

November 2020

globalpoint

Current Affairs

Latest Current Affairs Articles November 2020

- *Pakistan (9 Articles)*
 - *World (14 Articles)*
 - *Economy (9 Articles)*
 - *Education (3 Articles)*
-

Compiled By Shahbaz Shakeel

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 540141

FPSC Model Papers

50th Edition (Latest & Updated)

By Imtiaz Shahid

Advanced Publishers



**CLICK HERE TO
ORDER NOW!**

50th Edition 2020
FPSC Model Papers
By Imtiaz Shahid
Advanced Publishers

ORDER NOW

ADVANCED Edition 50th
FPSC
& Other Federal Model Papers
(Previous papers of FPSC, NTS & OTS)
New Papers of FIA, ASF, SST,
Motorways Police & Anti Narcotics

Best Books for:
FPSC Screening Tests,
FPSC One Paper Tests, NTS, OTS,
UTS, STS, PTS, BTS, and all other allied examinations

Added Features:
Sample Model Papers, English, Mathematics
Arithmetic, General Abilities Tests
Analogy Questions

Solved

Original Book

M. Imtiaz Shahid
A Combination of
Original & Model Papers

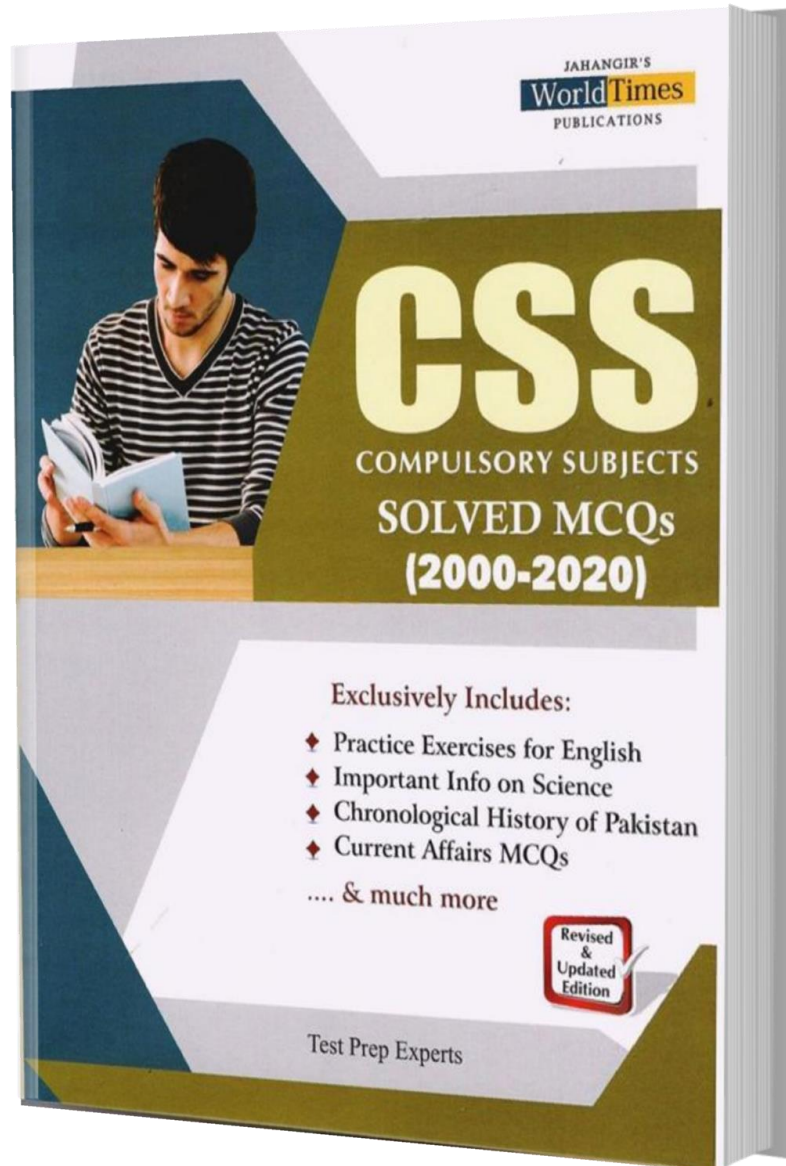
Advanced AP Publishers

For Order Call/WhatsApp 03336042057 - 0726540141

CSS SOLVED COMPULSORY MCQS

From 2000 to 2020

Latest & Updated



[Order Now](#)

Call/SMS 03336042057 - 0726540141

PPSC Model Papers

78th Edition (Latest & Updated)

M. Imtiaz Shahid

Original Edition
78th

ADVANCED

Now More refined & accurate

PPSC MCQs
MODEL PAPERS

- > Totally Revised & Updated Edition
- > Including Solved Mathematics Questions
- > The Largest & updated collection of Papers
- > The first and pioneer book of PPSC Papers
- > With Answer Keys
- > Introducing new style of paper pattern
- > All mistakes in original papers are mentioned
- > Department-wise arrangement & categorization
- > PPSC's new Syllabus for General Ability MCQs Test

For Sure
SUCCESS

22 Paper of 2020
36 Paper of 2019
25 Papers of 2018

227 Original
Solved Papers
Including one liners

More Than
350000
Copies Sold

Advanced AP Publishers

By Imtiaz Shahid

Advanced Publishers

For Order Call/WhatsApp 03336042057 - 0726540141



Table of Contents

PAKISTAN

1. Geopolitics and Pakistan By Aneela Shahzad	9
2. Lockdown Reconvened Editorial	12
3. Powering Gwadar For the Future By Kahuda Babar	13
4. Environmental Pledge Editorial.....	16
5. Pak-Iran Ties in Emerging Geopolitical Landscape By Dost Muhammad Barrech	17
6. Diplomatic Success Editorial	19
7. Pak Role in Afghan Peace Process By Sikandar Noorani.....	20
8. Pak-India Dialogue By S R H Hashmi	23
9. Towards a Hunger-Free Pakistan By Genevieve Hussain.....	25

ECONOMY

1. Economic Challenges By Dr Kamal Monnoo	28
2. A Scarred Economy Editorial	30
3. Capitalism After the Pandemic By Mariana Mazzucato	31
4. The Trade War and Pakistan By Shehryar Hamesh Khan	41
5. 'To remain on grey list': FATF urges Pakistan to complete action plan by Feb 2021 By Fayyaz Hussain.....	43
6. COVID's Impact on Pakistan Economy By Kashif Mirza	47
7. Surplus After Five Years Editorial	50
8. FATF: Facts, Diplomacy and Public Narrative By Hasaan Khawar.....	51
9. Remaining FATF Items Editorial	53

EDUCATION

1. Pakistani Children's Right to Education By Syed Mohammad Ali.....	55
2. Undergraduate Education Policy 2020 By Professor Dr. Muhammad Mukhtar.....	58
3. Reflection Of Education In Economy: Chinese Miracle And Lesson For Pakistan By Ahmad Raza Saleem.....	60

WORLD

1. US Presidential Election and its Impact on the Region By Talat Masood	65
2. America's 'Cold War Mentality' Editorial.....	68

- 3. Trump Wants US Troops Out of Afghanistan By Christmas..... 69
- 4. The False Promise of Regime Change By Philip H. Gordon..... 72
- 5. The End of American Illusion By Nadia Schadlow..... 79
- 6. Trump vs. Biden Is Truly the Most Consequential Election Of Our Lifetime By David Keene 91
- 7. Sleepwalking Into World War III By Carrie A. Lee 94
- 8. Nuclear Arms Race? Can America and Russia Save New START? By Peter Suci 100
- 9. Indo-US Strategic Partnership By Dr Muhammad Khan 103
- 10. 75 Years of United Nations — Successes & Failures By Rashid A Mughal..... 106
- 11. Understanding U.S.-China Strategic Competition By Paul Heer 109
- 12. The End of American Power By Eliot A. Cohen 113
- 13. China is Rising Again By Shahid Javed Burki 119
- 14. The Donald Trump and Benjamin Netanyahu Alliance: Simply Bad News By Paul R. Pillar 122

PAKISTAN

Geopolitics and Pakistan By Aneela Shahzad

Every country has a unique geography and geopolitical positioning, but it is not always possible for all states to harness their geopolitical positioning, either because they lack the political will to do so, or because the overall regional or global geopolitics suppresses such a will. Nevertheless, understanding one's geopolitical/strategic positioning is the first step in strengthening one's standing in bilateral, regional and global relations.

Pakistan's unique longitudinal geography allows it to wash its shores with the Arabian Sea at its south, and to shake hands with Central Asia at its north. Pakistan's historical and geographical contingency with Afghanistan has allowed it to support the brotherly country in its fight for freedom from Russian and American occupations; our neighbouring with Iran in a unique way that is different from its Arab neighbours to its west, allows us to have a relatively unbiased and even normative relation with it.

At the northeastern and eastern proximities, Pakistan touches two giant states: China and India — two states with the world's biggest populations and both harbouring regional ambitions. China being Pakistan's all-weather friend since the independence of the two states and India being an opponent to both of us.

Because of Pakistan's geography, India feels severed from larger Asia, especially from Iran and Russia, whom it considered allies till recently. India's foreign policy parted from Russia when it withdrew from Afghanistan and the weak alliance between India and Iran cracked when India decided to end oil trade with Iran under US-sanctions. After the Russo-Afghan War, India hooked up with the US in order to gain influence in Afghanistan that could serve it as a jumping board into Central Asia.

Central Asian states gained their independence from Russia in 1990, when the Soviet Union's defeat in Afghanistan led to its dismantling. Because of the fact that Central Asia consists of all Sunni Muslim states, they have a natural

ideological bonding with Pakistan and Afghanistan as compared to Iran or the Arab states that are further away. Vast hydrocarbon reserves were identified in the landlocked states of Central Asia in the 1990s. Being deep inside Asia, they need a route to the sea to export their oil and gas, and the route via Afghanistan and Pakistan becomes the shortest, best choice.

The 20 years of US occupation of Afghanistan has delayed the possibility of such ventures, as the US and its defence partner India have endeavoured to lay siege to Afghanistan, not only to get control on Afghan mineral resources but also to become the sole trading partners with the Central Asian states, an ambition the US and India have failed to accomplish because of Pakistan's backing of freedom fighters in Afghanistan. The Central Asian states are also Russia's near abroad and for this reason Russia too does not want the US or India to dominate Afghanistan. But more than anyone else, Pakistan feels strangled by India from three sides if it succeeds to entrench itself in Afghanistan, and considers India's presence in Afghanistan an existential threat that has to be leveled at any cost.

Pakistan's geography has also brought it ever closer to China, as it offers China the shortest route to the warm waters of the Arabian Sea. Because wars in the Middle East impede other Belt and Road routes to the Arabian Sea, China has proclaimed CPEC as the flagship project of its Belt and Road Initiative. But that is not all, for China Pakistan's friendship is a dear one also because this geographically contingent bulwark alliance is proving to be a partnership that can subdue India's ambitions to become a regional player. So, China and Pakistan complement each other in demanding territories that India has falsely occupied; and in the same vein while India sits on top of Pakistan's waters coming from Occupied Kashmir, China sits on top of India's waters originating from Tibet.

So, as China shows high prospects for being the regional hegemon of the coming decades, Pakistan has chosen wisely to ally with it. As China grew economically, it also garnered another vital ally, Russia, who has opened its arms to several BRI projects on and through its soil. The two, complement each other's foreign policies and repel a common adversary, the US. Russia's coupling up with Iran and Turkey to take control of Syria makes for an overall alliance framework that Pakistan would comfortably fit into.

On the other hand, Turkey's opposite in the Islamic World, Saudi Arabia, is also a long-cherished all-weather ally of Pakistan. The recent rift between the two states

over support for the Kashmir Issue has raised some eyebrows, but that does not undermine the long-standing strategic alliance that Pakistan enjoys with Saudi Arabia and the Gulf states, wherein Pakistani forces have trained their armies and navies. For instance, the first three chiefs of the UAE air force were all officers of the Pakistani air force.

The 41-state, Saudi-led Islamic military alliance created in 2015 is also headed by Pakistan's former chief of army staff General Raheel Sharif. Though still at an infancy stage, the alliance which is larger than NATO (30 members), can be a potential global force for protecting the interests of Muslim states. Pakistan's leadership of the Muslim ummah is well-precedented, as our forces have remained actively present in war-fronts from Bosnia to Sri Lanka and from Afghanistan to Somalia, wherever we found the chance to come to the aid of our brethren.

Pakistan's refusal to partake in the Saudi-Yemen war may have estranged its relations with the Saudis, but this also makes Pakistan a normative between the Shia and Sunni powers that have been forced to fight the proxy war in the Middle East. This means that Pakistan's foreign policy has been based on advocacy of peace and safeguard of friends and not on oppression and aggression. That Pakistan's foundations are ideological, is at least shown in our foreign policy, which has been outward and far-reaching from the beginning, and that its active posture has accrued for it a global role that awaits its 'will' and 'realisation'.

Published in The Express Tribune, October 2nd, 2020.

Source: <https://tribune.com.pk/story/2266547/geopolitics-and-pakistan>

Lockdown Reconvened | Editorial

Strict and diligent regulations for protocols regarding the containment of the pandemic were only relaxed after Pakistan had successfully limited the number of cases reported. However, as the country resumed operations, and schools reopened recently, a resurgence seems to be around the corner. Officials reported 311 new cases—221 of which were in Karachi—thereby prompting the reinforcement of smart lockdowns once again. Considering how the entirety of the European Union (EU) is experiencing a fierce second wave, it seems smart for the government to take strict precautionary steps to prevent such circumstances from taking a hold of Pakistan as well.

The aim of the provincial government of Sindh is to impose a ‘mini-smart lockdown’ in the neighbourhoods of Manghopir and Samama City for two weeks during which all business activities, outside of essentials, will be suspended, commute heavily constrained and strict codes of behaviour that prevent the transmission of the virus will be endorsed. Surely, this will mitigate some of the damage done and allow for the 60 percent rise in positive cases to depreciate. However, if we continue to see a steady rise in transmission, it is best to extend this lockdown and increase its application across the entire country once again—placing a particular focus on Islamabad and Gilgit-Baltistan since they are second in line to experience a potential revival of the pandemic.

It is imperative for the government to act while assuming the worst possible scenario for the future so that we are spared the horrors of a second round of COVID-19. Not only would it entail that Pakistan has digressed from being a nation that responsibly and meticulously controlled the virus but it would be a serious blow to the morale of industries, businesses and society at large. As such, proactive lockdowns, even if they are targeted towards neighbourhoods only, are welcomed because they will ensure that the aim to remain ahead of the pandemic is secured.

Source: <https://nation.com.pk/02-Oct-2020/lockdown-reconvened>

Powering Gwadar For the Future By Kahuda Babar

The China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) is poised to reshape the economic landscape of Pakistan in addition to opening multiple avenues for foreign direct investment. In this regard, Gwadar holds a pivotal importance. The development of Gwadar is sine qua non for Pakistan's development.

Ever since the materialisation of CPEC, Gwadar has been able to gain significant importance in Pakistan's political landscape. The representatives of Balochistan in Parliament have been raising a number of local issues out of which those related to Gwadar have either been resolved or are in the process of getting addressed. The ongoing construction of an international airport will not only help in providing access to potential investors or businesspersons but will serve as a gateway for tourism as well. Furthermore, the drinking water issue is in the process of getting resolved. In the meantime, the construction of a desalination plant has been catering to the increased demand for drinking water.

However, the city, often termed as the 'Future of Pakistan', faces a considerable power shortfall despite the inception of CPEC more than five years ago. The existing shortfall is going to act as an impediment for months and years to come with the increase in economic activities in the city. By 2030, the actual power demand will reach 778 MW against the current power supply of 142.5 MW. Therefore, it is important that Gwadar becomes self-sufficient in power generation to cater to not only its present and future energy needs but is also able to compensate for any power shortfalls across Balochistan through a national grid system.

Currently, the existing power supply to the Makran region is 142.5 MW. A large chunk of the power supply, approximately 104 MW, is imported from Iran. However, Iran's power supply is not optimally available due to its own accelerating energy demand. The average supply from Iran hovers around 40-70 MW. Additionally, 30 MW is generated by captive or domestic generators and 8.5 MW by generators at the Gwadar Free Zone. This heavy reliance on Iran as the supplier for Gwadar's power demands is strategically unreliable in addition to being a technical mismatch as well as incurring a high tariff. Due to technical

issues, Gwadar's electricity network is different from the national grid system. It feeds Gwadar, Turbat and Panjgur with a meagre 35 MW. Consequently, 12-14 hours of load shedding is common in the area. On the other hand, if the Makran region, which includes Gwadar, is connected to Pakistan's national grid system, it will not only be able to compensate for power shortfalls in Gwadar but will be able to contribute in satisfying existing power shortfall in all of Balochistan as well. Meanwhile, the current demand in the Gwadar region is about 247 MW.

In November 2017, the Joint Coordination Committee (JCC) meeting on CPEC proposed to review the Gwadar plan in order to deal with the power issue. Additionally, a separate high-level meeting occurred on the development of Gwadar's 300MW coal power project which would satisfy power demands from Gwadar and Makran region. CIHC, as a leading industry investor, was tasked with creating this plant by both the governments. By September 2020, the CPEC Authority decided to finalise all pending matters for the signing of the Power Purchase Agreement for this project. It was mutually agreed that all matters related to the agreement shall be resolved internally, at the Power Division level, within a week. However, the progress on the project remains at a slow pace.

The availability of sustainable electricity is the main demand of industrialists who wish to establish themselves in Gwadar. However, the unavailability of power has forced several industrialists to abandon their planned investments in the region—depriving it of losses amounting to millions of rupees if not billions.

The Gwadar Port and Free Zone operation totally relies on China Overseas Ports Holding Company's (COPHC) generators due to a lack of power supply. This has not only increased the operational cost of the project but has also negatively affected the functionality of the port and free zone development. It is already estimated that around 242 MW will be required for the Gwadar Free Zone. It is not possible to provide such an amount of power to the industries by COPHC's generators by that time. Thus, in other words, the Port and Free Zone development is dependent on the schedule of the proposed coal power project.

The availability of power will usher economic activities in the region and consequently, generate job opportunities. The delay in the production of the Gwadar power plant is delaying the progress of Gwadar as a whole since potential investors await the availability of sufficient power supply in the region and ultimately fail to see value in such elongated investments without any

benefit. Therefore, concerned authorities should prioritise this issue and take the necessary measures.

Source: <https://nation.com.pk/05-Oct-2020/powering-gwadar-for-the-future>

Environmental Pledge | Editorial

PM Imran Khan is all set to co-chair and give a keynote speech at the UN's Summit for Biodiversity 2020 which aims to restore the balance between development and nature. Considering that as a developing country, we stand to experience the worst effects of and incur major losses because of rapid climate change.

There was a pertinent need for Pakistan to take initiative, acknowledge the gravity of the situation and contribute towards leaps made by the international community in this regard. This is also why the PM made climate change a key component of his speech at the UNGA last month. Thus, for the PM to be at the forefront of the drafting process of environmental policies is not surprising. Pakistan is one of the biggest stakeholders in this fight, and our perspective must be taken into account.

In cooperation with countries across the world, a 10-point pledge was drafted, in accordance to the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDG), for the basis of the summit which highlighted ways through which certain ecosystems could be preserved in a world where human progress threatens complete extinction. Ultimately, this body convenes not only for the purpose of preservation but also for the aim to prevent a worsening environment from having irrevocable effects on health, wellbeing and the quality of life of the average individual across the world.

Pakistan has had to undergo a series of debates in order to pass sustainable policies and introduce projects like Tiger Force Day, Billion Tree Tsunami and the like, in light of the injurious ways through which climate change was manifesting in Pakistan—thick smog, excessive land pollution, water pollution, rapid deforestation and the engenderment of animal species, to name a few. To neglect the disproportionality created in our country would be a crime as it would make ways of life much more toxic for future generations.

The summit looks to provide promising solutions that encourage uniform and united action by all participants in their effort to delay, if not stop, the rate at which the atmospheric conditions continue to change—factors that the PM is very much aware of, and can provide guidance in, in conjunction with the government.

Source: <https://nation.com.pk/06-Oct-2020/environmental-pledge>

Pak-Iran Ties in Emerging Geopolitical Landscape By Dost Muhammad Barrech

Iran has remained the world's oldest civilization and Persian Empire for centuries, currently, is a major Islamic country and second most populous state after Egypt in the Middle East. It luckily is a next-door neighbour of Pakistan; in emerging geopolitical scenario, both states interests see an accelerating convergence. Pak-Iran relationship endured many ups and downs in the last few decades. However, Pakistan requires an overhauling of its foreign policy, revamping foreign policy according to emerging geo-political and geo-economic landscapes, by and large, will serve its national interest. Having cosy relationship with Iran ostensibly heralds the path of new avenues. Arguably, the world's politics witnesses two blocks in shape of the US and China. Pakistan and Iran are apparently under the Chinese umbrella. Both states under the tutelage of China have an enormous opportunity to functional dysfunctional Regional Cooperation for Development (RCD) formed in 1964 by regional members of Central Treaty Organization (CENTO) Pakistan, Iran and Turkey to bolster socio-economic development. RCD so far remains unsuccessful in forging socio-economic development and regional connectivity.

Pakistan can provide an easy access to Turkey and Iran under CPEC in functioning of RCD, benefiting the whole country in general and a deprived and marginalized province Balochistan in particular. Turkey, under current juncture, in block of China further strengthens its ties with Pakistan and Iran. Turkey's President has recently categorically said that "the issue of Kashmir is as important to Turkey as it is to Pakistan". Both Iran and Turkey support Pakistan in Kashmir cause, consequently, irritating India a huge economic giant. Support of Kashmir's cause of self-determination and alienation of India by these two countries make them more valuable to Pakistan. China-Iran deal, presumably, has positive implications for Pakistan; the deal downgrades Indian influence, enhancing Chinese clout in the region that would, by all means, go in Pakistan's favour. Pakistan fears Indian investment in Iran as its encirclement. Indian exit from Chabahar is a magnificence triumph for Pakistan. The deal, on the other hand, increases Pakistan's geo-strategic significance; the country in near future would be a supply route of Iranian oil and gas to China. Iran, as for as the deal is concerned, is willing to grant massive concessions to China in oil and gas.

Offering Chinese concessional offer of Iran to Pakistan will reduce its oil dependency on other countries. Pakistan and Iran in the presence of China can resolve their issues amicably. Better ties with Iran would eliminate Pakistan's apprehensions over support of Iran to the Balochistan Liberation Army (BLA) in Pakistan.

Pakistan's excessive dependency on Saudi Arabia-promoted Wahabism in the country has brought Iran under tremendous pressure to promote its Shia Islam in Pakistan. Mending of ties with Iran will also prevent Shia Islam in Pakistan and the country would remain immune to sectarian violence. The recent surge in a sectarian violence in Pakistan is alarming, jolting the state and moving the country towards anarchy. In Pak-Iran relations, the US factor plays a pivotal role. The US mounting pressure on Pakistan eschewed strengthening of its ties with Iran. Meanwhile, prevailing world order moves towards multi-polarity reducing the US unilateralism, buttressing Chinese ascendancy, culminating into the cementing of Pakistan and Iran relations. In 2016 when sanctions were lifted against Iran by Western powers, Pakistan and Iran abruptly initiated exchange of visits to consolidate relationship. Most considerably, both states view Chabahar and Gwadar ports as sister ports. To be fair, engaging in introspection is needed in Pakistan's statesmanship to ponder over the China-Iran deal. What implications will Chinese investment in Iran have on CPEC? In business, money, no doubt, is the real God; international politics primarily revolves around in obtaining of relative gains means maximum benefits. Pakistan, thus, ought to be thoroughly prepared in emerging geopolitical and geo-economic landscapes in the region where with each passing month witness a radical change. Pakistan seems to be a lucky in prevailing regional political changes, where things somewhat go in its favour. Jumping of Iran in Chinese bandwagon leaving India in a lurch and its support for Kashmir, having better ties with Turkey makes Iran largely instrumental than many other countries. Finally, an adage underscores neighbour's importance "A close neighbour is better than a distant relative".

— The writer works at the Institute of Strategic Studies, a think-tank based in Islamabad.

Source: <https://pakobserver.net/pak-iran-ties-in-emerging-geopolitical-landscape/>

Diplomatic Success | Editorial

Pakistan's re-election to the United Nations Human Rights Council (HRC) on Tuesday is an affirmation of our successful foreign policy and of the progress Pakistan has made on the international front. The fact that Pakistan was elected with a majority of 169 votes in the 193-member UN General Assembly, and it secured the highest number of votes among the five candidates from the Asia-Pacific region vying for four seats, reflects that the reforms Pakistan has been undertaking within its country, and the diplomatic support we have lent to human rights causes internationally, have not gone unnoticed by the international community. This rightfully won position is not just a coincidence but earned through a year of diplomacy and advocacy.

However, it should also be noted that Pakistan has been serving on the HRC since January 2018. With Tuesday's re-election, Pakistan will continue as a member for another three-year term commencing on Jan 1, 2021. The next few years are crucial for human rights causes like that of Indian Illegally-Occupied Kashmir (IIOK).

If the international community does not recognise the Indian atrocities and illegal annexation of Kashmir, it is possible that the damage can be irreversible then. It is then more important than ever that Pakistan continues to try its hardest in the HRC to raise the issue of Kashmir, and reach across the aisle to gain support from different countries.

This would require a lot of backchannel work, negotiations and persistence. Moreover, this also requires consistency and strong credentials—this means being consistent in our advocacy for different human rights struggles, for example, the human rights concerns in Palestine, as well as ensuring our own legislation is compliant and supports the HRC.

Source: <https://nation.com.pk/15-Oct-2020/diplomatic-success>

Pak Role in Afghan Peace Process By **Sikandar Noorani**

RESTORATION of peace in Afghanistan is undoubtedly a top priority matter for Pakistan on many understandable accounts. PM Imran Khan, in his recently published Op-Ed in Washington Post, very rightly reminded the US and rest of the concerned quarters about the heavy losses of Pak-Afghan masses for the misadventures of global powers. Back in the 90s, sudden vanishing of the US pushed the Afghan society into an undesired violent conflict. This bitter history of unplanned hasty withdrawal must not be repeated in present scenario. It is not that only Islamabad urging the US to stay firm on ground till the situation stabilizes rather every sane stakeholder wishes the same. Chief negotiator of Kabul government for peace talks, Abdullah Abdullah, has also asked the US to avoid hasty departure prior to successful completion of peace process. Complex process of formal intra-Afghan talks will begin after consensus on agenda. Despite exhaustive sessions, consensus on agenda is still awaited. The Taliban are not in any mood to compromise on their principled stance about the legitimacy of Kabul government. It is a well-known fact that at any stage of prolonged unrest, Taliban never agreed to hold talks with Kabul government considering it an illegitimate regime. Similar stance was recently repeated from Taliban side by denying the possibility of meeting with President Ashraf Ghani once he visited Doha on the invitation of Qatari Emir.

Taliban's insistence to accept their deal with the US as a key for formal Intra-Afghan talks is in fact aimed to avoid direct engagement with the Kabul government as representative of Afghan society. Objections were raised by the non-Taliban quarters on Shariah law or choice of jurisprudence and demands surfaced for Shia personal laws. While facing troubles in finalizing the agenda, most of the stakeholders are hopeful for a positive acceleration towards the formal commencement of the talks. On the other hand, alarming surge in violence seems badly mounting on the nerves of all stakeholders. A strange scenario is building up in which every stakeholder group presenting itself as major victim of ongoing violence. Fixing the responsibility of recent violence on any party is not an easy affair in existing situation. There have been instances where unarmed non-combatant civilians were killed with Afghan forces air strikes. There can be no second opinion on this aspect that peace spoilers are

the common foes of Afghanistan and Pakistan. Unrest stretched over four decades cannot be wrapped up with impure intent and hollow verbal claims. Disunity among Afghan quarters in the past proved fatal for the whole society.

Opportunity lost today might push Afghan society in deeper dark pits from where possibilities of recovery would further diminish. Chief Afghan negotiator Abdullah Abdullah is visiting important neighbours and stakeholders. Unlike the past, he adopted positive and hopeful tone during his visit to Islamabad. His second trip was in India where he maintained the past warmth and lauded Indian supportive stance towards Afghanistan. Mysteriously, at this critical juncture of Doha talks, India is avoiding lofty claims probably in an undesired acknowledgement of Pakistan's stronger grip on peace process. This silence on part of India is not thick enough to shroud her real coercive intents. New Delhi is just in search of right opportune moment to turn the tide against Pakistan. Complex tug of war between global players in regional arena is directly affecting peace matrix in Afghanistan. Quad countries Foreign Ministers met in Tokyo to analyze the growing impact of China in entire region. Though, President Trump is adamant to pull out US troops expeditiously but in any way no exploitable space would be left behind for Beijing's benefit. This aspect makes the whole situation more challenging and nerve testing for Pakistan. In addition to traditional rivalry against Pakistan, India is emerging as the sole anti-China regional power in the eyes of Washington.

There are a lot of provocative moves against Beijing with India in lead role. Afghanistan's rapidly worsening situation is in fact an outcome of regional tension. Pakistan, being a major affected party, is striving hard for the success of dialogue. This realization has taken roots in the minds of Afghan and US officials that Pakistan has moved many miles to fulfil this shared responsibility. Pakistan has emerged as a true flag bearer of peace under extremely challenging regional scenario. It is about time for all stakeholders to mend their ways and expose the real spoilers. Afghanistan cannot afford further violence, proxies, destabilization and chaos. Restoration of peace is a joint Pak-Afghan objective which can only be attained through unified struggle. US should also avoid hasty pull out prior to presidential election. Sudden creation of power vacuum in a poorly governed society like Afghanistan will be detrimental to peace and stability. It is rightly expected from the US to play a stabilizing role in initial troubling period of Doha talks. Similarly, strategic ally India must be properly harnessed from playing coercive role against neighbours. It is beyond any doubt Pakistan has played a

major role in setting up the dialogue table between rival quarters under extremely challenging and unfavourable environment.

—The writer is a freelancer who often contributes in national newspapers.

Source: <https://pakobserver.net/pak-role-in-afghan-peace-process/>

Pak-India Dialogue By S R H Hashmi

IN an interview with Indian journalist Karan Thapar recently, Special Assistant to Prime Minister on National Security Dr Moeed Yousaf said that Pakistan desired peaceful ties with India and wanted to resolve all issues through dialogue. However, he asserted that for any meaningful dialogue to take place between the two neighbours, India has to release all political prisoners in Kashmir, end inhuman blockade and restrictions, rescind domicile law that allows non-Kashmiris to settle in the disputed territory, stop human rights abuses and end state terrorism in Pakistan. Now, if Pakistan wants India to take all steps detailed above, what would be there to talk about? In order to solve problems, both sides have to engage in negotiations, with a spirit of give-and-take. Surely, just giving a list of demands is a non-starter, especially when we are in no position to force India to do our bidding. The sort of leverage we have over India, and which we actually used, was to reject Indian requests for using Pakistani airspace for Narindra Modi's visits to Germany and Saudi Arabia, which seemed rather childish. There is absolutely no doubt that extremist policies of Narindra Modi have crossed all limits. The Hindutva, as mainstreamed into Indian politics with Narendra Modi's election as Prime Minister in 2014, has been defined by Wikipedia thus: "Hindutva (Hinduness) is the predominant form of Hindu nationalism in India. The principle of Hindutva was founded by Chndranath Basu and later the term was popularised by Vinavak Damodar Savarkar in 1923. It is championed by the Hindu nationalist volunteer organization Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), the Vishva Hindu Parishad (VHP), the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and other organizations, collectively called the Sangh Parivar. The Hindutva movement has been described as a variant of "right-wing extremism and as "almost fascist in the classical sense", adhering to a disputed concept of homogenized majority and cultural hegemony. Some dispute the fascist label, and suggest Hindutva is an extreme form of conservatism or ethnic absolutism".

So, Hidutva is not much different from the religious extremism introduced /encouraged in Pakistan during General Zia era. The only difference is that the later Pakistani leaders realized the extremely harmful impact of this on the country and the nation, and used full state might to counter it. Fortunately, Pakistan government finally succeeded in eliminating it to a large extent and bringing things under control. However, the exercise cost the lives of over 70,000

Pakistanis, including 8,000 soldiers up to Major-General rank, apart from massive financial loss. Unfortunately in India, the real force behind religious extremism, Prime Minister Narendra Modi is still around, winning the second term election with a larger majority. However, until quite recently, India seemed to be doing well economically, and due to its sheer size – which offered a large market – it was favoured by the Western leaders, especially Donald Trump who invited Modi to the United States and attended the big public gathering in Houston ‘Howdy Modi’. And Trump also visited India. And perhaps feeling elated by so much importance given to him by super power America, the QUAD, and even by some Muslim countries, Indian leaders became over-confident to announce capability to fight a two-front war with China and Pakistan, expecting military help, especially from US and QUAD who see China as a rival. However, when the crunch came, no outside help was forthcoming and after facing severe reverses in conflict with China, Indian civilian and military leaders are beginning to realize that they are alone, and are no match for China.

Furthermore, bad handling of Covid-19, has destroyed Indian economy. And these dismal failures of Modi both at the home and external front have brought his popularity down. And finally realizing the limits of his powers, and desperately looking for a way out from the mess that he has landed himself and the country in, Modi may be ready to listen to reason. And that means this may be the right time to start negotiations with India, in consultation with China of course. We must note that despite being far too powerful, China does not seem to be flexing its muscles too much and seeks peace in the region and beyond. In fact, China has good relations with most states in the region. It is about time Modi realized that developing friendly relations with Pakistan and China would even be in India’s interest, as also of the region and beyond. So, it is unwise for Pakistan to impose impossible pre-conditions. Instead, in consultation with China, Pakistan should work out a strategy for negotiations with India. Given a strong will, and a spirit of give-and-take, it should be possible to find satisfactory solutions to the problems between India and Pakistan and also between India and China. Over seven decades of war and confrontation have not helped us much. So, it is time for India and Pakistan to start an era of peace, together with China which is linking up the world and spreading peace.

— The writer is senior political analyst based in Karachi.

Source: <https://pakobserver.net/pak-india-dialogue/>

Towards a Hunger-Free Pakistan By

Genevieve Hussain

This has been a year when the Covid-19 pandemic caused many to be cut off from their families, work and social lives, and even, at times, their supply of food. The use of evidence-based planning for a sustainable food system is more relevant than ever. The 2020 theme of World Food Day, of growing, nourishing and sustaining together, is very timely. World Food Day comes around every October 16. This year, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations is encouraging everyone to consider the importance of the food system in our lives, and how we can make it stronger.

Pakistan's food system must feed a population exceeding 200 million adults and children. It is a country well known for its agriculture, but also for its struggles with poverty, food insecurity and malnutrition. Despite the fertility of the Indus valley and one of the largest contiguous irrigation systems in the world, several segments of society face challenges in gaining stable access to a healthy and balanced diet. For vulnerable communities, setbacks like the Covid-19 pandemic, the floods, or the arrival of the desert locusts, make it even harder.

One of the first things necessary for a strong and resilient food system is reliable data and information. Careful analysis of these can then lead to better monitoring, understanding and action.

Pakistan's Ministry of National Food Security and Research intends to monitor the country's situation through the Food Security and Nutrition Information System (FSNIS), established in 2019 with the technical support of FAO. The FSNIS comprises products that can help decision-makers, development partners and participants in the food system take action to ensure adequate food for all Pakistanis. It helps answer questions like, do we need to import more of certain food commodities, or do we need to grow more? And, is the population consuming a balanced diet?

In 2020, Pakistan was compelled to import wheat to ensure supply, which is not the usual situation. Inadequate opening stocks, difficulties in the timely movement of agricultural labour during lockdowns, low productivity, or missing

targets by the government-led wheat procurement programme could all have been contributing to this. During the Covid-19 pandemic, the rapid evolution of policies and programmes by federal and provincial governments in Pakistan has made the FSNIS particularly valuable as a way to monitor the impacts of government initiatives on the food system and the ability of people to access food, and to identify disruptions in food supply chains.

A web-based dashboard, a fortnightly bulletin on food prices in over 17 markets across the country, and a bi-annual Pakistan Food Forecast Report are among the information products coming from the FSNIS to help monitor supply and demand and food market functionality, and to better understand the four dimensions of food security (availability, access, stability and utilisation) in the country. Current data points to important inequalities between urban and rural areas, and also among provinces, socio-economic groups and genders.

A deeper analysis of these matters is now available in the annual publication Pakistan Overview of Food Security and Nutrition (POFI). This is a collaboration between the MNFSR, FAO, World Food Programme, World Health Organization and UNICEF. Pakistan was the first to produce a country-level publication of this kind, in 2019, as part of the respected global and regional State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World (SOFI) series led by FAO. As such, it represents the benchmark for official estimates of progress on reaching Sustainable Development Goal 2: Zero Hunger. The sobering results at present are that Pakistan is one of the slowest countries in South Asia to improve on statistics relating to nutrition, with 40.2% of children under five stunted, 17.7% wasted and 28.9% underweight.

POFI also takes a valuable look at progress in addressing different drivers and determinants of food insecurity and malnutrition, rather than just overall results for SDG 2 indicators. An example is Pakistan's progress with supplying clean water, adequate sanitation and hygiene to its people. POFI 2019 reported that only 35% of the population has access to safely managed water, free of bacterial contamination that causes repeated gastrointestinal upsets and consequent failure to absorb nutrients in food. With information like this, it is easier to understand why ending malnutrition is such a challenge, no matter how much food is available, or how diverse, fresh and balanced this food supply is.

At times, data can appear contradictory or confusing. This is where consideration of data collection methods, and the impact of the exact timing of surveys, is so important. Country-level results can also mask considerable variation by province and by district. When considering assistance to bolster the food system in disaster-affected areas of the country, we must realise that rapid needs assessments conducted at the time of disasters usually only assess obviously-affected places, thus producing high scores for indicators of food insecurity, which are not applicable to the whole province or country. Nevertheless, these assessments have their place and can guide short-term and urgent humanitarian actions where they are needed most.

FAO is working closely with governments around the world, including in Pakistan, on more effective multi-criteria data analysis including geographic information system methods, to pinpoint where investments in resolving rural poverty, food insecurity and malnutrition could be most effective. This Hand-in-Hand initiative, as it is known, can only multiply the benefits of an FSNIS. We can look forward to more targeted and evidence-based development initiatives that address the root causes of hunger in Pakistan. Together we can grow, nourish and sustain Pakistan into a future without hunger.

Published in The Express Tribune, October 27th, 2020.

Source: <https://tribune.com.pk/story/2270003/towards-a-hunger-free-pakistan>

ECONOMY

Economic Challenges By Dr Kamal Monnoo

In the last quarter 2019, the government announcement on Pak-China Free-Trade Agreement (FTA) stated that effective January 1, 2020, the new FTA will allow Pakistan a duty-free access to the Chinese market for many textile and apparel categories, including cotton yarns, woven & knitted garments, and home textiles. Chinese imports in these categories are around \$10.20 billion while Pakistan's share is only \$892 million. In contrast in the same categories, Vietnam annually exports \$3 billion to China and India \$1.5 billion. The new facility will give Pakistan's exports in these categories an edge, since China's import duty for us (under the news FTA) will be zero percent, whereas, it will be between 3 to 7.80 percent for Indian goods—Vietnam also enjoys zero-duty access. Now fast forward this to the last quarter 2020 (one year) and Pakistani exports to China in August 2020 have in fact dropped to \$94 million, as compared to \$98 million in 2019, with USA and UK continuing to be our two largest (country) markets: \$342 million to the USA in August 2020 and \$130 to the UK in August 2020. Apparently, things have not gone as planned with the new Pak-China FTA, but then this is hardly surprising. It is extremely difficult to beat China at the trade game, as the United States recently found out after Trump pushed his country into a trade war (outright embargoes, higher tariffs, changed entry rules, etc.) with China, ironically its largest trading partner. Four years down the road, both Chinese trade figures and surplus with the US have instead grown.

However, for Pakistan such reverses are not sustainable. Laden with chronic external account challenges, the country needs exports and especially from friendly markets such as that of China. According to the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics, the country's exports tumbled by around 15 percent in the month of August 2020 year-on-year to \$1.58 billion compared to \$1.86 billion in the corresponding month of last year. Clearly there is a problem. With the markets of traditional trade, friends like the US and EU contracting due to the COVID-19 pandemic, we need support and market access from our all-weather friend China where its domestic consumption in contrast showed an unprecedented growth of

almost 53 percent month-on-month in August 2020 compared to the corresponding month of last year. Pakistan not only needs a larger window in Chinese imports, but also needs a share of this Chinese consumption growth. The external account problem does not just stop at the worrisome trend of dwindling exports, but could face a double whammy in the shape of a high number of Pakistani workers returning home since March 2020—naturally over time, this is bound to adversely affect our home remittances, a figure that by now is almost as significant as the national exports.

As if this was not enough to think about, the time from March 2020 may have just flown by a bit too quickly for the government's liking. Its economic managers made its 2020-21 budget on the assumption that the economy would fully recover from the impact of the coronavirus pandemic by October 1, 2020, which owing to the second wave of the pandemic—now nearly all around the globe—has not been possible. Primarily, the ambitious tax collection target of the Federal Bureau of Revenue (FBR) at Rs4.963 trillion was at the time prepared on this premise. Now with the effects of the pandemic still looming large in the shape of an economic slowdown resulting in large scale unemployment and a spike in poverty, ambitious and coercive taxation drives will simply be counterproductive. The more the state endeavours to suck capital from the markets and investors, the more it will get dragged into a vicious cycle of economic erosion. What it needs to realise is that the fallouts from the pandemic are still very much a reality and at present, ongoing. For now, the time still calls for providing a stimulus to the economy and for bringing ease in doing business more than ever before. It will do well by honestly revisiting and implementing some of its very laudable budgetary proposals that look to tangibly support small and medium size enterprises, address manufacturing concerns to arrest the current process of deindustrialisation in the country, tackle supply-side challenges to contain inflation, renegotiate trade deals by taking private sector stakeholders on board, not to undertake any coercive or ambitious taxation drives that unnerve the investors and scare away capital, and last but not least, to unleash a monetary policy that is pro-growth and pro-investment. Unless investment and consumption returns, unemployment will keep pushing up, in the process heaping misery on low to medium income families.

Source: <https://nation.com.pk/07-Oct-2020/economic-challenges>

A Scarred Economy | Editorial

The chief of the International Monetary Fund, Kristalina Georgieva, has said that while the world's economy has suffered deeply as a result of the coronavirus pandemic, the downturn and the long-term impact may not be as bad as had been originally feared. She has attributed this to an improvement in the third quarter of 2020 and said that Western economies and China are making a rapid recovery. She has attributed this largely to the \$12 trillion put under the floor of the world's economy to support firms and households. But she has warned that the developing world could be confronted by a lost generation that has missed out on education, job opportunities, and other chances in life.

This is the scenario we are seeing in Pakistan and which many fear will have a long-term impact. The World Bank has warned Pakistan about external financing risks that could be compounded by difficulties in rolling-over bilateral debt from non-traditional donors and tighter international financing conditions. A World Bank report says that a possible resurgence of the coronavirus, triggering a new wave of global and/or domestic lockdowns and further delaying the implementation of critical structural reforms, is a major factor in possible risks to Pakistan's economy. However, the words of the IMF chief offer at least some reassurance. We certainly hope the world can make a recovery, but exactly how it will engineer this and what measures it will take to make the recovery possible is still far from certain. Different strategies are likely to be followed in different parts of the world. But there is certainly going to be a downside after the entire crisis is over.

Economies too have all suffered from the decline in the quality of jobs and the fact that so many businesses have been forced to pull down their shutters. Here in Pakistan we can see that in many places, with businesses and industry laying off workers in many sectors. The problem is not one that can disappear immediately. But if the IMF chief is confident that it has been halted and that some recovery can be made in the years ahead, this is encouraging for all of us, no matter where we live. The crisis was shared in common. It is now time for the developed world to help countries which are less able to help themselves.

Source: <https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/726551-a-scarred-economy>

Capitalism After the Pandemic By Mariana Mazzucato

After the 2008 financial crisis, governments across the world injected over \$3 trillion into the financial system. The goal was to unfreeze credit markets and get the global economy working again. But instead of supporting the real economy—the part that involves the production of actual goods and services—the bulk of the aid ended up in the financial sector. Governments bailed out the big investment banks that had directly contributed to the crisis, and when the economy got going again, it was those companies that reaped the rewards of the recovery. Taxpayers, for their part, were left with a global economy that was just as broken, unequal, and carbon-intensive as before. “Never let a good crisis go to waste,” goes a popular policymaking maxim. But that is exactly what happened.

Now, as countries are reeling from the COVID-19 pandemic and the resulting lockdowns, they must avoid making the same mistake. In the months after the virus first surfaced, governments stepped in to address the concomitant economic and health crises, rolling out stimulus packages to protect jobs, issuing rules to slow the spread of the disease, and investing in the research and development of treatments and vaccines. These rescue efforts are necessary. But it is not enough for governments to simply intervene as the spender of last resort when markets fail or crises occur. They should actively shape markets so that they deliver the kind of long-term outcomes that benefit everyone.

The world missed the opportunity to do that back in 2008, but fate has handed it another chance. As countries climb out of the current crisis, they can do more than spur economic growth; they can steer the direction of that growth to build a better economy. Instead of handing out no-strings-attached assistance to corporations, they can condition their bailouts on policies that protect the public interest and tackle societal problems. They can require COVID-19 vaccines receiving public support to be made universally accessible. They can refuse to bail out companies that won't curb their carbon emissions or won't stop hiding their profits in tax havens.

For too long, governments have socialized risks but privatized rewards: the public has paid the price for cleaning up messes, but the benefits of those cleanups have accrued largely to companies and their investors. In times of need, many businesses are quick to ask for government help, yet in good times, they demand that the government step away. The COVID-19 crisis presents an opportunity to right this imbalance through a new style of dealmaking that forces bailed-out companies to act more in the public interest and allows taxpayers to share in the benefits of successes traditionally credited to the private sector alone. But if governments instead focus only on ending the immediate pain, without rewriting the rules of the game, then the economic growth that follows the crisis will be neither inclusive nor sustainable. Nor will it serve businesses interested in long-term growth opportunities. The intervention will have been a waste, and the missed opportunity will merely fuel a new crisis.

THE ROT IN THE SYSTEM

Advanced economies had been suffering from major structural flaws well before COVID-19 hit. For one thing, finance is financing itself, thus eroding the foundation of long-term growth. Most of the financial sector's profits are reinvested back into finance—banks, insurance companies, and real estate—rather than put toward productive uses such as infrastructure or innovation. Only ten percent of all British bank lending, for example, supports nonfinancial firms, with the rest going to real estate and financial assets. In advanced economies, real estate lending constituted about 35 percent of all bank lending in 1970; by 2007, it had risen to about 60 percent. The current structure of finance thus fuels a debt-driven system and speculative bubbles, which, when they burst, bring banks and others begging for government bailouts.

Another problem is that many large businesses neglect long-term investments in favor of short-term gains. Obsessed with quarterly returns and stock prices, CEOs and corporate boards have rewarded shareholders by buying back stocks, increasing the value of the remaining shares and hence of the stock options that form part of most executive pay packages. In the last decade, Fortune 500 companies have repurchased more than \$3 trillion worth of their own shares. These buybacks come at the expense of investment in wages, worker training, and research and development.

Then there is the hollowing out of government capacity. Only after an explicit market failure do governments usually step in, and the policies they put forward

are too little, too late. When the state is viewed not as a partner in creating value but as just a fixer, publicly funded resources are starved. Social programs, education, and health care all go underfunded.

The relationship between the public and the private sector is broken.

These failures have added up to mega-crises, both economic and planetary. The financial crisis was to a large extent caused by excessive credit flowing into the real estate and financial sectors, inflating asset bubbles and household debt rather than supporting the real economy and generating sustainable growth. Meanwhile, the lack of long-term investments in green energy has hastened global warming, to the point where the UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change has warned that the world has just ten years left to avoid its irreversible effects. And yet the U.S. government subsidizes fossil fuel companies to the tune of some \$20 billion a year, largely through preferential tax exemptions. The EU's subsidies total around \$65 billion per year. At best, policymakers trying to deal with climate change are considering incentives, such as carbon taxes and official lists of which investments count as green. They have stopped short of issuing the type of mandatory regulations that are required to avert disaster by 2030.

The COVID-19 crisis has only worsened all these problems. For the moment, the world's attention is focused on surviving the immediate health crisis, not on preventing the coming climate crisis or the next financial crisis. The lockdowns have devastated people who work in the perilous gig economy. Many of them lack both the savings and the employer benefits—namely, health care and sick leave—needed to ride out the storm. Corporate debt, a key cause of the previous financial crisis, is only climbing higher as companies take on hefty new loans to weather the collapse in demand. And many companies' obsession with pleasing the short-term interests of their shareholders has left them with no long-term strategy to see them through the crisis.

The pandemic has also revealed how imbalanced the relationship between the public and the private sector has become. In the United States, the National Institutes of Health (NIH) invests some \$40 billion a year on medical research and has been a key funder of the research and development of COVID-19 treatments and vaccines. But pharmaceutical companies are under no obligation to make the final products affordable to Americans, whose tax money is subsidizing them in the first place. The California-based company Gilead developed its COVID-19 drug, remdesivir, with \$70.5 million in support from the

federal government. In June, the company announced the price it would charge Americans for a treatment course: \$3,120.

It was a typical move for Big Pharma. One study looked at the 210 drugs approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration from 2010 to 2016 and found that “NIH funding contributed to every one.” Even so, U.S. drug prices are the highest in the world. Pharmaceutical companies also act against the public interest by abusing the patent process. To ward off competition, they file patents that are very broad and hard to license. Some of them are too upstream in the development process, allowing companies to privatize not only the fruits of research but also the very tools for conducting it.

For too long, governments have socialized risks but privatized rewards. Equally bad deals have been made with Big Tech. In many ways, Silicon Valley is a product of the U.S. government’s investments in the development of high-risk technologies. The National Science Foundation funded the research behind the search algorithm that made Google famous. The U.S. Navy did the same for the GPS technology that Uber depends on. And the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency, part of the Pentagon, backed the development of the Internet, touchscreen technology, Siri, and every other key component in the iPhone. Taxpayers took risks when they invested in these technologies, yet most of the technology companies that have benefited fail to pay their fair share of taxes. Then they have the audacity to fight against regulations that would protect the privacy rights of the public. And although many have pointed to the power of artificial intelligence and other technologies being developed in Silicon Valley, a closer look shows that in these cases, too, it was high-risk public investments that laid the foundations. Without government action, the gains from those investments could once again flow largely to private hands. Publicly funded technology needs to be better governed by the state—and in some cases owned by the state—in order to ensure that the public benefits from its own investments. As the mass closure of schools during the pandemic has made clear, only some students have access to the technology needed for at-home schooling, a disparity that only furthers inequality. Access to the Internet should be a right, not a privilege.

RETHINKING VALUE

All of this suggests that the relationship between the public and the private sector is broken. Fixing it requires first addressing an underlying problem in economics:

the field has gotten the concept of value wrong. Modern economists understand value as interchangeable with price. This view would be anathema to earlier theorists such as François Quesnay, Adam Smith, and Karl Marx, who saw products as having intrinsic value related to the dynamics of production, value that wasn't necessarily related to their price.

The contemporary concept of value has enormous implications for the way economies are structured. It affects how organizations are run, how activities are accounted for, how sectors are prioritized, how the government is viewed, and how national wealth is measured. The value of public education, for example, does not figure into a country's GDP because it is free—but the cost of teachers' salaries does. It is only natural, then, that so many people talk about public "spending" rather than public "investment." This logic also explains why Goldman Sachs's then CEO, Lloyd Blankfein, could claim in 2009, just a year after his company received a \$10 billion bailout, that its workers were "among the most productive in the world." After all, if value is price, and if Goldman Sachs's income per employee is among the highest in the world, then of course its workers must be among the most productive in the world.

Changing the status quo requires coming up with a new answer to the question, What is value? Here, it is essential to recognize the investments and creativity provided by a vast array of actors across the economy—not only businesses but also workers and public institutions. For too long, people have acted as if the private sector were the primary driver of innovation and value creation and therefore were entitled to the resulting profits. But this is simply not true. Pharmaceutical drugs, the Internet, nanotechnology, nuclear power, renewable energy—all were developed with an enormous amount of government investment and risk taking, on the backs of countless workers, and thanks to public infrastructure and institutions. Appreciating the contribution of this collective effort would make it easier to ensure that all efforts were properly remunerated and that the economic rewards of innovation were distributed more equitably. The road to a more symbiotic partnership between public and private institutions begins with the recognition that value is created collectively.

BAD BAILOUTS

Beyond rethinking value, societies need to prioritize the long-term interests of stakeholders rather than the short-term interests of shareholders. In the current crisis, that should mean developing a "people's vaccine" for COVID-19, one that

is accessible to everyone on the planet. The drug-innovation process should be governed in a way that fosters collaboration and solidarity among countries, both during the research-and-development phase and when it comes time to distribute the vaccine. Patents should be pooled among universities, government labs, and private companies, allowing knowledge, data, and technology to flow freely around the world. Without these steps, a COVID-19 vaccine risks becoming an expensive product sold by a monopoly, a luxury good that only the richest countries and citizens can afford.

More generally, countries must also structure public investments less like handouts and more like attempts to shape the market to the public's benefit, which means attaching strings to government assistance. During the pandemic, those conditions should promote three particular objectives: First, maintain employment to protect the productivity of businesses and the income security of households. Second, improve working conditions by providing adequate safety, decent wages, sufficient levels of sick pay, and a greater say in decision-making. Third, advance long-term missions such as reducing carbon emissions and applying the benefits of digitization to public services, from transport to health.

The United States' main response to COVID-19—the CARES (Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security) Act, passed by Congress in March—illustrates these points in reverse. Rather than put in place effective payroll supports, as most other advanced countries did, the United States offered enhanced temporary unemployment benefits. This choice led to over 30 million workers being laid off, causing the United States to have one of the highest rates of pandemic-related unemployment in the developed world. Because the government offered trillions of dollars in both direct and indirect support to large corporations without meaningful conditions, many companies were free to take actions that could spread the virus, such as denying paid sick days to their employees and operating unsafe workplaces.

The CARES Act also established the Paycheck Protection Program, under which businesses received loans that would be forgiven if employees were kept on the payroll. But the PPP ended up serving more as a massive cash grant to corporate treasuries than as an effective method of saving jobs. Any small business, not just those in need, could receive a loan, and Congress quickly loosened the rules regarding how much a firm needed to spend on payroll to have the loan forgiven. As a result, the program put a pitifully small dent in

unemployment. An MIT team concluded that the PPP handed out \$500 billion in loans yet saved only 2.3 million jobs over roughly six months. Assuming that most of the loans are ultimately forgiven, the annualized cost of the program comes out to roughly \$500,000 per job. Over the summer, both the PPP and the expanded unemployment benefits ran out, and the U.S. unemployment rate still exceeded ten percent.

For too long, governments have socialized risks but privatized rewards. Congress has so far authorized over \$3 trillion in spending in response to the pandemic, and the Federal Reserve injected an additional \$4 trillion or so into the economy—together totaling more than 30 percent of U.S. GDP. Yet these vast expenditures have achieved nothing in terms of addressing urgent, long-term issues, from climate change to inequality. When Senator Elizabeth Warren, Democrat of Massachusetts, proposed attaching conditions to the bailouts—to ensure higher wages and greater decision-making power for workers and to restrict dividends, stock buybacks, and executive bonuses—she could not get the votes.

The point of the government's intervention was to prevent the collapse of the labor market and to maintain firms as productive organizations—essentially, to act as a catastrophic risk insurer. But this approach cannot be allowed to impoverish government, nor should the funds be permitted to bankroll destructive business strategies. In the case of insolvencies, the government might consider demanding equity positions in the companies it is rescuing, as happened in 2008 when the U.S. Treasury took ownership stakes in General Motors and other troubled firms. And when rescuing businesses, the government should impose conditions that prohibit all sorts of bad behavior: handing out untimely CEO bonuses, issuing excessive dividends, conducting share buybacks, taking on unnecessary debt, diverting profits to tax havens, engaging in problematic political lobbying. They should also stop firms from price gouging, especially in the case of COVID-19 treatments and vaccines.

Other countries show what a proper response to the crisis looks like. When Denmark offered to pay 75 percent of firms' payroll costs at the start of the pandemic, it did so on the condition that firms could not make layoffs for economic reasons. The Danish government also refused to bail out companies that were registered in tax havens and barred the use of relief funds for dividends

and share buybacks. In Austria and France, airlines were saved on the condition that they reduce their carbon footprint.

The British government, by contrast, gave easyJet access to more than \$750 million in liquidity in April, even though the airline had paid out nearly \$230 million in dividends to shareholders a month earlier. The United Kingdom declined to attach conditions to its bailout of easyJet and other troubled firms in the name of market neutrality, the idea that it is not the government's job to tell private companies how to spend their money. But a bailout can never be neutral: by definition, a bailout involves the government choosing to spare one company, and not another, from disaster. Without conditions, government assistance runs the risk of subsidizing bad business practices, from environmentally unsustainable business models to the use of tax havens. The United Kingdom's furlough scheme, whereby the government paid up to 80 percent of furloughed employees' wages, should have in the very least been conditioned on workers not being fired as soon as the program ended. But it wasn't.

THE VENTURE CAPITALIST MENTALITY

The state cannot just invest; it must strike the right deal. To do so, it needs to start thinking like what I have called an "entrepreneurial state"—making sure that as it invests, it is not just derisking the downside but also getting a share of the upside. One way to do that is to take an equity stake in the deals it makes.

Consider the solar company Solyndra, which received a \$535 million guaranteed loan from the U.S. Department of Energy before going bust in 2011 and becoming a conservative byword for the government's inability to pick winners. Around the same time, the Department of Energy gave a \$465 million guaranteed loan to Tesla, which went on to experience explosive growth. Taxpayers paid for the failure of Solyndra, but they were never rewarded for the success of Tesla. No self-respecting venture capitalist would structure investments like that. Worse, the Department of Energy structured Tesla's loan so that it would get three million shares in the company if Tesla was unable to repay the loan, an arrangement designed to not leave taxpayers empty-handed. But why would the government want a stake in a failing company? A smarter strategy would have been to do the opposite and ask Tesla to pay three million shares if it was able to repay the loan. Had the government done that, it would have earned tens of billions of dollars as Tesla's share price grew over the

course of the loan—money that could have covered the cost of the Solyndra failure with plenty left over for the next round of investments.

But the point is to worry not just about the monetary reward of public investments. The government should also attach strong conditions to its deals to ensure they serve the public interest. Medicines developed with government help should be priced to take that investment into account. The patents that the government issues should be narrow and easily licensable, so as to foster innovation, promote entrepreneurship, and discourage rent seeking.

Governments also need to consider how to use the returns on their investments to promote a more equitable distribution of income. This is not about socialism; it is about understanding the source of capitalistic profits. The current crisis has led to renewed discussions about a universal basic income, whereby all citizens receive an equal regular payment from the government, regardless of whether they work. The idea behind this policy is a good one, but the narrative would be problematic. Since a universal basic income is seen as a handout, it perpetuates the false notion that the private sector is the sole creator, not a co-creator, of wealth in the economy and that the public sector is merely a toll collector, siphoning off profits and distributing them as charity.

A better alternative is a citizen's dividend. Under this policy, the government takes a percentage of the wealth created with government investments, puts that money in a fund, and then shares the proceeds with the people. The idea is to directly reward citizens with a share of the wealth they have created. Alaska, for example, has distributed oil revenues to residents through an annual dividend from its Permanent Fund since 1982. Norway does something similar with its Government Pension Fund. California, which hosts some of the richest companies in the world, might consider doing something similar. When Apple, headquartered in Cupertino, California, set up a subsidiary in Reno, Nevada, to take advantage of that state's zero percent corporate tax rate, California lost an enormous amount of tax revenue. Not only should such tax gimmicks be blocked, but California should also fight back by creating a state wealth fund, which would offer a way besides taxation to directly capture a share of the value created by the technology and companies it fostered.

A citizen's dividend allows the proceeds of co-created wealth to be shared with the larger community—whether that wealth comes from natural resources that

are part of the common good or from a process, such as public investments in medicines or digital technologies, that has involved a collective effort. Such a policy should not serve as a substitute for getting the tax system to work right. Nor should the state use the lack of such funds as an excuse to not finance key public goods. But a public fund can change the narrative by explicitly recognizing the public contribution to wealth creation—key in the political power play between forces.

THE PURPOSE-DRIVEN ECONOMY

When the public and private sectors come together in pursuit of a common mission, they can do extraordinary things. This is how the United States got to the moon and back in 1969. For eight years, NASA and private companies in sectors as varied as aerospace, textiles, and electronics collaborated on the Apollo program, investing and innovating together. Through boldness and experimentation, they achieved what President John F. Kennedy called “the most hazardous and dangerous and greatest adventure on which man has ever embarked.” The point was not to commercialize certain technologies or even to boost economic growth; it was to get something done together.

More than 50 years later, in the midst of a global pandemic, the world has a chance to attempt an even more ambitious moonshot: the creation of a better economy. This economy would be more inclusive and sustainable. It would emit less carbon, generate less inequality, build modern public transport, provide digital access for all, and offer universal health care. More immediately, it would make a COVID-19 vaccine available to everyone. Creating this type of economy will require a type of public-private collaboration that hasn’t been seen in decades.

Some who talk about recovering from the pandemic cite an appealing goal: a return to normalcy. But that is the wrong target; normal is broken. Rather, the goal should be, as many have put it, to “build back better.” Twelve years ago, the financial crisis offered a rare opportunity to change capitalism, but it was squandered. Now, another crisis has presented another chance for renewal. This time, the world cannot afford to let it go to waste.

Source; <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/united-states/2020-10-02/capitalism-after-covid-19-pandemic>

The Trade War and Pakistan By Shehryar

Hamesh Khan

WITH Trump coming to power in the US and the launch of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) in China, the indirect rivalry between the two countries has no longer remained that indirect. But the twenty-first century divides are not like the Cold War era, where countries were distributed in easily distinguishable blocs. Instead, the fault lines are now evident in trade, technology and geo-strategic spheres, where economic interests take precedence over everything else.

As the world is connected in a far greater way than was in the Cold War era, enhanced trade ties and global economic chains leave little space for countries to isolate themselves from others. On the technology front, telecommunication bigwigs are yearning to provide faster connectivity to their ever-expanding consumer base, and governments that are keen to provide better services to their citizens — are eager to jump on the 5G bandwagon, with little regard to if and when the US will catch up. And with more than 65 countries plugged into the BRI, with access to vast Chinese markets, low-cost manufacturing capabilities and a rapidly-expanding consumer base, there is even lesser room for a firewalled world, which could jeopardize these serious partnerships.

So far, Pakistan has managed to pull off a balanced relationship with both the US, a country with unparalleled strategic importance, and China, an emerging superpower that has pumped an unprecedented amount of infrastructure financing funds into the country. On one hand, Trump can be seen standing in Davos, claiming that the two countries have never been this close, and on the other, President Xi Jinping considers the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) as the main project of the BRI.

But beneath the illusion of a balanced and well thought out foreign policy lies an awkward trio, in which Pakistan is stuck in the middle of the US-China trade war for global economic dominance. Despite being essential to the US with regards to a peace deal in Afghanistan and heightened US-Iran tension, Pakistan has not been able to receive reciprocation in the form of support for the Kashmir cause and exiting the FATF Grey List. However, with regards to China, our own internal issues are a hindrance to fully benefit from ties with the most populous country in

the world. The CPEC pipeline is drying up and Pakistan is no longer in a position to take on new infrastructure projects, owing to IMF's restrictions and a tight monetary policy. The signing of second phase of the China-Pakistan Free Trade Agreement has paved the way for much deeper economic cooperation between the two countries. But for these new trade opportunities to materialize, Pakistan needs new investment and superior technology.

The much-touted special economic zones (SEZs) that were supposed to provide the stimulus through relocation of Chinese enterprises are still nowhere near completion. And despite the talk of the second phase of CPEC, Gwadar is nowhere near the "Dubai of Southeast Asia" it was envisaged to be. No one can question our stance on staying neutral in the trade war and with regards regional interests of the two economic goliaths. However, the real question is if and when this policy will yield benefits for a nation that was recently on the verge of economic collapse and a full blown out war with its six times more populous neighbour.

—The writer is freelance columnist.

Source: <https://pakobserver.net/the-trade-war-and-pakistan/>

‘To remain on grey list’: FATF urges Pakistan to complete action plan by Feb 2021

By Fayyaz Hussain

The Financial Action Task Force (FATF) has found that Pakistan has successfully complied with 21 out of 27 points of action and decided to keep the country on its ‘grey list’ until February 2021, the watchdog’s president said on Friday.

FATF President Marcus Pleyer announced the decision at a virtual press conference held after the body’s three-day plenary session came to an end today.

The global watchdog reviewed Pakistan’s progress on the 27-point action plan for addressing anti-money laundering and terror financing in its plenary session that started on October 21.

Also read: Pakistan deserves international support, not a place on the FATF grey-list

ARTICLE CONTINUES AFTER AD

In a statement issued after the plenary session concluded, the financial watchdog said: “To date, Pakistan has made progress across all action plan items and has now largely addressed 21 of the 27 action items. As all action plan deadlines have expired, the FATF strongly urges Pakistan to swiftly complete its full action plan by February 2021.”

The statement added that Pakistan needed to work on four areas to “address its strategic deficiencies”. These include:

demonstrating that law enforcement agencies (LEAs) are identifying and investigating the widest range of terror financing activity, which target designated persons and entities, and those who act on the behalf/direction of the designated persons or entities

demonstrating that terror financing prosecutions result in effective, proportionate and dissuasive sanctions

demonstrating effective implementation of targeted financial sanctions against all 1267 and 1373 designated terrorists and those acting for or on their behalf; preventing the raising and moving of funds including in relation to non-profit organisations; identifying and freezing assets; and prohibiting access to funds and financial services

demonstrating enforcement against violation of terror financing sanctions, including in relation to NPOs, of administrative and criminal penalties and provincial and federal authorities cooperating on enforcement cases

In response to a question by a journalist with India Today, Pleyer said that the FATF members had decided “by consensus” that Pakistan needed to work on the six outstanding items before the body would consider paying an “on-site visit” to review Pakistan’s progress on the ground.

Answering another question, he said that after the on-site visit by an assessment team, the FATF body would review Pakistan’s case in its plenary meeting and decide if the country should be taken off the ‘grey list’. He pointed out, however, that there was “another process going on in the Asian Pacific Group” where Pakistan’s case is being evaluated.

Meanwhile, an advisory posted on the watchdog’s website announced that Iceland and Mongolia were “no longer subject to the FATF’s increased monitoring process”.

Shortly after the FATF announced its decision, Minister for Industries Hammad Azhar said that Pakistan had “achieved impressive progress” and congratulated federal and provincial teams “who have worked day and night even during the pandemic to ensure this turn around”.

The minister said that due to Pakistan’s progress FATF had “acknowledged that any blacklisting is off the table now”.

Pakistan has been on the FATF's grey list since June 2018. The grey list comprises countries being monitored by the watchdog.

The FATF plenary was earlier scheduled in June but Islamabad got an unexpected breather after the global watchdog against financial crimes temporarily postponed all mutual evaluations and follow-up deadlines in the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic.

The Paris-based agency also put a general pause on the review process, thus giving Pakistan an additional four months to meet the requirements.

In February, the FATF had given Islamabad a four-month grace period to complete its 27-point action plan, noting that Pakistan had delivered on 14 points but missed 13 other targets. On July 28, the government reported to parliament compliance with 14 points of the 27-point action plan and with 10 of the 40 recommendations.

By September 16, however, the joint session of the parliament amended about 15 laws to upgrade its legal system matching international standards as required by the FATF. Pakistani officials were hopeful of a positive outcome, especially after the recent legislation by parliament on counter-terror financing and money laundering.

The FATF places those countries on its grey list which are not taking measures to combat terror funding and money laundering. Placement on the grey list is a warning for a country that it may be put on the blacklist in case of its failure to take effective measures against money laundering and terror financing.

After being placed on the grey list, a country is directly scrutinised by the financial watchdog until it is satisfied by the measures taken to curb terror financing and money laundering. If the watchdog does not deem progress by countries on the list as satisfactory, they may be relegated to the blacklist — a list of the countries branded as uncooperative and tax havens for terror funding. These countries may face global sanctions as well.

Countries on the blacklist — or 'high-risk jurisdictions' — have significant strategic deficiencies in their regimes to counter money laundering, terrorist financing, and financing of proliferation, according to the watchdog.

India's plans will fail

Foreign Minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi speaks to reporters in Islamabad on Friday. — DawnNewsTV

Foreign Minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi on Friday said India's plans to "push Pakistan into the blacklist" of the FATF will fail because of the steps the country has taken to meet the requirements of the global money laundering and terrorist financing watchdog.

He was speaking to reporters in Islamabad, hours before the FATF announced its decision.

"I can say this with confidence, India will fail in its designs to push Pakistan into the blacklist," Qureshi said, adding that the world had "acknowledged" today that the incumbent government and parliament had taken "concrete steps" regarding the FATF action plan.

He said Pakistan had conducted legislation and taken administrative measures to check money laundering and terror financing which were not seen in the recent past.

Of the 27 points on which the FATF had asked Pakistan to take action, "I can say with conviction we have implemented 21," the minister said. He added that progress had also been made on the remaining six points.

"Considering all this progress, the FATF forum should view Pakistan's measures positively and create room for Pakistan," he emphasised, saying he hoped the world will "acknowledge" the steps taken by the country.

A day earlier, the Foreign Office (FO) rejected baseless reports circulating in the media claiming Saudi Arabia had voted against Pakistan at the FATF session.

"Pakistan and Saudi Arabia enjoy strong fraternal ties and the two countries have always cooperated with each other on all matters of bilateral, regional and international importance," FO spokesman Zahid Hafeez Chaudhri had said.

Source: <https://www.dawn.com/news/1586624/to-remain-on-grey-list-fatf-urges-pakistan-to-complete-action-plan-by-feb-2021>

COVID's Impact on Pakistan Economy By

Kashif Mirza

The outbreak of COVID-19 covered the whole world, posing severe socio-economic challenges, especially for the Developing Countries. Pre COVID-19, global growth was projected to rise by 3.3 % in 2020, which was sharply contracted by -3% in April 2020 as a result of the pandemic. According to the World Economic Outlook (WEO) June 2020 forecast, the growth is projected to reduce further by – 4.9 percent in 2020. Pakistan was no exception and COVID-19 drastically changed the whole scenario. Prior to the COVID-19 outbreak, the GDP growth was projected at 2.4% for Fiscal Year (FY) 2020 while it is estimated at -0.4%. The last quarter of this fiscal year bore the most significant brunt of the COVID-19 crisis.

The report says Pakistan's debt, spending and deficits will decline by 2023. Govt revenue is projected to improve from 15.1% to 17.7%. The debt-to-GDP ratio will fall from 87.2% to 78.3%. The budget deficit will be halved to 4% from the current 8%. In three years, government spending will also fall from 22.8% to 21.7%. The IMF also predicts a primary balance surplus by 2022-23. The current fiscal year growth rate is 1%. It is expected to increase by 2% next year. It may further improve in 2023. However, IMF predicted that the unemployment rate in Pakistan will rise to 5.1% in the ongoing fiscal year.

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) forecast a subdued economic growth rate for Pakistan coupled with elevated rate of inflation and rising unemployment during the current fiscal year. IMF projected Pakistan's growth rate at one per cent, average inflation rate at 8.8pc, current account deficit at 2.5pc of GDP (gross domestic product) and unemployment rising by 0.6pc to 5.1pc during the current fiscal year. This is in sharp contrast with targets of 2.1pc GDP growth rate, 6.5pc inflation and 1.5pc current account deficit set by the government. IMF projected the economic growth rate recovering to 5pc of GDP by 2025.

The path ahead will require skilful domestic policies that manage trade-offs between lifting near-term activity and addressing medium-term challenges, that sustaining the recovery will also require strong international cooperation on health and financial support for countries facing liquidity shortfalls

It is expected that the rate of inflation would be peaking at 10.2pc at the end of FY2021. The IMF estimated current account deficit rising from 1.1pc of GDP in FY2020 to 2.5pc in FY2021 and then going up to 2.7pc in FY2025. Whereas, the WEO projected global growth at -4.4pc in 2020 – 0.8 percentage point above the June 2020 forecast. Although remittance flows contracted sharply during the early lockdown period but had shown signs of recovery. Nonetheless, the risk of a decline in payments and transfers from migrant workers back to their home countries is very significant, particularly Pakistan, Bangladesh, Egypt, Guatemala, the Philippines, and those in sub-Saharan Africa more broadly. The global economy was climbing out from the depths to which it had plummeted during the great lockdown in April. But with the Covid-19 pandemic continuing to spread, many countries have slowed reopening and some are reinstating partial lockdowns to protect susceptible populations. More than one million lives had been lost to Covid-19 since the start of the year and the toll continued to rise.

Many more have suffered serious illness. Close to 90 million people are expected to fall into extreme deprivation this year. The loss of human capital accumulation after widespread school closures poses an additional challenge. Moreover, sovereign debt levels are set to increase significantly even as downgrades to potential output imply a smaller tax base that makes it harder to service the debt. On the plus side, the prospects of low interest rates over a longer period, alongside the projected rebound in growth in 2021, can help alleviate debt service burdens in many countries.

On the other hand Pakistan's V-shaped economic recovery, the concept is proving veracious in Pakistan's case given the burgeoning remittances, current account surpluses, ameliorating foreign exchange (FX), and an orderly market-based rupee. As reported by the SBP, the current account surpluses stood at \$508 million and \$297 million in July and August, respectively. In consonance with SBP data, the total liquid FX reserves grew from \$18.8 billion in February 2020 to \$19.9 billion in August 2020. A V-shaped, precipitous economic retrieval is evident in the case of Pakistan. The current account surplus will only be short-lived if there isn't an upturn in exports on robust fundamentals. Hence the government must ensure that it devises a strategy focused on perennially increasing exports.

The government has contained budget deficit at Rs440 billion or less than 1% of the size of national economy in first two months of the current fiscal year as it now faces the challenge of translating improvement in economic indicators into betterment in lives of people. However, the improvement came largely because of nearly 70% increase in non-tax revenue and higher petroleum levy rates. The non-tax revenue, which stood at Rs92 billion during July-August of 2019, increased to over Rs112 billion. The Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) collected Rs 3,998 billion in FY2020. Pre COVID-19, the FBR target was Rs 4,807 billion. Before COVID-19, the GDP was projected at 3.0 percent for FY2021, now it is projected at 2.1 percent. Low economic activity in the major countries resultant fall in commodity prices, exports of Pakistan remained US\$ 22.5 billion as compared Pre COVID: US\$ 25.5 billion estimated. Moreover, workers' remittances reached US\$ 23.1 billion as compared Pre COVID: US\$ 24 billion estimated.

The path ahead will require skillful domestic policies that manage trade-offs between lifting near-term activity and addressing medium-term challenges, that sustaining the recovery will also require strong international cooperation on health and financial support for countries facing liquidity shortfalls. The governments should continue to support viable but still vulnerable firms with moratoria on debt service and equity-like support to preserve jobs. Over time, once the recovery has taken a strong hold, policies should shift gradually to facilitating reallocation of workers from sectors likely to shrink on a long-term basis to growing sectors. Along the transition, workers will need to be supported, including through income transfers, retraining and re-skilling programmes. Pakistan should design short-term support policies with a view toward placing economies on paths of stronger, equitable and sustainable growth. Moreover, investments in health and education including remedying losses incurred during the pandemic can help achieve participatory and inclusive growth.

The writer is an economist and the President of All Pakistan Private Schools Federation.

President@pakistanprivateschools.com

Source: <https://dailytimes.com.pk/680739/covids-impact-on-pakistan-economy/>

Surplus After Five Years | Editorial

Slowly, but surely, the indicators for Pakistan's economy have started looking positive. After a gap of more than five years, the State Bank of Pakistan has posted a quarterly current account surplus of \$792m during the first quarter of FY21 against a deficit of \$1.492 billion recorded in the same period last fiscal year. It is evident that the government has made this a priority for the last few years and it should be praised for pulling it off.

This is welcome news—the government's reforms finally seem to be showing some results after an extended period of pain. Yet while this is certainly an achievement that the government can and should tout, it is doubtful as to what extent the positives of these developments will trickle down to the average person and how much change the lower-income masses will see. The fact is that this surplus has been achieved by the government's dedication to increasing remittances. There was a 31 percent increase in remittances during the quarter under review due to the government's crackdown on illegal channels of remitting, as well as a host of pandemic-related factors including suspension of international travelling and workers sending money to their families more than usual during the pandemic.

While exports have increased, so have the restrictions on imports—with total imports declining by 8.1 percent. There is no data to show that these imports have decreased because of use of local products or because of higher prices which might have stifled production or sale. The fact of the matter is no matter what the official numbers displayed on the SBP's reports on the surplus are, the average people judge the economy by what is in front of them—in terms of the prices of the essential products they use. This government's reforms have started pulling in good results but it can be argued they have been done so at the cost of the average masses. If the government wants to keep its voter base, it needs to start translating the surplus it has made into lowering prices and relief packages for the ordinary people.

Source: <https://nation.com.pk/23-Oct-2020/surplus-after-five-years>

FATF: Facts, Diplomacy and Public Narrative By Hasaan Khawar

FATF's plenary session concluded last week and as expected Pakistan stays on the grey list. However, a lot has changed since the last session in February, as manifested by a much more supportive tone of the forum, appreciating Pakistan's significant progress against the action plan agreed in 2018. Pakistan is now fully or largely compliant with 21 out of a total of 27 action items, as opposed to merely 14 a few months ago.

Yet, during the last few weeks, the international media was full of baseless news items about the risks of Pakistan being blacklisted. Although Pakistan achieved significant progress on ground and undertook significant diplomatic efforts, it did not shape the public narrative, which was completely hijacked by baseless Indian propaganda.

Let's first see what all we have done so far to improve our anti-money laundering and counter-terrorism financing (AML/CFT) regime. Over the last few months, Pakistan amended scores of laws, both at national and provincial level, including the Anti-Money Laundering Act, Foreign Exchange Regulations Act, Anti-Terrorism Act, Companies Act and Waqf, Trusts and Cooperative acts. A new legislation on mutual legal assistance was enacted to improve international cooperation on money laundering and terrorism financing. Multiple working groups were formed to ensure inter-agency cooperation, regulations for designated non-finance business professions (DNFBPs) were made, and AML/CFT measures were introduced in Pakistan Post and Central Directorate of National Savings. Thousands of accounts were frozen, and transactions were rejected for positive matches with designated persons. AML/CFT penalties to the tune of Rs1.5+ billion were imposed on banks. The offenses regarding hawala/hundi were made cognizable and their imprisonment was increased. Systematic improvements in the FIA were introduced and an AML/CFT cell was established, leading to registration of cases, arrests and seizures. Cross-border currency movement was controlled and enforcement against terrorism finance cases was intensified and most importantly, 49,000 non-profit organisations (NPOs) were de-registered.

The country now needs to focus on a few remaining areas such as demonstrating that law enforcement agencies are identifying and investigating the TF activity and prosecutions, resulting in effective proportionate and dissuasive sanctions; showing effective implementation of targeted financial sanctions against all designated terrorists and their associates; and further strengthening our enforcement against NPOs, in relation to TF cases.

On the diplomatic front, the country also did a decent job. A group of diplomats from important countries were invited to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in September and were briefed about Pakistan's progress to date. Other back-channel efforts also helped in creating goodwill for Pakistan leading to a consensus decision by the FATF. The outgoing Chinese ambassador last month already indicated that the upcoming FATF review would have a positive outcome for the country. Such diplomatic efforts are essential to garner international support and should continue till the next session in February 2021.

But despite all these efforts, there was no media strategy in place to shape the public narrative and inform the world about Pakistan's commitment to AML/CFT agenda. Indian media outlets relentlessly spewed venom and the global media happily picked it up in the absence of any counter-narrative from Pakistan. Last month, I got in touch with a senior Pakistan official working on FATF and he was not willing to share a single word, not even to counter what has been baselessly alleged against Pakistan in international media. We need to not let this happen again. Let's tell our side of the story to the world.

Pakistan stands a good chance to come out of the grey list by February 2021. The key is to keep the foot on the pedal on enforcement, continue the diplomatic efforts and shape the public narrative by proudly showing what we have achieved and not hiding it under covers.

Published in The Express Tribune, October 27th, 2020.

Source: <https://tribune.com.pk/story/2269999/fatf-facts-diplomacy-and-public-narrative>

Remaining FATF Items | Editorial

THE FATF verdict is out. And there are no surprises. After its three-day plenary, the Paris-based global money laundering and terrorist financing watchdog announced on Friday that Pakistan would be retained on its list of jurisdictions under increased monitoring, ie the grey list.

This was, of course, a disappointment to some who desperately wanted to see the FATF blacklist the country for not completing in time the 27 actions recommended for strengthening and removing the deficiencies in the AML/ATF regime. At the other end, those who thought the FATF would show more leniency and acknowledge the progress made in the last several months were too optimistic.

Although the FATF conceded that Pakistan has made significant progress and addressed 21 of the 27 items while partially addressing the remaining six, it decided to not change the country's status. Instead, it gave Islamabad another four months to complete work on the remaining items, while strongly urging Pakistan to "swiftly complete its full action plan by February 2021 as all action plan deadlines have expired". This is fair enough.

Ever since Pakistan was put on the so-called grey list in June 2018 for the second time in six years, few had imagined it would have been able to make so much progress. But the fact that the country has shown its political commitment and is able to satisfy the global watchdog in 21 areas in such a short time is no mean achievement. Rather, it should be celebrated as a victory. Yet, the real test starts now.

We have been given a very narrow window of time to achieve the rest of the targets — tougher ones pertaining to law enforcement's capacity to identify and investigate the "widest range of terrorist-financing activity". It wants "the investigation and prosecution [to] target designated persons and entities, and those acting on behalf or at the direction of the designated persons or entities". Further, Pakistan has to demonstrate that terrorist-financing prosecutions result in effective and dissuasive sanctions. We also need to show the world that the provincial and federal authorities are on the same page on enforcing measures.

Indeed, this is a big ask from a country like Pakistan where large parts of the economy operate in the shadows and where law enforcers have little or no training in identifying, investigating and prosecuting financial crimes. But do we have a choice? It is, after all, in our own interest to remove weaknesses in our AML/ATF regime and strengthen our investigators and prosecutors not just because the FATF requires us to do so.

The fact that the government chose not to avail the option given by the FATF to not report at its meeting owing to the pandemic shows that we are confident that we can meet the next deadline with a bit of effort and political will. And we should — for our own sake.

Published in Dawn, October 25th, 2020

Source: <https://www.dawn.com/news/1586902/remaining-fatf-items>

EDUCATION

Pakistani Children's Right to Education By **Syed Mohammad Ali**

Covid-19 has posed several unanticipated challenges for the education sector in countries like Pakistan where vast numbers of students are now at risk of falling behind. Pakistan's educational woes however are longstanding. A decade after the right of education was guaranteed by a constitutional amendment, Pakistan has the dubious distinction of world's second-highest number of out-of-school children.

According to Unicef, over 22 million of Pakistan's 77 million school-going children remain out of school. While enrollment and retention rates have been improving slowly, the provision of good quality basic education for all remains an elusive goal.

Pakistan has glaring educational disparities based on gender, socio-economic status and geographic location. There has been much euphemism about the potential of private sector in achieving education goals including improved access and enhancing education quality. However, the private sector also cannot address the goal of ensuring universal education.

The UNDP's Human Development Report for 2019 specifically cautioned against relying on private (fee-based) schools for ensuring basic education. This report drew on empirical evidence showing how reliance on private schools can leave the poorest even further behind, due in part to unequal access and lower accountability for quality, which tends to harm poor students disproportionately, especially girls.

Yet, there has been a substantial increase in the number of private schools in countries like Pakistan over the past three decades. Over a third of all students in Pakistan now attend a private school. The growth of private schools has also

been encouraged by entities like the World Bank. The World Bank has even nudged the government to create entities like the Punjab and Sindh Education Foundations which are mandated to support the efforts of the private sector in providing education to the poor, through public private partnership. But another way to describe the mandate of these entities is that they aim to funnel scant public funds away from government schools to low income private schools. If low income private schools are more efficient, they presumably should be able to deliver quality education based on market principles of efficiency and competition, rather than needing government support.

Private school students can generally outperform public sector students, yet learning levels are alarmingly low in both public and low-income private schools. Most low-income private schools pay their teachers a fraction of what government schools do. This explains why many parents move their children from private low-income schools to public schools as they move up the grades, even where poverty is not a factor, as higher-level public schools are seen to be delivering better quality education.

Moreover, gauging the efficiency of private and public schools based on results alone is unfair. Private schools conduct admission tests and screen out those not likely to do well unlike public sector schools that have to admit virtually every student who applies.

The judicial system and the provincial governments have recently tried to regulate private schools. Yet, these attempts do not appear to have been applied in a broad, systematic or meaningful way.

There is no shortcut to public provision of quality education to achieve lofty goals of building the human capital of our bulging youth population. Public schools have many problems including bureaucratic inefficiencies, political interference, overcrowded classrooms, and inadequate school facilities. Instead of trying to solve these problems with public education, there has been increasing reliance on low-income private schools due to increasingly neoliberal models of development. It is about time for international development agencies to redirect their efforts to bolster public education, to help improve teachers' training and support inclusivity, especially for girls and disabled students.

Recognising the vital need for public education does not mean that private schools should be nationalised. Instead, public spending for government schools needs to be increased. At the same time, public education should be insulated from political interference and be made more accountable through well-conceived performance-based incentives.

Published in The Express Tribune, October 9th, 2020.

Source: <https://tribune.com.pk/story/2267549/pakistani-childrens-right-to-education>

Undergraduate Education Policy 2020 By **Professor Dr. Muhammad Mukhtar**

Recently, the Higher Education Commission of Pakistan rolled in the Undergraduate Education Policy 2020. It is mandatory for all public and private sector educational institutions to adopt this policy through their statutory bodies like academic councils, etc. by January 2021 and implement it in Fall during the same year. This policy is a gigantic step in taking undergraduate education to a different flight mode; however, silence prevails about this policy across academia and even at the HEC towards its future. The crux of the Undergraduate Education Policy 2020 is broadening the horizon for Pakistani youth entering undergraduate programmes across the country. Moreover, this policy adds flexibility for the youth to opt for studies that match their aptitudes. Students entering the engineering technologies or any other education domains will have the initial four semesters to decide which discipline aligns with their aptitudes. To make my point clear in the earlier version of the bachelor's degree, if you get admission in automotive engineering technology, you are bound to stay there. However, the new undergraduate education policy adds flexibility. A student has initial two years studying general education courses and meets with peers and mentors to decide the ultimate choice. During this time frame, a student can adapt any of the engineering disciplines like aviation, bioengineering, biomedical, electrical, electronics, garments, or material technologies provided that the higher education institute is offering these programmes.

Looking at the global perspective of "general education," there is no specific or ideal model to follow. The prevailing perception is that general education courses are not directly related to the student's major; however, they are considered a prerequisite to obtain a degree. A comparative of North American and European Universities suggests that the American undergraduate education system stresses general education more than the European.

The assimilation of the general education component in the United Arab Emirates higher education institutes undergraduate programmes is very well pronounced and worth appreciating. It could be the best example to follow. Pertinent to mention here is the neighbouring India's National Education Policy 2020 released by the Ministry of Human Resource Development. The Indian education policy

completely ignores general education; however, it adds flexibility for the learners in their undergraduate degree in multiple exits. One year's completion entitles students for a certificate, diploma after two years, bachelor's degree after three years, followed by a 4-year multidisciplinary bachelor's programme.

The Higher Education Commission of Pakistan team involved in the Undergraduate Education Policy 2020 accomplishment is worth appreciating, irrespective of unanticipated challenges that might come up and not being perceived currently. Adding an element of flexibility in the general education component or developing a digital academic bank might be an option in strengthening the undergraduate education policy. It is essential to mention here that, in earlier days, the HEC mantra used to be university building communities and vice versa. It is time that the HEC should apprise the common public, government officials at federal and provincial levels, and getting onboard the provincial higher education commissions to avert any resistance for the upcoming undergraduate education policy 2020. Sometimes, very well-designed perfect programmes fail due to a lack of their appropriate popularisation strategies. Besides, adding a flexibility and portability element, the digitised credit system will add value to the new policy. Certain specialised programmes will be doing more than what HEC demands. For example, in medical education, students spend most of their time acquiring skills to interact and treat patients. The same goes for universities like the National Skills University Islamabad, where the primary focus will be on strengthening physical expertise than cognitive enrichments.

Finally, it will be essential to explore why India has ignored general education, China has different versions, and in Pakistan, we are implementing specified general education. The UAE general education is considered a luxury by critics. Hoping, Pakistan's Undergraduate Education Policy 2020, having a general education component will be the most successful experience; however, the outcome and impact will be evident after a few years.

Source: <https://nation.com.pk/17-Oct-2020/undergraduate-education-policy-2020>

Reflection Of Education In Economy: **Chinese Miracle And Lesson For Pakistan By** **Ahmad Raza Saleem**

History of developed civilizations teaches a lesson to humanity that education has a vital role not in development of societies rather it engender memories in form of knowledge for coming generations which cannot be effaced. In modern world education, science , technology , intellectual development etc., have roots in education system. In contemporary global world economic development is reflection of quality education especially concept of knowledge base economies purely relies on innovative approach of institutions of higher education. Pakistan has produced a large number of scholars after establishment of higher education commission but irony of fate is, its reflection is not satisfactory in socioeconomic development of country. It is scientific approach that if results of an experiment are not appropriate than change the procedure. In developing world, there are many examples to be followed but Chinese miracle is inspiring. The reason is, it has close relationship with Pakistan and it's plight in the 1980s was identical to ours.

Chinese Education Miracle (vision of Deng Xiaoping)

Chinese cultural revolution(1966-1969) culminated into a big jolt for University education because students left the institutions to propagate Maoism. Deng Xiaoping who succeeded Mao as a Chinese leader, realized the fragile conditions and laid the foundation of modern China by introducing four modernizations. Scientific development and transformation of society was impossible without modernization of education system. In 1985, major reforms were announced in field of education. Aim was to enhance number of enrollments and nine year education (6 years primary and 3 years middle) was made compulsory and rating of schools was monitored on their ability to provide enrollment of graduates for universities. Poly-technical colleges admitted students with exposure in the field of agriculture, business and industry. Uniform curriculum was designed for schools with centralized control system.

Deng wisely opted policy of decentralization and autonomy for colleges and universities. In 1985, State Education Commission was formed which almost

abolished ministry of education for higher education and it remained functional until 1998. Institutions of higher education directly coordinated with Planning Commission. Universities were autonomous in development of their curriculum, staffing and engagement with other organizations.

Development of Higher Education System

Priority was again enhancement of enrollments. Natural sciences were promoted instead of social sciences because communist party thought that apolitical nature of science and technology will not create political challenges and on the other hand will provide impetus for promotion of industry. College entrance exams were introduced but government realized that rural area student could not compete well so should not be ignored for enrollments. Chinese, foreign language(mostly English) and mathematics were major subjects for entrance exams. Following important steps were taken by government.

- Universities have to provide force for production based economy and after achieving goals they will promote knowledge based economy.
- State owned enterprises , organizations and individuals were encouraged to pool for reforms in education. Universities were autonomous to coordinate with them.
- There was no appropriate budget for development of universities . Endowments , allocated budgets and fees were not enough so two steps were taken.
 - A- Low interest rate student loans from banks and degrees were offered for employees of organizations. Employer paid to universities and five year payroll deduction plan was for graduates.
 - B- There was shortage of trained staff. In 1990s only 15% students studying abroad were graduates. Mid career professional (aged 35-45) were sent abroad as visiting scholars who had to occupy responsible positions in universities in future.
- In 1998 China was able to develop its higher education infrastructure with trained professionals and now economy was able to pool for innovation era.

Present plight of higher education

Chinese universities are grabbing enrollments from third world countries now and reason was their autonomy though a communist regime is ruling country with iron fist.

- China is heading for knowledge based economy after surpassing stage of production based economy.

- There are more than 3500 universities out of them almost 500 are private institution.
- Innovative universities are being developed now to produce scholars. These universities are of two types
 - A. Carrier of innovation (researchers of creative abilities)
 - B. Centers of innovations (owned research centers)
 (Remember, researchers are those who can integrate innovative ideas and product)
- President Hu popularized knowledge and innovation economy after 2005.

Reforms in Exam system

- Chinese University intellectuals soon realized that exam system cannot judge creativity of student rather focus should be on learning process.
- Researchers need attitude and approach towards creativity and traditional exams cannot judge it.
- Gaokao, is entrance exam which is still under some criticism. It has 3+X (Chinese, mathematics, English and one elective subject)
- Creative approach is being judged by essays and short questions like
Write an essay on Edison , how will he react to mobile phone on visiting 21 st century ?

Write letter to 18 years old people in 2035?

- OECD comprised of 37 leading nations have average of 8 researchers out of 100 students. Finland is on top with average of 15 leaving behind Sweden with 13.6%. China has an average of 2 and is improving itself means going towards knowledge based economy with high number of patents.
- Important lesson to be learnt is, Chinese students have highest percentage in Swedish Universities as foreign scholars.

1+X Model

- Chinese universities have piloted this project to enhance enrollment, grab more job for their graduates in market and to surpass universities of Hong Kong & South Korea which may attract chunk of foreign students from China.

Model is based on academic studies with clusters of vocational certificates .

- Hybrid model of studies, universities are inviting the professionals to join faculties and administration to materialize the effort.
- On completion of pilot project, University will be declared applied University and later on policy will be applied in all provinces.

Lesson for Pakistan

1. Pakistan has some commonalities with Chinese like, dual nature of society(rural and urban) , need of graduates for production based economy, shortage of trained professionals, shortage of budgets etc.
2. Second thing is we have close ties with China. There are seven proposed Economic zones with CPEC. China had announced four economic zones in 1979 before reformation of education system.
3. Governments and universities should focus on existing sustained sectors like agriculture, livestock, food industry, pesticides, textile, sugar industry, etc. to commence the journey. There are following steps important with reference of China.
 - Decentralized and autonomous structure for universities.
 - Mid career University employees should be sent universities abroad as visiting scholars for short periods.
 - Universities should autonomously enter into agreements with public and private organizations for education and training of their employees to generate own extra budget.
 - Micro projects for researchers with private organization in sectors mentioned above.
 - Foreign Pakistanis and Alumni should be engaged voluntarily.
 - Maximum level of enrollment achieved with collaboration of school and colleges.
 - Change in examination system and entrance of exams is a must. Exploitation of set patterns by cramming cannot judge behavior and approach of graduates.
 - Foreign language and creative subjects should be made compulsory.
 - Language software should be developed for translation of research papers especially from Scandinavian languages (having highest rates of innovative scholars).

There are other examples like South Korea and Malaysia which are inspiring. South Korea has huge investment in education and most of it's universities are in private sector so we cannot follow them. Malaysian higher education system supported nation's production based economy because Mahatir Mohammed remained Education minister himself. It is not progressing towards knowledge base economy.

In Pakistan , we don't have umbrella of true autonomy around universities and lack of nexus with economic sectors is creating gulf between higher education and economic growth. Reforms of micro level are always done by institutions

themselves. Reformation in traditional systems of exams and change in environment in faculties is the need of hour.

Disclaimer: The views expressed in the article are the author's own and do not necessarily reflect Dunya News' editorial stance.

Source: <http://blogs.dunya-news.tv/27548/>

WORLD

US Presidential Election and its Impact on the Region By Talat Masood

Not that the United States' governments were generally considered anchored in principles or torchbearers of morality, but in many ways its Constitution, foundational principles and democratic governance did attract emerging and even mature democracies as a model to look up to.

This admiration is now a thing of the past as America's image has been torn to shreds by President Trump's frequent impetuous utterances, erratic behaviour and brazen flouting of democratic norms. The ugly scenes witnessed during the recent Presidential debate were the unpleasant manifestation of it.

Not surprising that the world looks eagerly at the outcome of the presidential elections in November from their own lens. Will the situation change for the better by electing Joe Biden, the Democratic nominee, and be a victory of the voices of sanity? And bury the legacy of Trump and be a strong setback to the white supremacist who have been his most ardent supporters?

There are countries, especially those that are ruled by autocrats and despots in the garb of democrats who would yearn that President Trump gets another term. This includes India, whose Prime Minister openly expressed his support for Trump — something most unusual and against accepted protocol.

Unfortunately, Trump has turned America into a country that has now no set values. This is diametrically opposite to what it once stood for and was valued for the world over. His remarks during the presidential debate that implied he would not accept any results that were not in his favour and would challenge them in the courts, Congress and even not hesitate to use street power shows to what extent he is desperate to cling to power and his respect for institutions.

President Trump's recent illness has thrown another wild card in the presidential election. Apart from how he recovers from it is that it will have its own consequences. For the world is watching how he faces the pandemic at the personal level. For while facing a personal health challenge a person's inner self is revealed like an open book. No wonder that it has become the hottest topic of US and international media with elections only weeks away.

A more pertinent question for us in Pakistan is: does it really matter who is elected the US president? Do we not have a history of US-Pakistan relations that remained under severe strain during the Republican and Democratic regimes and only blossomed when Washington needed our support or services? As was the period in the early 50s as a critical ally of the US and member of its security alliances, or during the Afghan jihad and later after the events of 9/11.

Will there be any difference in how the Biden administration looks at CPEC to Trump's? Or would the Pakistan-India hostility be perceived with a different lens? There could be marginal differences in nuance and issues where Pakistan's support is needed. The US would remain engaged with Pakistan in ensuring that it continues to prod the Taliban leadership toward having a more flexible approach during peace negotiations.

Pakistan's present political upheaval would be perceived by the incoming US administration with considerable disdain. In Pakistan, basic democratic values have been set aside and a major political storm is brewing with the opposition putting up a united front against the government. It is not sure which direction it would take. An environment of mutual abuse has become a common feature with millions of Pakistani's as sad spectators. In this situation, to expect support from any US administration would be wishful thinking.

There could be differences in the approach between President Trump and Biden in dealing with Iran's nuclear policy. President Trump having abandoned the nuclear agreement, has been extremely hostile towards Iran.

A Democratic administration would probably revive the 2015 long-term deal on its nuclear programme with the P5+1 — the US, UK, France, China, Russia and Germany, with a few caveats. Under the accord, which is known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, Iran agreed to limit its nuclear activities that had a

potential of being used for military purposes. Although, Iran had all along insisted that its entire programme was entirely peaceful.

The reduction of US-Iran hostility and easing of embargoes on Iran would be in the interest of Pakistan and the region. It would open up prospects of enhanced formal trade and interaction between the two countries. In the longer term, it could have a salutary impact on Iran-Arab relations as the threat of military buildup would somewhat ease.

The Trump administration has not been too sensitive about human rights issues. Knowing that it would not invite international criticism, it is not surprising that the authoritarian regimes in Eastern Europe, Asia, Latin America and elsewhere have no qualms in suppressing dissent.

Another foreign policy issue that has surfaced during the current debate is that President Trump and his administration generally downplayed Russian involvement in the last US elections. Furthermore, it remained under severe criticism for not taking a tough stand on Russian human rights issues.

Disarmament issues have not surfaced in the current presidential debate. Maybe these would have been brought up in subsequent debates but that possibility is now no more. The ongoing effort to renegotiate and replace the New START nuclear arms treaty that is set to expire in February 2021, is also in doubt. The US apparently has dropped its insistence that China is included in the treaty but its own commitment to move forward is doubtful. Hopefully, the Biden administration would take limiting nuclear arms seriously. This has implications for South Asia as well. It emboldens India to pursue its nuclear ambitions more aggressively with the cover that it is only countering the Chinese threat. But in reality the greater impact would be on Pakistan and this apprehension is being highlighted by it on international forums but it is doubtful if the West would be concerned as they support India as a counterweight to China at the regional level.

Published in The Express Tribune, October 7th, 2020.

Source: <https://tribune.com.pk/story/2267231/us-presidential-election-and-its-impact-on-the-region>

America's 'Cold War Mentality' | Editorial

The Chinese government has been forced to counter America's single-minded obsession with sidelining the Middle Kingdom once again and tell the US to "abandon its Cold War mentality and ideological prejudice, stop unprovoked accusations and attacks against China and treat relations with China in a constructive manner." This time Beijing's position came out of the country's embassy in Japan, which is where US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo called for deeper cooperation between Australia, India and Japan to counter China's growing regional influence.

Indeed the Trump administration has been obsessed with containing China one way or the other right from the get go. Washington even resorted to what is known in the world of diplomacy as dirty tricks including unnecessary sanctions and a completely unfair trade war. And it says something that so late in the electoral cycle, just days from the presidential election, the White House has jettisoned the secretary of state to Tokyo to whip up an anti-China coalition. Yet as deeply resentful as the Trump setup is towards China the policy to check China's growth and influence, the so-called Pivot to Asia, actually has its roots in the days of the Obama administration, which goes to show that both the Democratic and Republican establishments have similar feelings about protecting America's hegemony.

It is nothing short of a spectacle really that a fading superpower, one which has a part in almost all destabilising conflicts all over the world and the blood of millions upon millions on its hands, is bending over backwards to subvert a rising power that has pulled hundreds of millions of people out of poverty and is busy erecting a trade corridor between continents on the lines of the ancient, fabled Silk Route. And it's a shame that the world cannot expect much better policy even if the Republicans are voted out of the White House in a few days. The Chinese, for their part, are doing the right thing by replying to all accusations calmly and calling on the Americans to back off before they cause any more damage. It is never a good sign for the rest of the rest of the world when the two biggest economies lock horns; and that too just because one cannot stand the other. Hopefully the Americans will realise their mistake and mend their ways. The coronavirus has already wrecked the global economy. It can do without any more unforced disasters.

Source: <https://dailytimes.com.pk/675292/americas-cold-war-mentality/>

Trump Wants US Troops Out of Afghanistan

By Christmas

WASHINGTON: President Donald Trump said Wednesday he wants all US troops to leave Afghanistan by Christmas, speeding up the timeline for ending America's longest war.

"We should have the small remaining number of our BRAVE Men and Women serving in Afghanistan home by Christmas!" Trump wrote on Twitter.

In a February 29 agreement reached in Qatar with the Taliban, the United States promised to pull out all its troops by mid-2021 in return for insurgents' promises not to allow Afghanistan to be used by extremists – the original reason for the 2001 US invasion.

After intense US cajoling, the Afghan government and Taliban last month opened peace talks in Doha, although negotiations have quickly deadlocked.

Trump's promise comes one month before US elections in which the president, trailing in the polls, has sought to show that he is making good on his promise to draw a close to "endless wars."

After 19 years of US military operations his stance enjoys broad support at home including from his Democratic rival Joe Biden, who during his time as vice president had pushed to curtail US involvement in Afghanistan.

Asked last month whether he backed Trump's plans to withdraw troops from both Afghanistan and Iraq, Biden said: "Yes, I do. As long as he has a plan to figure out how he's going to deal with ISIS," the ultra-violent movement that has been active in both countries.

Members of the Taliban delegation attend the opening session of the peace talks between the Afghan government and the Taliban in the Qatari capital Doha on September 12, 2020. PHOO: AFP

The United States first intervened in Afghanistan following the September 11, 2001 attacks and dislodged the Taliban regime, which had welcomed Al-Qaeda.

But in the years since the resurgent militants have launched a fresh battle to topple the US-backed government in Kabul, with civilians bearing the brunt of spiraling violence since NATO combat troops withdrew in 2014.

The former Taliban regime had imposed an ultra-conservative brand of Islam on Afghanistan that banned music and education for girls.

The Doha talks have quickly deadlocked over the Taliban's insistence that negotiations adhere to a strict Sunni school of jurisprudence, a step the government says would discriminate against Shiites and other minorities.

Speaking earlier Wednesday, the veteran US diplomat who negotiated with the Taliban, Zalmay Khalilzad, nonetheless voiced guarded hope for the talks.

"The overwhelming majority of the Afghans would like to see an end to the conflict," Khalilzad, speaking by video from Doha, told a forum of the University of Chicago's Pearson Institute.

"I believe that the Taliban are quite serious about the negotiations. Many thought that they wouldn't sit across the table from the Afghan government – that all they wanted was an agreement for the withdrawal of US forces. But they are now sitting across the table."

Trump has already reduced US forces in Afghanistan to around 8,600 and the Taliban has stood by promises not to attack Western troops – even as the militants continue their bloody campaign against government forces.

"The level of violence is too high as far as we're concerned," Khalilzad said, although he asserted that Afghan civilian and military casualties had declined in the first half of 2020.

Afghan President Ashraf Ghani, visiting Doha on Tuesday, called on the Taliban to "have courage" and declare a national ceasefire.

The Trump administration had pressed Ghani's government to release some 5,000 Taliban prisoners, a condition of the militants to start talks.

Source: <https://tribune.com.pk/story/2267498/trump-wants-us-troops-out-of-afghanistan-by-christmas>

The False Promise of Regime Change By

Philip H. Gordon

Since the 1950s, the United States has tried to oust governments in the broader Middle East once every decade, on average. It has done so in Iran, Afghanistan (twice), Iraq, Egypt, Libya, and Syria—a list that includes only the instances in which the removal of a country's leaders and the transformation of its political system were the goals of U.S. policy and Washington made sustained efforts to achieve them. The motives behind those interventions varied widely, as have Washington's methods: in some cases sponsoring a coup, in others invading and occupying a country, and in others relying on diplomacy, rhetoric, and sanctions.

All these attempts, however, have one thing in common: they failed. In every case, American policymakers overstated the threat faced by the United States, underestimated the challenges of ousting a regime, and embraced the optimistic assurances of exiles or local actors with little power. In every case but that of Syria (where the regime held on to power), the United States prematurely declared victory, failed to anticipate the chaos that would inevitably ensue after regime collapse, and ultimately found itself bearing massive human and financial costs for decades to come.

Why is regime change in the Middle East so hard? And why do U.S. leaders and pundits keep thinking they can get it right? There are no easy answers to those questions, and it is important to acknowledge that in every case, the alternatives to regime change were unappealing. But as U.S. policymakers contemplate the challenges of dealing with this vexing region, they should see the patterns of self-delusion and misjudgment that have time and again made regime change so tempting—and, ultimately, so disastrous.

BLOWBACK

In 2011, as senior officials debated whether the United States should use military force against the Libyan ruler Muammar al-Qaddafi, U.S. Secretary of Defense Robert Gates—the most experienced member of President Barack Obama's national security team—reminded his colleagues that “when you start a war you never know how it will go.” Gates's warning was an understatement: in every single case, however carefully prepared, regime change in the Middle East has

had unanticipated and unwelcome consequences. Perhaps the most powerful example of this phenomenon was the 2003 U.S. invasion of Iraq, when Washington ended Saddam Hussein's rule but also inadvertently empowered Iran, fueled jihadism, demonstrated to dictators around the world the potential value of possessing nuclear weapons (to deter such invasions), increased doubts all over the world about the benevolence of U.S. power, and soured the American public on military intervention for decades to come.

Iraq was hardly an outlier: in every other case, the most significant consequences were the unintended ones. In Iran in 1953, the CIA helped oust the prickly nationalist prime minister Mohammad Mosaddeq, hoping that with Mosaddeq out of the picture, the Iranian shah, Mohammad Reza Pahlavi, would be a more reliable regional ally and keep Iran out of the Soviet camp. But the shah's baroque corruption and harsh repression—abetted by his U.S. benefactors—ultimately led to the 1979 revolution, which brought to power an intensely anti-American Islamist regime that has sponsored terrorism and destabilized the region ever since. In Afghanistan in the 1980s, U.S. support for the Islamist mujahideen helped to undermine the Soviet Union but also contributed to a decade of chaos, a civil war, the rise of the brutal Taliban government, an empowered global jihadi movement—and, ultimately, another U.S. military intervention, after the 9/11 attacks in 2001, which were planned by al Qaeda terrorists based in Afghanistan. After a popular uprising in Egypt in 2011, the United States used its diplomatic leverage to help end the decades-long repressive rule of Hosni Mubarak. The situation deteriorated in the years that followed, however. In 2012, elections brought to power an exclusionary Islamist government. The next year, that government was violently overthrown and replaced by a new military regime led by General Abdel Fattah el-Sisi, which has proved to be even more repressive than Mubarak's.

Whenever an existing regime is destroyed, a political and security vacuum emerges and a power struggle begins.

In 2011, the U.S.-backed ouster of Qaddafi and the subsequent collapse of the Libyan state led to widespread violence, allowed weapons to proliferate across the region, exacerbated instability in neighboring Chad and Mali, and stiffened Russia's resolve to never again allow the UN Security Council to pass a resolution that would facilitate regime change, as it did in the case of Libya. Advocates for regime change in Libya had hoped that Qaddafi's overthrow would

lead other dictators to agree to leave power or suffer Qaddafi's fate. In fact, the intervention had the opposite effect. In Syria, for example, President Bashar al-Assad watched Qaddafi brutally tortured and killed by Libyan rebels and decided to crack down even more ruthlessly on his opponents, creating an opening for jihadis, who then spilled over into neighboring Iraq and undermined the government there.

The attempt by the United States and others to remove Assad by supporting opposition rebels proved even more catastrophic. With Russia and Iran determined to keep Assad in power, years of outside military assistance to the Syrian opposition led not to Assad's ouster as intended but instead to counterescalation by his regime and its foreign sponsors, fueling a vicious civil war, a humanitarian tragedy, refugee flows on a scale not seen since World War II (which themselves caused a populist backlash in Europe), and an explosion of jihadi extremism. The desire to overthrow the murderous Assad was understandable. But the consequences of trying and failing to do so—in part because no one had the appetite to invade and occupy Syria less than a decade after the Iraq disaster—proved to be worse than not trying at all.

NATURE ABHORS A VACUUM

The heart of the problem is that whenever an existing regime is destroyed (or even just significantly weakened by outside forces, as in Syria), a political and security vacuum emerges and a power struggle begins. In the absence of security, people feel no alternative but to organize and arm themselves and to turn to kinship networks, tribes, and sects for safety, exacerbating sectarianism and internal rivalries and sometimes leading to demands for secession. In the run-up to an intervention, groups with little in common form coalitions of convenience. But once the regime falls, they quickly turn against one another. All too often, the most extreme or violent groups prevail and more moderate or pragmatic forces are sidelined; inevitably, those excluded from power work to undermine those who seized it. When the United States has tried to fill the vacuum itself, as it did in Iraq and at times in Afghanistan, it has found itself the target of locals and neighboring states that resist foreign interference and has ended up sacrificing thousands of lives and spending trillions of dollars yet still failing to create stability.

The security vacuum created by regime change not only sets up a struggle for power within states but invariably generates ruthless competition among regional

rivals as well. When governments fall (or appear likely to do so), regional and even global powers rush in with money, arms, and sometimes direct military force to put their own proxies in power and pull the country into their orbit. U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice's repeated assertion around the time of the Iraq war that Washington's pursuit of "stability at the expense of democracy" in the Middle East had produced neither was broadly true. But it turned out to have a corollary—that pursuing democracy at the expense of stability might also produce neither, but at even higher cost.

Well-meaning interventions in the Middle East have often led to violent resistance.

Americans like to believe their foreign interventions are generous, benign, and widely appreciated, but it turns out that even when they help topple unpopular regimes they are not necessarily greeted as liberators. Indeed, even well-meaning interventions in the Middle East have often led to violent resistance. After the 1953 coup in Iran, antipathy toward the United States for empowering the dictatorial shah led to virulent anti-Americanism that endures to this day. In Afghanistan, where suspicion of outsiders runs deep, Hamid Karzai, the leader whom Washington favored after its 2001 invasion, could never escape the impression among Afghans that he was put in power and supported by foreigners. Today, ridding the country of occupying U.S. troops remains the opposition Taliban's most central rallying cry. Most famously, U.S. Vice President Dick Cheney's prediction that U.S. troops would be "greeted as liberators" in Iraq proved wildly wrong and was followed by years of bloody anti-American insurgency.

Even the allegedly friendly leaders the United States has put in place have not always acted according to Washington's wishes. After all, they have their own local interests to worry about and often have to stand up to outside powers to bolster their legitimacy. Frequently, they have defied Washington on a range of domestic and international issues, knowing that their U.S. sponsors had little choice but to continue to support them. And far from exercising positive influence on such leaders and helping the United States overcome these challenges, many regional and global players do just the opposite. For decades, Pakistan has helped thwart U.S. efforts to stabilize Afghanistan. Iran undermined U.S. efforts in Iraq by supporting violent Shiite militia groups. Libya has been torn apart by competing outside powers supporting rival proxies. And in Syria, Russia and

Iran—determined to undermine U.S.-sponsored regime change in part lest Americans get the idea of trying it one day in Moscow or Tehran—responded to every U.S. escalation with a counterescalation of their own. These regional spoilers often succeed because they have more local influence and more at stake than the United States does, and it's far easier to cause chaos than to prevent it.

The more recent U.S. interventions in the Middle East have sought to replace autocratic regimes with democratic governments. But even if those actions had somehow avoided the pitfalls posed by security vacuums, popular resistance, and untrustworthy proxies, they would have been unlikely to shepherd in new democracies. Although there are no clear recipes for democratic development, extensive scholarly research suggests that the main ingredients include a high degree of economic development; significant ethnic, political, and cultural homogeneity (or at least a shared national narrative); and the previous existence of democratic norms, practices, and institutions. Unfortunately, the states of the contemporary Middle East lack all these attributes. None of this means that democracy is impossible there or that promoting democracy should not be an American aspiration. But it does suggest that pursuing regime change in the Middle East with the hope that doing so will lead to democratic development is wishful thinking in the extreme.

LEARNING THE HARD WAY

The deep-seated American desire to fix problems in the Middle East is in many ways honorable, but it can be dangerous as well. The hard reality—demonstrated by decades of painful experience in the region—is that there are some problems that cannot be entirely solved and trying to solve them sometimes makes things worse.

Part of the problem is that U.S. policymakers often lack a deep understanding of the countries in question, making them susceptible to manipulation from parties with their own vested interests. The most famous example is the Iraqi exile Ahmed Chalabi, who helped convince top officials in the George W. Bush administration that Iraq had weapons of mass destruction and that U.S. forces would be greeted as liberators in Iraq. Years after the invasion, Iraqi authorities arrested Chalabi on charges of counterfeiting and allegedly working to advance the interests of Iran. Similar scenarios played out in Libya, Syria, and elsewhere, where even well-meaning exiles told Americans and others what they wanted to

hear in order to win the support of the most powerful countries of the world. In each case, it led to massive miscalculations about what would happen in the wake of the U.S. intervention, almost always in the direction of excessive optimism.

Regime change will always tempt Washington.

Americans also keep placing hope over experience when it comes to Middle East policy because of a persistent tendency to underestimate the degree of resources and commitment it will take to get rid of a hostile regime and stabilize the situation once it is removed. But many decades of experience demonstrate that autocratic regimes never relinquish power in the face of economic sanctions alone (which hurt the public more than the leadership) or even in the face of modest amounts of military force. Numerous Middle Eastern rulers have been willing to risk and even lose their lives rather than give up their power voluntarily. The result is that when the United States wants to get rid of such leaders, it must go far beyond the low-cost remedies often proposed by proponents of regime change, such as implementing no-fly zones, launching airstrikes, and providing arms to the opposition. Instead, significant U.S. military deployments are required to dislodge such leaders, and even after they are gone, it always proves far more costly to deal with the aftermath than proponents of regime change suggest. And although officials in Washington often assume that regional or international partners will help bear the burdens and assume the costs of regime change, that rarely happens in reality.

Some of these problems would be manageable if the American public's commitment, patience, and staying power were infinite, but they are not. Especially because U.S. leaders and regime change proponents rarely acknowledge the likely heavy costs as they make the case for action, once the immediate crisis passes and public perceptions of the threats at hand diminish, public support dwindles. Most Americans initially supported the invasions of both Afghanistan and Iraq. Over time, however, majorities concluded that both interventions had been mistakes. And hardly any public support ever existed for intervening or peacekeeping operations in Libya and Syria. In every case, as the problems mounted and the costs rose, the public backing necessary for success disappeared.

JUST SAY NO

In the future, there may be cases in which mass terrorism, genocide, a direct attack on the United States, or a country using or proliferating nuclear weapons makes the benefits of removing a threatening regime exceed the costs. But if history is any guide, such cases will be rare to nonexistent. And even where they exist, they demand caution, humility, and honesty about the likely costs and consequences.

Regime change will always tempt Washington. So long as there are states that threaten American interests and mistreat their people, U.S. leaders and pundits will periodically be pulled toward the idea that Americans can use their unparalleled military, diplomatic, and economic power to get rid of bad regimes and replace them with better ones. The long, diverse, and tragic history of U.S.-backed regime change in the Middle East, however, suggests that such temptations—like most quick fixes that come along in life and politics—should be resisted. The next time U.S. leaders propose intervening in the region to overthrow a hostile regime, it can safely be assumed that such an enterprise will be less successful, more costly, and more replete with unintended consequences than proponents realize or admit. So far, at least, it has never been the other way around.\

Source: <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/middle-east/2020-10-07/false-promise-regime-change>

The End of American Illusion By Nadia

Schadlow

Since the end of the Cold War, most U.S. policymakers have been beguiled by a set of illusions about the world order. On critical issues, they have seen the world as they wish it were and not how it really is. President Donald Trump, who is not a product of the American foreign policy community, does not labor under these illusions. Trump has been a disrupter, and his policies, informed by his heterodox perspective, have set in motion a series of long-overdue corrections. Many of these necessary adjustments have been misrepresented or misunderstood in today's vitriolic, partisan debates. But the changes Trump has initiated will help ensure that the international order remains favorable to U.S. interests and values and to those of other free and open societies.

As the administration's first term draws to a close, Washington should take stock of the crumbling post-Cold War order and chart a path toward a more equitable and secure future. No matter who is U.S. president come January, American policymakers will need to adopt new ideas about the country's role in the world and new thinking about rivals such as China and Russia—states that have long manipulated the rules of the liberal international order to their own benefit.

A new set of assumptions should underpin U.S. foreign policy. Contrary to the optimistic predictions made in the wake of the Soviet Union's collapse, widespread political liberalization and the growth of transnational organizations have not tempered rivalries among countries. Likewise, globalization and economic interdependence have not been unalloyed goods; often, they have generated unanticipated inequalities and vulnerabilities. And although the proliferation of digital technologies has increased productivity and brought other benefits, it has also eroded the U.S. military's advantages and posed challenges to democratic societies.

Given these new realities, Washington cannot simply return to the comfortable assumptions of the past. The world has moved beyond the "unipolar moment" of the post-Cold War period and into an age of interdependence and competition that calls for different policies and tools. To properly navigate this new era,

Washington must let go of old illusions, move past the myths of liberal internationalism, and reconsider its views about the nature of the world order.

ALL TOGETHER NOW?

As the twentieth century drew to a close, the increasing number of countries that were embracing democratic ideals inspired pride in the West and high hopes for the future. A consensus formed that a convergence on liberal democracy would lead to a stable international political order. As the Soviet Union withered and the Cold War ended, U.S. President George H. W. Bush called for a “new world order,” a “Pax Universalis” founded on liberal values, democratic governance, and free markets. Several years later, President Bill Clinton’s 1996 National Security Strategy articulated a policy of engagement and democratic enlargement that would improve “the prospects for political stability, peaceful conflict resolution, and greater dignity and hope for the people of the world.”

This presumption of liberal convergence motivated the decision to allow China to join the World Trade Organization (WTO) in 2001. As Clinton said at the time, such an opening would have “a profound impact on human rights and political liberty.” The rest of the world would get access to Chinese markets and cheap imports, and China would get the chance to bring prosperity to hundreds of millions—which, many in Washington believed, would improve the prospects for democratization. It was a win-win.

But China had no intention of converging with the West. The Chinese Communist Party never intended to play by the West’s rules; it was determined to control markets rather than open them, and it did so by keeping its exchange rate artificially low, providing unfair advantages to state-owned enterprises, and erecting regulatory barriers against non-Chinese companies. Officials in both the George W. Bush and the Obama administrations worried about China’s intentions. But fundamentally, they remained convinced that the United States needed to engage with China to strengthen the rules-based international system and that China’s economic liberalization would ultimately lead to political liberalization. Instead, China has continued to take advantage of economic interdependence to grow its economy and enhance its military, thereby ensuring the long-term strength of the CCP.

China never had any intention of converging with the West.

While China and other actors subverted the liberal convergence overseas, economic globalization was failing to meet expectations at home. Proponents of globalization claimed that in an economy lubricated by free trade, consumers would benefit from access to cheaper goods, lost manufacturing jobs would be replaced by better jobs in the growing service industry, foreign direct investment would flow to every sector, and companies everywhere would become more efficient and innovative. Organizations such as the WTO, meanwhile, would help manage this freer and more integrated world (never mind its 22,000 pages of regulations).

But the promise that globalization's rising tide would lift all boats went unfulfilled: some rose to extreme heights, some stagnated, and others simply sank. It turned out that liberal convergence was not a win-win: there were, in fact, winners and losers.

A populist backlash against this reality caught elites off-guard. This reaction intensified as malfeasance on Wall Street and the U.S. Federal Reserve's misguided monetary policies helped bring about the 2008 global financial crisis. The generous bailouts that banks and financial firms received in its wake convinced many Americans that corporate and political elites were gaming the system—a theme that Trump seized on in his 2016 campaign. Years before Trump's victory, however, many ordinary Americans had already come to see that globalization was hurting them. Working people directly experienced how free trade could hollow out communities as jobs and capital investments fled overseas. Even the chief economist of the International Monetary Fund, Gita Gopinath, acknowledged in 2019 that international trade had been very costly for manufacturing workers in the United States. Between 2000 and 2016, the country lost some five million manufacturing jobs.

SLOUCHING TOWARDS TURTLE BAY

A second illusion that has entranced U.S. policymakers is the idea that Washington could depend on international organizations to help it confront major challenges and that “global governance” would emerge with the help of American leadership. Since countries were supposedly converging on political and economic liberalization, it was natural to think that transnational challenges such as nuclear proliferation, terrorism, and climate change would replace interstate competition as the principal focal point for U.S. leaders. The conventional

wisdom held that such threats could best be managed by international institutions.

That view presumed that since other countries were progressing inexorably toward liberal democracy, they would share many of Washington's goals and would play by Washington's rules. That belief tended to minimize the importance of national sovereignty and the fact that countries differ in how they organize their own communities. Even among democracies, there exists a high degree of variation when it comes to cultural, institutional, and political values.

Nevertheless, international institutions grew more expansive and ambitious. In 1992, UN Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali's Agenda for Peace envisioned a world in which the UN would maintain world peace, protect human rights, and promote social progress through expanding peacekeeping missions. Between 1989 and 1994, the organization authorized 20 peacekeeping missions—more than the total number of missions it had carried out during the previous four decades.

Mission creep extended to individual UN agencies, as well. The World Health Organization—created in 1948 to prevent the spread of infectious diseases—pioneered a number of the UN's greatest accomplishments, including the eradication of smallpox and the near eradication of polio. But over the years, its scope grew dramatically. By 2000, it had begun to issue warnings on everything from food safety to cellular phone usage to air quality. This spread staff and resources too thin, crippling the organization's ability to respond to genuine crises, such as the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. During the initial outbreak, the WHO was relegated to the sidelines as national governments raced to secure medical equipment. The institution's robust defense of China's response to the pandemic demonstrated that the CCP had used its clout to co-opt the WHO rather than support its missions.

WHO officials in Geneva, Switzerland, May 2020

Christopher Black / Who / Handout / Reuters

The trouble at the UN went far beyond the WHO, however. In 2016, Anthony Banbury, a career UN official who had recently served as assistant secretary-general for field support, wrote that the organization's bureaucracy had become so complex that it was incapable of delivering results, creating a black hole into which disappeared "countless tax dollars," as well as a long list of "human

aspirations, never to be seen again.” Such lost opportunities have led to cynicism and have weakened the liberal international order from within.

INVINCIBLE NO MORE

Although liberal internationalism encouraged interdependence and multilateralism, it also rested on a faith in Washington’s ability to indefinitely maintain the uncontested military superiority it enjoyed in the immediate aftermath of the Cold War. In reality, U.S. military dominance is now challenged in virtually every domain. The United States is no longer able to operate freely in the traditional spheres of land, sea, and air, nor in newer ones such as outer space and cyberspace. The spread of new technologies and weapon systems and the pursuit of asymmetric strategies by adversaries have limited the U.S. military’s ability to find and strike targets, supply and safeguard its forces abroad, freely navigate the seas, control sea lines of communication, and protect the homeland. Nothing is likely to reverse these trends.

Since the 1990s, the United States has become more dependent on space for its national security, because so many military and intelligence functions depend on assets, such as satellites, that are based there. But China, Russia, and other states now have the ability to field antisatellite weapons systems. Meanwhile, private commercial activities in space have increased exponentially, as well. Since 2014, a majority of satellite launches have been conducted by countries other than the United States—primarily China, India, Japan, and members of the EU, further eroding the United States’ ability to maneuver freely in space and increasing the amount of debris orbiting the earth, which threatens all space assets.

U.S. military dominance is now challenged in virtually every domain.

In cyberspace, hardware and software vulnerabilities have emerged across military supply chains, potentially reducing the effectiveness of important platforms. In 2018, David Goldfein, the U.S. Air Force’s chief of staff, described the F-35 Joint Strike Fighter as “a computer that happens to fly”—and thus, like all computers, it is vulnerable to cyberattacks. That same year, the Defense Science Board warned that since so many weapons systems were connected, a vulnerability in one could affect others, too.

At the same time, bureaucratic requirements have made it harder for the military to innovate. More than 20 years passed from when the Joint Strike Fighter

program was envisioned to when the first combat squadron of F-35s was declared operational. The military demands unrealistically high levels of performance, which companies, hungry for contracts, promise to deliver. Former U.S. Defense Secretary Robert Gates has bemoaned the armed forces' unwillingness to settle for an "80 percent" solution that could actually be built and fielded in a reasonable time frame. Given how quickly countervailing technologies develop, these frictions in the U.S. defense industry pose serious questions about the country's ability to fight and win wars, especially against near-peer competitors.

Meanwhile, Beijing and Moscow have developed so-called anti-access/area-denial weapons systems, which reduce Washington's ability to project power in East Asia and Europe. China has developed and modernized its strategic and tactical nuclear weapons and has invested heavily in technologies to improve its conventional forces. Russia has built an array of exotic "doomsday weapons" and low-yield tactical nuclear weapons, despite arms control agreements with the United States. And both countries are also pouring resources into hypersonic weapons whose speed and maneuverability render conventional missile defense systems ineffective.

In addition, smaller rivals such as Iran and North Korea have continued to develop and refine their nuclear programs. Despite visions of a world in which no one could challenge American force, the era of U.S. military dominance proved to be relatively short.

UNFRIENDING TECH

Misplaced faith in the advantages of new technologies has not been confined to military affairs. As the digital revolution began, policymakers and business leaders were optimistic that these technologies would accelerate the spread of liberal democratic values—that "the age of information can become the age of liberation," as President George H. W. Bush put it in 1991. A few years later, Clinton predicted that "liberty [would] spread by cell phone and cable modem."

Over time, however, it has become clear that the same technologies that connect and empower people can also imperil freedom and openness and limit the right to be left alone—all elements of a flourishing democracy. Authoritarian countries have deployed digital technologies to control their citizens, with the (sometimes unwitting) assistance of Western companies. The CCP has developed the most

sophisticated surveillance system in the world, for example, using facial and voice recognition technologies and DNA sequencing to create a “social credit” system that monitors China’s 1.4 billion people and rewards or punishes them based on their perceived loyalty to the party-state.

These practices are not limited to authoritarian governments—partly because Huawei, the Chinese telecommunications giant, has exported surveillance tools to 49 countries, including tools that employ artificial intelligence (AI). According to the Carnegie Endowment’s AI Global Surveillance Index, virtually all the countries in the G-20 have deployed AI-enabled surveillance technology, including facial recognition programs. Meanwhile, even as the CCP banned Twitter in its own country, Beijing and other governments have used it and other platforms to carry out disinformation campaigns abroad aimed at weakening democracies from within.

Trump, in his campaign and presidency, has offered some correctives to the illusions of the past—often bluntly and sometimes inconsistently. His departures from traditional ways of talking about and conducting foreign policy stem from an embrace of the uncomfortable truth that visions of benevolent globalization and peace-building liberal internationalism have failed to materialize, leaving in their place a world that is increasingly hostile to American values and interests.

Trump emphasizes the role of states in the international order, challenging an American tendency since the end of the Cold War to transfer power to international organizations. This has not meant unilaterally reducing the U.S. role in the world; rather, it has meant signaling respect for the sovereignty of others. Consider, for example, the administration’s strategy for a free and open Indo-Pacific region, which involves countering China’s excessive and illegal territorial claims in the South China Sea and bolstering the maritime security of other countries in the region, such as Vietnam, by providing them with equipment. Such measures draw a contrast with Beijing’s efforts to create subservient relationships in the region and establish spheres of influence.

More broadly, the Trump administration has applied the principle of reciprocity to various international institutions and norms. This has meant urging other powers to take more responsibility for their own security and contribute more to the strength of the Western-led order. Trump’s attention to burden sharing has “made NATO stronger,” according to NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg.

Between 2016 and 2018, defense spending by NATO members other than the United States increased by \$43 billion, and Stoltenberg has predicted that by 2024, such spending will increase by another \$400 billion.

Trump has offered some correctives to the illusions of the past.

In trade and commerce, reciprocity has meant raising the alarm, louder than in the past, about China's unwillingness to open its market to U.S. products and services and Beijing's unfair practices, such as forced technology transfers and intellectual property theft. Experts estimate that since 2013, the United States has suffered over \$1.2 trillion in economic damage as a result of China's egregious abuses.

Trump's use of tariffs as a trade tactic has underscored his willingness to take risks. Critics have decried the tariffs as radical departures from orthodoxy. In reality, the use of retaliatory tariffs to demand reciprocity is an American tradition that dates back to the presidency of George Washington. They are also used by countries around the world to enforce WTO decisions or counteract unfair subsidies provided by other states. Trump's tariffs helped yield an initial agreement with China that, unlike any previous bilateral U.S.-Chinese agreement, includes meaningful commitments from Beijing to limit the theft of trade secrets, reduce forced technology transfers, and open Chinese markets to U.S. financial services and agricultural goods.

The ongoing negotiations with China are part of the Trump administration's broader effort to mitigate the downsides of globalization, such as the vulnerabilities created by "just in time" supply chains and the deindustrialization of the U.S. heartland. In the words of Robert Lighthizer, the U.S. trade representative, in these pages, the goal is to support "the kind of society [Americans] want to live in" by acknowledging the dignity of work and always keeping American workers and U.S. national security in mind when crafting economic policy. Along those lines, one important measure was the administration's strengthening of the Committee on Foreign Investment in the United States, which reviews major investments in U.S. companies by foreign entities and has helped to block Chinese companies from using investments to access key technologies developed by U.S. firms.

In accordance with the goal of enhancing American power, Trump has fulfilled his campaign promise to reverse the decline of the U.S. military—and has increased

defense spending by almost 20 percent since 2017. Funding for nuclear modernization and missile defense has returned after years of neglect, and the Trump administration has established the Space Force. The Department of Defense has prioritized the pursuit of advanced technologies, such as hypersonic missiles and AI, as part of an overall focus on competing with other great powers. The Pentagon and U.S. intelligence organizations have also advanced the important operational concept of “defend forward” in cyberspace, which guides the United States to more proactively identify threats, preempt attacks, and impose costs in order to deter and defeat malicious cyber-campaigns.

No administration’s policies are without flaws or inconsistencies. The Trump administration has exhibited a tendency, shared by many of its predecessors, to rely too heavily on regional partners that are not always up to the job. One example is the confusion about the extent to which Washington could withdraw its forces from Iraq and Syria following the U.S.-led victory over the Islamic State (also known as ISIS). Consolidating U.S. gains there required understanding the limited capabilities of Washington’s partners in Syria, the mixed motivations of leaders in Iraq and Turkey, and the danger of leaving the field open to the Assad regime, Iran, and Russia. Ultimately, protecting U.S. interests has required a direct if modest American role.

The president and members of his administration have also been brash to the point of counterproductively alienating allies, especially in Europe. And tariffs have not always been applied in a strategic manner. It would have been better to seek unity in the contest against China rather than pick fights with allies and partners by imposing steel and aluminum tariffs on them in 2018.

GET OVER IT

No matter who is elected president in November, returning to a set of strategic assumptions designed for the unipolar moment would harm U.S. interests. Competition is and will remain a core feature of the international environment, and interdependence does not obviate that. If a Democrat wins the White House, he will likely require convincing that rivalry is an unalterable feature of the international system and that it would be a grave mistake to return to the premises of a bygone era.

If Trump wins a second term, his administration must focus on better implementing the policy shifts it has initiated, sending more consistent messages,

and building stronger coalitions both at home and abroad. Whoever occupies the White House in January will need to understand that today's multidimensional rivalries will not end in conventional victories. More broadly, policymakers and strategists need to move past their emphasis on achieving particular end states, since that springs from a mechanistic and ahistorical view of how politics works. In reality, as the historian Michael Howard argued, human acts create new sets of circumstances that, in turn, require new judgments and decisions.

Geopolitics is eternal. That is why competition persists no matter how much idealists might wish otherwise. A main objective of U.S. strategy, therefore, should be to prevent the accumulation of activities and trends that harm U.S. interests and values, rather than to pursue grand projects such as trying to determine how China or other countries should govern themselves. To do this, the United States must craft policies that aim to maintain regional balances of power and deter aggression by revisionist powers.

Geopolitics is eternal. Competition persists no matter how much idealists might wish otherwise.

Many on the right who favor restraint or retrenchment will be reluctant to embrace the idea of constant competition because they tend to discount the aspirations of other powers. If the United States is restrained, their argument goes, others will follow suit. History suggests otherwise. Many on the left will be reluctant to accept the idea of a rolling end state because they tend to believe that the arc of history is progressing toward a liberal convergence and view the push and pull of a competitive world as overly aggressive and likely to lead to war.

But recognizing the centrality of competition does not mean favoring the militarization of U.S. foreign policy, nor does it mean a drive to war. A wider acceptance of the competitive nature of geopolitics does indeed require a foundation of military power, but it also accentuates the need for diplomatic and economic tools of statecraft. Precisely because so much of today's international competition happens below the threshold of military conflict, civilian agencies need to take the lead in maintaining order and shaping a landscape favorable to U.S. interests and values. But that will occur only once the mindset and culture of U.S. government agencies change to allow for a broader recognition of the competition now underway.

Going forward, U.S. foreign policy success will hinge on a clear-eyed approach to cooperation. Rather than seeing cooperation with other countries as an end in itself, policymakers should recognize it as a means to crafting a stronger competitive strategy. They must also grasp that genuine cooperation requires reciprocity. Margrethe Vestager, the EU's competition commissioner, perhaps put it best when she expressed the essence of this policy: "Where I come from—I grew up in the western part of Denmark—if you keep inviting people and they don't invite you back, you stop inviting them."

In addition, Washington needs to accept that global problems are not necessarily best solved by global institutions, which are accountable primarily to internal bureaucracies rather than to external constituencies. Such institutions can play useful roles as conveners and centers for information sharing, but they lack the operational capacity to act at scale; bureaucratic complexity prevents them from accomplishing broader missions.

Reconsidering global governance does not require rejecting liberal principles or abandoning an order based on them. But because only a handful of countries are committed to those principles, the goal should be to foster what the scholar Paul Miller has described as a "smaller, deeper liberal order" of industrialized democracies that would defend liberal values and serve strategic and economic purposes. The focus might be on creating mission-driven coalitions that could construct redundant supply chains, fund research in emerging technologies, promote fair and reciprocal trade, and cooperate on security issues. Such coalitions would be open to new members provided they shared U.S. interests and values and could bring capabilities to bear on key problems. The Cold War-era rules-based order began much the same way: as a U.S.-led group of like-minded states seeking to win a strategic and ideological competition against a common adversary.

Washington also needs to refresh its thinking about political economy and improve the capacity of U.S. government agencies to address the interplay of politics and economics. The United States will never be able to integrate its economic policies and political strategies as China does by putting its command economy directly in the service of the CCP's goals. But Washington should invest more in economic intelligence and make it easier to share such information across departments and agencies by establishing a national center for economic

intelligence, perhaps modeled on the National Counterterrorism Center, as the scholar Anthony Vinci has advocated.

Moreover, the U.S. government must counter China's massive investments in research and development in emerging technologies. Congress must fund public- and private-sector research in AI, high-performance computing, synthetic biology, and other strategically important technology sectors. And the State Department should also put economics front and center by giving economic officers more responsibility at embassies and by opening more consulates around the world, to better foster business and commercial relationships.

Finally, U.S. policymakers must accept that in the contemporary world, speed is a vital component of power. The ability to respond quickly to threats and seize opportunities enhances a country's influence. Slow responses undermine democratic governance, since they reduce citizens' confidence that their government can meet needs within a reasonable amount of time. This truth has been underscored by the current pandemic, at the beginning of which, owing in large part to China's initial cover-up, governments around the world acted too slowly. U.S. government agencies need to introduce a new calculation: time to outcome. Armed with this measure, a policymaker might have a hope of identifying obstacles that need to be removed to get things done.

WHAT TRUMP SAW

The goals of the liberal international order were laudable—and, in many cases, they were achieved against daunting odds. The world is safer, more prosperous, and more just than it once was. But the unexpected consequences of globalization and the unfulfilled promises of global governance cannot be overlooked.

In a world of great-power competition, economic inequality, and dazzling technological capabilities, where ideologies as well as pathogens spread with viral ferocity, the stakes are too high and the consequences too dire to simply stick with what worked in the past and hope for the best. Trump recognized this reality earlier than many in the U.S. foreign policy community. Whoever follows him—be it in 2021 or 2025—will need to recognize it, as well.

Source: <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/americas/2020-08-11/end-american-illusion>

Trump vs. Biden Is Truly the Most **Consequential Election Of Our Lifetime By** **David Keene**

Before every election politicians of both parties can be heard proclaiming that “this will be the most important election of your lifetime.” This is rarely true although it’s always the most important of the politician’s lifetime whose future prospects turn on the outcome. This time, though, they may well be right.

The “progressives” who today dominate the Democratic Party find themselves unable to accept the results of elections that put people like Ronald Reagan, George W. Bush and Donald J. Trump in the White House and have vowed that given the chance they will change the rules to prevent such unthinkable electoral results in the future.

Progressives have considered George W. Bush and Donald Trump illegitimate presidents who cheated by suppressing the minority vote and relying on an outdated and “undemocratic” Electoral College to thwart the popular will or, in Trump’s case, conspired with Moscow to fool a “deplorably” and racist electorate into voting for a man who shouldn’t have been allowed anywhere near the White House.

If the Democrats win the Presidency in November and gain control of the Senate at the same time, they are likely to act decisively on the vow to fundamentally change America. Democratic leaders have said that they will eliminate the Senate filibuster if Republicans try to use it to thwart their plans and to expand or “pack” the Supreme Court. Like President Franklin Roosevelt, they would pack the Court to eliminate judicial constitution-based objections to their programs. If voters give them the “unified” control of the government they seek, both of these goals will be within reach.

As a candidate, Joe Biden has held himself aloof from these plans, but refuses to disavow them. He has even claimed voters don’t “deserve” to know his position on court-packing and says he will withhold judgment on eliminating the filibuster until he sees if Senate Republicans are going to try to stand in the way of his

agenda. The former Vice President may—as his managers maintain—be more a centrist at heart than those now in control of the Democratic Party, but he has always been a party man above all else. For decades he has adjusted his own views to conform with those of whichever faction dominates his party any given time and that isn't likely to change if he makes it to the White House.

Much of the analysis of what might follow a Biden victory in November focuses on whether Biden will really reverse the Trump-era tax cuts, roll back the regulatory reforms that so many businesses welcomed, further restrict firearms ownership and possession, improve relations with China or rejoin the Paris Accords, and implement his version of the “Green New Deal.”

If Biden wins the Presidency and his party finds itself in control of the Senate, Democrats will certainly reverse many of the policies implemented by his predecessor, but the more important and far-reaching consequences of a Biden victory will be fundamental changes to the very structure of the republic. The Constitution's protections for the pesky minority will disappear, along with the opportunity to regain power in elections once ballot harvesting is legalized nationally and the states are prevented by law from requiring any form of voter identification or cleaning up their voting rolls by to eliminate voters who have died, moved to another state or are for other reasons ineligible to vote in national and state elections.

An outline of the systemic restructuring Biden and the Democrats envision can be found in this year's Democratic Party platform and in H.R. 1, the election “reform” legislation Democratic Congressional leaders made their first priority in the Congress just ending and which they promise to pass in the next after rebranding it as “civil rights” legislation. This legislation would strip states of their constitutionally mandated responsibility to administer and safeguard the integrity of our elections. It would prevent them from cleaning up voter rolls and take away the states' role in Congressional and legislative redistricting and criminalize much campaign speech.

Much of what is included in this legislation is blatantly unconstitutional, but that can be solved by expanding the size of the Supreme Court so that whatever laws the new unified progressive government enacts will be found “constitutional” by a court subservient to the legislative and executive branches of that government.

Add to this the pledge to eliminate the Senate filibuster and grant statehood to Puerto Rico and the District of Columbia which, in political terms, amounts to “packing” the Senate so that Republicans will have little ability to influence the workings of that body or to harbor realistic hopes of retaking it in a future election. Taken together these proposals are little more than a formula for institutional reform that will disenfranchise those who disagree with the progressive vision of society and make it very difficult for dissenters to win future elections

The progressives who dominate former Vice President Biden’s party want more: restrictions on speech to silence those with whom they disagree and who they consider not just wrong, but evil along with the adoption of new laws that will make it difficult for opponents of their brave new world to organize and operate. They won’t get all they want in the short run, but if a Biden-Harris Administration can implement what most progressives see as the first steps in establishing them as a permanent electoral majority this year’s election will indeed prove to be the most important of our lifetimes.

David Keene was formerly the Opinion Editor of the Washington Times and is a member of the board of the Center for the National Interest.

Image: U.S. Democratic presidential candidate Joe Biden gestures as he delivers remarks at a Voter Mobilization Event campaign stop at the Cincinnati Museum Center at Union Terminal in Cincinnati, Ohio, U.S., October 12, 2020. REUTERS/Tom Brenner.

Source: <https://nationalinterest.org/blog/2020-election/trump-vs-biden-truly-most-consequential-election-our-lifetime-170619>

Sleepwalking Into World War III By Carrie

A. Lee

Civilian political authority over military leadership is a bedrock principle of the U.S. Constitution, so fundamental to the American system of government that it has rarely been questioned. But since President Donald Trump entered office in 2017, his administration has systematically eroded the norms that have supported this constitutional principle for generations.

The Trump administration has consistently elevated military voices over those of experienced civil servants in the development of foreign policy, and funding cuts to nondefense federal agencies, along with the resignations of many career civil servants, have left government offices woefully understaffed. As a result, policy planning and the guidance of strategic defense initiatives—which have historically been the purview of senior civil servants—have increasingly been ceded to those in uniform. Civilian authority over the armed forces is weaker now than at any point in living memory, and the Trump administration is increasingly engaging with the world in ways that mirror military preferences.

The resulting foreign policy is eerily reminiscent of the “cult of the offensive”: an overconfidence in offensive military advantage that can lead to rapid escalation; such overconfidence is widely believed to have contributed to the outbreak of World War I. Unless civilian control over the military can be reestablished, the United States risks sleepwalking its way into another world war.

SERVING CIVILIAN GOALS

By giving civilian leaders authority over the military, the framers of the U.S. Constitution were not merely assigning elected officials a few oversight duties. They were creating a system in which defense planning would be guided by civilian needs and the military would carry out its activities in the service of civilian goals.

Since Trump’s civilian “America first” plan was announced early in the 2016 presidential campaign, many members of the U.S. foreign policy community have viewed the agenda as an inherent danger to national security. Even more worrisome for those concerned about the continuing stability of civil-military

relations, many of the cabinet nominees whom the new administration found acceptable were military officers, such as General James Mattis, General John Kelly, and Lieutenant General H. R. McMaster.

From the beginning of the Trump era, the national security establishment made a Faustian bargain: in an effort to constrain the new president, it looked the other way as extraordinary numbers of active duty and retired military officers were appointed to positions usually reserved for civilian experts. As the “adults in the room,” these career military officials hoped to protect American alliances and constrain Trump’s worst impulses. Although few of these officers questioned the principle of civilian control, their narrow interpretation of civilian oversight meant that broader norms of civilian guidance became a kind of collateral damage in the struggle to contain the chaos.

The framers of the U.S. Constitution created a system in which the military would serve civilian goals.

This political bargain gave the more experienced military officers at the highest levels of the administration, some of whom had served together for decades, a natural advantage over their civilian counterparts. Their shared service gave them a common language and, most important, an outlook that allowed them to easily sideline civilian outsiders like Secretary of State Rex Tillerson, Secretary of Homeland Security Kirstjen Nielsen, and later, Secretary of Defense Mark Esper.

When leaders are appointed at the top levels of government, they staff their organizations with people whom they trust to execute their plans. Most civilian leaders have diverse professional networks to draw upon, but career military officers tend to know few qualified people outside of veterans’ organizations. As a result, many of the lower-level staff posts within the Trump administration have also been filled with retired military officers.

In the office of the secretary of defense, uniformed officers continue to execute civilian responsibilities. And although sluggish hiring and retention difficulties have played a role, Mattis’s admitted preference for military officers over career civil servants during his tenure exacerbated the imbalance. When the department did hire civilians, it often placed them in “acting” roles with little power and even less influence.

The result is that uniformed officers of the military have developed and enacted policy for the secretary of defense—such that it does not necessarily reflect the priorities of civilians in the administration. Indeed, the bipartisan National Defense Strategy Commission noted in November 2018 that “there is an imbalance in civil-military relations on critical issues of strategy development and implementation. Civilian voices appear relatively muted on issues at the center of U.S. defense and national security policy.”

DIFFERING VIEWS OF THE WORLD

Military officers and civilians see foreign affairs differently. Military officers tend to assume worst-case intentions and capabilities in order to be best prepared for potential threats. When called upon to act, they often prefer solutions that enable them to take the offensive. When civilians lose their voice in the process, military preferences shape security strategy in ways that reflect these institutional biases toward action and confrontation. And as civilian control of the U.S. armed forces has declined, these preferences have increasingly dominated American foreign policy. Thus, the current imbalance in civil-military relations has led to a foreign policy that has heightened international tensions, closed off avenues for productive diplomacy, and increased the risk of inadvertent escalation or even accidental war.

Mattis and McMaster principally authored the 2017 United States National Security Strategy and the 2018 National Defense Strategy. These documents defined security almost exclusively in terms of great-power competition and state actors, emphasizing the threat from China in particular. The strategies largely approach the world as a zero-sum competition in which maintaining an advantage matters far more than cooperating for mutual benefit.

The imbalance in civil-military relations has raised international tensions. Current U.S. strategy therefore filters the meaning of the changing geopolitical environment almost exclusively through military perceptions of threat. In the event of a war with China or Russia, the military would face a daunting task in the South China Sea or in the Baltic states. Its instinct, then, is to develop the strategies and build the capabilities that are most likely to win such a confrontation at the lowest cost possible.

But these strategies can have dangerous consequences. With their emphasis on “globally integrated operations,” senior military commanders are developing

retaliatory military strategies that emphasize speed and could lead to quick escalation, effectively limiting the options of political bodies like the North Atlantic Council in the event of a conflict. And by officially labeling China a “revisionist” state, Mattis and McMaster assume its hostility, forcing decision-makers to start from the premise that diplomatic approaches are unproductive and preventive action is the only way to contain China’s ambitions.

Military leaders need civilian input in order to mitigate these risks. Military operational preferences privilege offensive action—civilian officials are best positioned to articulate the pitfalls of such an approach, lest the concern about a great-power war become a self-fulfilling prophecy.

The military naturally seeks to modernize and acquire new weapons systems. In response to this desire, the Trump administration withdrew from at least three major arms control agreements, and it looks unlikely to renew the New START agreement with Russia. But without arms control, the United States not only risks setting off arms races but also loses transparency into its adversaries’ systems, capabilities, and intent. Decision-makers must then adopt the military’s worst-case assumptions in the event of a crisis, and they are likely to miscalculate.

The military’s priority of seeking ever more lethal and modern weapons increases the risks of nuclear use and proliferation. The 2018 Nuclear Posture Review advocated for the development and deployment of low-yield nuclear weapons in response to Russia’s alleged intention to use limited nuclear strikes in regional conflicts. But by acquiring nuclear weapons specifically designed to be used in a much wider set of circumstances than the current inventory, the military has effectively lowered the threshold for using nuclear weapons—a fact that did not escape congressional leaders during their hearings on the document.

Furthermore, as the United States modernizes its arsenal, states with vulnerable stockpiles may feel the need to invest even more in their nuclear programs, increasing their inventories and investing in second-strike capabilities. The United States has proposed to develop new weapons systems capable of dismantling nascent nuclear programs. Some states may therefore conclude that nuclear latency—the ability to develop a nuclear weapons program from existing peaceful infrastructure—is no longer a sufficient deterrent and choose to proliferate instead. The United States is rushing even now to introduce hypersonic weapons into its arsenal. Such missiles serve essentially no

defensive purpose—and their development is leading to a new nuclear arms race.

REASSERTING CIVILIAN CONTROL

The White House and Congress must reestablish strong civilian control over military priorities if the United States is to find diplomatic solutions that can help avoid another great-power war. The next administration, whether under Joe Biden or Donald Trump, should refrain from equating military experience with foreign policy expertise. Rather, at the top levels of government, the president should reset the balance of power toward civilians, appointing officials whose backgrounds yield a variety of perspectives on foreign policymaking.

The next president's priority upon taking office should be to fill positions within the civilian office of the secretary of defense that have been largely taken over by uniformed military officers. These new civilians should be hired in a manner that maximizes the office's demographic, experiential, and intellectual diversity. Current hiring laws privilege hiring veterans, which limits the diversity of those in policymaking positions. Civilian hiring initiatives must therefore act as a counterweight to that tendency.

Finally, the administration should comprehensively review engagements, programs, and posture to ensure that U.S. actions are in fact aligned with strategic intent. Such a review should encompass all military programs. Many may seem like good ideas in isolation, but in combination they may prove to be provocative or threatening. Civilian leaders should make political determinations about the risks and rewards of military spending on offensive weapons programs; in particular, they should review the constraints on the new Space Force that may be necessary in order to both encourage service pride and avoid an arms race and conflict.

In 1962, the Soviet Union placed nuclear missiles just 90 miles from the United States' shore. President John F. Kennedy and the rest of the civilian leadership did not allow the military to continue with its standard operating procedures and preferred courses of action. Instead, they carefully orchestrated a series of signals that narrowly avoided the outbreak of open hostilities between the world's two nuclear superpowers.

Current U.S. policy resembles the firm civilian control and oversight of the Kennedy administration far less than it does the posture of the great powers before the outbreak of World War I. Civilian leadership was either co-opted or pushed aside as French, German, and Russian militaries pursued strategies that prioritize offensive operations and doctrines—leading to the now famous cult of the offensive. Privileging the military’s perceptions of threat over those of diplomats makes war all but inevitable. Without strong civilian oversight, the United States risks this catastrophic fate.

Source: <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/united-states/2020-10-19/sleepwalking-world-war-iii>

Nuclear Arms Race? Can America and Russia Save New START? By Peter Suci

Last Friday, Russian foreign minister Sergey Lavrov said during a meeting with President Vladimir Putin and permanent members of the Security Council that it was ready to work with the United States on new strategic stability and arms control treaties—also known as the New START Treaty.

“Dear Vladimir Vladimirovich [Putin], on your instruction we have been in quite intensive contact with our American colleagues on the entire range of strategic stability issues, in particular, we are stressing your initiative that remains in force and is becoming increasingly important on making a decision on extending the current New START Treaty [the Treaty on Measures for the Further Reduction and Limitation of Strategic Offensive Arms], which expires in February, without any preconditions. Meanwhile, we confirm that we will be ready to continue work on new accords,” Lavrov said as reported by Tass.

“With your consent, we put forward specific proposals on developing a comprehensive approach towards strategic stability that were transferred to the U.S. side,” Lavrov added. “In response, the Americans gave us their proposals that were presented as preconditions of extending the New START Treaty. Moreover, these preconditions are quite numerous.”

The Treaty between the United States of America and the Russian Federation on Measures for the Further Reduction and Limitation of Strategic Offensive Arms—also known as the New START Treaty—was signed in 2010 and it entered into force on February 5, 2011. It is set to expire in February, and there has been no significant effort to see it extended.

The New START Treaty stipulated that seven years after its entry into effect each party should have no more than a total of seven hundred deployed intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBM), submarine-launched ballistic missiles (SLBM) and strategic bombers, as well as no more than 1,550 warheads on deployed ICBMs, deployed SLBMs and strategic bombers, and a total of no more than eight hundred deployed and non-deployed ICBM launchers, SLBM launchers and strategic bombers.

As noted the New START Treaty is set to expire in February unless superseded by a subsequent agreement. It could be extended for a period of no more than five years, which would be 2026 upon the mutual consent of both parties. Moscow has reportedly called on Washington not to delay such an extension.

New Arms Race

Failure to extend the treaty could result in a new escalation of arms, and there have been calls not to allow that to happen.

“Putin’s proposal would buy additional time for diplomacy,” said Robert Litwak, the senior vice president at the Wilson Center and author of *Managing Nuclear Risks*, in an email to the *National Interest*.

“The demise of the foundational New START treaty could usher in an era of unconstrained nuclear competition between the United States and Russia with potentially destabilizing consequences,” added Litwak.

The issue however is that Washington and Moscow may not be on the same page for what they expect from such a treaty.

“After several rounds of talks, the U.S. and Russia each offer a slightly different vision for the New START extension,” said Matthew Rojansky, the director of the Kennan Institute on Russia and the United States, who also shared his thoughts via an email. “Both sides agree that, per the terms of the original 2011 treaty, it can be extended for another five years by mutual agreement.”

There are factors for the United States to consider, however, notably that Washington must deal with not only Moscow but also Beijing—as China continues to increase the size of its military, notably its navy, which has now become the largest in the world.

“The Russian side has offered such an extension, ostensibly ‘without preconditions.’ However, the U.S. side, noting changing the global security context especially increasing tensions with China, has sought to negotiate a more expansive deal,” suggested Rojansky.

“Initially, the Trump administration sought a three-way agreement that would include China,” Rojansky added. “More recently, senior U.S. officials have described an ‘agreement in principle’ with Russia to freeze warhead numbers on both sides, but the Russians have not confirmed this. What it amounts to is continuing uncertainty whether the New START agreement will be extended before February 2021, when it is otherwise set to expire.”

Peter Suciu is a Michigan-based writer who has contributed to more than four dozen magazines, newspapers and websites

Source: <https://nationalinterest.org/blog/buzz/nuclear-arms-race-can-america-and-russia-save-new-start-170970>

Indo-US Strategic Partnership By Dr Muhammad Khan

UNITED States and India are likely to sign a landmark agreement on 27 October 2020, just a week before American Presidential Elections-2020. Named as 'Basic Exchange and Cooperation Agreement (BECA), the agreement will allow New Delhi to use the geospatial maps of Washington for the military purposes. This agreement will boost Indian military capability in many ways. The crucial aspect is; after signing of BECA, India is expected to have an edge over the regional countries including China. Indeed, the agreement is continuation of larger Indo-US collaboration. Indian military strategists envisage that, by signing BECA India will neutralise the "Russia-China-Pakistan axis in the maritime domain and for the stability of the Indo-Pacific region." Indeed, India and United States (US) are heading towards a Comprehensive Strategic Global Partnership. This partnership aims at attaining Indo-US supremacy in the field of security at global level. As perceived, this partnership will enable US to continue its contemporary status of global hegemony while as a junior partner; India will be able to emerge as regional power in broader Asia-Pacific region.

In order to minimize the Chinese influence over the region, the region has been renamed by United States and India as; Indo-Pacific. Indeed, India and U.S considered China as their common opponent. Thus, the renaming of the region and the extraordinary military cooperation between India and US is all about to counter the rapid rise of China and its growing influence both at regional and global level. In order to attain their strategic objectives and hegemony at global and regional level, India and United States have been cooperating since the decade of 1990. This cooperative mechanism was formalized with the onset of 21st century. In 2003, US declared India as its natural ally at the strategic level. There have been numerous deals between both states in the field of military cooperation, political exchanges and strategic collaborations. The first major cooperation between the two states took place in 2005 in the form of Indo-US Nuclear Deal which was finalized in 2008. This deal was a major breakthrough in the bilateral relationship of both countries which obliged Washington to even amend its own Constitutional provisions. Though this deal was related to civilian use of nuclear energy, nevertheless, it enabled India to dedicate fourteen nuclear reactors purely for military purposes. The more India will have nuclear facilities

dedicated for the nuclear weapons, the more it will have deterrent effects at regional level. Besides, India maintains a huge conventional military power (world's third largest military).

On the military front there have been more serious developments which largely remained un-noticed so far. If materialized in their essence, these developments (four agreements of military nature would change the entire international security scenario). As mentioned above, India and U.S will sign Basic Exchange and Cooperation Agreement (BECA) on October 26-27. This will be very significant development at regional and global level. BECA aims at Geo-Spatial cooperation between both countries. BECA is final stage of three previous agreements between India and US. The other three agreements include; One; General Security of Military Information Agreement (GSOMIA). GSOMIA allows militaries of India and US to share the intelligence gathered by both especially in the field of security and military. It was signed in 2002, once BJP was in power. Two: Logistics Exchange Memorandum of Agreement (LEMOA). Signed in 2016, LEMOA aims at availing the military facilities of each other for the purpose of refuelling and replenishment of their ships and aircrafts whenever required. Three; Industrial Security Annex (ISA) was signed in 2019. It is in fact an extension to the GSOMIA. ISA was signed at the 2+2 dialogue in 2019. It provides a framework for exchange and protection of classified military information between the USA and Indian defence industries. BECA will be an all-inclusive agreement, for the greater and long-term strategic cooperation between India and US. The crucial aspect of the BECA is, "it will allow India to use the geospatial maps of the USA to get pinpoint military accuracy of automated hardware systems and weapons such as cruise and ballistic missiles." This is the higher dimension of warfare at strategic level. Whereas, through BECA India will acquire the military equipment like; armed unmanned aerial vehicles such as the Predator-B from United States, it will also allow US to use India and its geopolitics for its own strategic objectives.

It is worth mentioning that, Predator-B uses geospatial data for accurate strikes on enemy targets. It is to be noted that, New Delhi will never dare to attack Beijing. Nevertheless, the military cooperation and its provisions will enable Washington to counter the Chinese rise and its military power. Apart from this, there are many agreements likely to be negotiated and signed between New Delhi and Washington in the field of maritime. These maritime developments are aiming to constrain the space for China in Indian Ocean. The maritime dimension

would include the Quad countries too. Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (Quad) is the informal strategic dialogue between Australia, Japan, India, and United States. It aims at; ensuring “a free, open and prosperous Indo-Pacific region.” From GSOMIA to BECA, India and United States are heading for a very crucial strategic partnership. This partnership may have broader and very serious consequences for regional states of Asia-Pacific and South Asia. Indeed, debating the map of future battlefield, India may not to be use the military bases of US, however later may use Indian facilities for the attainment of its strategic objectives. Indeed, through this unholy strategic partnership India is putting at risk the security of entire Asian Continent.

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

Source: <https://pakobserver.net/indo-us-strategic-partnership/>

75 Years of United Nations — Successes & Failures By Rashid A Mughal

THE present UNO came into being after the dismal and disappointing performance of League of Nations which was formed at the end of World War-I to prevent such armed conflicts between nations. But the World War-II between a short span of just thirty years (1917-1939) forced the world leaders to find ways and means to establish an organization with a mandate to prevent such conflicts in future and has necessary moral, executive, administrative and enforcing authority to restore peace, if and when a conflict breaks out between two sovereign states. World War-II was devastating for entire world as 70-85 million people (3%) of the world population in 1940 perished in war. Deaths directly caused by war (including military and civilian fatalities) are estimated at 50-56 million with an estimated 19-28 million deaths from war-related diseases and famine.

Thus UNO was established in 1945 with its H/Q in New York, USA, for upholding basic human rights of liberty, equality, particularly women rights, work place and child abuse, providing basic health facilities, gender equality, movement of people from one country to another due to persecution, victimization, wars etc. Indeed UN has done remarkable and note-worthy work in these areas and its achievements speak for itself. Its peace keeping role during the last 75 years has not only been significant but indeed laudable. However, unfortunately, the inter-power rivalry continued between big powers notably America and Russia. During the Cold War period the United Nations H/Q was de-facto a meeting place to discuss how to strike balance between the opposing powers. The Korean War, Suez Canal Crisis and the UN operation in Congo were the most important examples, which showed that the UN became an arena of ideological struggle between the two blocs- East and West.

Most international conflicts between 1945 and 1989 were of the traditional interstate kind resulting from incompatible interests over economic, military or territorial issues. For example, The UN played a significant role in mediating an end to the Iran-Iraq war and assisting with the implementation of Resolution 598 in 1987, which provided for a cease-fire and the deployment of unarmed UN military observer force. Also, the overwhelming majority of conflicts in the period

of the Cold War took place between Third World countries where the great powers had been involved on opposite sides and often encouraged to continue the conflict. These conflicts were exacerbated by the ideological divide that for decades gave rise to distrust and hostility and prevented any effective international steps from being taken. After the end of the Cold War the conditions under which UN peacekeeping operations were deployed qualitatively, changed. Firstly, the number of conflicts increased significantly. Civil wars took place not only in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe but also in the Central Asian states, the Middle East, Africa and Southeast Asia. Secondly, these bear a significant amount of cruelty against the civilian population. New historical circumstances have put the UN up against new challenges, requiring constant readiness to settle ethnic and religious conflicts in multi-ethnic and multi-confessional states.

The Organization managed to support decolonization leading to the independence of a large number of new states and to mitigate, and even at times resolve, regional, bilateral and civil conflicts in a context that was nonetheless marked by severe ideological confrontation. At the same time, United Nations agencies made an important intellectual, political and judicial contribution to the universal recognition of human rights and strengthening cooperation for development and regional economic integration. Those advances constituted fundamental progress towards empowering the rule of law, which itself provides a favourable framework and is the best guarantor of human rights and peaceful international cooperation. It is, therefore, imperative that the United Nations of the twenty-first century respond effectively to present realities and effectively handle future challenges.

During the session of 2011—2012 the General Assembly of UN adopted the landmark Resolution 65/283 and Resolution 66/291 on mediation that recognizes its growing usefulness as a means of preventing disputes from escalating into conflicts and as a cost-effective tool in the peaceful settlement of disputes and the prevention of conflicts. In addition, the fundamental components of the solution to the conflict exist in the other documents and resolutions of the United Nations. The components of the solution are also endorsed in resolutions of regional organizations: the League of Arab States, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, the Non-Aligned Movement and the African Union. They can also be found in the statements of the European Union and the international Quartet.

United Nations continues to mediate in the settlement of the Israeli-Palestinian and Nagorno-Karabakh conflicts, Cyprian issue and others irritants and flash points. The major challenge facing UN today is the settlement of Palestine and Kashmir issue. Effectiveness of UN in solution of these two issues is something which the world wants to see. Presently WHO, one of the 17 UN specialized agencies is doing a remarkable work in Covid19 situation which has shaken and jolted the whole world. Covid19 continues to threaten jobs, businesses, health and wellbeing of millions amid exceptional uncertainty. Building confidence is crucial to ensure that economies recover and adapt according to the WHO guidelines. WHO is doing a commendable work in Pakistan since long. It is helping Pakistan in sharing and providing know-how in the areas of communicable and non-communicable diseases, strengthening of health care systems, promoting health care through life-course and emergency preparedness and response thus saving thousands of precious lives. It is an on-going effort and has helped Pakistan immensely. WHO has also been providing capacity- building support to Pakistan in health spectrum which has resulted in positive change for extending support to needy and poor segments of society. However Pakistan, is least prepared to fight the Pandemic as for every 10,000 people, Pakistan has only 10 physicians, five nurses and only 6 hospitals. Lockdowns have seriously affected the economy and business along with growing un-employment. With only 2.8% budget allocation for health sector, Pakistan's health care system needs much to be desired.

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

Source: <https://pakobserver.net/75-years-of-united-nations-successes-failures/>

Understanding U.S.-China Strategic Competition By Paul Heer

Determining the right prescription for how the United States should respond to strategic competition with China depends on having the right diagnosis of the problem. Unfortunately, much of the prevailing analysis and commentary on the subject has gotten the diagnosis wrong by misunderstanding or misrepresenting the nature of the challenge that China poses. Let us examine what it is, and what it isn't.

The U.S. contest with China is a full scale, full-spectrum strategic great-power competition for wealth and power and influence, both within East Asia and globally. It features competing models for political governance and economic development, as well as competing views on the structure and rules of the international order. This competition is being driven primarily by historic changes and structural shifts in the wake of the U.S.-Soviet Cold War and—more recently and perhaps more importantly—the Global Financial Crisis of 2008–9. These events and their consequences have altered the global balance of power and especially the relative strategic trajectories of the United States and China. This new status quo has inevitably fueled tensions, suspicions, and competition between the world's two biggest powers. Each side is determined to maximize its position and its freedom of action relative to the other.

This competition, however, is not automatically or necessarily an adversarial relationship, or a zero-sum or winner-take-all contest. It is not, or at least should not be, exclusive of bilateral cooperation—which in fact will be necessary and vital to both countries and for the sake of the rest of the world. And contrary to many prevailing views, it is not a product of Chinese leader Xi Jinping's personality or personal ambitions. The historical and structural drivers of the competition largely predated his rise to power in 2012.

Perhaps most importantly, this is not an existential ideological struggle, like that between the United States and the Soviet Union. The ideologies and strategic objectives of the two sides are not mutually exclusive, or at least need not be. China is not seeking to destroy the U.S. system or to supplant the United States as the global hegemon. Indeed, Beijing has almost certainly calculated that

global hegemony is unachievable, unnecessary to secure China's interests, and not something to be particularly wished for. Chinese leaders probably recognize that pursuing global hegemony would be counterproductive, and destabilizing in ways that would not be conducive to China's interests or its security. They probably also calculate—based in part on having observed the U.S. example—that possessing it would be both burdensome and unsustainable. Given this cost-benefit analysis, Beijing is prepared to settle for something less than global predominance, which is why Chinese leaders talk a lot about global “multipolarity.”

It is within this framework of pursuing and promoting multipolarity that China is seeking to legitimize its model of governance and development, not impose it upon other countries. This is part of what Beijing is referring to when it routinely invokes a “community of common destiny for mankind.” Rather than being the expansionist and aggressive Sino-centric vision that some scholars have attributed to the phrase, this is actually a relatively benign slogan that harkens back to the “five principles of peaceful coexistence.” Its core emphasis is on mutual respect for—or at least tolerance of—alternative governing systems, and mutual pursuit of solutions to shared global challenges and imperatives. Similarly, when Chinese leaders talk about the “reform of global governance,” they are clearly talking about reform—not replacement of the international system with one of China's making or wholly in China's image. Indeed, Beijing sees the existing international system trending in its favor. But it wants to adjust and update the system to make it even more reflective and representative of the twenty-first-century balance of power in the world. And obviously the Chinese would like to maximize the extent to which the system serves China's agenda and endorses its preferred ways of doing business.

Much commentary has deemed the U.S.-China strategic competition to be a new Cold War. But is only a “cold war” to those commentators who choose to define the term in a way that serves that purpose. But that comparison is inappropriate because, again, the U.S.-China contest is not an existential ideological struggle. The world today is not characterized by two opposing ideological camps aligned with Beijing and Washington; and the United States is integrated and interdependent with China in ways that it never was with the Soviet Union. Indeed, the competition with China is unprecedented because Washington has never faced a strategic or ideological rival that had its act together while being competitive in various realms.

In sum, the challenge from China was accurately and succinctly captured by Chinese scholar Wu Xinbo who has noted that “China does not pose an existential threat to the United States, yet it does threaten to dilute US hegemony, share its global leadership role, and demonstrate an alternative to its development and governance model.” That is the nature and scope of the competition that the United States is now confronting.

Given this diagnosis, what is the best prescription for Washington? First, the United States needs to fully recognize and acknowledge that the balance of power in the world has changed as a consequence of recent historical developments and the impact of globalization and interdependence. This has altered the relative clout and capabilities of China and the United States. Additionally, it has altered the leverage they have in dealing with each other. This, in turn, will require Washington to reassess the relationship between its means and its ends and to recognize the growing need for trade-offs and reciprocity in its approach to Beijing. It will also require the United States to understand that policies of containment or regime change in China are probably not realistic, and instead are likely to be counterproductive. Finally, Washington needs to recognize that U.S. “primacy”—either within East Asia or globally—almost certainly is no longer viable or sustainable; and that this is one of the reasons U.S. allies and partners abroad are disinclined to join the United States in a zero-sum contest with China or one that is focused on containment or regime change.

So what should the key elements be of a recalibrated U.S. approach to China, based on these new strategic realities? Given that the challenge from China—although it has a traditional military component—is primarily in nonmilitary realms, the United States needs to focus first and foremost on reviving and mobilizing its economic and technological competitiveness. Rather than merely complain about—and often mischaracterize—Beijing’s economic diplomacy and especially its expansive “Belt and Road Initiative,” Washington needs to compete against it by offering alternatives to the countries China is targeting for resources, markets, access, and influence. The United States also needs to revive and mobilize American diplomacy, which has apparently fallen by the wayside and is underfunded. We will make little progress in de-escalating tensions with Beijing unless we are willing to engage routinely and extensively with Chinese

counterparts, and there are myriad bilateral and multilateral issues that need urgent attention and cooperation.

None of this is meant to imply inattention to the traditional security realm. Knowing what we do about the breadth and scope of Chinese capabilities and activities, the United States can and should continue to maximize its own capabilities, vigilance, and deterrence in the military, space, intelligence, and cyber spheres and—increasingly—in the domain of influence operations. At the same time, Washington must avoid overly militarizing issues that are not primarily military problems or that do not lend themselves readily to military solutions; issues surrounding Taiwan, the South China Sea and the Korean Peninsula all fit within this category. The United States also can and should reinvigorate its network of Allies and partners to deal collectively with the China challenge, but do so on the basis of shared and realistic objectives—recognizing our foreign partners' different strategic priorities, threat perceptions of China, and comfort levels with a confrontational approach.

Finally—as most commentators have observed—all of this will require the United States to get its house in order. The current political, social, economic, and public health crisis has hampered America's ability to confront external challenges. But it has also fueled a tendency to inordinately blame China for many problems that Americans have largely inflicted upon themselves. This must be resisted and corrected if Washington is to deal with Beijing on a reasonable basis and to focus on the real, core elements of the strategic competition with China. The United States, in short, needs to make its version of democracy and capitalism internationally competitive again. And Americans need not fear this contest with China unless they have lost faith and confidence in their country's model.

Source: <https://nationalinterest.org/feature/understanding-us-china-strategic-competition-171014>

The End of American Power By Eliot A. Cohen

If President Donald Trump manages to win reelection, many things will not change. His narrow worldview will continue to shape U.S. foreign policy. His erratic approach to leadership, his disdain for allies, his fondness for dictators—all will remain throughout a second Trump term.

But beyond the realm of policy, a Trump victory would mark a sea change for the United States' relationship with the rest of the world. It would signal to others that Washington has given up its aspirations for global leadership and abandoned any notion of moral purpose on the international stage. It would usher in a period of disorder and bristling conflict, as countries heed the law of the jungle and scramble to fend for themselves. And a second Trump term would confirm what many have begun to fear: that the shining city on a hill has grown dim and that American power is but a thing of the past.

RUNNING ON HIS RECORD

Trump's first term provides a guide for what would follow. Under his leadership, the United States has disengaged from some major international commitments, including the Paris climate accord, and cooled its relations with NATO allies. It has set a course of confrontation with China and pursued an incoherent policy vis-à-vis Russia—Trump's admiration for Russian President Vladimir Putin clashes with congressional and bureaucratic hostility to Moscow. The administration's exceptionally close relationship to Israel, coupled with partnerships with the Gulf Arab states, has sped up a transformation of Middle Eastern politics. The question of Palestinian statehood has faded away, with the focus shifting to the creation of counterbalancing coalitions against Iran and Turkey. Concern about human rights is now purely instrumental, a convenient lever in realpolitik and domestic politics. U.S. officials largely ignore Latin America and Africa and view most relationships with Asian countries through the prism of trade.

Trump and his advisers have had a crude but for the most part coherent worldview, captured in the slogan "America first." They know about the connotations of this phrase from the 1940s, when it was the name of a

movement to keep the United States out of World War II, but they do not particularly care. They have no intention of engaging in projects to expand liberty or even merely defend it, although they are perfectly capable of using human rights as a cudgel against China. They have a distaste for international organizations, including those the United States helped create after World War II. Unlike most of their predecessors, they do not see leadership in these institutions as an instrument of U.S. power but as a limit on it. (The Chinese have precisely the opposite view, hence their increasing involvement in the UN.) The Trump administration sees the world as an arena for brutal commercial and military competition in which the United States has no friends but only interests.

A second Trump term would permanently tarnish the United States' reputation for stability.

This general outlook does contain some internal contradictions, most notably with respect to Russia, but it is, despite its crudeness, a recognizable echo of one old strain of thinking about U.S. foreign policy. It reflects what the historian Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., referred to in these pages 25 years ago as the desire to go "back to the womb," a naive and ultimately untenable form of isolationism.

Schlesinger underestimated the extent to which the United States was always a globally engaged power, one whose values occasionally propelled it into foreign engagements—be they wise or foolish. But the isolationist impulse, particularly in its nativist, belligerent manifestation, has been around for a very long time. Trump merely articulates one version of it—the view that others play Americans for fools, that international institutions are nefarious tools of those who would curtail U.S. sovereignty, that bloodshed and horror elsewhere cannot really affect a gigantic republic flanked by two great oceans and two much weaker countries.

Of course, the Trumpian manifestation of these impulses is distinctive. Thus, even when the policy directions are more or less normal or to be expected—the pro-Israel tilt, for instance, or the suspicion of the UN—the style and the execution are not.

STYLE AND SUBSTANCE

The first term of the Trump administration was characterized by periodic squalls of bombast, insults, and fight picking with allies, as well as lavish compliments paid to friendly or flattering dictators. It was also characterized by administrative

incompetence, compounded by the unwillingness of the Republican Party's deep bench of foreign policy and national security professionals to serve a leader they loathed and despised. The question of a second term, then, requires thinking at both the substantive level (the administration's policies) and the level of style (the administration's tone and staffing).

From a policy point of view, the biggest uncertainty has to do with a reelected Trump's desire to secure his place in history, a motivation well known among presidents in their second terms. A president usually seeks to satisfy this desire by grasping for some big deal—Israeli-Palestinian peace is a perennial favorite, but so, too, is ending wars or reconciling with old enemies.

For Trump, it is fair to say, the idea of making big deals is central to his self-presentation as a business tycoon who has uniquely brought his hard-earned market wisdom to the business of government. The biggest deal to close would be a trade negotiation with China, which would also abate the rising strategic tension between the two countries. Lesser deals might include an Israeli-Palestinian peace pact and possibly some significant reconciliation with Russia. To secure these deals, Trump, a repeated bankrupt who in his private life made some exquisitely bad business decisions about casinos, airlines, and golf courses, would probably be willing to give away a lot. After all, in return for nothing, he gave the North Korean government the gift of presidential visits and suspended military exercises with South Korea. One could expect something spectacular, such as handing over Taiwan to China, for example, or caving in on Chinese industrial espionage in the United States.

In truth, however, none of these big deals are really out there for the asking. The U.S.-Chinese rivalry is now rooted not only in the geopolitical logic of a rising China but also in deep mutual suspicions and Chinese President Xi Jinping's desire to begin purging his region of U.S. influence. Even if Trump wants a deal, Beijing may not meet him at the table, and even if it did, any agreement might falter in the halls of the next Congress. Negotiations between the Israelis and the Palestinians, meanwhile, are unlikely to offer the Palestinians a better deal than they could have gotten under the Clinton administration (much worse, in all likelihood) and would no doubt fail to satisfy their aspirations for untrammelled statehood and a capital in Jerusalem. As for some sort of thaw with Russia, although Trump has an affinity for Putin, very few Republicans in Congress or members of the bureaucracy do.

That is where the issue of style comes in. Trump's rhetoric toward traditional allies is one of near-continuous insult: he certainly has little regard for their interests or concerns. And although he may believe that the United States can truly go it alone, he will learn that it is difficult to make a deal with China if key Asian allies are opposed to it, achieve Israeli-Palestinian peace if it leaves local Arab regimes exposed, or broker a Russian arrangement if Europe is dead set against it.

More important, Trump will find himself continually stymied by sheer administrative incompetence. Having gutted much of the bureaucracy, he will find—in some respects has already found—that the work of foreign policy does not simply get done out of the White House. Understaffed or incompetently staffed bureaucracies invariably gum up the works, in both intentional and accidental ways.

Trump's hands will not be completely tied. If he orders troops home from Afghanistan and Iraq, or even from Europe, that will happen—although it is striking how successful his own appointees have been at slow rolling him on a withdrawal of U.S. troops from Syria. If he persists, however, he can manage to withdraw U.S. forces and throw aside those commitments. Such retrenchment will again feed his self-image as a peacemaker.

A second Trump term, then, would be as though the isolationist Robert Taft had defeated Dwight Eisenhower in the 1952 Republican primary but then suffered some grave mental disorder in the process. There is no reason to think that Trump's bombast, self-pity, incoherence, belligerent narcissism, and fecklessness would abate after a second miraculous victory over a more popular Democratic opponent. His bristling and volatile version of "America first" would do far more damage than the more traditional "back to the womb" isolationism that Schlesinger described.

It would, for one thing, permanently tarnish the United States' reputation for stability and predictability. One election of Trump by razor-thin margins in three states could be written off as a fluke, an American version of a political virus that has afflicted numerous democratic states in recent years. A second election would signal something far worse to outside observers—either that the system is fundamentally flawed or that the United States has undergone some kind of

moral collapse. In either case, its days as a world leader would be over. The country that had built international institutions, that had affirmed the basic values of liberty and the rule of law, and that had stood by allies would be gone. The United States would remain a great power, of course, but of a very different kind.

LAW OF THE JUNGLE

As troubling as the Trump presidency has already been and as badly as it has damaged the reputation of the United States, this outcome would be far worse and difficult even for those who have been the most critical of the president to imagine. It would mean a return to a world that has no law other than that of the jungle—a world akin to the chaotic 1920s and 1930s but worse than that, because there would be no United States out there on the periphery, ready to be awakened and ride to the rescue.

It would become, rather, a world of radical self-help, in which any and all tools of power would be legitimated by that most powerful of reasons—necessity. States would be more tempted to acquire nuclear weapons and to consider the use of assassination, targeted biological weapons, and routine subversion in order to achieve security. The appeal of authoritarian systems would grow.

Moreover, even as a great power, the United States would be severely weakened by internal discord. A second Trump term, pulled off in large part by voter suppression, the quirks of the Electoral College, and the artful maneuvering of Republican politicians, would lead to an unstable polity. The Republican Party is, as it stands now, demographically doomed, drawing the bulk of its support from a narrowing and aging portion of the electorate, and its leaders know that. So, too, do their opponents. There has already been politically motivated violence on American streets, and there could well be more. Outright civil war may not occur, but it is perfectly plausible to imagine the mobbing and murder of political leaders by partisans of either side—all egged on by a triumphant Trump and his outraged and radicalized opponents. And, of course, the United States' foreign adversaries would find ways to fan the flames.

The biggest consequences of a second Trump administration would be the most unpredictable.

The biggest consequences of a second Trump administration would be the most unpredictable. Another term would likely force a shift in the way everyone thinks

about the United States. Since its inception, the country has been the land of the future, a work in progress, a place of promise no matter its flaws and tribulations, an unfinished city on a hill still under construction. With a second Trump term, the United States might as well be understood as a monument to the past. Not a failed state, but a failed vision, a vast power in decline whose time has come and gone.

The United States has faced such a potential drastic revision of its image before. The Civil War called into question the country's very existence as a unitary state, and the Great Depression cast doubt on its politico-economic model. On both occasions, exceptional presidents, inspired by the ideals of the country's founders, were keenly aware of the need to point Americans to a brighter future. That is why some of President Abraham Lincoln's key pieces of legislation focused on opening the West and why President Franklin Roosevelt assured Americans that they had nothing to fear but fear itself.

Trump's slogan has been "make America great again." The more revealing phrase came from his funereal inaugural speech in 2017: "American carnage." The president has bought into a vision of decline that undermines whatever good the United States can do in the world. His vision of greatness is startlingly devoid of content; his political appeal rests on resentment, loss, fear of displacement, and even outright despair. A second term would mean that the United States would enter a multifaceted crisis, potentially one as deep as that of the 1850s and the 1930s. But this time, the country would have a leader crippled by his own narcissism, incompetence, and, even more, his dismal understanding of what one of his Republican predecessors so often called "the last, best hope of man."

Source: <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/united-states/2020-10-27/end-american-power>

China is Rising Again By Shahid Javed Burki

Pakistan is now firmly placed in China's orbit and is likely to stay there for decades to come. Covid-19 that originated in China took a heavier economic and human toll in the United States and parts of Europe than it did in China. That notwithstanding, the pandemic is likely to change the structure of the global economy and how China fits into it. How would these changes affect Pakistan and its relations with China? I will attempt an answer to this question before I conclude this article.

Looking back at Pakistan's 73-year history we see that the three periods of high rates of economic growth coincided with those during which there were good relations with the US. Washington came to Pakistan for its own reasons. This was during most of the period when Field Marshal Ayub Khan governed the country. In the seven-year period between October 1958 when the military took charge and September 1965 when India and Pakistan went to war, large amounts of American military and economic assistance flowed into the country. In return Pakistan became an active participant in the Washington-led defence pacts aimed at preventing the Soviet and Chinese Communism from encroaching upon Asia. The war with India resulted in the American pull out from Pakistan.

The Americans came back in the 1980s when General Ziaul Haq's government agreed to partner with Washington to push out the Soviet Union from Afghanistan. The Soviets pulled out in 1989 and the Americans withdrew from Pakistan soon after. The third period of close Islamabad-Washington partnership was during the presidency of George W Bush's "War on Terror". This lasted from 2001 to 2009. This off-and-on relationship is now over with China now becoming Pakistan's strong and steady partner. It appears that this relationship is not likely to be disturbed even during periods of turbulence.

Much of the current global turbulence was caused by Donald J Trump, the 45th US president. In his inaugural address delivered on January 20, 2017, he promised to "make America great again". MAGA became the slogan his followers that came to be called the "Trump base" put on their red hats. MAGA was a vague promise; much of it was directed at China — to keep in place the rising Asian power. But China continued to move forward even though its rise was interrupted by the arrival of the novel coronavirus — it was called novel since it

had never been seen and experienced before. The virus was much more lethal when it attacked the human body. It caused respiratory ailments that were given the name of Covid-19. It was highly contagious, carried in the droplets that come in human breath. The virus was first detected in the Central China city of Wuhan on the Yangtze River and from there it was transported by travellers who went from China to the Middle East and Europe. It mutated in Europe and went with those who traveled to the US.

By January 2020, the World Health Organization announced that mankind faced a pandemic which took a heavy toll in terms of the number of people who picked up the disease. Since there was no vaccine as yet available there was consensus among disease experts that the only way to contain the spread of the disease was to reduce human contact. People were advised to wear face masks, keep distance of at least six feet from other people, and not participate in activities that brought them into contact with a lot of other people. Some of these practices were enforced by governments; some others were left to be followed voluntarily. China followed the first course; the US went on the second road. Initially both paid a heavy economic price. But China was successful not only in containing the spread of Covid-19 but also in reviving its economy.

On Monday, October 19, 2020, China Bureau of Statistics reported that the country's GDP increased at the rate of 4.9% in the July-September quarter when compared to the same period in 2019. This was impressive performance since it brought back China to the roughly 6% rate of increase before it was hit by Covid-19. The economy had contracted by 6.8% during the first quarter of 2020. The country's cumulative growth for 2020 is now back in the black while most other large economies such as Britain, Germany and the US have shrunk in absolute terms. The International Monetary Fund forecast Chinese growth for 2020 at 1.8%, while the US is expected to shrink by 4.3% and Germany by 6%.

The Chinese recovery was the result of the return of consumer confidence in the country's economy. For instance, car sales increased by 11% from a month ago. In October more than 630 million Chinese took trips during the National Day holiday on the first day of the month to celebrate the founding of the Communist state. Eswar Prasad, an economist of Indian origin who has worked at the IMF's China division and now teaches at Cornell University, said that China would probably be the "key driver of global growth in 2020 and 2021. The country is in

the remarkable position of being the only major economy that will register positive growth in 2020.”

In the report released on October 19, the China Bureau of Statistics said that the biggest threat to the country’s continued recovery was that “the international environment is still complicated and severe with considerable instabilities and uncertainties”. No doubt the report’s authors had in mind the US elections of November 3. If there is a change of guard in Washington and Joe Biden replaces the mercurial Trump as the country’s president, there is likely to be greater stability in world affairs. In May, China’s top leadership unveiled what they called a “dual circulation strategy” aimed at making the country more self-reliant by boosting domestic consumption as the pandemic came under control and reducing dependence on developed countries such as the US and Western Europe for technology and trade. The leadership will hold its annual meeting in late October or early November at which they will spell out the details of President Xi Jinping’s approach to “take the path of indigenous innovation through self-reliance”.

The new Chinese economic strategy that is likely to be adopted and articulated after the country’s senior leadership has met later this year, is likely to shift the focus of development from export-led growth to producing more growth from domestic consumption. The country is now much richer with considerably higher worker-wages compared to the time decades ago when it joined other East Asian miracle economies in generating growth by exporting cheap merchandise to the West. The move to domestic consumption as the driver of growth would mean more imports of products produced by low-priced labour. This is where Pakistan enters the picture. However, Islamabad will need to come up with a strategy that dovetails with the change in China’s economic approach.

Published in The Express Tribune, October 26th, 2020.

Source: <https://tribune.com.pk/story/2269881/china-is-rising-again>

The Donald Trump and Benjamin Netanyahu Alliance: Simply Bad News By Paul R. Pillar

The political careers of President Donald Trump and Israeli prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu have become increasingly linked. The linkage goes well beyond the parallel personal interests they have in such things as the hyping of recent diplomatic developments involving Bahrain and the United Arab Emirates. It extends to a similarity of political methods that over the long term works to the detriment of both Americans and Israelis.

The spectacle this week of a White House signing ceremony replete with flags and trumpet flourishes helps both leaders claim credit with their domestic audiences for what they say is a historic “peace deal,” even though it isn’t. An ideal Middle East would be one in which all states of the region, including Israel, have full and cordial relations with all other states of the region, but only because in an ideal Middle East such relations would reflect the successful resolution of previous conflicts. Relations that ignore or paper over unresolved conflicts, much less exacerbate them, are not an improvement.

The upgrading of Israel’s existing relationships with Manama and Abu Dhabi is not a peace deal—neither Bahrain nor the UAE had been at war with Israel—but instead a deepening of an anti-Iran military alliance that intensifies confrontation in the Persian Gulf and risks stimulating an arms race there. Israel’s conflict with the Palestinians, which has been the reason for a lack of full diplomatic relations with Arab states, is left unresolved and even less likely than before to be resolved, given how this latest development reduces further any Israeli incentive to resolve it. Or in the blunter and more partial language of an Arab leader—in this case, the prime minister of Morocco—normalization with Israel “emboldens it to go further in breaching the rights of the Palestinian people.”

It is hard to see any benefit for U.S. interests—as distinct from the political interests of Donald Trump—in this. In Israel, normalization of relations with the two Gulf states will be welcomed by a wider range of Israelis than Netanyahu’s core base of support. But thoughtful Israelis will realize that this development

perpetuates Israel's living by the sword and keeps it as far away as ever from true peace.

The Trump/Netanyahu partnership operates within a larger transnational alliance between the Republican and Likud parties. Interference by one country in the internal political affairs of the other has become central to that alliance. Americans ought to worry about how such interference erodes their democracy, whether the interference comes from Russia or, in a longstanding and more blatant way, from Israel. Israelis should worry, too, not only about what happens to U.S.-Israeli relations when the Likud-allied party is not in power in Washington but also about how much their own country's politics are influenced by the domestic politics of the United States.

Some of the resemblances between Trump and Netanyahu have to do with this larger party alliance and some are more personal to the two men. Corruption falls mostly in the latter category. The corruption for which Netanyahu has been charged is serious but probably no more so than that of Trump, who has thrown government ethics out the window and sees no apparent division between his personal equities and official actions. At the presidential level, this has included, among much else, drumming up business for Trump's hotels and golf courses. The example set at the top has encouraged similar rot throughout the political levels of the executive branch.

That the corruption issue is dogging Netanyahu more directly than Trump is in large part due to the Israeli attorney general, Avichai Mandelblit, displaying an independence from politics that has been conspicuously missing from U.S. Attorney General William Barr, who has endeavored to turn the Department of Justice into a pro-Trump political weapon. Another factor has been the parade-of-outrages phenomenon during Trump's presidency, in which what would ordinarily be considered scandalous quickly gets eclipsed in the public mind by some new attention-grabbing comment or antic.

Trump and Netanyahu display in common certain techniques to fight off disclosures that they don't like. In Trump's case, this has involved enormous effort, with Barr's help, to discredit investigations that uncovered Russia's role in helping to get Trump elected. The effort has involved investigating the investigators, no matter how misdirected such an effort to discredit may be,

coupled with accusations of improper political motives on the part of government professionals who addressed the original problem.

Netanyahu, taking a page from the same book, is saying the same thing about investigations into his corruption. “The police and prosecution are making political decisions against justice and law in order to topple a right-wing prime minister,” declared Netanyahu. “This conduct must be investigated.”

Both Trump and Netanyahu base their political power on energizing only a slice of the people they rule while writing off the rest of their subjects. With Netanyahu, the written-off segment includes not only what remains of the Israeli left but also, of course, the entire Palestinian Arab population that is subject to Israeli rule but enjoys no Israeli political rights.

Trump does not have the option of consigning Democrats, immigrants, or other segments of the American public he would like to write off to an equivalent of the West Bank occupation. But his rhetoric is centered on a divisive strategy to excite the 35 or 40 percent of the electorate that can be described as his base while finding ways to manipulate this minority support into continued power in a political system that is supposed to be based largely on the majority rule. Those ways include longstanding Republican voter suppression measures and, more recently, Trump’s efforts to delegitimize in advance, with unsubstantiated claims of fraud, many of the ballots that will be cast against him in this fall’s election.

What the United States and Israel Do and Do Not Share

This last similarity between the two leaders leads to an irony involving common tropes about the U.S.-Israeli relationship. It has often been said that this relationship is based on shared democratic values. But insofar as Israel rules a large subjugated population without political rights it is not democratic. Now Trump, with his assault on America’s democratic procedures as represented in the coming election, is closing the gap with Israel—but in a direction contrary to, not in line with, democratic values.

The two governments say something similar about those values in their dealings with authoritarian regimes, including Persian Gulf monarchies of the sort represented at this week’s affair at the White House. The Trump administration’s dealings have involved playing down the Saudi regime’s grotesque murder in a

diplomatic mission of a Saudi dissident journalist who was a U.S. resident. Israel's dealings have included the selling of cell phone spyware that the UAE and other Persian Gulf regimes use to monitor dissidents.

Another major flaw in the traditional notion of U.S.-Israeli common values concerns religion. Israel is a theocracy in which certain rights, including the right to self-determination, are reserved by law for Jews alone and in which religion shapes official matters on subjects ranging from marriage to military service obligations. By contrast, the United States was founded on a separation of church and state and an explicit rejection of established religion. Trump's administration has narrowed this gap as well. The favors he has bestowed on Netanyahu's government, such as moving the U.S. embassy to Jerusalem, he says he did "for the evangelicals." Religious dogma of one segment of the minority that constitutes Trump's political base is shaping large parts of U.S. policy toward the Middle East.

Partners in so much else, Netanyahu and Trump are increasingly partners in global isolation, notwithstanding how much some arms-for-recognition deals with Gulf Arab monarchies may obscure that isolation for a moment. In addition to many United Nations resolutions and U.S. vetoes through the years about the Palestinian conflict, there now is isolation on, for example, policy toward Iran and the handling of war crimes.

The Trump and Netanyahu governments are even partners in isolation regarding the coronavirus pandemic, which a surging caseload has made into a political liability for Netanyahu as it is for Trump. Last week the United Nations General Assembly passed a broad-ranging resolution about the pandemic by a vote of 169-2, with Hungary and Ukraine abstaining and the United States and Israel voting no. (The Trump administration did not like what the resolution says about sanctions, women's reproductive rights, and the World Health Organization.)

It seems that the closer Trump and Netanyahu draw together, the farther away they are leading their countries from the opinions and respect of most of the rest of the world.

Paul Pillar retired in 2005 from a twenty-eight-year career in the U.S. intelligence community, in which his last position was National Intelligence Officer for the Near East and South Asia. Earlier he served in a variety of analytical and

managerial positions, including as chief of analytic units at the CIA covering portions of the Near East, the Persian Gulf, and South Asia. Professor Pillar also served in the National Intelligence Council as one of the original members of its Analytic Group. He is also a contributing editor for the National Interest.

Source: <https://nationalinterest.org/blog/paul-pillar/donald-trump-and-benjamin-netanyahu-alliance-simply-bad-news-169127>