cited the 1977 Emergency Economic Powers Act to give him the authority to order American firms to move out of China. The law was originally written to enable a president to isolate criminal regimes, not sever economic ties with a major trading partner over a trade dispute. The US industry responded in disbelief. “The instruction for US firms to leave China was quite stunning. I’m completely surprised by it,” said Alison Acosta Winters, senior policy fellow at Americans for Prosperity, a conservative group. She said there was tremendous concern among lawmakers, including Congressional Republicans, about the direction of the trade war, which has burdened the world’s two largest economic engines for more than a year.

The Chinese reacted with anger to Washington’s provocations. “This unilateral and bullying trade protectionism and extreme pressure violate the consensus of the heads of state of China and the United States and violate the principle of mutual respect, equality and mutual benefit, seriously undermine the international

trade order,” reads a statement issued by the Chinese Commerce Ministry. But it probably understood that none of these arguments meant anything to Trump who operated according to his own rules. According to one account, Trump had been telling US businesses in private conversations to locate out of China and many had done so or were planning to. Several had announced plans to move their operations to low labour cost countries such as Vietnam, Cambodia, Indonesia and India. Pakistan did not figure in these plans.

What Trump did and said figured prominently in the annual discussions of the world’s major central bankers in Jackson Hole, Wyoming. At the meeting there was a consensus that when crises are the result of political actions and developments, there is no reason for their institutions to step in. “While monetary policy is a powerful tool that works to support consumer spending, business investment and public confidence, it cannot provide a settled rule book for international trade,” Powell said in his prepared speech at the conference. “Trade policy uncertainty seems to be playing a role in the global slowdown and in weak manufacturing and capital spending in the United States.”

Powell had the support of Mark Carney, head of the Bank of England. “Global momentum remains soft, despite the broad-based easing in global monetary expectations,” he said at the conference.

Some highly regarded economists who had occupied senior positions in the United States government or in international agencies voiced views that were similar from those of Chairman Powell. Lawrence Summers, who was treasury secretary for President Bill Clinton, summarised the concern in a tweet. “Coming to Jackson Hole, central banks are grappling with a major issue: can central banking as we know it be the primary tool of macroeconomic stabilization in the industrial world over the next decade?” George Mankiw, the former chief economist for President George W Bush, voiced similar alarm. “Not all the effects of the trade war can be offset by more expansionary monetary policy. In particular, to the extent that rising tariffs disrupt global supply chains, the result is an adverse effect on the supply of goods and services. There is nothing monetary policy can do to reverse that.”

In other words, the Federal Reserve was not equipped to deal with the problem that was caused by President Trump by launching the trade war with China. It

was these comments that angered Trump and had him call Powell and President X Jinping enemies of the United States. These statements capped one of the most extraordinary days in the long-running US-China trade war.

The leaders who gathered in the French resort of Biarritz for the G7 meeting found it difficult to understand where the American President stood on his relations with China. Having called President Xi an enemy of America as he was leaving for France, he decided that the Chinese leader was a “great leader” and a brilliant man. He was positive that he would get a trade deal and, if so, then American firms should “stay there and do a great job”. It was small wonder that the world was confused. “Day by day, even hour by hour, his approach to the trade war with China, the most consequential economic conflict on the planet, veered back and forth, leaving much of the world with geopolitical whiplash,” wrote Peter Baker of The New York Times. “If he seemed all over the map on Monday, as he wrapped up days of diplomacy, that the world would just have to get used to it. He likes leaving negotiating partners, adversaries and allies off balance.”

The impact of all this back-and-forth and the uncertainty it had caused was summed up by the Nobel Laureate Paul Krugman in his New York Times column. “If your business depends on smoothly functioning global economy, Trump’s tantrums suggest that you should postpone your investment plans; after all, you may be about to lose access to your export markets, your supply chain or both. It’s also, though, not a good time to invest in import-competing businesses; for all you know, Trump will actually back down on his threats. So everything gets put on hold — and the economy suffers.” If the world economy suffers a downturn, the blame should be clearly assigned to the American President.

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

Source: <https://tribune.com.pk/story/2047171/6-trump-taking-world-towards-another-recession/>

Halting Afghan Talks | Editorial

AN unexpected tweet from US President Donald Trump has put the brakes on the Afghan peace talks, giving rise to fears that the hard-won gains for a transition of power in Afghanistan may have been reversed.

Mr Trump stunned many people on Saturday evening when he announced that he was supposed to meet senior leaders of the Afghan Taliban and Afghan President Ashraf Ghani at Camp David on Sunday, but that the planned secret talks had been called off after a US soldier was killed in Kabul.

The attack that took several lives was claimed by the Taliban.

In a series of tweets, Mr Trump hit out at the Taliban, asking “what kind of people would kill so many in order to seemingly strengthen their bargaining position?”

The Taliban said the US president’s words had damaged his credibility, and they have warned of more American deaths.

There is no doubt that the Taliban’s continuing onslaught ought to be strongly condemned.

The group’s hardline position of bringing guns to the negotiating table is inconsistent with the goal of peace and has justifiably angered the US administration. But to respond to the Taliban’s violence in the manner adopted by Mr Trump is not only ineffectual, it is also self-destructive.

Mr Trump’s arbitrary decision has greatly undermined the work of Zalmay Khalilzad, America’s chief negotiator on Afghanistan, who had managed to move the needle on winding down 18 years of a bloody war by getting the Taliban to agree to a landmark accord “in principle” just days ago.

Although the US may have legitimate concerns about the high levels of violence in Afghanistan, it is entirely possible that increased diplomatic pressure on the Taliban could have resulted in lesser bloodshed and persuaded the insurgents to engage with the Ghani government.

It is true that in an ideal situation, a ceasefire would have been in place as warring parties negotiated. It is equally true that the Taliban have no qualms about displaying their strength to put pressure on their adversaries, especially as they are not bound by time constraints. But surely this makes continuing with the peace talks — accompanied by a closer look at Afghanistan's long history of civil war and hardline positions — all the more necessary.

Where dialogue makes things possible, walking away from negotiations achieves nothing.

Calling off the talks will hardly lead to the change in the current situation that the Americans are hoping for. In fact, arbitrary moves by the US president will only intensify the cycle of violence in Afghanistan and create more uncertainty in the region.

The Trump administration should know better than to look for quick-fix solutions to the Afghan war. Meanwhile, any dreams of a foreign policy win before the next US election must give way to the realisation that Afghanistan is too serious a matter to link to domestic politics.

Published in Dawn, September 10th, 2019

Source: <https://www.dawn.com/news/1504552/halting-afghan-talks>

International Rebuke For India | Editorial

The world community “must not remain indifferent to the tragedy that is unfolding before our eyes” in Indian Occupied Kashmir, Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi said on Tuesday during the 42nd session of the United Nations Human Rights Council in Geneva. In what may be a callout of India’s economic allies turning a blind eye to the brutality of the Indian regime in the occupied state, the FM added, “We must not let political, commercial, and parochial considerations cloud and impair our thoughts and action.”

Decisive action, Qureshi insisted, was needed to address the warning signs of a “looming human catastrophe”. He also called on the human rights council to take a few immediate steps, including urging India to immediately stop the use of pellet guns; end the bloodshed; lift the curfew; reverse the clampdown and communications blackout; restore fundamental freedoms and liberties; release political prisoners; stop targeting human rights defenders; and fulfil its obligations under the UNSC resolutions and international law. He also called on the council to take steps to bring to justice the perpetrators of human rights violations of Kashmiris through an inquiry commission, as recommended by the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights. On Wednesday, Pakistan submitted a statement on behalf of 50 countries, expressing concern over the illegal annexation of occupied Kashmir by India. The statement included all of the points from his earlier speech. The Foreign Office also issued a statement thanking the 50 countries which signed the statement. Also, after a meeting with Qureshi, UN Human Rights Council President Coly Seck reportedly expressed concern over the abuse of human rights and said the entire world was cautiously watching the situation.

The Indian media has, meanwhile, caught on to a misspeak by Qureshi during an interaction with reporters on Tuesday, where he accidentally referred to the disputed region as “the Indian state of Jammu and Kashmir”, rather than ‘IOK’ or ‘Indian Occupied Kashmir’, which are the terms Pakistan officially uses. Fortunately, if this is the best that India and the Modi media can come up with after an international rebuke, it’s still a win for Pakistan.

Source: <https://tribune.com.pk/story/2054184/6-international-rebuke-india/>

Planned Trump-Moon Meeting Rekindles Hopes of North Korea Talks By Edward White

US president Donald Trump will meet his South Korean counterpart Moon Jae-in later this month at the UN in New York, as optimism builds for the rekindling of talks with North Korea over its nuclear weapons programme.

The meeting, announced by South Korea's presidential office on Friday, follows a signal by the North Korean foreign ministry on Monday that Pyongyang was willing to restart negotiations with Washington this month.

Negotiations between the US and North Korea have been mostly stalled since February when the second summit between Mr Trump and North Korean leader Kim Jong Un collapsed in Hanoi. Since May, Pyongyang has undertaken a series of missile and rocket tests, raising fears of a return to military provocations.

A third meeting between Mr Trump and Mr Kim, at the demilitarised zone dividing the Korean peninsula in late June, resulted in a pledge by both sides to resume talks within weeks, but since then there have been few signs of progress.

Many analysts remain sceptical that the new working level talks between Washington and Pyongyang will deliver concrete progress towards North Korean denuclearisation. There is also doubt over what role Mr Moon will play in any future talks.

“Until North Korea manages to secure at least waivers and exemptions from UN and US sanctions, Kim Jong Un seems to have little interest in talking to Moon,” said a Seoul-based analyst.

Van Jackson, a former Pentagon official and now a lecturer at Victoria University of Wellington, said the key to “whether anything meaningful happens at the working level” was whether the US would abandon its policy of maximum pressure, which has been implemented through tough international economic sanctions on Pyongyang, and give up on its longer term goal of denuclearisation.

“There’s no sign of that yet,” said Mr Jackson.

Leif-Eric Easley, a professor of international studies at Ewha Womans University in Seoul, said that while it was positive that the US and South Korean leaders were meeting to “co-ordinate” policy on North Korea, it was unclear whether North Korean negotiators would be “empowered to trade specific denuclearisation steps for limited sanctions relief”.

“If the North Koreans just want to arrange another [Trump-Kim] summit, that would indicate Pyongyang is playing for time and unearned concessions,” said Mr Easley.

Speaking on Thursday at the White House, Mr Trump, responding to a question, reiterated that the door was still open to another meeting this year with Mr Kim. “They’d like to meet. I think it’s something that will happen,” Mr Trump told reporters.

Mr Jackson said the fact that the US president was already talking publicly about his next meeting with Mr Kim “all but guarantees North Korea will agree to nothing meaningful at the working level”.

The renewed potential for talks comes just days after Mr Trump fired John Bolton, his national security adviser and a longtime North Korea hawk and proponent of taking a tough approach against the Kim regime.

Mr Trump on Wednesday told reporters that Mr Bolton had “set back” progress between the US and North Korea by talking about the “Libyan model” — referring to US efforts to convince Muammer Gaddafi to abandon his nuclear weapons programme in exchange for economic assistance in 2003 and the Libyan leader’s later demise at the hands of western-backed rebels in 2011.

Still, experts have diverged as to whether Mr Bolton’s departure would boost the chances of further progress in negotiations between Washington and Pyongyang.

Source: <https://www.ft.com/content/5c5862e8-d5da-11e9-8367-807ebd53ab77>

The Problem With Trump's Foreign Policy – Analysis By Adam Garfinkle

Critics of Trump's foreign policy have got it backwards. International consensus, international law and UN Security Council resolutions have not produced the post-World War II international order. These are consequences, not causes, of an order produced by the West.

Consider this general, and generic, recent criticism of the Trump administration's foreign policy from an intelligent and experienced journalist: In the ocean of international relations, "icebergs" have always popped up that threatened the post-World War II world order and sought to dictate a system based on force rather than decisions by the international community. Such decisions are expressed in United Nations conventions on issues like occupied territories, human rights, nuclear proliferation and ballistic missiles.

These icebergs, usually in the form of tyrants in Africa, Asia and South America, have largely melted in the warm currents of the international community under the leadership of the United States and Western Europe. This has happened even though these leaders too sometimes sinned by using arbitrary force. Donald Trump's shirking of the US commitment to the international community's "Gulf Stream" once again leaves international relations to the forces of aggression. The Trump administration even switched sides and became a giant iceberg threatening an ice age on the existing order, which is based on the lessons from the world wars.

Fundamental Flaw: "Three Bases" of World Order Argument

The criticism goes on to define this "Gulf Stream", listing "the three bases of world order — international consensus, international law and UN Security Council resolutions". This remark came from an Israeli journalist who writes for Ha'aretz, Shaul Arieli.

Absent his reference to "occupied territories" it could easily have come from virtually any random, reasonably attentive, observer, journalist, or politician in western Europe, or from virtually any random academic ensconced in most

American university faculties. The problem with the Trump foreign policy, in short, is that it spurns the norms, multilateral institutions and legal apparatus of the international community.

This view, which goes under the general label of “liberal internationalism”, is today the default template of what passes for the Western intelligentsia — and indeed, one reason that this intelligentsia is understood to be “liberal” is because it takes this view. The liberal internationalist template is not without many critics in the West, notably among policy-oriented scholars and, especially, practitioners of statecraft and diplomacy. Neither is it a monolithic point of view; several variations defined mainly by the scope of its claims may be discerned if one has patience for detailed study.

Whatever the variations, however, the view itself is fundamentally in error; indeed, not a single sentence in Arieli’s foregoing description of the sources and nature of international order is accurate. The main reason is that its advocates have mistaken an aspiration for reality, and by so doing have gotten a basic chunk of causality exactly backwards.

International consensus, international law and UN Security Council resolutions have not produced the post-World War II international order, and what remains of it today. These rarified nouns are consequences, not causes, of an order produced by the advanced democracies of the West, led by the US and girded by American power and reputation.

Trump’s Foolish Errors

The problem with the Trump administration’s foreign policy is not its disparaging attitude toward the United Nations, inherited arms control agreements with the USSR-cum-Russia or Iran, or other international legal instruments such as the Paris Accords on Climate Change. Many of the actions the administration has taken in these regards have been foolish unforced errors driven by some shifting combination of long-stifled pique and domestic political considerations.

But they have been but marginal errors because these are but relatively marginal issues. The real damage that has been done, and it is cumulatively quite serious, has other sources and manifestations.

For example, in recent weeks no fewer than six oil tankers have been attacked by Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) units in the Strait of Hormuz, and one British vessel has been seized outright in a commando operation. Never mind for the moment the backstory reasons for Iranian actions, which in the main represent responses to sanctions and sanctions enforcement actions.

What has the Trump administration done about this threat to the flow of energy to the world economy, a common security goods responsibility the US government has undertaken to supply more or less since the British left East of Suez in 1971?

Aside from a tit-for-tat downing of drones, it has done worse than nothing. It volubly "dispatched" a carrier battle group toward the region that was headed there in normal rotation anyway, a cheap trick that fooled no one. The president later let it be known that he called off a limited strike on Iranian/IRGC targets because it might have killed 150 people. The result? Within days an Emirati delegation travelled to Tehran in what must be seen, and has been seen, as classic hedging behaviour.

Within days too, like clockwork, the Russian government proposed a new security structure for the Gulf that would require the removal of all US forces and facilities based in the area. Even in the recent past such a proposal would have been seen by all concerned as propagandistic bluster; today, with the Trump administration seeming to lunge for the exits anyway, that's not obviously the case.

New Withdrawal Syndrome

The administration has also elevated the stature of North Korea's Kim Jong-un with predictably pointless summitry, thus rewarding one of the world's most brutal tyrants in return for, so far, nothing but acrid smoke and cracked mirrors. In the process the president agreed to suspend joint US-South Korean military exercises (subsequently rolled back thanks to the exertions of since-departed US Defence Secretary James Mattis) and opined that he wanted to "bring those troops home". That sentiment, once expressed by the president of the US, cannot be rolled back.

President Trump also announced, and then sort of un-announced, the withdrawal of all US troops from Syria — a small but effective deployment of 2,000 soldiers that has provided oversized diplomatic leverage in a tough situation. The troops remain, for the time being, but the reputational damage is done.

President Trump has also since authorised talks with the Taliban that presage an abandonment of the current government there no less than the Paris Peace Accords of 1973 presaged abandonment of South Vietnam. One can argue the merits of the decision, but not the image it casts.

President Trump himself has several times cast doubt on US adherence to Article 5 of the NATO Treaty, thus undermining the key pillar of the security and prosperity of Europe. He has also consistently downplayed provocative Russian behaviour for fear that somehow it would delegitimize his election as president, even though the two concerns are logically unrelated.

That in turn can only raise the prospect of green little hybrid men showing up on the soil of some Baltic state, forcing NATO to either resist or essentially collapse. Given NATO's unanimity rule and the persistence of Turkish membership, it would take a strong US effort to galvanise the alliance into action.

End of Post-War Liberal International Order?

The US president has alienated almost every ally the US has. If systematic Chinese violation of WTO rules is the real problem here — and it is — elemental common sense would have counselled gathering the allies in common cause instead of dissing them.

In recent days President Trump has expressed hope that things will calm down in Hong Kong. "Our Intelligence has informed us that the Chinese Government is moving troops to the border with Hong Kong. Everyone should be calm and safe!", he tweeted, just hours after having expressed the hope that the "tough situation" would work out "for everybody, including China". One can imagine the tone of private conversations these days in Taipei.

These words and deeds represent what Richard Haass, president of the New York-based Council on Foreign Relations, has aptly called the abdication of American superpower status.

One ought not to perseverate on Donald Trump, for his rise has been more symptom than cause of current anxieties, international as well as domestic. Much of the same body language of geopolitical retrenchment purveyed the Obama administration's foreign policy. Though they came from very different focal points on the American political spectrum, they seem to represent a new normal in the sense that they, alone among all US Presidents, have been reticent at best to affirm American exceptionalism.

Some still hold out hope that with the end of the Trump era in American politics, whether sooner or later, things will go back more or less to the way they were, with the US in its own enlightened self-interest providing common security goods to the global order. Alas, just as hope is generally not a policy, this particular hope is not a prospect to bet on.

Finally, what this means, among many other things, is that the institutional sinews of the postwar liberal international order, their associated norms along with them, will surely weaken and decay in time.

Adam Garfinkle is a Distinguished Visiting Fellow at the S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies (RSIS), Nanyang Technological University (NTU), Singapore and Founding Editor of The American Interest.

Source: <https://www.eurasiareview.com/13092019-the-problem-with-trumps-foreign-policy-analysis/>

Energy And Poverty – OpEd By Todd Royal

Energy and poverty are intertwined. In the last ten years India according to the United Nations (UN) 2019 Multidimensional Poverty Index, lifted over 270 million Indian citizens out of extreme poverty; since they acquired growing electrification and access to energy. But many nations believe chaotic, intermittent renewables – mainly wind and solar – will achieve these results. Meanwhile, the world watches passively while the weaponization of energy led by China, Russia and Iran (CRI) is teetering Asia towards memories of 1939 and the emergence of World War III.

Europe and the U.S. wholeheartedly believe renewables will power billions in China, India, Africa, and Asia hungry for energy and electricity. Europe even welcomes with open arms, Iranian terrorist-monies for their dispirited economies. What the U.S. should do is “drown the world in oil.” Build power plants, and watch the planet flourish with affordable electricity. Nations need energy now.

Whoever controls energy – mainly oil, natural gas, coal and increasingly nuclear power – rules with either an iron fist or a benevolent one? But the world is in a stage of chaotic order with CRI challenging the US-led liberal order in place since the end of World War II (WWII). Energy is the new superpower.

Never before has energy and electricity played the leading role in alleviating poverty. Social order, religion, and family structure are still important – though all three are under attack over environmental extremism – but nothing has done more for human achievement, increased life expectancies, and ameliorating hunger like access to oil, natural gas, and coal that brings scalable, reliable affordable, abundant and flexible energy and electricity.

Allowing the Guardian newspaper, and green clergy parading as environmentalists such as Bill McKibben, Paul Ehrlich and John Holden to determine energy policies that lead to poverty is evil and shameful. These men then attack human reproduction, productivity, longevity, and technological progress through delaying or crushing enhanced infrastructure projects.

Renewables and believing an existential crisis exists via climate change when there are serious doubts (research the Oregon Petition and Marc Moreno for starters) won't stop CRI from becoming the new hegemonic powers. Even NASA has admitted it is the sun that affects the earth more than burning fossil fuels. Then the last seventy five years of fighting poverty will be overturn over dubious, global warming claims, and relying on the sun and wind for electricity backed up by fossil fuels onto electrical grids.

We have entered the era of allowing Al Gore-types (whose predictions and science are generally wrong) to set national security, foreign policy, and realist balancing based on inaccurate predictions of the weather. But the former U.S. Vice President isn't the only doomsayer whose global warming/climate change prognostications are deceptively incorrect. This has profound implications for energy, poverty, and global peace.

Renewables, and setting energy polices based on global warming/climate change only leads to poverty and geopolitical chaos. Poverty is now in the form of:

“Trillions in subsidies, rocketing power prices, pristine landscapes turned into industrial wastelands, wrecked rural communities and bird and bat carnage.”

The U.S. and European led “Green New Deals” will destroy humanity, and lead to backbreaking poverty. It's why India has chosen reliable, affordable coal-fired power plants over solar and wind farms for electricity. China is following India's lead, and slashing renewables, clean energy and technology subsidies by 39 percent; and building coal-fired power plants at a record pace.

China has even used “green finance” monies for coal investments. Overall “global renewable growth (and investment) has stalled,” particularly in Europe. Why are global subsidies, production credits and tax incentives for renewables are being cut by governments and private investors?

Solar and wind have led to electrical grid blackouts in Australia, Britain, New York City, and grid instability in U.S. state, Texas, and substantially higher electricity costs. Additionally, renewables cannot replace the approximately 6,000 products that came from a barrel crude oil.

Renewables (solar and wind) will never be enough for decades ahead to power modern, growing economies, or countries, and continents such as China, India and Africa, which are emerging from the energy and electrical dark ages. A city, county, state, nation, or continent needs reliable electricity 24/7/365, and renewables are chaotically intermittent. U.S. energy firm Duke Energy now believes solar farms are increasing pollution; Michael Shellenberger, Time Magazine environmental hero recipient echoes the same sentiments. Mr. Shellenberger also includes wind power with solar increasing emissions.

Moreover, renewable investments are plummeting, because unless electricity markets are skewed towards favoring renewables, the entire market for solar and wind produced electricity breakdowns. Then the entire renewable to electricity model relies on energy storage systems that do not have enough capacity or technological progress currently available to provide uninterrupted, on-demand electricity to all ratepayers and recipients from the grid.

It energy-nihilism to think, or believe storage from wind and solar will generate affordable, reliable, scalable, and flexible electricity. If fossil fuels are replaced on a large-scale basis it will lead to increased pollution, higher than average levelized cost of electricity, grid instability, environmental destruction, and poverty. This why most people don't want renewables near them; meaning, there isn't a green transition-taking place.

But geopolitics is where energy and poverty collide, and renewables replacing fossil fuels based on the overarching belief of anthropogenic global warming (whose climate models consistently fail) is how the global instability could deepen and grow.

According to the Bloomberg Economic gauge, China's economy is dramatically slowing, "due to its vast self-made problems." Which means as long as President Trump is in office the U.S.-China trade war will continue. The U.S. is winning, and Iran is still in Trump's and the U.S.' "crosshairs." Both strategies receive negative media attention, but are causing geopolitical consternation. China and Iran will forcefully respond.

Nations and governments better have policies in place for energy and electrical stability to counter renewables instability, and the nation-state rivalry occurring between the U.S., NATO, and Asian allies against CRI. Either reliable energy will be chosen, or geopolitical wars over blackouts leading to lower military preparedness will happen. Either way energy and poverty are intertwined, or poverty can be defined as lower per-capita-GDP leading to conflicts that destroys countries. Choosing renewables and global warming-based energy policies will likely lead to poverty and possibly wartime catastrophes.

Source: <https://www.eurasiareview.com/12092019-energy-and-poverty-oped/>

The Afghan Peace Agreement — The US

Perspective By Inam Ul Haque

The dust is yet to settle after the inevitable scuttling of the peace process by the mercurial Donald Trump. The press is abuzz with stories as to what happened, when, where and by whom. In my previous piece “Afghanistan: Beyond the Hope of a Peace Agreement” published in this space on 10th September, some of the perceived reasoning was highlighted mainly from the Taliban perspective, since it is the least represented and almost non-existent. This opinion piece will focus on the role played by the maverick Zalmay Khalilzad, the US Special Representative for Afghanistan Reconciliation, and the US deep state.

In the run-up to the deal, there was an urgency about the anticipated outcome in the air. This urgency seemed to be generated by Khalilzad and supported by the powerful international media and analyst community. Khalilzad had his compulsion to deliver the deal before the Afghan elections on 28th September 2019, as a precursor to the US presidential elections in 2020. The shaping of the media environment was also meant to pressurise Pakistan and other stakeholders, ostensibly to faithfully support the process and the desired US outcome. Mr Khalilzad had kept the draft agreement super confidential from the US deep state — especially the US military and the CIA — and the Afghan government much to their consternation. In the end, perhaps it was hard for the deep state to entrust American interests in Afghanistan to a first-generation US citizen of Afghan origin.

Zalmay Mamozy Khalilzad (68) — Zalmay being a Pashto word for a brave “young man” — was born in Mazar-e-Sharif, in the Balkh Province in northern Afghanistan, to Noorzai Sunni Pashtun parentage. After being an exchange student to the US and earning his Masters from the American University of Beirut, where he met his future wife, Cheryl Benard (66), he earned his PhD from the University of Chicago. After brief stints in academia, he joined the government and is regarded as one of the most successful bureaucrats turned diplomat, and is the highest-ranking Muslim to ever serve in the US government. He served as the permanent US representative to the UN (2007-2009), ambassador to Iraq (2005-2007) and ambassador to Afghanistan (2003-2005). Mr Khalilzad has been associated with policymaking at the US National Security

Council for a long time, serving as a special presidential envoy to Afghanistan and special assistant to the US President for Southwest Asia, Near East, and North African affairs. He has strong moorings in the US academic and analytical community with Cheryl Benard, his wife, and son Alexander Benard working with RAND and other influential think tanks. Under successive administrations after president Reagan (1985-89), Khalilzad has been an influential insider in US decision-making concerning the Islamic World. He worked with Zbigniew Brzezinski, the architect of “Operation Cyclone” to organise and support the Afghan Mujahideen during the Soviet occupation, as an assistant. Later on, the media used to call him “Bush’s favourite Afghan”.

As per Khalilzad’s memoir, *The Envoy: From Kabul to the White House, My Journey Through a Turbulent World*, he believes, “the Muslim world was suffering a crisis of civilization,” hence the US needs to work with moderates to nudge Islam forward. In the run-up to the 2001 invasion of Afghanistan, Khalilzad tried to persuade President Bush against the conventional wisdom that Afghanistan was the “hissing snake pit of disputatious tribes”, arguing that the country was peaceful for 50 years before the Soviet invasion in 1979.

The family is also in business. Alexander Benard specialises in “distressed investment”. The second son, Maximillian Benard, is also a column writer and businessman. Khalilzad’s firm, Gryphon Capital Partners, representing the UK-based Tethys Petroleum, competed in a tender for oilfields in northern Afghanistan holding an estimated 80 million barrels of oil. He was also involved with the risk analysis of the Turkmenistan, Pakistan, Afghanistan, and India (TAPI) Pipeline; the 1,400 kilometres (\$2 billion) gas pipeline for UNOCAL and Chevron. In September 2014, the Austrian press reported freezing of his wife’s bank accounts on money laundering charges, which were later disproved.

As the US ambassador to Afghanistan, Khalilzad oversaw the first Afghan elections, the meeting of the Loya Jirgah (the Afghan Lower House) and established the American University of Afghanistan. He also persuaded king Zahir Shah to abdicate, against the wishes of Pashtun delegation to the Loya Jirgah.

As a dexterous diplomat, Khalilzad cajoled Iran into supporting the US choice of Hamid Karzai and is known for bringing together people from diverse and

generally hostile points of view together. Such rare talent arouses jealousies at home and abroad. He survived an assassination attempt, while serving as the US ambassador in Afghanistan in 2005, and may have fallen out of grace with the US deep state during the current episode.

Besides the Khalilzad factor, in the US internal political landscape, democrats could hardly stomach the award of such a prize — a peace deal culminating the longest military conflict in US history — to a Republican president. It is considered too big a trophy and legacy for a president. And for those uninitiated in US politics; domestic politics is always decisive in US policy formulation. Foreign policy and external engagements always get a second priority.

The emphasis by President Trump to sign and announce the agreement at Camp David also played out negatively. Trump wanted to sign it at Camp David himself for spectacle, drama and political mileage — if US press is to be believed. The Taliban wanted to sign it in Doha and announce it at Camp David, a controversial venue all across the US political spectrum. Plus there were other forces at work too. US Generals Petraeus, Kean and others too were uncomfortable to accept defeat and sit with the ragtag Taliban and that too at Camp David.

President Trump perhaps stopped the process to put pressure on the Taliban, as he did with South Korea recently, by cancelling the summit dramatically and then holding it. The plan to sign up the agreement at Camp David was a spur-of-the-moment decision by President Trump, as was the subsequent cancellation. The deal can be revitalised in another volte-face by Trump especially after the removal of the restraining influence of John Bolton, the hawkish and ideologically-driven NSA.

Perhaps, the Taliban perspective on the events will follow next time.

Published in The Express Tribune, September 17th, 2019.

Source: <https://tribune.com.pk/story/2057933/6-afghan-peace-agreement-us-perspective/>

UN Report on Rohingya Crisis | Editorial

The warning carried in a recent UN report is pretty loud and clear: as many as 600,000 Rohingya Muslims still living in Myanmar face a “serious risk of genocide”. They are the ones who failed to escape the August 2017 military-led offensive in the Aung San Suu Kyi’s homeland. It is understandable, therefore, why nearly a million Rohingya refugees — who managed to find shelter in Bangladesh two years back — prefer the inhuman and insecure camp life there to a return journey to Myanmar. For many in these squalid camps, Bangladesh still feels like paradise, compared to Myanmar. Thus, the repatriation deal signed between Myanmar and Bangladesh, the country that hosts most of the Rohingya refugees, in November 2017 has been literally dead ever since.

The UN report issued in Geneva validates the repatriation fears of the Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh, stressing that the “deplorable” and “deteriorating” situation in Myanmar’s Rakhine state makes it “impossible” for the fleeing population to return. The report prepared by a fact-finding mission of the world body after interviewing nearly 1,300 witnesses says sexual and gender-based violence by the Myanmar military “remains a prominent feature of conflicts” in Shan and Kachin states. The mission report says that the evidence gathered by it has been passed to a new investigative mechanism for Myanmar which will support any future prosecution in international courts.

The Myanmar military offensive against Rohingya is a textbook example of ethnic cleansing with soldiers involved in rape, murder, burning down of entire villages, planting landmines, and using civilians as slave labour. The sheer barbarism being endured by these stateless people cannot be overemphasised. The UN report must not be rendered a mere file material, and must help wake up the world to what is regarded as the gravest crimes against civilians under the international law.

Published in The Express Tribune, September 18th, 2019.

Source: <https://tribune.com.pk/story/2058766/6-un-report-rohingya-crisis/>

Defeat For Netanyahu | Editorial

ISRAELI Prime Minister Netanyahu, who earned reputation of a racist leader, has suffered a crippling defeat in Tuesday's parliamentary elections brightening prospects of his accountability on the charges of corruption. Having conducted a vile campaign directed at Israel's Arab minority, Mr. Netanyahu saw his Likud Party lose hundreds of thousands of votes and a critical handful of parliamentary seats, compared with the previous election in April — while Arab parties increased their representation by 30 percent.

His defeat has been described by many analysts as something good for Israelis, Palestinians and Americans. Echoing Palestinians' satisfaction with the results, Mahmoud al-Aloul, Deputy Chairman of the West Bank's ruling Fatah faction, said that he was happy to see Netanyahu "defeated." Mr. Netanyahu, he charged, was a "symbol of racism and hostility," and that Netanyahu's defeat "came after his election campaign focused on carrying out more violations, especially the annexation of the Jordan Valley and the northern Dead Sea." On the basis of election result, analysts say if Israel's other parties stick to their campaign positions, a leader who has polarized his country and damaged Israel's standing in the United States could finally be forced from office — or, at least, prevented from following through on his most extreme promises that could damage prospects for peace beyond any repair. However, going by the ground situation, there would be hardly any difference for Palestinians as Jewish parties and candidates behave almost similarly as far as Palestinian and rights of Palestinian people are concerned.

Source: <https://pakobserver.net/index.php/2019/09/20/defeat-for-netanyahu/>

Iran-US Ties Since Trump Came to Power

TEHRAN: Tensions between Tehran and Washington have spiralled since US President Donald Trump came to power, quit the multilateral deal on Iran's nuclear programme and reimposed sweeping sanctions.

Here is a recap.

In a landmark address to Middle Eastern leaders in Saudi Arabia on May 21, 2017, just months after taking office, Trump urges nations to work together to isolate Iran.

“From Lebanon to Iraq to Yemen, Iran funds, arms and trains terrorists, militias and other extremist groups that spread destruction and chaos across the region.”

The Iranian government, Trump claimed in an address to the United Nations on September 19, 2017, “has turned a wealthy country with a rich history and culture into an economically depleted rogue state.”

US-Iran tensions overshadow Makkah summits

Trump on May 8, 2018, pulls the US out of the nuclear pact between world powers and Iran.

The move heralds the reinstatement of US sanctions on Iran and companies with ties to it.

On August 7, Washington reimposes a first set of sanctions that involve freezing financial transactions and imports of raw materials, as well as penalties on purchases in the car and commercial aviation industries.

A second wave of US sanctions comes into force on November 5, described by Washington as the “toughest” yet.

From May 2019, tensions rise between Washington and Tehran after acts of sabotage and attacks on oil tankers in the Gulf, blamed by the US on Iran, which denies the charges.

On June 20, Iran's Revolutionary Guards say they shot down a US spy drone which allegedly violated Iranian airspace. The Pentagon denies the unmanned aircraft entered Iran's airspace.

The next day Trump approves a retaliatory strike, but cancels it at the last minute.

On June 24 the US imposes "hard-hitting" financial sanctions on Iran's supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei and senior Iranian military leaders.

On July 18, Trump says the US military has taken down an Iranian drone that came dangerously close to one of its naval vessels in the Strait of Hormuz. Iran denies the claim.

On September 3 the United States imposes sanctions on Iran's space programme.

On September 7, Iran says it has fired up advanced centrifuges to boost its enriched uranium stockpiles.

It is the latest step in scaling down nuclear commitments following Washington's withdrawal from the accord.

Since May it has exceeded the enriched uranium stockpile permitted by the accord and begun enriching to above 3.67 per cent, to a level of at least 4.5 per cent, but still far from that required for military use.

On September 20 Trump announces "the highest sanctions ever imposed on a country", hitting Iran's central bank.

What's behind rising US-Iran tensions in the Gulf?

But he indicates he does not plan a military strike, calling restraint a sign of strength, while stressing it would be “the easiest thing... (to) knock out 15 different major things in Iran.”

The new sanctions come after September 14 attacks on two oil facilities in Saudi Arabia, which Washington blames on Iran.

Source: <https://tribune.com.pk/story/2061724/3-iran-us-ties-since-trump-came-power/>

World Peace | Editorial

We all know, it is either co-existence or non-existence. Yet we continue to move towards dangerous situations oblivious of the consequences that this could lead to the destruction of the entire human race. To mark the International Peace Day on Sept 21, a think tank reported that the average level of global peacefulness improved slightly in the 2019 Global Peace Index (GPI). Trends show peacefulness since 2008 has deteriorated by 3.78 per cent. Pakistan has slipped by two positions in the annual global index on peacefulness, being at 153 among 163 countries. The overall trends though show signs of improvement in Pakistan in some areas. Iceland continues to be the world's most peaceful country. Afghanistan has replaced Syria as the most violent place. In its annual report, the Sydney-based Institute for Economics and Peace has presented a comprehensive data-driven analysis on peace, its value for the economy, trends and how to develop peaceful societies. India has slipped by four points on the global index on peacefulness finishing at 141. The increase in state-sponsored violence in occupied Kashmir, rising intolerance against the minorities and lower castes under the hate ideology of 'one nation, one religion, one language' have added to India's notoriety as an intolerant society. It also has the seventh-highest overall natural hazard score in the world. Ukraine has shown the best improvement in peace in the 2019 GPI. Egypt has made some progress in the peace index for the first time since 2015. The index shows the Middle East and North Africa region as the world's least peaceful area for the fifth consecutive year. Half of the countries in Europe, the world's most peaceful region, have deteriorated in peacefulness since 2008.

The 13th edition of the report has identified climate change as a threat to world peace. We are in a situation where too many mouths chase too little food. What can one expect when big arms are under the control of small minds. We are living in dangerous times.

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

Source: <https://tribune.com.pk/story/2062099/1-world-peace/>

Global Climate March | Editorial

On a sweltering Friday afternoon, thousands of citizens in different cities of the country braved the heat to march for a critical cause — climate change. The marches are part of a larger global movement on climate. And while all of those who participated in these marches may not know if they have been affected by climate change, they certainly do know that it is a real thing and with very real consequences. Curiously, the marches came about after 15-year-old Swede Greta Thunberg sat in front of parliament in Geneva, urging lawmakers to take stronger climate action. Her protest quickly snowballed and just over a year later, it turned into a global movement.

On Friday, millions of people across the world were out on the roads calling on their respective governments to take decisive action to mitigate the impact of global warming and ensure a greener future for coming generations. In Pakistan, most of those who came out have been impacted by freak climate events brought about as a consequence of climate change. From extreme temperatures which claimed hundreds of lives to flash floods which brought vast destruction, and to rising sea levels which are forcing those living in coastal areas to relocate.

Those on the march across Pakistan have demanded the power brokers of the country to declare a climate emergency, adopt a low-carbon economy, and create awareness at the grass roots. It is heartening to note that unlike some other heads of government around the world, Pakistan has a PM who is quite cognisant of the threat posed by climate change and has done much to counter it. The marches present an unprecedented opportunity for the government to engage with people who are affected by climate change and involve them in symbiotic efforts to turn around global warming.

At the Paris Climate Change Conference in 2015 participating nations had agreed to cut temperature by 2 degrees Celsius over the years. However, African countries said it is hard for them to agree to this because this might wipe them out. They said, “We want 1.5 degrees Celsius cut, 1.5 to survive.”

Source: <https://tribune.com.pk/story/2061305/6-global-climate-march/>

Trump's Trade Wars: A New World Order?

– Analysis By James M. Dorsey

President Trump's declared economic protectionism has taken the United States' international relations with several foes and allies to some uncharted territories. His open-ended trade wars toward several nations have triggered criticism among conservatives and liberals alike in the United States. He has justified his actions by arguing for a downturn of America's trade deficit. However, a recent Harvard CAPS/Harris Poll survey shows 63 percent of registered voters said that tariffs imposed on Chinese products ultimately hurt the U.S. more than China; while 74 percent said that American consumers are shouldering most of the burden of those tariffs.

(1) The political network funded in part by billionaire libertarian Charles Koch has contested Mr. Trump's approach toward China, and decided to shape an alternative strategy in the year of the U.S. Presidential elections. One Koch senior official has acknowledged, "It doesn't penetrate with the people that are willing to go along with the argument that you have to punish China." There is now a pursuit of a "two steps back strategy," which will involve putting together a team of almost 100 business leaders to call on the Trump administration and lawmakers to end the trade war with China.

(2) In this paper, James M. Dorsey, senior fellow at the S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies at Singapore's Nanyang Technological University and the National University of Singapore's Middle East Institute, examines the ramifications of President Trump's policy of economic sanctions and tariffs vis-à-vis several nations and international groupings. He also looks at China's counter strategy, and whether Middle Eastern countries, like Saudi Arabia, will be caught in the web of the current trade wars.

By James M. Dorsey

US President Donald J. Trump may not like armed conflict, but he sure loves economic warfare, whether it is to impose his political will on countries, protect sectors of the U.S. economy, secure more preferential trade terms, or stop others from gaining technological advantage.

The list of countries subject to sanctions or import tariffs designed to force changes in either economic, military, or geopolitical policies is long and includes both U.S. allies and rivals. Since Mr. Trump assumed presidency in January 2017, he has sanctioned China, North Korea, Russia, Venezuela, Iran, the European Union, Myanmar, Syria and Cuba. In one of his first actions after entering the Oval Office, he pulled the United States out of the Trans Pacific Partnership (TPP).

(3). He has also sought to undermine the World Trade Organization (WTO), a US-inspired pillar of global trade.

(4) Mr. Trump's liberal use of sanctions amounts to more than a penchant for economic warfare in an effort to create trade terms more advantageous to the United States. Economic warfare is the president's strategy to shape a new world order that is likely to be multi-polar. Almost three years into Mr. Trump's administration, it is proving to be a strategy with unintended consequences. Trump is not the only leader to discover that the employment of trade, commerce, and investment as not only an economic but also political tool can be a double-edged sword.

Conspiring by Default

So is Chinese president Xi Jinping as he confronts mounting anti-Chinese sentiment in Eurasia and greater competition on China's border in the Russian Far East. Both leaders are forced to respond to external shocks, like mounting tension between Saudi Arabia and Iran in the wake of recent brazen drone and missile attacks on the kingdom's oil installations. These attacks have led to a temporary cut of Saudi oil production by half, and are likely to change trading patterns, particularly in energy, not only of China; but also, of multiple other Asian states, including Japan, South Korea and India.

Mr. Trump's protectionist penchant for economic warfare, 15 months before next year's US presidential election, that breaks with 85 years of U.S. trade and economic policy focussed on free trade and open markets, has yet to produce a foreign policy success. China and Russia, determined to counter U.S. power, particularly in Asia, have forged ever-closer ties. Iran and North Korea have demonstrated the resilience to endure harsh sanctions. Nicholas Maduro retains

his grip on Venezuela while Europe is increasingly exasperated with America and discussing ways of improving relations with Russia to counter China.

(5) Mr. Trump's renegotiation of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), renamed the United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMC), weakened protections for investors in Mexico as well as government commitment to allow foreign companies to bid for procurement contracts. While adding a review process to the agreement, this policy has created a sense of instability. Mr. Trump enhanced uncertainty by subsequently threatening to impose new tariffs on Mexico because he did not like the country's handling of Central Asian asylum seekers.

(6) Former World Bank president, U.S. trade representative and deputy-secretary of state Robert B. Zoellick predicts that Mr. Trump is likely to continuously wage economic warfare and keep trade partners off balance. "He will not change. Trade...is a core issue for the president's political base. He must keep it boiling," Mr. Zoellick said in a Wall Street Journal op-ed entitled "The Trade War's Winners Don't Include Us".

(7) As a result, damage to U.S. credibility and ability to regulate the international political and economic order may outlast Mr. Trump's sanctions and tariffs-driven policies. Countries like China and Russia are likely to expand trade relations with third countries, and shift supply chains at the expense of preferential U.S. access to markets. They may also defy U.S. secondary sanctions, which target third country companies and entities, which refuse to comply with, for example, sanctions against Iran, and initiate ways of undermining the global reserve function of the U.S. dollar.

U.S. losses are palatable. The TPP has lowered trade barriers for member countries

(8) but not for the United States. The EU has gained preferential access to Japan

(9) while China has retaliated with tariffs of 21.8 percent on U.S. products

(10) and lowered them to 6.7 percent for others.

(11) The U.S. Treasury has doled out billions of dollars to agricultural exporters

(12) who have lost significant market share in China that they will find difficult to recover. U.S. manufacturers are moving operations to third countries

(13) to evade the impact of the U.S.-China trade war while foreign direct investment in the United States is dropping.

(14) Chinese investment in the United States has plummeted in the last two years.

(15) Meanwhile, India and the United States are erecting barriers of their own

(16) that will negatively affect bilateral trade while negotiations with the EU are stalled.

(17) Mr. Trump's trade wars have reduced the United States' ability to establish rules and standards that govern key sectors like medical services, finance, intellectual-property rights, data access and security; and enable the fight against corruption and promote transparency; "This president disdains rules; he acts as if governments control purchases like in old-style mercantilism," Mr. Zoellick said. "Trump thinks that trade policy is a tweet at 3 o'clock in the morning," added Democratic presidential candidate Bernie Sanders.

(18) **Bullying Does the Job**

Mr. Trump's erratic approach towards policy-making and implementation, involving the belief that bullying will do the job and vacillation between bluster and moderation, has projected him as an unreliable and impossible negotiator. This approach showcases a sharp contrast to his self-styled portrayal of himself as the master of the 'Art of the Deal'. At the risk of sparking the emergence of parallel economic worlds, one dominated by the United States, the other by China, Mr. Trump assumes his trade war and efforts to block Chinese access to U.S. technology would sabotage Mr. Xi's 'Made in China 2025' program designed to make China commercially and industrially self-sufficient. Mr. Trump further sees his trade war as a way of halting China's efforts to replace the U.S. as the world's foremost, cutting-edge economy. Reporting on a recent visit by Mr. Xi to Henan Province, Communist Party newspaper Global Times reported the

president had “urged the development of the real economy bolstered by manufacturing, with self-reliance as the basis of all endeavours.”

(19) Mr. Trump may be right in his identification of the threat that China poses to U.S. economic and geopolitical dominance. The problem is that his policy solution risks accelerating the process rather than pausing or reversing it. Rather than stimulating research and development needed to ensure an American lead, Mr. Trump seems to believe that undermining China’s abilities is the key. The threat of the demise of a global market and the rise of parallel markets appears to have reinforced Chinese determination to become self-reliant to the degree possible.

“A more competitive United States would be a stabilizing force,” said Ely Ratnert, the executive vice president of the Center for a New American Security and former deputy national security adviser to Vice President Joe Biden, arguing that U.S. strategy should involve both engagement and containment.

(20) Differences between China’s response to U.S. sanctions on telecommunications equipment and systems maker ZTE Corporation that threatened to bring the company down and Huawei, another major Chinese telecom equipment manufacturer, suggest that Mr. Xi has factored the emergence of parallel worlds into his thinking. Last year, he phoned Mr. Trump to plead with him to lift a crippling seven-year ban on the acquisition of U.S. components by ZTE.

(21) The ban, imposed in response to allegation of ZTE’s busting of sanctions against Iran and North Korea, effectively sounded the death knell for ZTE, which has a workforce of 75,000. Mr. Trump agreed to lift the ban in exchange for ZTE agreeing to pay a U.S. \$1.3 billion fine, undertake sweeping management changes, and hire American compliance executives to monitor internally the company.

No such deal was available to Huawei, neither would Mr. Xi be willing to accept another deal that he would have perceived as reminiscent of China’s historical humiliations at the hands of Western powers. Huawei has responded defiantly to U.S. sanctions,

(22) the detention in Canada at the behest of the United States of its Chief Financial Officer, Meng Wanzhou,

(23) daughter of the company's founder, Ren Zhengfei, on charges of financial fraud, sanctions violations, and obstruction of justice; and a global campaign to prevent companies from acquiring Huawei's 5G technology. The US asserts that Huawei has close ties to China's military and security forces.

(24) In line with what has been termed the decoupling of the U.S. and Chinese economies, Huawei introduced Harmony, its own operating system to rival Android; and make it less dependent on U.S. technology.

(25) In September 2019, the Trump administration took a further step towards decoupling with proposed new rules, which would allow the United States to exert greater control over foreign investment, by broadening the government's authority to block technology and real estate transactions. The rules would give the Committee on Foreign Investment in the United States, or CFIUS, greater power to stop foreign investment in areas the U.S. deems protected, a move that primarily aims to bar China from access to sensitive American technology and other valuable assets. Beyond technology, the rules would red flag investment in infrastructure, such as telecommunications, utilities and energy as well as companies that collect sensitive personal data related to finance and health, particularly of individuals and/or federal employees involved in national security. Real estate acquisitions would be vetted on proximity to military installations, airports and ports.

(26) Chinese Trade Policy Backfires

If Mr. Trump has demonstrated his inclination to wage economic wars, his Chinese counterpart, Mr. Xi, sees trade and foreign investment as a way of not only securing economic growth by imposing increasingly controversial commercial terms; but also, achieving China's geopolitical goals and promoting its concept of an invasive surveillance state. With countries like Pakistan, Malaysia, Myanmar and Nepal questioning projects that fail to respond to local needs and fail to contribute to economic growth because they rely on Chinese labor and materials, China has conceded that it may have to make adjustments to a policy that by default rather than design could end up contributing to decoupling.

“It is normal and understandable that development focus can change at different stages in different countries, especially with changes in government. So China can also make some strategic adjustments when cooperating with these countries, but it is definitely not a reconsideration of the B&R (Belt and Road) initiative,” Wang Jun, deputy director of the Department of Information at the China Center for International Economic Exchanges told the Global Times newspaper.

(27) Mr. Jun spoke as Chinese foreign minister, Wang Yi, was confronted on a visit to Islamabad with Pakistani demand that China should refocus its U.S. \$45 billion plus investment in the China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), the single largest country infrastructure investment related to the Belt and Road initiative, to emphasize manufacturing and poverty reduction projects.

(28) The Pakistani demand amounted to a rejection of China’s approach that appeared to position Pakistan as a raw materials supplier for China, an export market for Chinese products and labour, and an experimental ground for the export of the surveillance state China is rolling out, particularly in its troubled north-western province of Xinjiang.

(29) Elsewhere in Asia, some countries were putting their money where their mouth was. Chinese commercial terms prompted Nepal, like Pakistan to withdraw from a Chinese-funded dam project.

(30) Furthermore, protests against the forced resettlement of eight Nepali villages persuaded CWE Investment Corporation, a subsidiary of China Three Gorges, to cancel a 750MW hydropower project.

(31) In July, Malaysia restarted the China-linked East Coast Rail Link project after forcing China to agree to downsizing construction costs by a third. The rail project, led by China Communications Construction Co. and Malaysia Rail Link Sdn., was cancelled in 2018 by Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad after he balked at the U.S. \$16 billion cost.

(32) The rail scheme was one of several projects, including a natural gas pipeline, suspended or cancelled by Mr. Mahathir after taking office in May 2018.

(33) Similarly, Myanmar forced China to scale back its Kyaukphyu deep-sea port project from U.S. \$7.5 billion to 1.3 billion.

(34) Even China's approach towards trade with Russia, its closest ally, has sparked anti-Chinese sentiment and raised questions of whether the current state of affairs is sustainable. Chinese investment in Russia is a fraction of China's investment in other regions like sub-Saharan Africa or South America and less than China's expanding stake in countries like Nigeria and Brazil. A Chinese-Russian agreement on economic cooperation in Siberia, Russia's Far East and China's Northeast for a period of nine years ending in 2018 has fallen far short of expectations.

The agreement identified 91 joint investment projects of which only 11 materialized.

(35) Similarly, energy failed to live up to its billing. CEFC China Energy's plan to acquire a 14 percent stake in Russia's largest, and majority state-owned, oil company, Rosneft, never happened. Neither did an agreed U.S. \$25 billion investment in Russia's Power of Siberia gas pipeline. The pipeline's export of 38 billion cubic metres of natural gas is but one source for China that in 2017 imported more than 90 billion cubic meters from Australia, Qatar, and Turkmenistan.

Russia scholar Leo Aaron charged that the lopsided nature of Chinese-Russian economic relations fits the definition of Karl Marx and Vladimir Lenin of colonial trade, in which one country becomes a raw material appendage of another. "China is Russia's second-largest trading partner (after the EU) and Russia's largest individual partner in both exports and imports. For China, the Russian market is at best second-rate. Russia ranks tenth in Chinese exports and does not make it into the top ten in either imports or total trade," Mr. Aaron said. He noted that three-quarters of Russia's exports to China were raw materials as opposed to consumer goods, electronics and machinery that accounted for the bulk of Chinese sales to Russia.

(36) More ominously, China starting in Central Asia, a crucial region that borders on its strategic province of Xinjiang, is making deployment of its intrusive surveillance systems a pre-condition for investment; and in some cases appears

willing to supply the infrastructure at no cost as part of a Smart City project developed by Huawei for initial roll-out in former Soviet states.

(37) Huawei says the system, which involves installing thousands of security cameras equipped with artificial intelligence and facial recognition technology in public places, has been exported to 160 cities worldwide.

Liu Jiaying, head of Huawei's representative office in Uzbekistan, disclosed China's insistence on adopting its surveillance approach in an interview with an Uzbek news outlet. "Investors will only go where the situation is stable. In view of this, the implementation of the Safe City project is very important for Uzbekistan as it will help the country develop its investment potential," Mr. Liu said.

(38) With no transparent regulation and oversight that ensure Central Asians' privacy rights, China is likely to have access to data collected by the Smart City technology. Kyrgyzstan's interior minister said data, one collected, would be handled at no cost to the government by Chinese National Electronics Import and Export Corporation, or CEIEC; a company believed to be tied to the Chinese military whose technology is deployed in Xinjiang, China's surveillance system laboratory.

(39) A Joker in the Game

The Middle East may not be at the core of the trade wars and policies that appear to be reshaping world trade. However, harsh U.S. sanctions on Iran and opposition to them by China, Russia and Europe have enabled Saudi Arabia and Iran to put their stamp on them. Devastating attacks in September on two Saudi oil facilities, which were claimed by Iranian-backed Houthi rebels in Yemen and blamed on Iran by the United States and less directly by Saudi Arabia, have prompted the kingdom's major Asian customers to look at diversifying their supplies, which could force them to upgrade their ability to refine heavier grades of crude. "The key is to gradually get rid of heavy reliance on Middle Eastern oil. There is a consistent risk to oil supply from Middle East countries. China has been diversifying its oil suppliers," said Zhu Guangming, an analyst with consultancy Sublime China Information.

(40) China's diversification options are Russia, the United States and Iran. Russia may be China's safest bet as long as the U.S. imposes sanctions on Iran

while the U.S. is tricky given the trade war. Trading patterns in the immediate aftermath of the attacks in Saudi Arabia of Unipecc, the trading arm of Chinese oil giant Sinopec, highlight China's dilemma. Unipecc was rushing in early September to sell U.S. oil it had acquired as China imposed a five-percent tariff on imports of American oil. Two weeks later, it was chartering ships to import U.S. light crude to compensate for Saudi shortfalls.

(41) A careful reading of Saudi and U.S. responses to the Saudi attacks suggests subtle differences between the two governments. They mask several emerging fundamental issues that could have far-reaching consequences for the Gulf's security architecture and energy export focus. U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo and Mr. Trump explicitly pointed the finger at Iran as being directly responsible,

(42) while Saudi Arabia stopped short of blaming the Islamic republic, saying that its preliminary findings showed that Iranian weapons had been used in the attack.

(43) Iran has denied any involvement.

(44) Saudi Arabia's initial reluctance to unambiguously blame Iran may have a lot to do with Trump's America First-driven response to the attacks, which appeared to contradict the Carter Doctrine proclaimed in 1980 by President Jimmy Carter. The doctrine, a cornerstone of the Saudi-U.S. relationship, stated that the United States would use military force, if necessary, to defend its national interests in the Gulf.

Mr. Trump's apparent weakening of the United States' commitment to the defense of the kingdom, encapsulated in the doctrine, risks fundamentally altering the relationship, already troubled by Saudi conduct of the more than four-year-long war in Yemen and last year's killing of journalist Jamal Khashoggi in the Saudi consulate in Istanbul.

Signalling a break with the Carter doctrine, Trump was quick to point out that the attacks were on Saudi Arabia, not on the United States; and suggested it was for the Saudis to respond. "I haven't promised the Saudis that. We have to sit down with the Saudis and work something out. That was an attack on Saudi Arabia,

and that was not an attack on us. But we would certainly help them,” Mr. Trump said without identifying what kind of support the U.S. would be willing to provide.

(45) Despite blustering that the United States was “locked and loaded,” Mr. Trump insisted that “we have a lot of options but I’m not looking at options right now.” Mr. Trump further called into question the nature of the U.S.-Saudi defense relationship by declaring that “If we decide to do something, they’ll be very much involved, and that includes payment. And they understand that fully.”

Conclusion

The structure of global trade is by design or default in flux with potentially far-reaching consequences for international relations as well as political systems in various countries. The escalating trade war between the United States and China risks a breakdown in global trade as the world’s two largest economies contemplate encouraging the emergence of trading environments that they would dominate. Add to that, the impact of Mr. Trump’s penchant for economic sanctions, that in the case of Iran, have sparked escalating tension between Saudi Arabia and the United States that could reshape security perspectives in the Gulf and could lead to alternative flows of energy to Asia’s largest importers. The possible decoupling of the Chinese and U.S. economies would make it easier for China to politically align some beneficiaries of China’s Belt and Road initiative by imposing its concept of a 21st-century Orwellian surveillance state on them.

Source: This article was published by AlJazeera Centre For Studies

Source: <https://www.eurasiareview.com/24092019-trumps-trade-wars-a-new-world-order-analysis/>

Tensions Simmer in ME | Editorial

All eyes are hovering above Iran following the Aramco attack, initially claimed by the Yemeni Houthi militia, on September 14. In light of recent investigations the US was the first to issue explicit statements inculpating Iran on the basis of “Iranian-made weapons” used in the attack. Tehran, however, denies such accusations.

Since the attack, Trump has propelled economic push-down by imposing another round of sanctions on Iran’s central bank and development fund in an attempt to apply “maximum pressure”. To psychologically put the country at edge, Trump has hinted at military action and possible war options. Furthermore, the US has announced the deployment of its forces as well as air defence capabilities in Saudi Arabia and the UAE, claiming it to be “defensive in nature”. This bolsters the US-Saudi relationship, in an attempt to collectively tackle the so-called Iran problem. Even though presently the US is not dependent on Gulf oil, further attacks could trigger economic instability around the world, which the US is avoiding at all costs; given past instances. One can also not ignore the fact that the US will now have a physical presence in the wealthiest part of the country.

Iran, on the other hand, seems more resilient than ever, with its Foreign Minister and the Commander of the Revolutionary Guards claiming that any attack on Iran would mean an “all-out war”. Hope and options for Iran are quickly fading away as recently, the British Prime Minister offered support to the US and Saudi Arabia against Iran. This proves to be a trump move and only a brilliant mastermind can pull off such strategic manoeuvres to cordon Iran off from all fronts. It seems that, unlike his predecessors who would so easily enforce military action, Trump is using all diplomatic means to pressurise Iran to throw in the towel.

Published in The Express Tribune, September 25th, 2019.

Source: <https://tribune.com.pk/story/2064304/6-tensions-simmer-in-me/>