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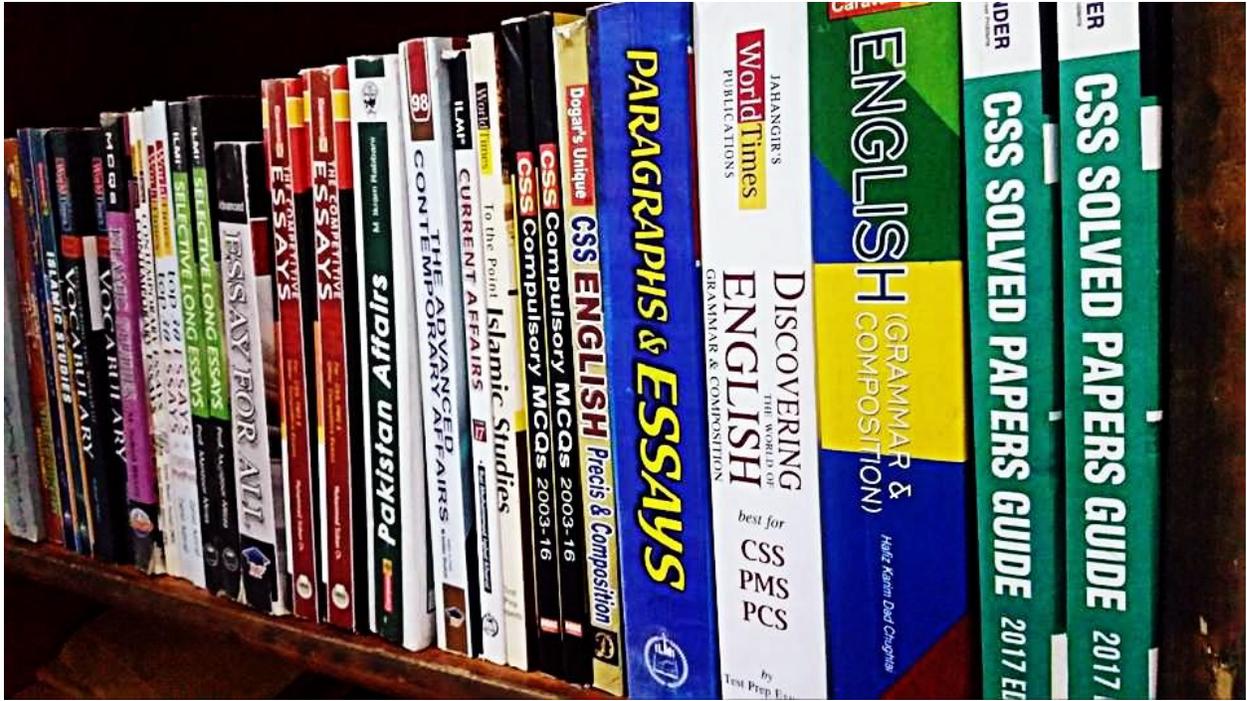
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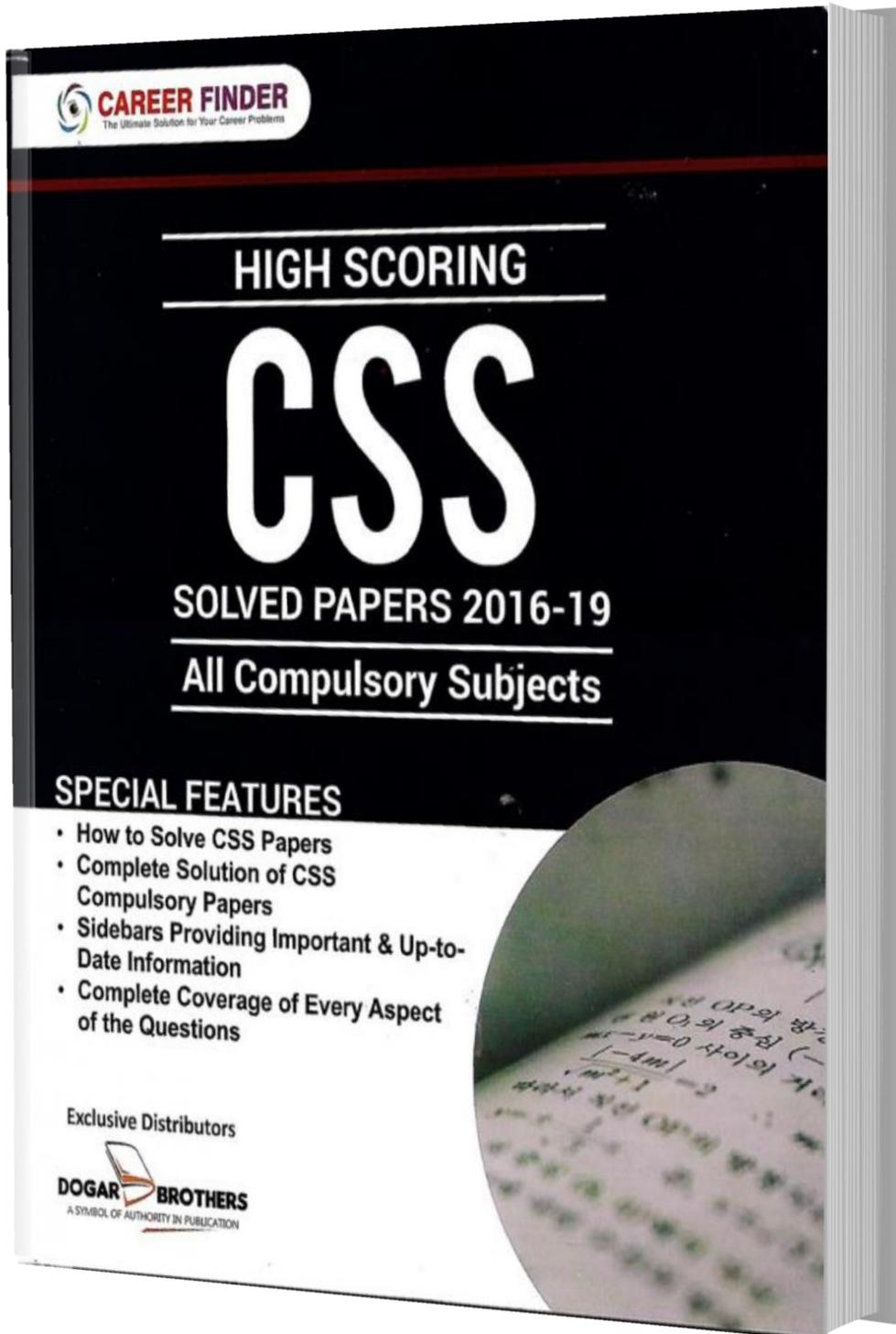
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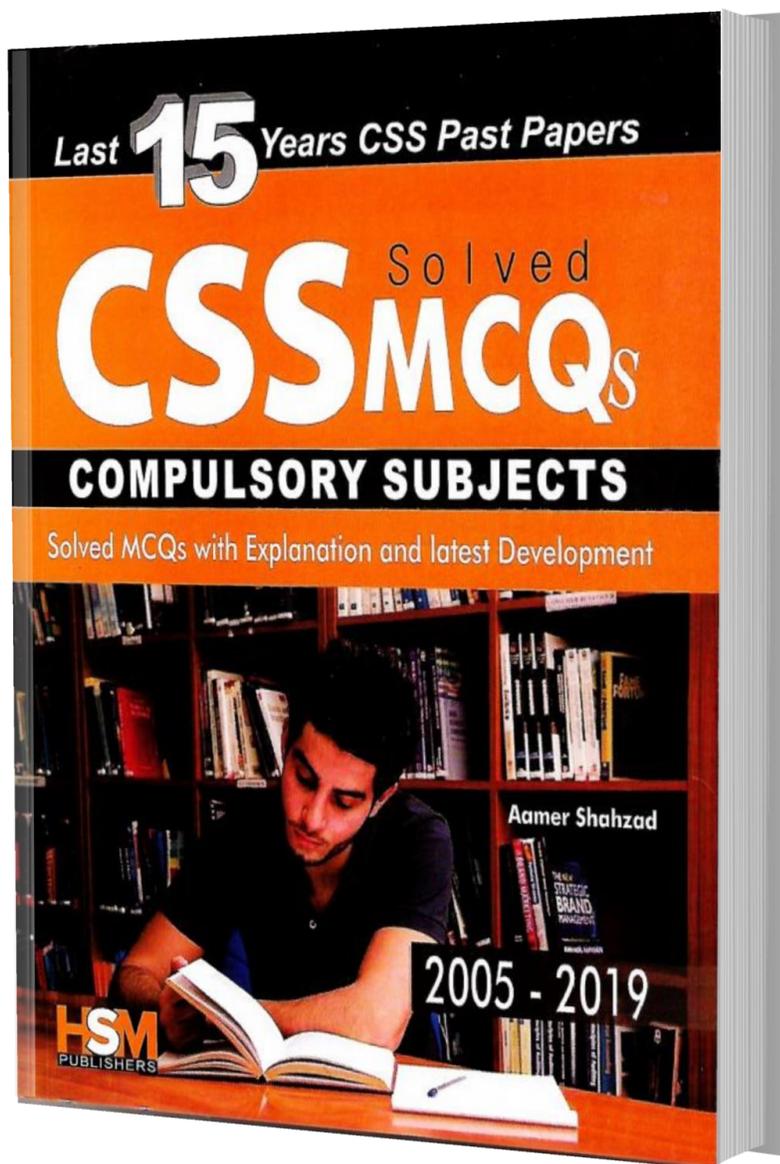
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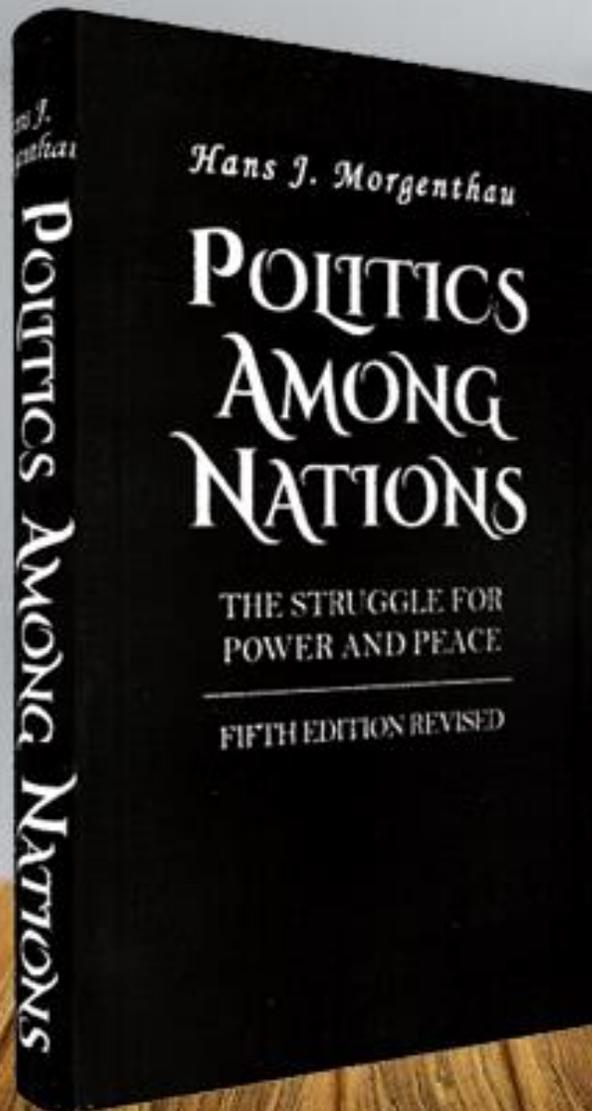


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# PAKISTAN

## Nuclear success amid overall failure By Kamran Yousaf

On May 28, Pakistan observed the 21st anniversary of nuclear tests. This year the debate was who deserved the credit for making the country a nuclear power? For PML-N supporters, the jailed former prime minister, Nawaz Sharif, was the one who took the 'bold' decision in the face of the mounting US pressure. They often cite the famous telephone call by then US president Bill Clinton, who offered Nawaz five billion dollars of financial package in exchange for not conducting the tests in response to the India's nuclear explosions. But Nawaz, as his supporters claim, turned down the offer and decided to go ahead with the tests. The PTI and other PML-N critics dispute that claim. They believe that Pakistani scientists and the military leadership deserved the actual credit for making Pakistan nuclear.

While this debate will continue, the real issue we seldom dwell on is: Why has Pakistan miserably failed to replicate this technological feat in other fields? Acquiring nuclear weapons is not a joke by any means. Currently, there are only eight declared nuclear weapons states in the world. Israel, it is thought, also has nuclear bomb but deliberately follows the 'doctrine of ambiguity'.

The US, China, Russia, France and the UK, all permanent members of the UN Security Council, were officially declared nuclear states before Pakistan and India laid their claims in 1998. North Korea also joined the race later. But except Pakistan and North Korea, all other countries having nuclear weapons are in the list of top 20 leading exporters of the world. In fact, all these countries are economic powerhouses. This means their progress is not restricted to military prowess only.

Some would argue that comparing Pakistan with these powerful countries is unjustified. It is true if Pakistan has any comparison, it must be with the neighbouring India. Notwithstanding the size of India, it is now fast becoming a global economic power simply because of the reforms it has undergone over the past many years. India's burgeoning economy and trade ties with outside world have considerably enhanced its political clout at the global level.

On the other hand, where does Pakistan stand? No doubt joining the exclusive club of nuclear countries was not an ordinary achievement for a country that has so many challenges to deal with.

But the question one must ask is: how and why does a country that has been able to acquire the most sophisticated weaponry struggle to emulate the same in other areas? The absence of technological advancement in other spheres of life is the main reason behind Pakistan's faltering economy.

While everyone including politicians, generals and scientists claim credit for the nuclear programme, the situation is totally different when it comes to Pakistan's failures in other sectors.

One key factor that helped Pakistan become a nuclear state is that despite international pressure and US sanctions, every government and institution owned the nuclear programme. That ownership certainly is lacking when it comes to challenges on the economic and political fronts. Every new government blames its predecessor for the precipice. The end result of this blame game is that we are moving in a vicious cycle where no one is ready to own up the problems.

Pakistan's nuclear deterrence may have prevented India from launching a full-scale war following the Pulwama attack but this alone will not guarantee our survival. The former Soviet Union is a prime example. Ultimately, it is the country's economic progress that can ensure its survival. In fact, economic and political

instability can make our nuclear programme vulnerable in the eyes of powerful countries.

Therefore, Pakistan needs to show the same determination — as it has shown for decades for the nuclear programme — to bring the country on a par with other nuclear states as far as economic prosperity and political stability are concerned.

Source : <https://tribune.com.pk/story/1985743/6-nuclear-success-amid-overall-failure/?fbclid=IwAR3zMWcbHeNP2hOUWx41ez2QPIN26fmWMoxait4QGQmlhwNHZ-yFaYR8h-k>

## The evolving relationship between Pakistan and Iran By Muhammad Asif Noor

As the countries of the Muslim world are about to have largest gathering of their unique forum of Organization of Islamic Conference in Riyadh this week, Pakistan and Iran have developed a thaw in relations to build the synergies for evolution of their deep-rooted relations. In the wake of ongoing stress and strains between Tehran and Washington, Javad Zarif, Foreign Minister of Iran was on his recent urgent spree to different capitals of the regional countries including China, Japan, India and Turkmenistan before his presence in Islamabad to meet at the higher levels of civilian and military commands. Amid the tension in the region and keeping in view Pakistan's formidable role in the geopolitics of the Persian Gulf where the South Asian nuclear armed Islamic country is finding a tough balance between Riyadh and Tehran. Presence of Iranian Foreign Minister before these important meetings of the regional stakeholders in a tense situation, is meant to convince Pakistan to play a constructive role in pushing or influencing Riyadh to soften its regional stance towards Iran. Lest not forget Pakistan's relations Saudi Arabia and their both being strong allies of USA. The visit was also important to keep the backdoor diplomatic channels to be utilized to remove the tension and seek assistance from allies.

Earlier Prime Minister Imran Khan was also in Tehran for talks with his counterparts and supreme leaders in Tehran. During this meeting there was several important confidence building measures were achieved between the two important neighbouring countries wherein it was agreed to develop a joint rapid action force to help the surveillance in the borders for security reasons. This step was proposed after the attack on Army personals in Balochistan-bordering Iran. At least a day before Prime Minister's departure to Tehran, Minister of Foreign Affairs Shah Mahmood Qureshi said that attackers were from Iran-based Baloch Terror organization. The fight against terrorism and extremist remained a centrepiece of Imran Khan's speech where he stressed the need to curb cross border terrorism, do not permit saboteurs sabotage the regional peace and halt prosperity. Moreover, Quetta-Taftan railway track would be built. This very proposal presents Iranian belief in Pakistani leadership's urge to maintain regional peace for mutual coexistence.

There is constant existence of paranoia of mistrust between Pakistan and Iran. Sometimes odd events happen whenever some high-level dignitary arrive either

to Tehran from Islamabad or from Islamabad to Tehran. The incident in Balochistan happened days before Imran Khan supposed to travel to Tehran. While once President of Iran was about to arrive in Islamabad, Kulbhushan Jadhav was captured from Balochistan and his alleged ring operating from Iran. This growing mistrust has now been slowly demonizing keeping in view the fact that there are now close connections developed between the higher ups in Islamabad and Tehran. Once you begin viewing the other through someone else lenses then there is a growth of the mistrust. With regular contacts and sharing of the intelligence, Pakistan and Iran will continue to deal with the regional and national level issues together. This air of mistrust needs to be removed as perfectly and immediately as possible.

The times are tough, but the hearts of the people of Pakistan and Iran beat to the same rhythm of togetherness and brotherhood

Lately the verbal and diplomatic clashes between Iran and the US became intense after the US intelligence reports suspected Iran planning a possible attack or sabotage US interests in the region. Not to forget the fact, Iran and USA are at loggerheads with each other since USA withdrew from JCPOA and asked Iran to renegotiate or halt its missile development. Iran threatened to partially withdraw from agreement, blocking Strait of Hormuz and to restart uranium enrichment. In response, USA dispatched bomber air crafts in Middle East and Carrier Group Strike Force in Arabian Ocean succeeding 1500 additional military personnel to Middle East. Prior to this in April President of the US designated Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) as terrorist organization and as a reaction Iran declared US Central Command to be terrorist entity. The continue tension has made huge dent to the international political and regional geopolitical landscape.

In this backdrop, presence of Mr Zarif and holding high level candid in Islamabad on the arrival has built the confidence between the two countries. Iranian Foreign Minister also met PM Imran Khan where Iran-US tensions were discussed in detail because Pakistan has its own version of concerns in accordance with Iran. It is because Pakistan would also suffer in case of Iran-US war with next-door neighbour, which Pakistan cannot afford due to increasing investments in area of proximity with Iran, Balochistan. On the other end, GCC are major Pakistani allies wherein Pakistan would hate taking sides in any escalation. Accordingly, Prime Minister Imran Khan urged parties to minimize escalation. Iran and Pakistan are continuously building their ties and making it possible shape new partnership blocks in the region. Iran cannot shut doors to Pakistan amid heavy Saudi

investments in Balochistan and it have to come up with equally potential work out. It is worth mentioning here that Iranian President Hassan Rouhani appraised Imran Khan for his role to unite Muslim states and efforts to curb apprehensions while not taking sides.

Moreover, Apart from counter weighting US militarization in the region, Iran appears to be in a process of strategic shift, which led her to reshuffle its position in regional affairs. Mr. Javad Zarif came with a formal proposal for Pakistan to link Gwadar with Chahbahar port to maximize the potential of regional connectivity. “We can connect Chahbahar and Gwadar, and then through that connect Gwadar to our entire railroad system, from Iran to the North Corridor, through Turkmenistan and Kazakhstan, and also through Azerbaijan, Russia, and through Turkey”, He quoted saying. It is an ambitious position taken by Iran after a series of visits by FM Javad Zarif to China and Russia which clearly presents prospective proposition for China and Russia if Gwadar and Chahbahar are to be linked.

In a regional integration perspective, Iran is an observer member of Shanghai Cooperation Organization led by China, which seeks close proximity and regional integration. On the other hand, linking Chahbahar to Gwadar may present Iranian urge to be part of CPEC and BRI where Pakistan already holds a far more stakes than any other state in the region. In this perspective, Iran would continue to hold a significant position in region and may elevate to dialogue partner ending in full member state in Shanghai Cooperation Organization. It is worth mentioning here that on his visit to China, Iranian Foreign Minister Jawad Zarif in meeting with Chinese counterpart said, “Iran and China need to think together and work together about preserving a multilateral global order and avoiding a unilateral global order”. It presents Iranian distrust with US dominated imperialist world order, which also has been criticized by China of and on. As far as the concern of Pakistan, it already expects no good from the US though not apparently ready to disengage.

Iran and Pakistan agree to work together to reap the fruit of benefit for our countries and build relationship on solid footing hence not allowing any state to sabotage our mutual interests. It is also important that unless, Afghanistan issue is not resolved, Iran offers an easy passage for Pakistani and Chinese trade up to the North and West. It simultaneously offers to connect Eurasia with South Asia and both with China. What Iran is likely seeking are the oil markets, international patronage against unjustified US sanctions and bridging gaps with GCC states especially Saudi Arabia with the help of Pakistan though not spoken these demands on

media. It is time for all regional countries to stand up for their region and patron its resources for their own use and get best out of it.

Pakistan and Iran must cooperate in trade and integrate their economies but apparently it becomes difficult since USA has sanctioned Iran and ready to sanction states who deal with Iran. At this state of economic affairs, tough times are ahead for Pakistan and for Iran as both states are facing daunting challenges. As Pakistan could not implement Iran Pakistan gas pipeline project due to international sections and the pressure is mounting day by day. Both states have stood with each other in the test of times. Although the time is tough, but people of Pakistan and Iran have their hearts tied to each other and beat to the same rhythm and symphony of togetherness and brotherhood, no matter what, and will continue to do so.

Source :<https://dailytimes.com.pk/405190/the-evolving-relationship-between-pakistan-and-iran/?fbclid=IwAR2CioZ9Fd7heIE2h5kaTC79MvNM2Vt6N4tz-9OX0IEKsO60zUNbaS-RI8k>

## Pakistan suffers heavily in US-Afghan war By Dr. Zafar

### Jaspal

US is withdrawing its forces from Afghanistan and looking for a peaceful regime in Afghanistan. Regional powers including India have played their part in destabilization of the country. Pakistan's mediation is bringing the war to a peaceful end. Taliban's inclusion in the peace talk is mandatory if peace is to be obtained.

Afghanistan situation is complex and violent. The peace talks between the United States and Taliban are encountering challenges. The Ghani Government seems frustrated by the said process, therefore, looking for alternatives. Pakistan is struggling to improve its bilateral relations with Afghanistan and also supports the peace initiatives in the country. The Great Powers direct contacts with Afghan Taliban have provided them legitimacy and compromised the significance of the Unity Government led by President Ashraf Ghani.

The regional powers, including India, are equally contributing to the internal mess of the country. Besides, the Afghans themselves are antipathetic to the dialogue process despite having war fatigue. Taliban are unwilling to the cease-fire and averse to peace talks with President Ghani Government. Even the recent Consultative Peace Loya Jirga did not improve the Afghans affairs.

Zalmay Khalilzad, special envoy for peace and reconciliation in Afghanistan held the seventh round of talks with the Taliban but failed to convince them for a ceasefire in the country.

President Donald Trump announced to withdraw nearly half of his troops from Afghanistan by the end of 2019. It generated cautious optimism about the end of the war. Though everyone is supportive of Afghan-owned, Afghan-led reconciliation process, yet the Afghan Taliban are reluctant to establish direct contacts with President Ghani Government.

The Americans are cognizant that without engaging Taliban peace in Afghanistan is impossible. Therefore, The Trump Administration reversed the longstanding United States policy, ie "Any negotiations over the political future of Afghanistan will be between the Taliban and the Afghan Government," and has accepted the demands of the Afghan Taliban.

It is presently directly engaged with the Taliban, without involving the Afghan Government, to end the 18-year-old war in Afghanistan. The direct talks between

the US and Taliban in Abu Dhabi and Doha have exposed the powerlessness of Afghanistan's National Unity Government to bring the Afghan Taliban to the negotiating table.

### Afghan Peace Process

Zalmay Khalilzad, special envoy for peace and reconciliation in Afghanistan held the seventh round of talks with the Taliban but failed to convince them for a ceasefire in the country. The ongoing peace talks between the Taliban and the United States do not involve the country's elected government. The Americans practically sidelined President Ghani in the peace process.

He convened four-day Consultative Peace Loya Jirga on April 29, 2019, to discuss the ongoing peace talks to strengthen his position as Afghanistan's legitimate representative in the peace talks. He said, "It is a proud moment for me to have representatives from all over the country here, and today we have gathered to speak about the peace talks."

On June 11, Afghan Deputy Foreign Minister Idrees Zaman visited Islamabad for the first review session of the Afghanistan-Pakistan Action Plan for Peace and Solidarity (APAPPS).

The Jirga was not taken seriously by Afghanistan observers because Taliban declined President Ghani's invitation to participate in it and also urged people to boycott it. Taliban spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid stated, "Do not participate in the enemy's conspiracy [in] the name of Jirga, instead find ways to further sideline the shaky administration of Kabul."

Moreover, opposition politicians and government critics, including former president Hamid Karzai, also boycotted the Jirga. The protracted asymmetrical warfare in Afghanistan is perilous for Pakistan's National Security. Historically speaking, after the demise of the Taliban Government in 2001, the Al-Qaeda led terrorist syndicate managed to secure safe hideouts in the federal administrative Tribal Areas and urban centers of Pakistan.

They unleashed terrorism in Pakistan and killed 75000 innocent civilians and personnel of law enforcement agencies during the last 17 years. Pakistan's economy was derailed and internationally its image was maligned. Therefore, Islamabad is mindful about the current chaos in Afghanistan and Washington's forces withdrawal plan.

The withdrawal of the American troops could create a power vacuum that could be filled by warlords, radicalized militant organizations, and proxy groups sponsored by neighboring states. RAW has been providing both financial and material support to Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) for conducting terrorist acts inside Pakistan.

Neither American forces nor Afghan law enforcement agencies are erasing the safe heavens of TTP located in eastern Afghanistan. The mistrust and reciprocal accusations undermine Kabul and Islamabad relationship. The last month meeting between President Ghani and Prime Minister Imran Khan, on the sidelines of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation in Saudi Arabia, has a positive outcome.

On June 11, Afghan Deputy Foreign Minister Idrees Zaman visited Islamabad for the first review session of the Afghanistan-Pakistan Action Plan for Peace and Solidarity (APAPPS). On June 4, President Ghani announced that he would visit Islamabad on June 27, to improve bilateral relations. Indeed, the current high-level engagement would have a constructive impact on Afghanistan and Pakistan relationship.

Source : [https://www.globalvillagespace.com/pakistan-suffers-heavily-in-us-afghan-war-zafar-jaspal/?fbclid=IwAR0W3snEV0dmD\\_5kESygi8Fc3hB7kFvjICxTAJw8Hbs1wCHWx07EnnLY9ps](https://www.globalvillagespace.com/pakistan-suffers-heavily-in-us-afghan-war-zafar-jaspal/?fbclid=IwAR0W3snEV0dmD_5kESygi8Fc3hB7kFvjICxTAJw8Hbs1wCHWx07EnnLY9ps)

## Geopolitics of Pakistan & SCO By Dr Muhammad Khan

The 19th Summit of Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) took place at the most crucial time of contemporary world. The Bishkek Declaration called for greater cooperation among member countries of SCO with emphases against three evils; the extremism, terrorism and separatism. Among all SCO member states, Pakistan has the distinction of playing an unparalleled role against all these evils. Prime Minister Imran Khan gave a Pakistani perspective for the future of SCO, with a vision of 'cooperation that rejects confrontation, and advances the imperatives of peaceful co-existence at the regional and international levels.' Indeed, peace is the most needed aspect for each state, at regional level as well as at global level.

Today, SCO has almost half of the global population, 25 % of world's GDP and about 80% of Eurasian landmass. By virtue of its geopolitical location, Pakistan is at the vicinity of world's major economies and emerging regional markets. Besides, it occupies a strategic location viz-a viz great powers and their strategic interests. Therefore, "Pakistan can utilize economic tools like trade, energy, and investment, infrastructure development to further its geopolitical and geo-economic objectives in a befitting manner. For Pakistan, the SCO is the most important cooperative forum. Through this forum, Pakistan can seek economic assistance from major regional powers to prosper through trade and proper investment. SCO, being an emerging security bloc, can prove greatly helpful for Pakistan in helping it from traditional and non-traditional threats.

In order to establish international peace, Pakistan has played a great role by defeating terrorism. Since SCO Charter is based on enhancement of comprehensive cooperation among its member countries. The organization further aims to strengthen peace by ensuring regional security and stability for attaining multi-polarity at political level and economic prosperity at social and state level while accruing all the benefits of globalization. This was especially highlighted by Chinese President Mr Xi Jinping at Bishkek, once he called for a win-win approach in the changing international landscape. President Xi, urged the SCO members to have a keen appreciation of the trend toward world multi-polarization and economic globalization, search for wisdom in the Shanghai Spirit and draw strength from unity and cooperation so as to build a closer community with a shared future for the organization.

Pakistan believes in peace and cooperative relationship with its neighbours. In this regard, it fits into the principal objective of SCO which calls for peace not the war and cooperation not the conflict. There are many commonalities in SCO Charter and the foreign policy of Pakistan. With its permanent membership of SCO geopolitically, Pakistan has assumed a crucial position for this forum. Pakistani vision for SCO also outlined the galvanization of Shanghai Spirit to strengthen the mandate of forum while reducing the 'risks of conflict, fostering confidence, and promoting stability.' In his eight point's proposals, Prime Minister Imran also suggested regional trade in local currencies, which boost the regionalism and economic prosperity. For an efficient trade, there is a need for regional connectivity through development of infrastructure and cultural affinity. Food and health security is yet another area which Pakistan proposed for enhancing cooperation among SCO members.

The Bishkek Summit of SCO took place at the most critical time of contemporary world. Whereas the Bishkek Declaration called for greater cooperation among member countries of SCO, the Iranian President, Mr Hassan Rohani expressed his serious concerns over the US military deployment in the Persian Gulf, posing threat not only to Iran but to entire region. The situation in this region is getting bad to worst with each passing day. Lately US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo alleged Iran for an attack on two commercial tankers, carrying oil for Japan and Norway under US escort. Iranian side deny this blame, considering it a US strategy for showing its military muscles. President Rohani clearly hinted that, under President Trump, US is responsible for a "plague of unilateralism that is challenging the international community more than ever."

While outlining the opportunities for Pakistan as a member of SCO, there is a requirement to quantify them as per the objectives and charter of the organization. Pakistan has the opportunity to get the support of all SCO members, in its drive against the terrorism. Rather, the SCO members are fully cognizant of the contribution and sacrifices, Pakistan has rendered for the global peace and security by combating terrorism. Indeed, the SCO Charter endorses the vision of founding father of Pakistan and further provides a guideline for a value-added performance from the platform of SCO. Since SCO aims at: strengthening mutual trust, friendship and good neighbourliness between the member States, so are foreign policy objectives of Pakistan. Pakistan faces security challenges from its neighbourhood on account of CPEC and its close relations with China. Besides, the unresolved disputes between India and Pakistan, especially Kashmir dispute

has kept both countries on the path of rivalry. In order to dislodge the CPEC, India is promoting separatism, extremism and terrorism in different parts of Pakistan, which is against the basic spirit of SCO. As emphasized by Prime Minister Imran Khan during 19th SCO Summit, Pakistan is not in favour of an arms race, but it desires other regional countries like India to cooperate for promotion of peace and regional stability in South Asia and broader SCO region.

Source :[https://pakobserver.net/geopolitics-of-pakistan-sco/?fbclid=IwAR0j9ol4V9nr3MGoT11d0BbeBLV-yK41-\\_aTrRESPIO-YGUPz0geSw5SEqY](https://pakobserver.net/geopolitics-of-pakistan-sco/?fbclid=IwAR0j9ol4V9nr3MGoT11d0BbeBLV-yK41-_aTrRESPIO-YGUPz0geSw5SEqY)

## Pak diplomacy pays dividend By Malik Muhammad Ashraf

Since the advent of Narendra Modi as Indian Prime Minister in 2014, the Indian animosity against Pakistan has been bewilderingly intensified and it has not only tried to isolate her globally without much success but has also been actively engaged in a proxy war against it. Well calculated moves have also been made to exploit the fast changing geo-political landscape in our region. However Pakistan has used diplomacy as an effective tool not only to unleash a process of protecting its strategic interests, but also to recalibrate its relations with Iran, which to a great extent has neutralised the Indian covert proxy war against her through sponsored acts of terrorism using Iranian soil.

Relations between Pakistan and Iran have been under lot of strain due to cross border terrorism and Iranian perceptions about Pakistan having a tilt towards her archrival Saudi Arabia with regard to their animosity on regional issues, notwithstanding the fact that Pakistan has remained neutral and tried to defuse the tensions between them.

India's RAW has not only been using Afghan soil in collaboration with Afghanistan's NDS to sponsor acts of terrorism in Pakistan, but also Iranian land for the same purpose. Kulbhushan Jadhav, captured in Balochistan, who was assisting the Baloch insurgents and sponsoring acts of terrorism in Pakistan, was based in Iran. Similarly, some Baloch insurgents who enjoyed Indian patronage also had sanctuaries and training camps on Iranian soil. The Baloch militants who killed 14 Pakistani security personnel near Ormara in Balochistan in April and claimed responsibility for the gory incident, also came from Iran. It was therefore in the backdrop of the snowballing tensions between the two countries after that act of terrorism that Prime Minister of Pakistan Imran Khan undertook a two-day visit to Iran in the last week of April where he met the Iranian leaders to discuss border security, counter-terrorism, regional issues and improvement in the bilateral relations.

The recent interaction between the leaders of the two countries, particularly the visit of the Iranian foreign minister to Pakistan, amply testifies to the change in the Iranian outlook about it and their understanding of the position that it has taken on the issues of mutual and regional issues, especially related to security

The visit surely produced very positive results. The two countries agreed to set up Joint a Rapid Reaction Force to fight terrorism and guard the common border between the two countries and also vowed not to allow their territories to be used

for terrorist activities. Relations between the two countries were under great stress following terrorist attacks on both sides of the frontier. In the context of bilateral relations, the two sides also resolved to enhance cooperation in a number of social and cultural domains besides expanding economic relations. The Iranian President mentioned utilisation of Chahbahar and Gwadar Ports to handle increased activity in the region and also urged Pakistan to build the IP gas pipeline section on its side as soon as possible.

The visit to Iran by the Prime Minister was a very timely diplomatic move which paid immediate dividends as it helped to recalibrate our relations with her. Pakistan and Iran have a history of unprecedented bonhomie between them before the Iranian revolution. Improving relations with Iran also is in conformity with our new narrative of amity with all the neighbours for nudging process of shared economic prosperity.

In the context of the bilateral relations between the two countries which have a bearing on the regional security situation, the biggest achievement of the visit has been the agreement between the two countries on counter-terrorism and the raising of a joint Rapid Reaction Force to guard the common borders and fight terrorism. This development will have a far-reaching impact on efforts against terrorism, and at the same time will thwart Indian moves to use the Iranian soil against Pakistan for acts of terrorism, particularly fomenting insurgency in Balochistan.

This initiative by Pakistan, and persuading the Iranian authorities for mutual collaboration against terrorism, has not only been acknowledged as successful diplomacy but also been appreciated as a well-orchestrated move to affect amity between India and Iran. Andrew Korybko and Adam Garrie, geo-political analysts, said, "The Pakistani leader exposed India's Hybrid War terrorist plot during his talks with the Iranian leadership which probably explains why the two neighbouring nations decided to take their military cooperation with one another to the next level. This will greatly complicate India's Hybrid War capabilities in clandestinely using Iranian territory to carry out terrorist attacks against Pakistan by proxy as it obsessively seeks to sabotage CPEC, meaning that PM Khan's visit will have far-reaching and long-term geostrategic security consequences in the New Cold War".

Referring to the US decision not to renew its Iranian oil sanctions waivers to India and other countries, who will now have to seek help from Saudi Arabia and GCC countries to replace their imports of oil, they concluded that it would also affect

Iran's relations with India. They contended that the two uncoordinated and coincidental developments would ruin relations between Iran and India. The conclusion drawn by them was "Although Iran and India still have shared strategic interests in the Chabahar Corridor and North-South Transport Corridor, the trust that formerly defined their relations is broken and their ties will never be the same"

Pakistan has also been successful in convincing the Iranian leadership regarding her irrepressible desire to have cordial relations with Iran and to play a positive role in defusing the crisis that has developed in the backdrop of renewed tensions between the USA and Iran. The ambiguities regarding Pakistan's position on Saudi-Iran relations and issues related to the scenario in the Gulf region also seem to have been removed and Iran no more looks askance at it. The recent interaction between the leaders of the two countries, particularly the visit of the Iranian foreign minister to Pakistan, amply testifies to the change in the Iranian outlook about it and their understanding of the position that it has taken on the issues of mutual and regional issues, especially related to security. Notwithstanding the strong position taken by Iran regarding the completion of Pakistani part of the IP Gas Pipeline, it now seems to have a better understanding of the constraints that prevent Pakistan from fulfilling her obligations in the project which is also of crucial importance to the latter. Pakistan is surely pursuing a successful diplomacy on the regional issues, especially in the context of its relations with Iran.

Source : [https://www.pakistantoday.com.pk/2019/06/04/pak-diplomacy-pays-dividends/?fbclid=IwAR0MmovrRyH5gGNXG1IXid8yB2BVNdudDHZ2A34Dxder1XjfrqS8Qr-f\\_U](https://www.pakistantoday.com.pk/2019/06/04/pak-diplomacy-pays-dividends/?fbclid=IwAR0MmovrRyH5gGNXG1IXid8yB2BVNdudDHZ2A34Dxder1XjfrqS8Qr-f_U)

## Pak-US relations | Editorial

For Prime Minister Imran Khan the only issue is that of sending all opposition leaders to jail. After handing over the management of the economy to the IMF, he has forgotten about the sufferings the common people are being required to undergo.

One wonders who is looking after Pakistan's foreign relations, especially Pak-US relations. In March, Foreign Minister Shah Mahmud Qureshi told the nation that ties with the USA were in bad shape in the past 'but because of our successful foreign policy' relations between both countries were improving and about to take a new turn. On another occasion the same month, Mr Qureshi thanked US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo for timely intervention amid simmering tensions between nuclear-armed rivals Pakistan and India.

But this not the way the USA looks at the relationship. Speaking at the 44th annual meeting of the US-India Business Council early this week, Secretary Pompeo said President Donald Trump had taken a far tougher stand on Pakistan than previous presidents, as he throws his weight behind New Delhi to "deal with" Islamabad and Beijing. Then, at the "India Ideas Summit" in Washington on Wednesday Secretary Pompeo went further. "We realise it's different to deal with the likes of China and Pakistan from across the ocean than it is when they are on your borders."

The Assistant Secretary of State for South and Central Asian Affairs, Alice Wells, went further at a hearing of the House Foreign Affairs Committee early this week. She underlined two US concerns about Pakistan, proliferation and support for terrorists. The USA, she said, remains concerned about Pakistan's development of certain categories of nuclear weapons and delivery systems. After referring to Pulwama, she said, "We continue to urge Pakistan's leaders to make good on their pledges to take sustained and irreversible actions against terrorist groups operating within the country's borders, which is necessary for the long-term stability and prosperity of the region." Wells warned that terrorist organisations, such as LeT and JeM, would continue to pose a grave risk to international peace as long as they were able to operate freely in Pakistan. Secretary Pompeo would be in New Delhi in coming weeks to strengthen US India ties. This seems to be none of Mr Khan's concern.

Source ; <https://www.pakistantoday.com.pk/2019/06/14/pak-us-relations-15/?fbclid=IwAR3QKHnprX9T3hjmDO2OQajLzW6JfoVO94qNgLkKRs9oRYueoGoOZxkXp2o>

## The future of higher education in Pakistan By Nisar Ullah

A recent newspaper article calls for transforming Pakistan's university system by turning universities into low-level community colleges that primarily focus on undergraduate teaching. It was insinuated that Higher Education Commission (HEC) previous reforms and initiatives to promote and support postgraduate research were not beneficial and failed to advance Pakistan's economy. Although the HEC reforms and initiatives were highly lauded by international observers such as education experts from UN, USAID and World Bank, there has been a widespread public misconception that the only outcomes of the HEC programs were production of large numbers of PhDs and even higher numbers of 'research' papers. It has also been conjectured that the reforms-led high research outputs in Pakistan were useless since no profit-seeking businesses making use of these papers and patents. However, the centrality of research in the Western university system was linked to foundation of a solid undergraduate teaching programme.

Confining the intellectual life of Pakistan universities system to rote classroom activity would be a fatal flaw for our education system. Instead, our universities should celebrate a culture of research- a system in which research is uniformly expected, discussed, produced, and valued. Without a research component, a relevant and modern undergraduate curriculum does not exist in developed countries. Several studies have revealed that undergraduate research enhances students' critical thinking skills and equips them with fundamentals and skills needed for success in their careers. It also helps them to discover their passion for research, and prepare them for the challenges and opportunities of the future. Undergraduate research is an inquiry-based learning that allows students to apply their knowledge in an experience-based learning environment.

No one doubts that a solid undergraduate programme is important towards a common goal of increasing scientific understanding. However, in practice, a cadre of postdoctoral researchers and graduate students runs the advanced research conducted in developed countries instead of undergraduate students. The USA, which is home to only 4.3% of the world's population but houses 43 of the world's top 100 universities, had more than 40000 postdocs in 2013. Many of the postdocs and graduate students are non-US citizens, who completed their undergraduate training in developing countries around the world. Certainly, human resource is instrumental in the advancement of R&D. However, availability of adequate infrastructure and research funds are also key ingredients for R&D and innovation.

Pakistan's R&D expenditure is more than 216 times less than USA, 73 times less than Japan, 22 times less than India, and about 7 times less than Turkey.

It is a reality that investment in Research and Development (R&D) is not like an ordinary investment. Studies have shown that majority of the research projects, especially basic research, do not produce immediately commercialized results. A study has revealed that there are over 2.2 million papers in science and engineering alone are published each year! Will all of the papers published translate into significant industrial usefulness and utility? The progress of translation of research into practice in the developing countries is plagued mainly by low absorptive capacity of the local industry, non-existent or deficient research commercialization mechanisms and lack of knowledge transfer through foreign direct investment. Furthermore, academic research does not specifically focus on support of domestic industry. Instead, academic-based research generally aligns with answering the larger scientific questions of interest to the international audiences of the scientific community. The reality is that the majority of academic research is fundamental research where the impacts are measured by publications and citations. The promotion of quantitative performance indicators in academic institutions leads to some of academician's work serves the purpose of chasing indicators – a dynamic that encourages utilitarian approach to select agendas or topics favored by the indicator system rather than responding to the market.

Given the fact that R&D needs time to show its full potential and usefulness, the long term promotion of R&D and innovation for the socio-economic development in the developing world is on the rise. The development agenda of the European Union "Europe 2020 Strategy" clearly marked R&D and innovation as key interventions to create jobs through increased industrial competitiveness and to provide solutions to their socioeconomic challenges. The emergence of "tiger economies" of South Korea, Taiwan, and China was rooted in technology-based catch-up, which illustrates that investments in science and technology are crucial ingredients to come out from the "middle income trap". The enormous success of Finland in 1990s has been partly linked to clear concentration on increasing R&D expenditures and supporting knowledge society initiatives. More than 50% India's population is engaged with the profession of agriculture, which contributes to less than 10% to national economy. Merely 15% of her population is equipped with tertiary education that contributes to more than 50% of country's economy.

Bridging the gap between the academia and industry is important for the translation of research into practical applications. We need to make curriculum more relevant

by including 10 to 15% of courses that are industry specific and solicit feedback from the stakeholders about the status of the academic programs. We should enable our faculty to invite an industry expert in his/her domain to co-teach the curriculum, who may bring case studies, technology road maps, and state-of-the-art practices and technologies into the classroom. The industrial exposure of our students needs enhancing through industrial internships, industrial projects, and counselling activities with industry. We should also facilitate industry experts to sit in our advisory bodies.

Increasing R&D expenditure and the development of an ecosystem that contains an adequate infrastructure, employing and retaining of highly qualified faculty and motivation of students is the way forward. The need for continued support in Pakistan for higher education and research can be illustrated by the concept of the knowledge triangle – to disseminate knowledge, generate new knowledge and apply that knowledge in partnership with industry. Without supporting the generation of new knowledge and disseminating that knowledge, the knowledge-triangle is simply incomplete.

Source : [https://nation.com.pk/14-Jun-2019/the-future-of-higher-education-in-pakistan?fbclid=IwAR1gU3DVSB03clo9IKhF5gIgMdSV8HAZWmjm05Cn\\_VRDVphziiCiB-H8vyw](https://nation.com.pk/14-Jun-2019/the-future-of-higher-education-in-pakistan?fbclid=IwAR1gU3DVSB03clo9IKhF5gIgMdSV8HAZWmjm05Cn_VRDVphziiCiB-H8vyw)

## Pakistan & Sino-US cold war By Munir Akram

AFTER the secretive Bilderberg meetings in Switzerland last week, Martin Wolf, the respected Financial Times economic columnist, wrote an op-ed entitled: 'The 100 year fight facing the US and China'. Wolf's conclusions are significant:

"...[R]ivalry with China is becoming an organising principle of US economic, foreign and security policies"; "The aim is US domination. This means control over China, or separation from China". This effort is bound to fail. "This is the most important geopolitical development of our era. ...[I]t will increasingly force everybody else to take sides or fight hard for neutrality"; " Anybody who believes that a rules-based multilateral order, our globalised economy, or even harmonious international relations, are likely to survive this conflict is deluded".

Pakistan is near if not in the eye of the brewing Sino-US storm. Neutrality is not an option for Pakistan. The US has already chosen India as its strategic partner to counter China across the 'Indo-Pacific' and South Asia. The announced US South Asia policy is based on Indian domination of the subcontinent. Notwithstanding India's trade squabbles with Donald Trump, the US establishment is committed to building up India militarily to counter China.

On the other hand, strategic partnership with China is the bedrock of Pakistan's security and foreign policy. The Indo-US alliance will compel further intensification of the Pakistan-China partnership. Pakistan is the biggest impediment to Indian hegemony over South Asia and the success of the Indo-US grand strategy. Ergo, they will try to remove or neutralise this 'impediment'.

The US is arming India with the latest weapons and technologies whose immediate and greatest impact will be on Pakistan. India's military buildup is further exacerbating the arms imbalance against Pakistan, encouraging Indian aggression and lowering the threshold for the use of nuclear weapons in a Pakistan-India conflict. Washington has joined India in depicting the legitimate Kashmiri freedom struggle as 'Islamist terrorism'.

The China-US confrontation is likely to escalate further in the foreseeable future.

A hybrid war is being waged against Pakistan. Apart from the arms buildup, ceasefire violations across the LoC and opposition to Kashmiri freedom, ethnic agitation in ex-Fata and TTP and BLA terrorism has been openly sponsored by India, along with a hostile media campaign with Western characteristics. FATF's threats to put Pakistan on its black list and the opposition to CPEC are being

orchestrated by the US and India. The US has also delayed the IMF package for Pakistan by objecting to repayment of Chinese loans from the bailout.

Although the US has moderated its public antipathy towards Pakistan while it extracts Pakistan's cooperation to persuade the Taliban to be 'reasonable', it is likely to revert to its coercive stance once a settlement is reached in Afghanistan, or if the negotiations with the Taliban break down.

The Sino-US confrontation is likely to escalate further in the foreseeable future. US pressure on smaller states to fall in line will become more intense under the direction of US hawks. Under Xi Jinping, China will not "hide its strength or bide its time". Beijing has retaliated against Washington's trade restrictions. It will "defend every inch" of Chinese territory.

Likewise Narendra Modi in his second term is unlikely to become more pliant towards Pakistan. He has been elected on a plank of extreme Hindu nationalism and hostility towards Muslims, Kashmiris and particularly Pakistan. Modi will not shift from this posture since he needs to keep his people's attention away from the BJP's failure to create jobs and improve living conditions for anyone apart from India's elite. India's economy is facing headwinds and growth has slowed. There are multiple insurgencies across the country, apart from the popular and sustained revolt in disputed Kashmir against India's brutal occupation.

The Pulwama crisis has confirmed the imminent danger posed by the Kashmir dispute. In their resistance to Indian occupation, Kashmiris groups will at times respond violently to India's gross and systematic violations of human rights. India will blame Pakistan for such violence and its failure to put down the Kashmiri resistance. The next Pakistan-India confrontation could lead to general hostilities. These could escalate rapidly to the nuclear level.

The most dangerous scenario for Pakistan would be an Indian conventional attack under a US nuclear 'umbrella'. Pakistan's second strike capability is the only certain counter to this catastrophic scenario.

Some in Pakistan may be sufficiently disheartened by its imposing challenges to advocate peace with India at any cost. But, for Pakistan, "surrender is not an option" (to quote the title of John Bolton's book about the UN).

Accepting Indian domination over South Asia will compromise the very raison d'être for the creation of Pakistan. The current plight of India's trapped Muslims

should be an object lesson to those who believe that displays of goodwill will buy India's friendship. A thousand years of history refutes that thesis.

In any event, irrespective of what Pakistan does, the Kashmiris will persist in their struggle. They have survived periods of Pakistani indifference. If Modi's government attempts to fulfil its campaign pledge to abrogate Jammu & Kashmir's special, autonomous status, the Kashmiri resistance will further intensify. Islamabad will then face a choice of supporting the just Kashmiri struggle or cooperating with the Indians to suppress it (just as the Arab states are being pressed to do to the Palestinian struggle for statehood.)

Even as it seeks to stabilise the economy and revive growth, Pakistan's civil and military leadership must remain focused on preserving Pakistan's security and strategic independence. The alternative is to become an Indo-American satrap.

A better future is possible. But it is not visible on the horizon.

Against all odds, presidents Trump and Xi may resolve their differences over trade and technology at the forthcoming G20 Summit or thereafter. Or, Trump may be defeated in 2020 by a reasonable Democrat who renounces the cold war with China. Alternately, Modi may be persuaded by Putin, Xi and national pride not to play America's cat's-paw and join a cooperative Asian order, including the normalisation of ties with Pakistan. Yet, Pakistan cannot base its security and survival on such optimistic future scenarios. It must plan for the worst while hoping for the best.

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## Pakistan-China: Symphony Of Friendship By Sabah Aslam

It is a well-understood certitude that the iron bond between Beijing and Islamabad gained more strength the moment CPEC was incepted. With growing progress, it got more zest. Amid to the relation which both countries share, several moments occurred where high profile delegation of Peoples Republic of China paid visits to Islamic Republic of Pakistan. Few such visits include visit of Chinese President and Chinese Premier. This time Chinese Vice President, Mr. Wang Qishan visited Pakistan. It was scheduled from May 26 to May 28, 2019.

During his course of visit, he had met the Prime Minister Imran Khan, where both shared their views on the diverse areas of cooperation between Beijing and Islamabad and how to further strengthen the bond between the two countries. Later, he met the President of Islamic Republic of Pakistan where he was revered by the highest civil award of Pakistan “Nishan-e-Pakistan”. Award was given in recognition of the commendable role he has played in promoting Pakistan-China relations. Mr. Wang also had a meeting with the military chief of Pakistan.

Prior to the visit, foreign office of Pakistan released a statement that noted that the visit is in continuation of high-level visits of Pakistan to China in 2018 and later of 2nd Belt and Road forum in Beijing in April 2019.

It has been now 68 years since the diplomatic ties were first entrenched between Pakistan and China. Despite the ever-changing global dynamics, both countries stood side by side with each other and supported the stances of each other internationally.

Every act counts. From the President of Pakistan, Dr. Arif alvi honoring highest civil award “Nishan-e-Pakistan to the inauguration of four mega projects and signing of five MOUs it is all evident of how deeply rooted the bond between the iron brothers is and as to why they are said to be all-weather’s friends. It is not only Pakistan that holds great feelings of affection towards the China but it is the same on the other side as well.

The visit from Chinese high ranks was need of time and visit of Chinese Vice President served the cause. The moment Prime Minister Imran Khan walked into the power corridors in Islamabad there have been speculations that Chinese are not comfortable with the new government and there are few irritants which are causing hindrances in the progress of CPEC thus affecting the bond which both countries share. Prime Minister Imran Khan paid a couple of visits to China since

assuming the office. One was in 2018, the other was on the Second Forum of Belt and Road Initiative held at Beijing. Current visit of Vice president, Wang Qishan therefore, did the job and defied all those speculations.

Another aspect that can be considered of Qishan's visit is that this visit has also sent a strong message to the Washington. In the line of recent events where United States is arching a full-scale trade war with China; this visit sent a strong signal to Oval that China is going stronger and no such action can contain its policy of global prosperity through economics. In addition, that China will not be patronized by such acts of the United States. If US is willing and determined to wage into any sort of economic war than China is all set too.

Wang's visit to Pakistan once again rejuvenated the relation between Pakistan and China. His visit also proved to be a vitality booster for the economic cooperation between the two countries. Such high profile visits always have been fruitful in conveying the message to international community that the iron bond is truly "Deeper than the seas and Higher than the Himalayas".

Source : [https://www.eurasiareview.com/11062019-pakistan-china-symphony-of-friendship-oped/?fbclid=IwAR1C6GFHhOvxybZ-NE4OEyMwaXmMv3WpctNikFwWwwxO41813C0FmA\\_yPEw](https://www.eurasiareview.com/11062019-pakistan-china-symphony-of-friendship-oped/?fbclid=IwAR1C6GFHhOvxybZ-NE4OEyMwaXmMv3WpctNikFwWwwxO41813C0FmA_yPEw)

## Let's get real about Pak-Russia relations By Nasir

### Muhammad

The brief but relatively pleasant interactions between Pakistan's prime minister Imran Khan and his Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin on the sidelines of the recently concluded SCO summit in the capital city of Kyrgyzstan were widely reported in Pakistan's mainstream media and hailed by the youth of the country on social media potentially as a "quick reset" in ties between the two Cold War rival nations. In other words, many at home in Pakistan seemed to think that Russia and Pakistan are now strong allies because Khan had some good moments with Putin unlike Mr. Modi, a recently re-elected leader of Pakistan's archrival India. Wrong!

It is quite interesting to see that both Imran Khan and Vladimir Putin nonetheless share some spectacular attributes (both innate and acquired) such as their year, month and close days of birth (Oct 05 and 07, 1952), athletic and fit physiques, ultra-nationalism and patriotism, anti-Americanism, strong stand against corruption, and pro-people policies etc. However, their polar differences such as their divergent stand on the freedom of media, human rights, democracy; revolution ('Tsunami' in Khan's language), international relations, pragmatism and much more outshine their similarities.

Pakistan's Imran Khan needs to understand the Russian leader Vladimir Putin as well as the country that the latter has been ruling since 1999, in order to launch meaningful ties with the powerful bear to the north

This is in addition to the fact that Khan is a newcomer in government with little-to-none diplomatic skills while Putin is a former elite KGB spy who has been successfully ruling his country for the past twenty years now and who has flamboyant diplomatic skills with epic articulation.

Long gone are the days when alliance systems among nations used to be based upon and cemented by the personal chemistry between political leadership, ideological kinship, usual spell of diplomacy, and other such intangible and immaterial attributes. This marked shift has especially been a hallmark of the post-bipolar world.

What we see and term today as "cordial or special relationship and or a strong bond" among certain nations of the world basically stems from the strong economic and or technological interdependence that have held them together; hence the

term “economic diplomacy.” This certainly does not apply when we speak of Pak-Russia relations especially vis-à-vis Indo-Russia relations and despite some military-to-military contacts in the past few years between Pakistan and Russia.

Pakistan’s Imran Khan needs to understand the Russian leader Vladimir Putin as well as the country that the latter has been ruling since 1999, in order to launch meaningful ties with the powerful bear to the north.

Ever since Vladimir Putin assumed the reins of power, there has been only one thing on his mind, advancing and stabilizing his country’s economy. The KGB spy-turned president knew well that without an economically viable Russia, competition with the US led free world was only a mad man’s dream. This approach can be corroborated by the fact that in 2000, the GDP per capita of Russia was only US\$1,899 but in 2017 it stood at US\$10,966. Also, Russia is forecasted to become the 5th largest economy of the world by 2022. This happened due to- among many other measures- Putin’s emphasis on revitalizing the fractured economic bonds between Russia and some powerful economies in Europe and Asia.

For instance, Russia’s bilateral annual trade volume with Japan in 2003 was \$6 billion whereas it jumped up to \$14 billion in 2018, with China it was below \$2 billion in the late 1990’s while it stood at \$107.06 billion as of 2018, and lastly trade with India; Pakistan’s long time rival, is expected to hit \$30 billion by 2025.

On the other hand, Putin’s Russia appears to be least interested in forging even near-strong ties with nations such as Pakistan, Bangladesh, Afghanistan and Sri Lanka etc for they are faced with the scourge of terrorism and sweeping corruption at home and thus offer very little market for Russian exports or geostrategic influence. This is substantiated by the fact that the Russian president has not visited any of the said countries since his coming to power in 1999 as prime minister of the Russian Federation. Likewise, trade with any of these countries is hardly above US\$1 billion as of 2018.

When it comes to Pakistan’s relations with Russia, it has surely moved slightly in the positive direction especially in the backdrop of some high profile visits of military and political personnel between the two countries and of discussions over some limited military sales to Pakistan. However, according to Ajit Doval, India’s national security adviser, Russia has no plans to diversify the spectrum of its defense relationship with Pakistan and that it would rather prefer to keep it limited. In other words, Russia cannot afford to alienate an ever growing export market in

a powerful India only to appease an economically struggling Pakistan in return for defense projects worth only peanuts.

As far as the news of Russia's interest in the CPEC (a flagship project of the Chinese sponsored Belt and Road Initiative), it is far from a reality at the moment at least. Part of the reason is, Russia's major consumer of gas is Europe, China and it is actively pursuing new ways to further it rather than thinking of the Middle East and Africa- probably last of the last options for Russian energy exports.

Apart from the above, Russia appears to have no geostrategic interests in Pakistan, except for using the "Pakistan card" to modify the behavior of India and to turn it to its own interests. Russia is wary of deepening Indo-US economic and defense ties which is why it sometimes plays the Pakistan card.

If Imran Khan's "Naya Pakistan" really wants to forge closer ties with Russia, it can do so by: utilizing all options to maintain peace in Afghanistan that will then provide an easy access for Pakistan to Russia's rich "near abroad" and ultimately to Russia itself, mulling Russian investment in non-defense sectors such as education, tourism, energy, infrastructure development, information technology, agriculture, dairy farming, minerals, research and development, counter-terrorism, engineering and textile etc, and by trying to closely aligning Pakistan's diplomatic interests with those of Russia. Once this has been accomplished, it will pave the way for stronger military ties as well.

Source :<https://www.pakistantoday.com.pk/2019/06/17/lets-get-real-about-pak-russia-relations/?fbclid=IwAR1Vgs8f8vb8L6-32mHA0hbJdAge7X-OKNX2hkRd-yQQ00su6pS0Tv-LsoM>

## Complex Pakistan-US relationship By Talat Masood

The foremost current interest of the United States in Pakistan is how it supports its policy in persuading the Taliban to accept a negotiated settlement. Among its other priorities, the US wants Pakistan to end its presumed support to the militant organisations operating from within its territory. At the strategic level, Washington remains hostile to the Pakistan-China cooperation; and as such, the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) is its major concern. In sharp contrast, for Pakistan, CPEC is the central pillar of its economic future and long-term strategic alignment with China. Not surprising that the US eyes Pakistan as an irreversible ally of China and its policies towards it testify to this reality.

What we are experiencing is that as the US continues to foster deeper cooperation with India in the economic and strategic fields, its pressure on Pakistan — and China — continues to mount. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo's visit later this month to India is meant for further energising the strong economic, military and political ties between the two countries. The US is eyeing the attractive Indian defence market. It is expected that Mr Pompeo would promote the sale of the stealth design F-35 Fighter Aircraft and other latest defence equipment. Interestingly, sixty-five to seventy per cent of the Indian defence systems in its inventory are of Russian origin and due for modernisation and upgradation. Mr Pompeo's visit also aims at fostering closer cooperation between South Eastern nations — Sri Lanka, Japan and South Korea — to counter Beijing's growing influence in the South China Sea.

What are the measures and policy adjustments, if any, Pakistan has to undertake in view of this emerging geo-strategic picture?

Pakistan though has few options, essentially because of its dire economic situation and dependence on the IMF and global financial institutions.

The present US policy toward Pakistan is in sharp contrast to the early period of its relations when it was the main beneficiary of its economic and military assistance and was considered to be a major ally against the former Soviet Union. Not building its own economy and relying on foreign assistance has brought Pakistan to this stage of dependence.

In the present, it is Afghanistan, radicals and the military's role in regional stability that determine the US-Pakistan relations. Keeping this in view, Pakistan has already taken several measures to allay international concerns. However, as

doubts remain in Washington and in the Western world that more has to be done, it would be in our interest to do a serious reappraisal as to what extent it would be possible to recalibrate foreign and security policies.

In view of the fragile nature of the Afghan government, it would not be able to hold on for long without the strong political and military support by the US. The focus of the current US policy revolves round pushing Pakistan military to ensure that the Taliban leadership agrees to a negotiated settlement and ceases its support for the Taliban. President Trump is wary of prolonging the stay of the US troops in Afghanistan but realises that a hasty withdrawal would lead to an intensification of the civil war and threaten long-term security interests of the US. In this scenario, Pakistan would be the worst sufferer. Having deep interest in the stability of Afghanistan-Pakistan, the military has been facilitating the peace process by putting pressure on the Taliban leadership to engage with the Afghan government. There are, however, limits to the extent that it can persuade their leadership. Besides, it has to protect Pakistan's long-term interests that may not necessarily converge with those of the US. These considerations demand astute diplomacy and a fine balancing act. The military leadership cannot afford to push the Taliban leadership too hard as they are the only party on which it retains a level of influence and that too is gradually lessening.

Despite Pakistan's categorical policy decisions to ban the terrorist organisations like Lashkar-e-Tayaba (LeT), Jaish-e-Muhammad (JeM) and others, doubts remain in the US and certain other countries that these organisations are still finding space in Pakistan and operating freely. The government has taken definitive steps against these organisations, but perception persists that this has been done only cosmetically to satisfy the US and the Western world. It is reflected from their frequent statements and casts a shadow on Pakistan's credibility as this would be in our national interest to remove this misapprehension.

Furthermore, the stringent requirements of the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) have also compelled the government to reassess its past policies towards non-state actors as it realises that any laxity in compliance could drag us in the black zone.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi, in particular, has fully exploited the presumed presence of these groups and has made it the basis of his hard policy of isolating Pakistan. The other disturbing aspect is that India masks its gross human rights

abuses in Kashmir by diverting attention on Pakistan. Similarly, Washington finds in Pakistan an alibi for its failures and difficulties in Afghanistan.

These hostile policies notwithstanding, a robust debate in Pakistan on the utility of non-state actors in a changed security environment is necessary. This process would certainly pose a challenge but has to be undertaken when the frayed relations between the government and the opposition subside. A more transparent approach towards these groups would prevent India and the US from building diplomatic pressure on Pakistan. It will also allay any misgivings that these groups pose a threat to our nuclear assets.

Pakistan's development in the missile or nuclear field is subjected to criticism despite the defensive nature of these systems. In sharp contrast, India's build-up of nuclear and missile forces is encouraged by Washington and facilitated through Israel to counter the growing Chinese military power.

Pakistan faces tough choices for internal consolidation and improving relations with the US and other major powers. For this, we have to regain national confidence and build on the potential and capability of our people. This would be possible if political parties and state institutions realise the growing dangers around us and stay away from narrow pursuits.

source :[https://tribune.com.pk/story/1995285/6-complex-pakistan-us-relationship/?fbclid=IwAR1AuC8HJ87GwAWEYKKWu\\_6Bzl73bbS6Ud72DL0PRzxXliS5uDIJOwcXKuY](https://tribune.com.pk/story/1995285/6-complex-pakistan-us-relationship/?fbclid=IwAR1AuC8HJ87GwAWEYKKWu_6Bzl73bbS6Ud72DL0PRzxXliS5uDIJOwcXKuY)

## Judicial-military conundrum By Faisal Siddiqi

“Let us also discuss, without mincing words or feeling shy, the role of the armed forces and the intelligence agencies in the governance paradigm”. — Chief Justice of Pakistan Asif Saeed Khosa

ONE of the central issues in Pakistan’s political and constitutional development has been the civil-military conflict. But interestingly, this conflict has been conceptualised primarily and predominantly as a conflict between political actors (or at times, civil society) and the military. The judicial side of this civil-military conflict has either been denied by contending that the judiciary has been the alleged ‘B team’ of the military or, if acknowledged, the judicial-military conflict has been perceived more as an aberration and less as an emerging trend.

But is the judicial-military conflict an emerging trend? And are there any ways to mitigate this conflict?

There’s a need for an inter-institutional dialogue to ensure judicial independence & constitutional democracy.

Structural and historical conflict: Between 1947 and 1971, Pakistan had a colonial-minded but independent judiciary, which meant a judiciary which provided legal justice impartially and independently but did not question the legitimacy of unconstitutional regimes or question their fundamental unconstitutional actions. Mohammad Munir, the Machiavellian chief justice, and A.R. Cornelius, the decent chief justice, were really different sides of this same colonial-minded but independent judiciary. The breakup of Pakistan in 1971 led to the establishment of both democracy and democratic constitutionalism (ie adult franchise democracy and the 1973 Constitution) in Pakistan. This laid the foundation for a fundamental structural contradiction between the roles of the judiciary and military.

On one side, protection of democracy and a democratic constitution guaranteed the tremendous power of the judiciary; on the other, the de facto power of the military elite was fundamentally threatened by both democracy and democratic constitutionalism. Thus came about a structural contradiction between these state institutions. But this contradiction coexisted with the inherent weakness of a judiciary having no coercive power to protect itself or implement its decisions. This gave rise to the paradox of both continuing collusion and emerging dissent with the military elite.

Zulfikar Ali Bhutto's judicial murder and the legitimisation of the martial laws of Gens Ziaul Haq and Pervez Musharraf are examples of this continuing collusion. But judges refusing to take the martial law oath in 1981, 2000 and 2007, the judicial examination of the military's role in the 1990s elections, the missing persons cases, and Musharraf's treason trial ordered by the Supreme Court are some examples of emerging dissent.

Former chief justice Jawwad S. Khawaja may have been right in noting the 2007-2009 judicial movement as a watershed point for the judiciary's increasing independence from the military elite; but 2007 only accelerated the existing structural contradiction and consequential historical conflict. Therefore, this structural and historical context explains both Justice Faez Isa's current critique of the militarisation of politics and the militarisation of constitutionalism and also explains the witch-hunt in the form of a presidential reference against him, manufactured and processed by Musharraf's loyalists in the law ministry and the attorney general offices.

Justice Isa's legal confrontation: The Faizabad dharna judgement dated Feb 6, 2019, authored by Justice Isa, contains a summary of what he thinks is wrong in Pakistan — violation of citizens' fundamental rights, illegal tactics used to achieve political agendas, lack of security mechanisms to protect citizens, violation of their constitutional role by the military and intelligence agencies, violation of media independence and inaction of Pemra, the weak role of the Election Commission and the misuse of Islam.

But as far as the civil-military conflict is concerned, this judgement makes two key points. Firstly, it contains a stringent critique of the militarisation of politics and civilian affairs due to the recent alleged unconstitutional role of the military elite especially the intelligence agencies. In short, this is a no-holds-bar critique of the security establishment.

Secondly, far-reaching policy directions are issued on sensitive issues such as the regulation of intelligence agencies and initiation of action against armed forces' interference in political and civilian matters. More importantly, these directions are based on the untested liberal presumptions that the law and Constitution can on their own restrain the tremendous de facto power of the security elite and such judicial directions controlling de facto military power will be implemented without the need to use force as the judiciary has no coercive powers of its own.

Chief Justice Khosa's dialogical approach: In his address of Jan 17, 2019, at a full court reference for former chief justice Saqib Nisar, Chief Justice Khosa proposed a different, indigenous approach to problems of institutional conflict especially the civil-military conflict. Such an out-of-the-box approach has four distinct elements. Firstly, there is the need for an inter-institutional dialogue at the summit level to be convened and chaired by the president of Pakistan. This is based on the premise that there is nothing in the separation-of-power doctrine which "demands institutional isolation or forbids collective efforts to achieve the common good".

Secondly, such a summit should be attended by the top parliamentary, judicial and executive leadership including the military and the intelligence agencies.

Thirdly, the result of this exercise will be a "charter of governance" so as to ensure that we don't "keep drifting or floating aimlessly".

Fourthly, the underlying purpose of this inter-institutional dialogue is to bolster constitutionalism and the rule of law, strengthen democracy and create conditions for inter-institutional working towards the "real issues of the citizens of this great country". To put it differently, such a dialogical approach is rooted in legal realism, which realises the destructiveness of an all-out institutional conflict between different state organs as well as the need for dialogue in order to ensure judicial independence, constitutional democracy, human rights and effective state authority.

"Do not cast away an honest man for a villain's accusation," cautions Shakespeare. Once this foolish and villainous presidential reference is cast away, the real task of mitigating the judicial-military conflict can finally begin. The consequences of non-mitigation of such a conflict will be tragic because military domination of both politics and constitutionalism will lead to an isolated, ungovernable and unsustainable Pakistani state in the 21st century. On the other hand, demoralisation of the military resulting from the mishandling of this conflict may lead to grave threats to the internal and external security of Pakistan.

## Diluting provincial autonomy Abdul Moiz Jaferii

BILAWAL Bhutto-Zardari, in a comprehensive critique of the federal government and its attitude towards parliament during the recent budget session, once again highlighted the order of transfer of the NICVD, the NICH and the JPMC to the federation by the Supreme Court.

The autonomy gained by the provinces after the passage of the 18th Amendment finds its most vocal critics in those who oppose the workings of the PPP-led Sindh government. As a result of the financial space the amendment created, it is argued that the Sindh government behaves in a totalitarian manner, depriving the local governments of their due share or inefficiently administrates the large amounts of money it now has at its disposal.

Recent Supreme Court decisions concerning the three hospitals located in Karachi and the reversion of those institutions to the federation reflect exactly this underlying sentiment, and have given rise to a debate amongst lawyers regarding the scheme and spirit of our Constitution. It is argued that provincial autonomy has been stripped away in favour of a stronger centre as a result of such judgements.

Lawyers supporting the transfer judgement have explained this interpretation of the Constitution going against its plain and expressed meaning by calling it 'federalism'. They have created the same barriers to entry to the debate that Islamic scholars have done in the past with religion. You are uninformed about the subtleties of the federal concept, hence incompetent to debate it. You are told to first read the history of the US and the federalist's great use of its constitutional silences to develop a functioning and cohesive unity.

Thinly veiled is the horror of the shrinking federal pie; it means less money for federally funded institutions.

Federalism, as taken from America, has a romantic history. It has roots in the idea of a progressive-minded minority taking the reins of a country otherwise owned and controlled by a regressive slave-owning elite. Cotton needed a backbreaking effort to harvest, and the slaves that the South so desperately wanted to own were forcibly made to execute this. Enter the federalists, the Hamiltons and the Lincolns, who put right these excesses through ingenious readings of the very bare document that was and is the American constitution.

The Pakistani use of the concept of federalism is to effect nearly the opposite outcome — a centralised and regressive minority seeking to prevent what it feels

are childish, unprepared provincial governments from exercising autonomy. The excuse is that these provincial governments are run with less than bona fide intent, or by less-than-capable representatives.

Thinly veiled is the horror of the shrinking federal pie — less money for federally funded institutions and the resulting unacceptable accountability to localised and varied power structures.

The desire to do what's best for the people drives the best of our public functionaries, including the honourable members of our Supreme Court. The rollback of the 18th Amendment, proving impossible due to a lack of parliamentary and cross-party support, is under way through a dilution by interpretation. In what started out as an interpretation of 'trans-provincial', where taxation of any authority operating in more than one province was held to be outside the scope of a single province, a series of judgements appear to have overridden the plain meaning of the Constitution.

Even though the subject of health is in the provincial domain, and the provinces are hence competent to exercise exclusive authority over it as clearly delineated in Article 97, the hospitals in dispute were taken away from Sindh on the premise that they fell under Entry 16 of the Federal Legislative List. The entry allows the federation to run institutes for the purposes of research, for professional or technical training or for the promotion of special studies.

What was held was simply this: because a (very small) part of the resources of the hospitals in dispute were used to conduct research as well as professional and technical training, the entry in the Federal Legislative List included them (the hospitals).

The predominant function of the hospitals providing health services to hundreds of thousands of patients, as succinctly summarised in the dissent authored by Justice Maqbool Baqar, was ignored in favour of the ancillary research opportunities and the chances of professional training these hospital services generated. It is akin to holding that a sugar mill operates mainly to produce ethanol from molasses.

These actions had landed in the Supreme Court courtesy of brilliant judges who think less as members of the apex court of the province, and more as functionaries of a subordinate court of the federation.

These judgements are much more agreeable because it's so easy to know what's good for the people of Sindh, which is where the fulcrum of the provincial autonomy

challenge pivots. After all, they protect the people from a more autonomous Zardari. It's almost the right thing to do.

Justice Baqar mentioned the Children's Hospital, the Institute of Child Health, the Mayo Hospital and the Services Hospital located in Lahore. He highlighted the research and training that are similarly ancillary and ongoing in all the said hospitals without a federal desire to capture their resources from the government of Punjab. He highlighted the Post Graduate Medical Institute established by the KP government as a separate and independent body to the Lady Reading Hospital in Peshawar.

In summarising his searing critique of the expansion of the Federal Legislative List well beyond its meaning to a point where it overstepped the boundaries of the articles of the Constitution itself, Justice Baqar stated: "Disregarding the mandatory provisions of the Constitution and the categorical mandate prescribed thereunder would embolden and encourage those who are averse to the rule of law and have scant regard for the supremacy of law, thereby strengthening those who want to create dissension and discord in our national polity."

The few educated and experienced seated in power must focus on the smallness of their number rather than the vastness of their wisdom. It takes a two-third parliamentary majority to undo our Constitution. It should not take any less to alter its plain meaning.

Source : [https://www.dawn.com/news/1491192/diluting-provincial-autonomy?fbclid=IwAR0xvxOzUJSOA-9WFqIBkml\\_cuQ8iVmKxpqUXgB4tlhHdsoQiewXr8r-rDU](https://www.dawn.com/news/1491192/diluting-provincial-autonomy?fbclid=IwAR0xvxOzUJSOA-9WFqIBkml_cuQ8iVmKxpqUXgB4tlhHdsoQiewXr8r-rDU)

# ECONOMY

## CPEC allows Pakistan to solve its aching national problems, but it must act quick By Momin Sheikh

The China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) is the topic of national discourse every few days, however, it misses out on the crucial details, explaining the public how they can benefit from it. The discussion mostly centers around the politics of it, without explaining the key aspects that help address Pakistan's key national problems. In this article, I argue how instead of focusing on what's China's interest in initiating CPEC and the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), Pakistan must focus on taking advantage of the CPEC plan to solve its own national issues.

CPEC is a three part plan, investing in Pakistan on priority basis in three separate sectors, Infrastructure, Agriculture and Energy. The investment plan started from \$46 billion initially, however, has since expanded to over \$65 billion.

First and foremost, CPEC started off as an infrastructure development scheme (even though it is now much more than that). The CPEC investment allows Pakistan to build and upgrade its road and rail network throughout the country, connecting areas to the national mainstream that were previously considered remote (for example, areas in Gilgit Baltistan, and Balochistan). The connectivity is vital for Pakistan. Despite Pakistan having a population of over 200 million, the potential of economic growth the size of population brings, remains largely unutilized.

The connectivity, offered by CPEC offers Pakistan a chance to connect the entire population (even the ones living in remote areas) to national mainstream and increase its market size. The increased market size ultimately helps Pakistani manufacturers to increasing their sales, growing their businesses and ultimately increasing their chances of targeting international markets. The larger market size also attracts foreign direct investment from international players (other than China), something that the Pakistani government has been working to promote for a while.

The increased connectivity offered by CPEC, also helps Pakistan address its issue of National Cohesion. Pakistan faces a severe problem within its ethnic fault-lines, which is only aggravated by poor connectivity. Lack of connectivity creates low

interaction between different ethnicities of Pakistan, for example, the urban Punjabis rarely ever have a chance interacting with Pashtuns and Balochs living in frontier regions. This disallows both from learning from each other, exchanging ideas, which only creates distances between them.

The global community now considers national cohesion as important to the development of a country as economic prosperity, since the lack of national cohesion can also become perfect grounds for foreign interference in creating instability and promoting separatism within a country. Connecting the people, and promoting interaction between different segments of society will only help reduce the ethnic tensions within Pakistan. For that to work, our policymakers will have to be thinking along these lines and prioritising such steps.

The second part of CPEC investment deals with Agricultural Technology. Pakistan is still primarily an agricultural economy, which means, the main mode of earning for Pakistan is still to produce and export. The foreign exchange Pakistan earns from exporting its produce helps it finance its domestic development projects, including roads/bridges, health and education, as well as import products for its domestic needs. However, Pakistan remains the lowest in ranking for agricultural yield per area globally. Combine that with rising water scarcity, Pakistan is spending a high amount of resources on low amount of yield. Considering how important the agriculture sector is to Pakistan's survival, use of technology to reform and boost its produce should be the top priority for Pakistan.

This is where CPEC investment arrives, offering Pakistan a chance to solve its chronic problem. The plan offers Pakistan technology sharing and development to help boost its yield as well as produce higher amount of crops with a lower amount of water. Fixing the agriculture sector in Pakistan improves Pakistan's earning potential, essentially helping Pakistan invest more in health, education and poverty alleviation. Combine higher agricultural yield with connectivity, and CPEC offers Pakistan a chance to solve its food security problem as well; only if Pakistan realises its a problem and intends to fix it.

Food security is defined as the availability of food and a person's access to it. So if a country has ample food for its population, however, a part of the population does not have easy access to that food, it's a problem that the country needs to fix. Agriculture technology allowing Pakistan to produce surplus food, combined with infrastructure connecting remote areas to national mainstream, Pakistan will

have a unique opportunity to solve its food security problem if it is to fully utilise the potential of CPEC investment.

Last part of CPEC investment deals with Pakistan's energy sector. Pakistan's energy shortage has been crippling for the country's economy in the past. Even though the situation has improved, there is still much more that needs to be done for the current and future energy needs. The energy shortage in the country is considered a bottleneck. No matter the capacity of country's industry, the industry is unable to operate at an optimal level due to unavailability of energy. This ultimately costs Pakistan's economic growth potential.

Chinese investment in Pakistan's energy sector can allow Pakistan to become self-sufficient and self-reliant in the energy sector. Instead of relying on imported fuel for energy production, the CPEC investment aims to develop self-reliant, coal, nuclear and hydropower plants. The investment further helps Pakistan in the extraction of coal reserves to power the country's coal power plants. Even though coal brings a host of environmental challenges, it is the best medium-term fix for the country, until it develops its solar and wind-powered plants.

The surplus of energy, combined with a large market connected in every part as well as ample availability of food, make Pakistan an ideal destination for future foreign investment in various fields, and a hub for future economic activity. However, in order to position Pakistan on that pedestal, its policymakers will have to realise the potential CPEC investment brings and utilise it through proper planning and policy making.

CPEC helps Pakistan solve its connectivity, national cohesion, food security, agricultural yield and energy shortage problems, however, to ensure these problems are fixed, Pakistan will have to understand and work towards these goals, rather than believing in conspiracy theories and searching for quick fixes. It is not termed game changer for nothing, however, the ball is in Pakistan's court now, and it must act quick.

Source: <https://en.dailypakistan.com.pk/featured/cpec-allows-pakistan-to-solve-its-aching-national-problems-but-it-must-act-quick/?fbclid=IwAR2J1AJLTrm2ybOJpbEy53XK33iXYPPqsxtlzU4XndcS4ncJenwfSS66dk>

## The Global Economy's Next Winners By Susan Lund, James Manyika, and Michael Spence

### What It Takes to Thrive in the Automation Age

The countries that once led the world toward economic openness are retreating into protectionism. Over the past two and a half years, the United States has abandoned the Trans-Pacific Partnership and imposed tariffs on steel, aluminum, and a wide range of Chinese goods. The United Kingdom is in the process of leaving the world's largest free-trade area. And rising nationalist sentiment is threatening to repeat these self-destructive acts elsewhere. The rich world is turning inward.

Its timing couldn't be worse. Even as critics of free trade gain the upper hand, globalization, wholly of its own accord, is transforming in rich countries' favor. Economic growth in the developing world is boosting demand for products made in the developed world. Trade in services is up. Companies are moving production closer to their customers so they can respond faster to changes in demand. Automation has slowed the relentless search for people willing to work for ever-lower wages. And the greater complexity of modern goods means that research, design, and maintenance are coming to matter more than production.

All these trends play to the strengths of developed countries, where skilled work forces, large quantities of capital, huge customer bases, and dense clusters of high-tech companies combine to power modern economies. Middle-income countries, such as China and Mexico, may also benefit from the next era of globalization (although changing trade and investment patterns may well leave sections of their work forces behind, just as they did in rich countries over the past two decades). The poorest countries, meanwhile, will see their chief advantage—cheap labor—grow less important.

Rich countries have chosen a spectacularly poor time to begin closing themselves off from trade, investment, and immigration. Rather than pulling up the drawbridge just as the benefits of globalization have begun to flow back toward the developed world, they should figure out how to take advantage of these changing patterns of globalization. Making sure that everyone, not just the already successful, benefits will be a daunting task. But the one way for rich countries to ensure that everyone loses is to turn away from the open world just as they are becoming the masters of it.

In the 1990s and the early years of this century, growth in trade soared, especially in manufactured goods and natural resources. In 2001, China's entry into the World Trade Organization helped create a vast new manufacturing center for labor-intensive goods. The digital revolution allowed multinational companies to stretch their supply chains around the world. This spurt of globalization was fueled in part by trade in intermediate goods, such as raw materials and computer chips, which tripled in nominal value, from \$2.5 trillion in 1995 to \$7.5 trillion in 2007. Over that period, the total value of goods traded each year grew more than twice as fast as global GDP.

Then came the Great Recession. Global trade flows plummeted. Most analysts assumed that once the recovery gained steam, trade would come roaring back. They were wrong. From 2007 to 2017, exports declined from 28 percent to 23 percent of global gross output. The decline has been most pronounced in heavily traded goods with complex global value chains, such as computers, electronics, vehicles, and chemicals. A decade after the Great Recession, it is clear that trade is not returning to its former growth rates and patterns.

Trade in services will take up an ever-greater share of the global economy.

In part, that's because the global economy is rebalancing as China and other countries with emerging markets reach the next stage of development. After several decades of participating in global trade mainly as producers, emerging economies have become the world's major engines of demand. In 2016, for example, carmakers sold 40 percent more cars in China than they did in Europe. It is expected that by 2025, emerging markets will consume two-thirds of the world's manufactured goods and, by 2030, they will consume more than half of all goods.

China's growing demand means that more of what is made in China is being sold there. In 2007, China exported 55 percent of the consumer electronic goods and 37 percent of the textiles it produced; in 2017, those figures were 29 percent and 17 percent, respectively. Other emerging economies are following suit.

Developing countries also now rely less on intermediate imports. China first stepped onto the global trading scene in the 1990s by importing raw materials and parts and then assembling them into finished goods for export. But things have changed. In several sectors, including computers, electronics, vehicles, and machinery, China now produces far more sophisticated components, and a wider range of them, than it did two decades ago.

Trade is becoming more concentrated in specific regions, particularly within Europe and Asia. That is partly the result of greater domestic demand from emerging-market countries, but it is also being driven by the increased importance of speed. Proximity to consumers allows companies to respond faster to changing demand and new trends. Many companies are creating regional supply chains near each of their major markets. Adidas, for example, has built fully automated “Speedfactories” to produce new shoes in Germany and the United States rather than making them in its traditional locations in Indonesia. Zara has pioneered the “fast fashion” industry, refreshing its store merchandise twice a week. More than half of the company’s thousands of suppliers are concentrated in Morocco, Portugal, Spain, and Turkey, where they can serve the European and U.S. markets. Zara can get new designs from the drawing board to a store in Manhattan in just 25 days.

The growth of new technologies, such as Internet connectivity and artificial intelligence (AI), are also changing trade patterns. From 2005 to 2017, the amount of data flowing across borders every second grew by a factor of 148. The availability of cheap, fast digital communication has boosted trade. E-commerce platforms allow buyers and sellers to find each other more easily. The Internet of Things—everyday products with Internet connections—lets companies track shipments around the world and monitor their supply chains.

Yet not all new technologies lead to more trade. Some, such as robotics, automation, AI, and 3-D printing, are changing the nature of trade flows but not boosting the overall amount of trade. Factories have used robots for decades, but only for rote tasks. Now, technological advances, such as AI-powered vision, language comprehension, and fine motor skills, allow manufacturing robots to perform tasks that were once out of their reach. They can assemble intricate components and are starting to work with delicate materials, such as textiles.

The rise of automation means companies don’t have to worry as much about the cost of labor when choosing where to invest. In recent decades, companies have sought out low-paid workers, even if that meant building long, complex supply chains. That is no longer the dominant model: today, only 18 percent of the overall trade in goods involves exports from a low-wage country to a high-wage one. Other factors, such as access to resources, the speed at which firms can get their products to consumers, and the skills available in the work force, are more important. Companies are building fully automated factories to make textiles, clothes, shoes, and toys—the labor-intensive goods that gave China and other

developing countries their start in global manufacturing. Exports from low-wage countries to high-wage countries fell from 55 percent of all exports of those kinds of cheap, labor-intensive goods in 2007 to 43 percent in 2017.

Trade in goods may be slowing relative to global economic growth, but trade in services is not. Since 2007, global trade in services has grown more than 60 percent faster than global trade in goods. Trade in some sectors, including telecommunications, information technology, business services, and intellectual property, is now growing two to three times as fast as trade in goods. In 2017, global trade in services totaled \$5.1 trillion, still far less than the \$17.3 trillion of goods traded globally. But those numbers understate the size of the services trade. National accounts do not, for example, separate out R & D, design, sales and marketing, and back-office services from the physical production of goods. Account for those elements, and services make up almost one-third of the value of traded manufactured goods. And companies have been turning more and more to foreign providers for those services. Although directly measured services are only 23 percent of total trade, services now account for 45 percent of the value added of traded goods.

Trade in services will take up an ever-greater share of the global economy as manufacturers and retailers introduce new ways of providing services, and not just goods, to consumers. Car and truck manufacturers, for example, are launching partnerships with companies that develop autonomous driving technologies, rent out vehicles, or provide ride-hailing services, as they anticipate a shift away from the traditional model of one-time vehicle purchases. Cloud computing has popularized pay-as-you-go and subscription models for storage and software, freeing users from making heavy investments in their own hardware. Ultrafast 5G wireless networks will give companies new ways to deliver services, such as surgery carried out by remotely operated robots and remote-control infrastructure maintenance made possible by virtual re-creations of the site in question.

For decades, manufacturing firms made physical things. Today, that is no longer a given. Some multinational companies, including Apple and many pharmaceutical manufacturers, have turned themselves into “virtual manufacturers”—companies that design, market, and distribute but rely on contractors to churn out the actual product.

That change reflects a broader shift toward intangible goods. Across many industries, R & D, marketing, distribution, and after-sales services now create more

value than the physical goods, and they're growing faster. The economist Carol Corrado has shown that firms' annual investment in intangible assets, such as software, brands, and intellectual property, exceeds their investment in buildings, equipment, and other physical assets. In part, that's because products have become more complicated. Software now accounts for ten percent of the value of new cars, for example, and McKinsey expects that share to rise to 30 percent by 2030.

Goods still matter. Companies still have to move goods across borders, even when services have played a big role in their production. Tariffs on goods disrupt and distort these flows and lower productivity. That means they act as tariffs on the services involved, too. Tariffs on intermediate goods raise costs for manufacturers and result in a kind of double taxation for final exports. In short, the argument for free trade is just as strong today as it was three decades ago.

Middle-class Americans and Europeans bore the brunt of the job losses caused by the last wave of globalization. With the notable exception of Germany, advanced economies have experienced steep falls in manufacturing employment over the past two decades. In the United States, the number of people working in manufacturing declined from an estimated 17.6 million in 1997 to a low of 11.5 million in 2010, before recovering modestly to about 12.8 million today.

Yet advanced economies stand to benefit from the next chapter of globalization. A future that hinges on innovation, digital technology, services, and proximity to consumers lines up neatly with their strengths: skilled work forces, strong protections for intellectual property, lucrative consumer markets, and leading high-tech firms and start-up ecosystems. Developed countries that take advantage of these favorable conditions will thrive. Those that don't, won't.

Manufacturing jobs are not yet flowing back to the rich world in vast numbers, but there are some encouraging signs. Several major companies, such as Adidas, Fast Radius, and Lincoln Electric, have opened U.S. facilities in recent years. Apple has announced a major expansion in Austin, Texas, and is planning new data centers and research facilities in other cities across the United States. Companies based in the developing world are also investing more in the United States and Europe.

The growth in trade in services is providing another boost for advanced economies. The United States, Europe, and other advanced economies together already run an annual surplus in trade in services of almost \$480 billion, twice as high as a

decade ago, demonstrating their competitive advantage in these industries. New technology will let companies remotely deliver more services, such as education and health care. Countries that already specialize in exporting services, such as France, Sweden, the United Kingdom, and the United States, are in a good position to capitalize on these trends.

Emerging economies have become the world's major engines of demand.

Finally, as the developing world gets richer, it will buy more cars, computers, airplanes, and machinery from the developed world. Advanced economies send more than 40 percent of their exports to emerging markets, almost double the share they sent 20 years ago. Those exports added up to more than \$4 trillion worth of goods in 2017 alone.

The picture for advanced economies is not uniformly rosy, however. Some industries will face fierce new competition from the developing world. Homegrown companies in Brazil, China, and other middle-income countries are branching out into higher-value-added industries, such as supercomputing, aerospace, and solar panel manufacturing, and relying less on imported parts from the developed world. Chinese companies are beginning to manufacture the computer chips they used to buy from abroad. (Although for smartphones, China still imports chips.) China's total annual imports of intermediate goods from Germany for vehicles, machines, and other sophisticated products peaked in 2014 at \$44 billion; by 2017, the figure was \$37 billion. Japan and South Korea have also seen their exports of intermediate goods to China in those industries decline. The Made in China 2025 initiative aims to build the country's strengths in cutting-edge areas such as AI, 5G wireless systems, and robotics.

Middle-income countries, such as Brazil, China, Hungary, Mexico, Morocco, Poland, South Africa, Thailand, and Turkey, will reap some of the benefits of the new globalization, but they will also face new difficulties. Such countries now play important roles in the complex value chains that produce vehicles, machinery, electronics, chemicals, and transportation equipment. They both supply and compete with the companies based in countries with advanced economies that have traditionally dominated those industries.

A number of middle-income countries enjoy a fixed advantage: geographic proximity to major consumer markets in advanced economies. As automation makes labor costs less important, many multinational companies are choosing to build new factories not in countries with the lowest wages but in countries that are

closer to their main consumer markets and that still offer lower wages than rich countries. Mexico fits the bill for the United States; Morocco, Turkey, and eastern European countries do the same for western European countries, as do Malaysia and Thailand for richer Asian countries, such as Japan and the wealthier parts of China.

Other middle-income countries are poised to benefit from the shift from goods to services. Costa Rica, for example, is now a major exporter of business services, such as data entry, analytics, and information technology support. Its exports in those sectors have grown at an average annual rate of 34 percent over the last ten years, and they are worth \$4.5 billion today, or 7.6 percent of Costa Rica's GDP. The global annual trade in outsourced business services—everything from accounting to customer support—totals \$270 billion and growing. That represents a lucrative opportunity for middle-income countries such as Costa Rica. Yet since AI tools could handle much of the work involved in these services, workers will need to be able to assist customers with more complex troubleshooting or sales if they are to stay ahead of the machines.

CHINA STRINGER NETWORK / REUTERS At a logistics center in Wuhan, China, November 2015

Middle-income countries also have huge opportunities to benefit from new technologies—not only by adopting them but also by building them. China, for instance, is a world leader in mobile payments. Apps such as WeChat Pay and Alipay have allowed Chinese consumers to move straight from using cash for transactions to making smartphone payments, skipping credit cards altogether. China's third-party payment platforms handled some \$15.4 trillion worth of mobile payments in 2017—more than 40 times the amount processed in the United States, according to the consulting firm iResearch. In addition to making transactions cheaper and more efficient, payment apps also create huge pools of data that their creators can use to offer individually tailored loans, insurance, and investment products. In every country, the rise of big data raises difficult legal and ethical questions; in China, especially, official use of such data has come under scrutiny. No two countries are likely to come to exactly the same conclusions, but all will have to grapple with these issues.

In addition, e-commerce, mobile Internet, digital payments, and online financial services tend to contribute to more inclusive growth. A 2019 report by the Luohan Academy, a research group established by Alibaba, found that the benefits of the

current digital revolution are likely to be more evenly distributed than those of previous technological revolutions. That's because digital technologies are no longer restricted to rich people in rich countries. Today's technologies have made it easier for people everywhere to start businesses, reach customers, and access financing. The report found that in China, digital technologies have accelerated growth in rural areas and inland provinces, places that have long lagged behind the coasts.

Even as middle-income countries shift to higher-value manufacturing and services, their manufacturing workers are likely to face struggles similar to those of American and European workers who have been displaced by digital technologies. Factory workers in China, Mexico, and Southeast Asia may bear the brunt of job displacement as wages rise and automation proceeds. A study by the economist Robert Atkinson found that China, the Czech Republic, Slovenia, and Thailand are adopting industrial robots faster than their wage levels would predict. Although automation will raise productivity growth and product quality, these countries will need to help displaced workers and avoid the mistakes made by the West.

In a world of increasing automation, the prospects for low-income countries are growing more uncertain. In the short term, export-led, labor-intensive manufacturing may still have room to grow in some low-wage countries. Bangladesh, India, and Vietnam are achieving solid growth in labor-intensive manufacturing exports, taking advantage of China's rising wages and the country's emphasis on more sophisticated and profitable products. To make the old model of export-led manufacturing growth work, countries will need to invest in roads, railways, airports, and other logistics infrastructure—and eventually in modern, high-tech factories that can compete with those in the rest of the world. Bangladesh, India, and Vietnam have taken some positive steps but will need to do more.

Whether services can drive the kind of rapid growth in early stage developing countries that manufacturing once did remains to be seen. Some low-income countries, such as Ghana, India, and the Philippines, have thriving service industries catering to businesses around the world. But even in those countries, the services-export sector employs few people and contributes little to GDP. Like middle-income countries, low-income ones will need to shift to higher-value activities to stay ahead of automation. Tradable services, such as transportation, finance, and business services, enjoy high productivity growth and can raise living standards, but less tradable ones, such as food preparation, health care, and

education, which employ millions more people, thus far show little productivity growth, making them a poor engine for long-term prosperity.

Technology may enable some people in low-income economies to jump ahead in economic development without retracing the paths taken by those in advanced economies. Internet access allows workers everywhere to use online freelance platforms, such as UpWork, Fiverr, and Samasource, to earn supplemental income. A large share of the freelancers on these platforms are in developing countries. Khan Academy and Coursera teach languages and other skills. Google Translate is removing language barriers. Kiva and Kickstarter help aspiring entrepreneurs fund their start-ups. And telemedicine services make better health care available to people in remote places. But using those services requires widespread access to affordable high-speed Internet. Countries need to invest in digital infrastructure and education if they are to succeed in a global digital economy. Although many countries have achieved near-universal primary schooling, getting students to complete secondary school and making sure they receive a high-quality education when there are the next hurdles.

Trade has done more than almost anything else to cut global poverty. If developing countries shift strategies to take advantage of the next wave of globalization, trade can continue to lift people out of poverty and into the middle class. It is advanced economies, however, that need to change their outlook the most dramatically. They are shutting themselves off from the outside world at the very moment when they should be welcoming it in.

Source : [https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/world/2019-06-11/global-economys-next-winners?fbclid=IwAR14tXw\\_8bf-ete0Yg\\_FZmTN9Wb5\\_2VWqcP-t-Y19kT2Di2I9nhdgUVxEI8](https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/world/2019-06-11/global-economys-next-winners?fbclid=IwAR14tXw_8bf-ete0Yg_FZmTN9Wb5_2VWqcP-t-Y19kT2Di2I9nhdgUVxEI8)

## Faltering economy | Editorial

MUCH of it was already known, but it bears repeating from an official platform like the latest Economic Survey of Pakistan that the country's economy is now in the throes of a sharp slowdown which is expected to persist all through the next year as well. The growth target set at the start of the fiscal year was 6.2pc, but the out-turn today is 3.3pc, just past the halfway mark. This is far below the level that the growth rate needs to be at to even absorb the additional requirements in the labour force on an annual basis. To top it off, the Survey, as well as the prime minister's finance adviser Hafeez Shaikh, highlighted that inflation will be "considerably higher" all through next year after seeing steep increases in the closing months of the current fiscal year. There was no indication of how much higher, but perhaps a clue will be provided if and when the government announces its inflation target for the next year. Suffice it to say that one of the main drivers of inflation next year will be higher utility and fuel prices, as per Mr Shaikh's remarks and the Economic Survey.

What this means is that we should brace ourselves for a full year of rising unemployment coupled with high inflation. This is an incendiary combination that is rarely seen. The last time we saw collapsing growth amid rising inflation was when the country made the transition from military rule to civilian democracy about a decade ago. It was the legacy left behind by Gen Pervez Musharraf and it took many years — till 2013 — before growth returned and inflation was finally tamed. But even in those years, as the finance adviser himself pointed out, the adverse impact on employment was mitigated by the government's policy of shifting the base of its spending, and the motor force of the economy, from the urban to the rural economy. As a result, as Mr Shaikh said, the economy was able to still generate more jobs despite growth having fallen to around 2pc, compared to the fastest-growing years of the PML-N government that followed.

The Survey makes it abundantly clear that a large economic adjustment has to be undertaken. Revenues have posted zero growth while expenditures have grown by almost 8pc. Even the shrinking of the current account deficit by 27pc from last year is not as encouraging a story when one sees that much of it owes to the shrinking furnace oil imports, along with a handful of other items. Exports have posted zero growth as well, while foreign investment has fallen by almost 50pc. It now remains to be seen what strategy the government intends to follow to help mitigate the impact of this awful situation on the poor. We can only hope that

something more than cosmetic measures will be undertaken for that crucial objective.

Source : <https://www.dawn.com/news/1487731/faltering-economy?fbclid=IwAR23jjluCZFxEFBGDxeEMGq1oGNgpWqBNR6aXWsUthGffwf3tDJSjXR4U>

## Issues in World Bank's Global Economic Prospects report and Pakistan's growth outlook By OMER JAVED

The Talks Scenario – Afghanistan Peace Process By Brig (Retd) Ishaq Ahmed Peace in Afghanistan – A dream that is not getting to reality, despite efforts (not concerted and fruitful) of so many countries, players and even Afghan populace and leadership within and outside Afghanistan. Eighteen years down the road, for the recent invasion, insurgency to some and Jihad for Taliban,

The World Bank came out with its June 2019 Global Economic Prospects (GEP): Heightened Tensions, Subdued Investment report, where the main message is that in 2019 while forecasted global growth overall weakens to 2.6 per cent, that of emerging/developing economies expected to be at four per cent; while both likely to increase to 2.7 per cent and 4.6 per cent respectively in 2020.

Having said that, unfortunately the WB's main thrust for lowering poverty remained on growth. This reflects the underlying basis of trickle-down economics entrenched in WB's mindset, where since the 1960s it was assumed that by increasing national output would naturally lead to denting poverty, which has not happened in the last 30 years, and in the words of Nobel laureate Joseph Stiglitz would have been a good phenomena if it were to happen, as a lot of public funds investment took place in safeguarding and nourishing the income pie of the rich. Yet, as now soundly highlighted by research, this income pie did not trickle down, but rather increased income and wealth inequality for the rich.

Nevertheless, the bottom line is that this never happened, and rather the rich increased their wealth, while the income inequality gap increased; overall average wages continued to stagnate, and coupled with austerity adventurism, has meant that poverty has increased over time. Yet WB continues to not highlight the importance of distributional consequences of growth towards denting poverty. The report also does not draw attention to the role of extractive institutional design, and the lack of regulation in an era of fast and deep financialisation of economies. To his surprise, the author could not find the word 'inequality' even once in the entire report.

It is all the more bizarre of WB to not include the endogeneity of inequality in determining economic growth, along with the positive role of distribution in denting poverty, since recent research by leading economists like Thomas Piketty and Joseph Stiglitz- among numerous others- and even the IMF's own senior

economists—all documented the importance of equity with growth in denting poverty and inequality, while at the same time inequality in itself was found to be a significant determinant of economic growth.

The government should make best use of all these windfall gains to shift tax composition from indirect to direct, among initiating other needed reforms for meeting growth and equity concerns

Even the word ‘equity’ that appeared 21 times in the report, had nothing do with equity concerns of growth in terms of distributional consequences; instead it appeared with reference to equity prices and indexes, in turn, concerning overall with the world of finance and investment. Moreover, the word, ‘welfare’ appears once and that too in the reference section! Does the report that reflects and forecasts the global economic prospects, and that tries to talk meaningfully— but fails— about poverty, has no place for deliberating the status and role of welfare and inequality in determining economic growth, and in translating this growth into denting poverty and checking equity concerns— more importantly in relation to its impact over the last few decades in perpetuating a large chunk of global wealth into fewer and fewer hands? Indeed, serious points for the WB staff to ponder if they wish to really penetrate the meat that bears significantly in determining economic growth and poverty.

According to the GEP report, while the real GDP growth of South Asia is forecasted for 2019 at 6.9 per cent, and which is expected to increase to 7.0 and 7.1 per cent in the next two fiscals, Pakistan’s performance in this regard is quite poor— at 3.4 per cent in 2019 (a major upward projection over IMF’s earlier forecast of 2.9 per cent), which is expected to dip in 2020 to 2.7 per cent, after recovering to a paltry 4.0 per cent in 2021.

At the same time, India and Bangladesh will remain close to the mid-seven per cents, which also means that unlike in Pakistan greater absorption of unemployed people in the labour force in both is expected. For the PTI government, this also means being caught in a difficult position in terms of coming true on its manifesto promises of providing jobs, meeting enhanced social and education expenditure targets, and other announced endeavours like subsidised housing and ehsaas (or welfare) programme.

Two areas the government could have explored to better manage these promises, was to tap effectively into international financial markets to service external debt, which would have not only built up forex reserves but also possibly allowed

avoiding a neoliberal IMF programme, and secondly as a consequence allowing government to reach a much needed home grown economic policy to deal with stagflationary concerns while avoiding unnecessary cuts in development spending and withdrawing from greater role of government and regulation, in turn by tapping into unconventional monetary policy measures.

The last measure is also important to save the economy from any further curtailment of aggregate demand, since already one of the reasons of low growth in the country was at the back of contractionary monetary policies; clearly also indicated in the GEP report as, 'The (South Asian) region continued to enjoy solid economic activity in 2018, posting 7 per cent GDP growth due to robust domestic demand. Pakistan was a notable exception, with a broad-based weakening of domestic demand against the backdrop of tightening policies aimed at addressing the country's macroeconomic imbalances.' And also, 'Private consumption and investment remained robust in much of the region, offsetting a slowdown in Pakistan.'

The GEP report also underlines the lack of budgetary support to agriculture here, by indicating, 'India has announced a package of direct benefits to farmers and some tax breaks for the middle class while others (Pakistan, Sri Lanka) are on paths of fiscal consolidation to tackle sizable deficits.' It is important for Pakistan to correct fiscal imbalance with active policy, even an unconventional one, at the earliest possible and provide much-needed budgetary and overall institutional support to agriculture, since unlike India and Bangladesh, the percentage share of agriculture in GDP is a lot higher in Pakistan at 22.9 per cent; while in India and Bangladesh at 15.5 per cent and 13.4 per cent respectively. Such support is also important, since rural poverty is a lot higher than urban poverty in Pakistan.

That said, all is not lost still and the government should adopt a more heterodox approach to economic policy- mainly by a) taking a political economic view of issues, b) borrowing from active redistribution policies, c) bringing back the state in taking the lead on running economic institutions, d) rationalising prices, e) right-sizing the scale of production/activity and labour-intensive techniques of public sector enterprises to reduce losses, in turn meeting the supply gaps generated from reduced scale of goods and services from alternative sources in the transition time. For this, the government should also extensively expand the role of the Planning Ministry, make an overall economic ministry for reaching efficiency gains, and transform the approach of budget making to being a wellbeing one.

One breath of fresh air for the government's current account worries should be a recent change in the direction of oil prices, which have suddenly turned, slipping to below \$60 a barrel in London. This has been the lowest since January 2019, mainly at back of a) global trade wars concerns and its negative impact on portfolio investment and productive activity, b) significant supply disruptions from Russia, Venezuela, and Iran, and c) large-scale market absorption of US shale oil that has been entering market in huge quantities. The government should make best use of all these windfall gains– albeit expected to last briefly– and take this cushion to shift tax composition from indirect to direct, among initiating other needed reforms for meeting growth and equity concerns.

Source : [https://www.pakistantoday.com.pk/2019/06/09/issues-in-world-banks-global-economic-prospects-report-and-pakistans-growth-outlook/?fbclid=IwAR3jM70TocQRmOM6YirbdbuN5NHafPa32FCwjP\\_ib5IMkuco\\_wj5kBSZ7NP8](https://www.pakistantoday.com.pk/2019/06/09/issues-in-world-banks-global-economic-prospects-report-and-pakistans-growth-outlook/?fbclid=IwAR3jM70TocQRmOM6YirbdbuN5NHafPa32FCwjP_ib5IMkuco_wj5kBSZ7NP8)

## [There is no green revolution without tax justice](#) By Eva Joly

The “green wave” recorded during the European elections on 26 May should give Europe momentum. It is now time we oppose our determination to build a social, democratic and ecological Europe, against the withdrawal desires of nationalists and Eurosceptics, or the temptations of the status quo offered by Conservatives and Liberals.

The strong mobilisation of young people for the climate gives me particular hope for the future. In France and Germany, the Greens were the highest-ranked party among the 18-34 demographic in this election. And though high school students cannot yet vote, they are already expressing their willingness to defend their future on the streets during the climate marches.

As my mandate as a European MP ends after ten years of fighting, I want to tell these young mobilised people from Europe and the rest of the world that it is up to them to take up the torch. I also want to convince them that there is no green revolution without tax justice.

First, because there is a direct link between environmental degradation and tax evasion. Take illegal fishing or logging, for example. The income from this trafficking is clearly not invested in savings banks; it is hidden in tax havens. Secondly, States must have more resources to finance the ecological transition we are calling for, and, for this reason, multinationals must pay their fair share of taxes. We must put an end to aggressive tax optimization strategies that allow them to pay no taxes despite record profits. That Google, for example, was able to transfer 19.9 billion Euros to Bermuda in 2017 through a Dutch shell company is outrageous. Tax evasion costs the European Union 20% of its corporate tax revenue each year.

For ten years, I have made tax justice a priority for my work, in the European Parliament. I leave now my position with a mixture of satisfaction and bitterness. Satisfaction first, because we have achieved important victories. Whistleblowers, who defend the general interest at the risk of their own lives, will now benefit from European protection. Financial crime will be better attacked through the creation of a European Public Prosecutor’s Office to coordinate cross-border investigations. Moreover, the European Union has finally required intermediaries – such as banks and tax lawyers – to transmit the plans they draw up on behalf of their clients to the authorities.

Today Europe that is more respectful of the environment, justice and solidarity, is within reach. It is also time for developing countries to seat at the table, and make their voices heard

The bitterness is there, however, because there is still so much to be done. The proposal for tax transparency for multinationals is still blocked by Member State governments, while we are entitled to check whether these companies are paying their taxes where they actually do business. Above all, I regret that Europe has not yet adopted unitary taxation of multinationals, imposing taxes on a multinational as a single entity – which they are in reality, rather than a myriad of so-called independent subsidiaries, as they claim. This would put an end to the sleight of hand that allows companies to declare their profits wherever they want, with the sole purpose of paying almost no tax!

This system, which benefits a handful of cheating states in the European Union – notably Ireland, the Netherlands and Luxembourg – harms all the others. It also engages our responsibility towards developing countries. For example, the Tax Justice Network has just revealed that tobacco giant British American Tobacco artificially declared part of its profits in a British subsidiary, where it is exempt from tax. If nothing changes, the company will have avoided paying € 625 million by 2030 to Bangladesh, Indonesia, Kenya, Guyana, Brazil and Trinidad and Tobago. Without transparency and unitary taxation, multinationals will be able to continue plundering poor countries from the South.

On May 31, in Paris, 129 countries agreed on the need to change global tax rules and prevent multinationals from declaring their profits – and associated taxes – wherever they want. In other words, they decided that multinationals should be considered as single entities – which they are in reality, rather than a myriad of so-called independent subsidiaries, as they claim. It is a revolution that we have been defending worldwide within the Independent Commission for the Reform of International Corporate Taxation (ICRICT). Of course, the political battles have only just started, because the interests diverge considerably among the 129 states.

For ten years, I have defended the vision of a fairer Europe. A Europe that puts an end to the impunity of the powerful. I have acted for a Europe that defends the general interest rather than multinationals. This Europe that is more respectful of the environment, justice and solidarity, is within reach. It is also time for developing countries to seat at the table, and make their voices heard

Source :[https://dailytimes.com.pk/421097/there-is-no-green-revolution-without-tax-justice/?fbclid=IwAR3vY59npDaCi4b6dx8sOM4\\_f4xw0s56BG8R-x8dYLI5RnquAX5AS9j-j8](https://dailytimes.com.pk/421097/there-is-no-green-revolution-without-tax-justice/?fbclid=IwAR3vY59npDaCi4b6dx8sOM4_f4xw0s56BG8R-x8dYLI5RnquAX5AS9j-j8)

# WORLD

## Modi & Kashmir | Editorial

WITH Narendra Modi back in the prime ministerial saddle, legitimate questions have arisen about how the Indian leadership is likely to handle the simmering discontent in India-held Kashmir.

After all, Mr Modi's previous stint in power witnessed a brutal approach, with a militarised response to Kashmiris' yearning for freedom and dignity.

In fact, the radical Hindu BJP said it would end Kashmir's special constitutional status, and remains committed to this dubious goal.

This violent, clumsy response from Delhi to what is a political issue has increased the sense of alienation among Kashmiris, with many young and educated citizens of the region taking up arms to resist the Indian military machine on the battlefield and the erosion of Kashmiri autonomy.

The killing by Indian forces of young Kashmiri freedom fighter Burhan Wani in 2016 sparked protests in the held region, and also highlighted the trend that young educated Kashmiris were willing to opt for armed struggle against India after being disillusioned with the political process.

Indian forces recently gunned down Zakir Musa, said to be India's 'most wanted' militant, who was among Wani's comrades. Following the killing of Musa, thousands turned up for his funeral.

Unfortunately, ugly cycles of violence in occupied Kashmir have become the norm, and unless the establishment in Delhi comes up with a fresh approach, they will show no signs of abating.

Along with the concerns many in the region have regarding Mr Modi's approach to regional politics and his government's treatment of minorities within India, the issue of Kashmir will remain prominent.

Will the Indian prime minister continue with his hard-line approach, pushing Kashmiri youth to the wall and forcing them to fight the Indian state? Or will he display statesmanship and adopt a fresh approach to the troubled region?

While those wishing to see peace prevail in South Asia will be hoping that Mr Modi picks the latter option, the reality may be more of the same.

However, while the BJP's suppression of the Kashmiri freedom struggle has resulted in the disillusionment of practically all Kashmiris with India, even some of Delhi's most loyal supporters in the held region — the Abdullah clan, Mehbooba Mufti etc — appear dismayed at the way the Hindu nationalists have treated Kashmir.

A different approach to the occupied territory by Delhi can help break the deadlock in South Asia, but only if Mr Modi and his acolytes have the courage to opt for it.

Source: <https://www.dawn.com/news/1485780/modi-kashmir>

## OIC politicking | Editorial

UNITY in the Muslim world has been a distant dream, with sectarian, nationalist and other factors often cropping up to fuel division. The Organisation of Islamic Cooperation has, in particular, been ineffectual in promoting unity and the common interests of over a billion Muslims across the globe. What is worse, the organisation is often used by some Muslim states as a political vehicle to denounce and demonise their geopolitical rivals within the OIC. This was sadly the message that emanated from a series of meetings held in Makkah over the past few days. Early on Saturday morning, the Saudi monarch used the OIC summit held in Islam's holiest city to denounce Iran's "sabotage", referring to recent Houthi strikes on Saudi oil pipelines, as well as attacks by as yet unidentified assailants on oil tankers in the Gulf. The Saudis' tone towards Iran at the summits of the Gulf Cooperation Council and Arab League preceding the OIC conclave was even harsher. Riyadh accused Tehran of indulging in "criminal acts" while the Arabs — with the exception of Iraq — rallied around the Saudis in denouncing Iran and called upon "the international community to take a firm stand to confront Iran". Tehran has reacted to the statements in kind, accusing Riyadh of "sowing division" and towing the "American and Zionist" line.

Ideally, if any OIC member has issues with another, instead of indulging in mudslinging publicly, the good offices of a third country should be used to resolve the issues. However, the reality is that the OIC and other multilateral Arab and Islamic forums are often seen as being used by Saudi Arabia to forward its geopolitical aims. Moreover, the ongoing Saudi-Iranian spat has an unseemly sectarian flavour to it, reflected in the fact that Iraq — an Arab country — refused to denounce Iran, considering its own Shia population.

In the shadow of such internal bickering, other issues — some would say the 'real' issues plaguing the Muslim world — were also raised, including by this country's prime minister during the OIC summit. The proverbial burning issues of Palestine, Kashmir, the shocking plight of the Rohingya as well as the hateful march of Islamophobia all were highlighted. But how can the Muslim world, and others, take such pronouncements seriously when there is a profound lack of unity and clear divisions within the OIC? The issues are indeed grave; the Palestinian dream of a state risks being shattered by US President Donald Trump's 'deal of the century'. In Kashmir, India continues to use brutal tactics against the held region's people while the misery of the Rohingya shows no sign of abating. The OIC — with the combined petrochemical wealth and manpower of its members — has huge

potential to address the ills of the Muslim world and the global community in general. But how can these energies be harnessed when the forum is used to forward petty agendas and promote division?

Source: <https://www.dawn.com/news/1486256/oic-politicking>

## [Is the peace initiative slipping out of the US grip? | Editorial](#)

Much time has elapsed since the commencement of negotiations between the USA and the Taliban. Their respective positions have also been known for a while now which reflects vast divergence of views. In spite of that, one continued to nurture the hope that the two sides would ultimately show flexibility for reaching an accord that would lead to peace and reconciliation in Afghanistan.

After completion of six rounds of talks between the two sides, that hope is gradually waning as they have failed to untangle some critical issues that would set the trajectory for an outcome of the talks including a withdrawal timeframe that the USA is to provide, and the Taliban agreeing to engage with other political groups and the government in Kabul in an all-encompassing intra-Afghan dialogue to build consensus leading to a ceasefire.

As an uncompromising proviso, the Taliban have staked the advent of peace in Afghanistan on the withdrawal of all occupying forces from the country.

Simultaneously, other countries are also undertaking endeavours to forge an environment that would be conducive to the success of peace efforts in the war-ravaged country. The most important of such initiatives has come from Russia. Its efforts have already broken some ground by putting the Taliban representatives and members of other Afghan political groups on the same table. With the first of these meetings having taken place in February, the second moot was held in Moscow on May 28 where the Taliban delegation was led by Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar who, incidentally, is also the leader of the delegation that is negotiating with the US in Qatar.

Russia has come out openly in support of the Taliban demand regarding withdrawal of foreign forces from Afghanistan. This was reiterated by their foreign minister at the conclusion of the recently-held gathering in Moscow.

From President Donald Trump's announcement that he wanted the US troops out of Afghanistan by the end of last year to Special Envoy Zalmay Khalilzad's resolve to have the agreement signed by the end of March last, it has been a long wait without any substantive progress on the difficult road to peace. The emerging indicators also don't look encouraging with little hope on the anvil for a quick fix.

The Taliban and the USA have taken positions which are conflicting both in essence and substance: the former demanding a withdrawal of troops as a precursor to a possible peace agreement, and the latter insisting that the Taliban undertake steps which they have ever so consistently and resolutely refused doing. The six rounds of parleys between the two adversaries held so far have not paved the way for either party to moderate their stated positions for ensuring continued productive engagement. The fact that none of the negotiating parties made a statement at the conclusion of the sixth round in Qatar indicates that the talks may even have stalled.

Simultaneously, other stakeholders have also redoubled their efforts for the cause of forging peace. Recently, two key personnel, German Special Envoy for Afghanistan Markus Potzel and the European Union Special Envoy for Afghanistan Roland Kobia held separate meetings with the Taliban leader Mullah Baradar. This reflects growing concerns among the international community about a lack of progress in the peace talks. It is still unclear whether these meetings were meant to reiterate the US position, or, fearing a collapse of the US-Taliban talks, these were efforts to evaluate a parallel path to peace.

The emerging scenario should also be viewed in the context of the reported visit of the Afghan President to Pakistan. The Afghan National Security Advisor Hamdullah Mohib recently paid a visit here to meet the top leadership including the Army Chief General Bajwa. According to some sources, this was a preparatory trip paving the way for Ashraf Ghani's visit.

President Ghani's tenure which ended last February has been extended to September later this year when the presidential elections are scheduled to be held, which most of the stakeholders, including the USA and the Taliban, are reported to be opposing. Instead, they want that a peace deal should be first agreed upon leading to the induction of an interim government entrusted with the task of amending the constitution based on input received from various stakeholders, including the Taliban. At the conclusion of this, understandably within a period of 18 to 24 months, the presidential elections should be held to choose a new leader. This is being opposed by President Ghani who is also averse to the idea of the interim set-up, insisting that the Taliban first engage with the Kabul government.

President Ghani's reported forthcoming visit heralds a few questions regarding what he would expect of Pakistan at this critical juncture. A number of steps that he has taken in the recent past are perceived as an attempt to belittle Pakistan's role in the ongoing talks between the USA and the Taliban, even questioning its sincerity in efforts to bring peace to Afghanistan. All this may have jeopardised his relevance as a serious stakeholder in efforts to build consensus to secure an elusive peace.

Having brokered the ongoing US-Taliban talks and repeatedly asserting its commitment to an Afghan-led and Afghan-owned peace process with its role as that of a facilitator, one does not see Pakistan going beyond that parameter at this stage.

Two things appear to be happening simultaneously. The US-Taliban negotiations have not delivered the desired results, with little prospect of that happening unless one or both the parties bring about substantive changes in the way they look at things. In the absence of tangible progress, considerable space has also been created for other stakeholders to step in, with Russia successfully organising two meetings in Moscow involving the Taliban and other political groups from Afghanistan. As against a no-statement at the conclusion of the sixth round of the talks in Qatar, the Taliban and the Afghan opposition representatives claimed "tremendous progress" at the Moscow moot which did not include any officials from the Afghan government. In a joint statement, the parties said that they had "productive and constructive" discussions on issues including a possible ceasefire.

Whether one looks at the US-Taliban talks in Qatar or the meetings in Moscow, there is one factor which is common to both: the growing irrelevance of President Ghani to the prospect of peace in Afghanistan. With his opposition to the idea of an interim government and his stress on first holding elections in Afghanistan paving the way for him becoming the president a second time, he is gradually being perceived as an impediment to the peace efforts in Afghanistan.

Having contributed in no small measure to the controversy surrounding his person with his future anything but certain, his visit to Pakistan at this juncture raises many eyebrows. The best option for him would be to re-evaluate his position and take urgent steps for becoming a serious stakeholder in accelerating the pace of the peace process in Afghanistan. It is unity within the Afghan nation that would be the

most potent constituent to the success of the ongoing peace endeavours. Continued intransigence from either side is not likely to serve the cause of peace.

Source: [https://www.pakistantoday.com.pk/2019/06/02/is-the-peace-initiative-slipping-out-of-the-us-grip/?fbclid=IwAR3DNLrGRwBAivKx8AOC7xJCFV8JvITklkwjKK23sqso53gKC6E8\\_4NKQbk](https://www.pakistantoday.com.pk/2019/06/02/is-the-peace-initiative-slipping-out-of-the-us-grip/?fbclid=IwAR3DNLrGRwBAivKx8AOC7xJCFV8JvITklkwjKK23sqso53gKC6E8_4NKQbk)

## The Self-Destruction of American Power By Fareed Zakaria

### Washington Squandered the Unipolar Moment

Sometime in the last two years, American hegemony died. The age of U.S. dominance was a brief, heady era, about three decades marked by two moments, each a breakdown of sorts. It was born amid the collapse of the Berlin Wall, in 1989. The end, or really the beginning of the end, was another collapse, that of Iraq in 2003, and the slow unraveling since. But was the death of the United States' extraordinary status a result of external causes, or did Washington accelerate its own demise through bad habits and bad behavior? That is a question that will be debated by historians for years to come. But at this point, we have enough time and perspective to make some preliminary observations.

As with most deaths, many factors contributed to this one. There were deep structural forces in the international system that inexorably worked against any one nation that accumulated so much power. In the American case, however, one is struck by the ways in which Washington—from an unprecedented position—mishandled its hegemony and abused its power, losing allies and emboldening enemies. And now, under the Trump administration, the United States seems to have lost interest, indeed lost faith, in the ideas and purpose that animated its international presence for three-quarters of a century.

U.S. hegemony in the post–Cold War era was like nothing the world had seen since the Roman Empire. Writers are fond of dating the dawn of “the American century” to 1945, not long after the publisher Henry Luce coined the term. But the post–World War II era was quite different from the post-1989 one. Even after 1945, in large stretches of the globe, France and the United Kingdom still had formal empires and thus deep influence. Soon, the Soviet Union presented itself as a superpower rival, contesting Washington's influence in every corner of the planet. Remember that the phrase “Third World” derived from the tripartite division of the globe, the First World being the United States and Western Europe, and the Second World, the communist countries. The Third World was everywhere else, where each country was choosing between U.S. and Soviet influence. For much of the world's population, from Poland to China, the century hardly looked American.

The United States' post-Cold War supremacy was initially hard to detect. As I pointed out in *The New Yorker* in 2002, most participants missed it. In 1990, British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher argued that the world was dividing into three political spheres, dominated by the dollar, the yen, and the deutsche mark. Henry Kissinger's 1994 book, *Diplomacy*, predicted the dawn of a new multipolar age. Certainly in the United States, there was little triumphalism. The 1992 presidential campaign was marked by a sense of weakness and weariness. "The Cold War is over; Japan and Germany won," the Democratic hopeful Paul Tsongas said again and again. Asia hands had already begun to speak of "the Pacific century."

U.S. hegemony in the post-Cold War era was like nothing the world had seen since the Roman Empire.

There was one exception to this analysis, a prescient essay in the pages of this magazine by the conservative commentator Charles Krauthammer: "The Unipolar Moment," which was published in 1990. But even this triumphalist take was limited in its expansiveness, as its title suggests. "The unipolar moment will be brief," Krauthammer admitted, predicting in a *Washington Post* column that within a very short time, Germany and Japan, the two emerging "regional superpowers," would be pursuing foreign policies independent of the United States.

Policymakers welcomed the waning of unipolarity, which they assumed was imminent. In 1991, as the Balkan wars began, Jacques Poos, the president of the Council of the European Union, declared, "This is the hour of Europe." He explained: "If one problem can be solved by Europeans, it is the Yugoslav problem. This is a European country, and it is not up to the Americans." But it turned out that only the United States had the combined power and influence to intervene effectively and tackle the crisis.

Similarly, toward the end of the 1990s, when a series of economic panics sent East Asian economies into tailspins, only the United States could stabilize the global financial system. It organized a \$120 billion international bailout for the worst-hit countries, resolving the crisis. *Time* magazine put three Americans, Treasury Secretary Robert Rubin, Federal Reserve Chair Alan Greenspan, and Deputy Treasury Secretary Lawrence Summers, on its cover with the headline "The Committee to Save the World."

Just as American hegemony grew in the early 1990s while no one was noticing, so in the late 1990s did the forces that would undermine it, even as people had begun to speak of the United States as "the indispensable nation" and "the world's

sole superpower.” First and foremost, there was the rise of China. It is easy to see in retrospect that Beijing would become the only serious rival to Washington, but it was not as apparent a quarter century ago. Although China had grown speedily since the 1980s, it had done so from a very low base. Few countries had been able to continue that process for more than a couple of decades. China’s strange mixture of capitalism and Leninism seemed fragile, as the Tiananmen Square uprising had revealed.

But China’s rise persisted, and the country became the new great power on the block, one with the might and the ambition to match the United States. Russia, for its part, went from being both weak and quiescent in the early 1990s to being a revanchist power, a spoiler with enough capability and cunning to be disruptive. With two major global players outside the U.S.-constructed international system, the world had entered a post-American phase. Today, the United States is still the most powerful country on the planet, but it exists in a world of global and regional powers that can—and frequently do—push back.

The 9/11 attacks and the rise of Islamic terrorism played a dual role in the decline of U.S. hegemony. At first, the attacks seemed to galvanize Washington and mobilize its power. In 2001, the United States, still larger economically than the next five countries put together, chose to ramp up its annual defense spending by an amount—almost \$50 billion—that was larger than the United Kingdom’s entire yearly defense budget. When Washington intervened in Afghanistan, it was able to get overwhelming support for the campaign, including from Russia. Two years later, despite many objections, it was still able to put together a large international coalition for an invasion of Iraq. The early years of this century marked the high point of the American imperium, as Washington tried to remake wholly alien nations—Afghanistan and Iraq—thousands of miles away, despite the rest of the world’s reluctant acquiescence or active opposition.

Iraq in particular marked a turning point. The United States embarked on a war of choice despite misgivings expressed in the rest of world. It tried to get the UN to rubber-stamp its mission, and when that proved arduous, it dispensed with the organization altogether. It ignored the Powell Doctrine—the idea, promulgated by General Colin Powell while he was chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff during the Gulf War, that a war was worth entering only if vital national interests were at stake and overwhelming victory assured. The Bush administration insisted that the vast challenge of occupying Iraq could be undertaken with a small number of troops and a light touch. Iraq, it was said, would pay for itself. And once in Baghdad,

Washington decided to destroy the Iraqi state, disbanding the army and purging the bureaucracy, which produced chaos and helped fuel an insurgency. Any one of these mistakes might have been overcome. But together they ensured that Iraq became a costly fiasco.

After 9/11, Washington made major, consequential decisions that continue to haunt it, but it made all of them hastily and in fear. It saw itself as in mortal danger, needing to do whatever it took to defend itself—from invading Iraq to spending untold sums on homeland security to employing torture. The rest of the world saw a country that was experiencing a kind of terrorism that many had lived with for years and yet was thrashing around like a wounded lion, tearing down international alliances and norms. In its first two years, the George W. Bush administration walked away from more international agreements than any previous administration had. (Undoubtedly, that record has now been surpassed under President Donald Trump.) American behavior abroad during the Bush administration shattered the moral and political authority of the United States, as long-standing allies such as Canada and France found themselves at odds with it on the substance, morality, and style of its foreign policy.

So which was it that eroded American hegemony—the rise of new challengers or imperial overreach? As with any large and complex historical phenomenon, it was probably all of the above. China's rise was one of those tectonic shifts in international life that would have eroded any hegemon's unrivaled power, no matter how skillful its diplomacy. The return of Russia, however, was a more complex affair. It's easy to forget now, but in the early 1990s, leaders in Moscow were determined to turn their country into a liberal democracy, a European nation, and an ally of sorts of the West. Eduard Shevardnadze, who was foreign minister during the final years of the Soviet Union, supported the United States' 1990–91 war against Iraq. And after the Soviet Union's collapse, Russia's first foreign minister, Andrei Kozyrev, was an even more ardent liberal, an internationalist, and a vigorous supporter of human rights.

The greatest error the United States committed during its unipolar moment was to simply stop paying attention.

Who lost Russia is a question for another article. But it is worth noting that although Washington gave Moscow some status and respect—expanding the G-7 into the G-8, for example—it never truly took Russia's security concerns seriously. It enlarged NATO fast and furiously, a process that might have been necessary for

countries such as Poland, historically insecure and threatened by Russia, but one that has continued on unthinkingly, with little concern for Russian sensitivities, and now even extends to Macedonia. Today, Russian President Vladimir Putin's aggressive behavior makes every action taken against his country seem justified, but it's worth asking, What forces produced the rise of Putin and his foreign policy in the first place? Undoubtedly, they were mostly internal to Russia, but to the extent that U.S. actions had an effect, they appear to have been damaging, helping stoke the forces of revenge and revanchism in Russia.

The greatest error the United States committed during its unipolar moment, with Russia and more generally, was to simply stop paying attention. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, Americans wanted to go home, and they did. During the Cold War, the United States had stayed deeply interested in events in Central America, Southeast Asia, the Taiwan Strait, and even Angola and Namibia. By the mid-1990s, it had lost all interest in the world. Foreign-bureau broadcasts by NBC fell from 1,013 minutes in 1988 to 327 minutes in 1996. (Today, the three main networks combined devote roughly the same amount of time to foreign-bureau stories as each individual network did in 1988.) Both the White House and Congress during the George H. W. Bush administration had no appetite for an ambitious effort to transform Russia, no interest in rolling out a new version of the Marshall Plan or becoming deeply engaged in the country. Even amid the foreign economic crises that hit during the Clinton administration, U.S. policymakers had to scramble and improvise, knowing that Congress would appropriate no funds to rescue Mexico or Thailand or Indonesia. They offered advice, most of it designed to require little assistance from Washington, but their attitude was one of a distant well-wisher, not an engaged superpower.

Ever since the end of World War I, the United States has wanted to transform the world. In the 1990s, that seemed more possible than ever before. Countries across the planet were moving toward the American way. The Gulf War seemed to mark a new milestone for world order, in that it was prosecuted to uphold a norm, limited in its scope, endorsed by major powers and legitimized by international law. But right at the time of all these positive developments, the United States lost interest. U.S. policymakers still wanted to transform the world in the 1990s, but on the cheap. They did not have the political capital or resources to throw themselves into the effort. That was one reason Washington's advice to foreign countries was always the same: economic shock therapy and instant democracy. Anything slower or more complex—anything, in other words, that resembled the manner in

which the West itself had liberalized its economy and democratized its politics—was unacceptable. Before 9/11, when confronting challenges, the American tactic was mostly to attack from afar, hence the twin approaches of economic sanctions and precision air strikes. Both of these, as the political scientist Eliot Cohen wrote of airpower, had the characteristics of modern courtship: “gratification without commitment.”

Of course, these limits on the United States’ willingness to pay prices and bear burdens never changed its rhetoric, which is why, in an essay for *The New York Times Magazine* in 1998, I pointed out that U.S. foreign policy was defined by “the rhetoric of transformation but the reality of accommodation.” The result, I said, was “a hollow hegemony.” That hollowness has persisted ever since.

The Trump administration has hollowed out U.S. foreign policy even further. Trump’s instincts are Jacksonian, in that he is largely uninterested in the world except insofar as he believes that most countries are screwing the United States. He is a nationalist, a protectionist, and a populist, determined to put “America first.” But truthfully, more than anything else, he has abandoned the field. Under Trump, the United States has withdrawn from the Trans-Pacific Partnership and from engaging with Asia more generally. It is uncoupling itself from its 70-year partnership with Europe. It has dealt with Latin America through the prism of either keeping immigrants out or winning votes in Florida. It has even managed to alienate Canadians (no mean feat). And it has subcontracted Middle East policy to Israel and Saudi Arabia. With a few impulsive exceptions—such as the narcissistic desire to win a Nobel Prize by trying to make peace with North Korea—what is most notable about Trump’s foreign policy is its absence.

When the United Kingdom was the superpower of its day, its hegemony eroded because of many large structural forces—the rise of Germany, the United States, and the Soviet Union. But it also lost control of its empire through overreach and hubris. In 1900, with a quarter of the world’s population under British rule, most of the United Kingdom’s major colonies were asking only for limited autonomy—“dominion status” or “home rule,” in the terms of the day. Had the country quickly granted that to all its colonies, who knows whether it would have been able to extend its imperial life for decades? But it didn’t, insisting on its narrow, selfish interests rather than accommodating itself to the interests of the broader empire.

There is an analogy here with the United States. Had the country acted more consistently in the pursuit of broader interests and ideas, it could have continued

its influence for decades (albeit in a different form). The rule for extending liberal hegemony seems simple: be more liberal and less hegemonic. But too often and too obviously, Washington pursued its narrow self-interests, alienating its allies and emboldening its foes. Unlike the United Kingdom at the end of its reign, the United States is not bankrupt or imperially overextended. It remains the single most powerful country on the planet. It will continue to wield immense influence, more than any other nation. But it will no longer define and dominate the international system the way it did for almost three decades.

What remains, then, are American ideas. The United States has been a unique hegemon in that it expanded its influence to establish a new world order, one dreamed of by President Woodrow Wilson and most fully conceived of by President Franklin Roosevelt. It is the world that was half-created after 1945, sometimes called “the liberal international order,” from which the Soviet Union soon defected to build its own sphere. But the free world persisted through the Cold War, and after 1991, it expanded to encompass much of the globe. The ideas behind it have produced stability and prosperity over the last three-quarters of a century. The question now is whether, as American power wanes, the international system it sponsored—the rules, norms, and values—will survive. Or will America also watch the decline of its empire of ideas?

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## Democracy Demotion | How the Freedom Agenda Fell Apart By Larry Diamond

For three decades beginning in the mid-1970s, the world experienced a remarkable expansion of democracy—the so-called third wave—with authoritarian regimes falling or reforming across the world. By 1993, a majority of states with populations over one million had become democracies. Levels of freedom, as measured by Freedom House, were steadily rising as well. In most years between 1991 and 2005, many more countries gained freedom than lost it.

But around 2006, the forward momentum of democracy came to a halt. In every year since 2007, many more countries have seen their freedom decrease than have seen it increase, reversing the post-Cold War trend. The rule of law has taken a severe and sustained beating, particularly in Africa and the postcommunist states; civil liberties and electoral rights have also been declining.

Adding to the problem, democracies have been expiring in big and strategically important countries. Russian President Vladimir Putin, for example, has long been using the power granted to him through elections to destroy democracy in Russia. More recently, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan has gone down a similar path. Elected executives have been the principal agents of democratic destruction in some countries; in others, the military has. The generals seized control of the government in Egypt in 2013 and in Thailand in 2014, and they continue to wield de facto power in Myanmar and Pakistan. Across Africa, the trend has been for elected autocrats, such as President Uhuru Kenyatta of Kenya and President John Magufuli of Tanzania, to manipulate elections, subvert independent institutions, and harass critics and political opponents to ensure their continued grip on power.

More concerning still is the wave of illiberal populism that has been sweeping developed and developing countries alike, often in response to anxiety over immigration and growing cultural diversity. The harbinger of this trend was Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán, who has presided over the first death of a democracy in an EU member state. Similar trends are under way in Brazil, the Philippines, and Poland. Illiberal, xenophobic parties have been gaining political ground in such hallowed European liberal democracies as Denmark, Germany, the Netherlands, and Sweden; one such party made a serious bid for the presidency of France; and another captured a share of national power in Italy. In the United States, an illiberal populist now occupies the White House.

There are flickers of hope in places such as Ethiopia, Malaysia, and Nigeria, and democracy is hanging on against the odds in Tunisia and Ukraine. But overall, the trend is undeniably worrisome. Twelve years into the democratic slump, not only does it show no signs of ending, but it is gathering steam.

A quarter century ago, the spread of democracy seemed assured, and a major goal of U.S. foreign policy was to hasten its advance—called “democratic enlargement” in the 1990s and “democracy promotion” in the first decade of this century. What went wrong? In short, democracy lost its leading proponent. Disastrous U.S. interventions in the Middle East soured Americans on the idea of democracy promotion, and a combination of fears about democratic decline in their own country and economic problems encouraged them to turn inward. Today, the United States is in the midst of a broader retreat from global leadership, one that is ceding space to authoritarian powers such as China, which is surging to superpower status, and Russia, which is reviving its military might and geopolitical ambitions.

Ultimately, the decline of democracy will be reversed only if the United States again takes up the mantle of democracy promotion. To do so, it will have to compete much more vigorously against China and Russia to spread democratic ideas and values and counter authoritarian ones. But before that can happen, it has to repair its own broken democracy.

A temporary dip in the remarkable pace of global democratization was inevitable. During the latter part of the third wave, democracy spread to many countries in Africa, Asia, and eastern Europe that lacked the classic favorable conditions for freedom: a developed economy, high levels of education, a large middle class, entrepreneurs in the private sector, a benign regional neighborhood, and prior experience with democracy. But the democratic recession has been much deeper and more protracted than a simple bend in the curve. Something is fundamentally different about the world today.

The Iraq war was the initial turning point. Once it turned out that Saddam Hussein did not, in fact, possess weapons of mass destruction, the Bush administration’s “freedom agenda” became the only way to justify the war retrospectively. Whatever support for the intervention that had existed among the American public melted away as Iraq descended into violence and chaos. If this was democracy promotion, most Americans wanted no part of it.

A series of other high-profile shocks reinforced the American public's wariness. Elsewhere in the Middle East, President George W. Bush's vow to stand behind people who stood up for freedom rang hollow. In Egypt, for example, the administration did nothing as its ally, President Hosni Mubarak, intensified political repression during and after the contested 2005 elections. In January 2006, the Palestinian Authority held democratic elections, partially in response to pressure from the United States, that resulted in an unexpected victory for the militant group Hamas. And then, during Barack Obama's presidency, the so-called Arab Spring came and went, leaving behind only one democracy, in Tunisia, and a slew of reversals, crackdowns, and state implosions in the rest of the Middle East.

As a result of these blunders and setbacks, Americans lost enthusiasm for democracy promotion. In September 2001, 29 percent of Americans surveyed agreed that democracy promotion should be a top foreign policy priority, according to a poll by the Pew Research Center. That number fell to 18 percent in 2013 and 17 percent in 2018. According to a 2018 survey by Freedom House, the George W. Bush Institute, and the Penn Biden Center, seven in ten Americans still favored U.S. efforts to promote democracy and human rights, but most Americans also expressed wariness of foreign interventions that might drain U.S. resources, as those in Vietnam and Iraq did.

Americans have been losing confidence in their own futures, their country's future, and the ability of their political leaders to do anything about it.

More important, Americans expressed preoccupation with the sorry state of their own democracy, which two-thirds agreed was "getting weaker." Those surveyed conveyed worry about problems in their society—with big money in politics, racism, and gridlock topping the list. In fact, half of those surveyed said they believed that the United States was in "real danger of becoming a nondemocratic, authoritarian country."

Pessimism about the state of American democracy has been compounded by economic malaise. Americans were shaken by the 2008 financial crisis, which nearly plunged the world into a depression. Economic inequality, already worse in the United States than in other advanced democracies, is rising. And the American dream has taken a huge hit: only half the children born in the 1980s are earning more than their parents did at their age, whereas when those born in 1940 were around age 30, 92 percent of them earned more than their parents did at their age.

Americans have been losing confidence in their own futures, their country's future, and the ability of their political leaders to do anything about it.

A sense that the United States is in decline pervades—and not just among Americans. The United States' global standing took a nosedive following President Donald Trump's inauguration. Among 37 countries surveyed in 2017, the median percentage of those expressing favorable views of the United States fell to 49 percent, from 64 percent at the end of Obama's presidency. It will be hard for the United States to promote democracy abroad while other countries—and its own citizens—are losing faith in the American model. The United States' retreat from global leadership is feeding this skepticism in a self-reinforcing downward spiral.

Promoting democracy has never been easy work. U.S. presidents from John F. Kennedy to Ronald Reagan to Obama struggled to find the right balance between the lofty aims of promoting democracy and human rights and the harder imperatives of global statecraft. They all, on occasion, chose to pursue not just pragmatic but even warm relations with autocrats for the sake of securing markets, protecting allies, fighting terrorism, and controlling the spread of weapons of mass destruction. Often, presidents have backed the forces of freedom opportunistically.

Obama did not set out to topple Mubarak, but when the Egyptian people rose up, he chose to back them. Reagan did not foresee needing to abandon loyal U.S. allies in the Philippines and South Korea, but events on the ground left him no other good option. George H. W. Bush probably did not imagine that Reagan's prediction of the demise of Soviet communism would come true so quickly, but when it did, he expanded democracy and governance assistance programs to support and lock in the sweeping changes.

As the White House's rhetorical and symbolic emphasis on freedom and democracy has waxed and waned over the past four decades, nonprofits and government agencies, such as the National Endowment for Democracy, the U.S. Agency for International Development, and the State Department's Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, have taken over the detailed work of democracy assistance. The United States has devoted around \$2 billion per year over the last decade to programs promoting democracy abroad—a lot of money, but less than one-tenth of one percent of the total federal budget.

Although the U.S. government should spend more on these efforts, the fundamental problem is not a question of resources. Instead, it is the disconnect between the United States' admirable efforts to assist democracy, on the one

hand, and its diplomatic statements, state visits, and aid flows that often send the opposite message, on the other. Barely a year after he vowed in his second inaugural address to “end tyranny,” George W. Bush welcomed to the White House Azerbaijan’s corrupt, autocratic president, Ilham Aliyev, and uttered not a word of public disapproval about the nature of his rule. On a visit to Ethiopia in 2015, Obama twice called its government “democratically elected,” even though the ruling coalition had held sham elections earlier that same year.

Trump’s disregard for democratic norms is contributing to a growing and dangerous sense of license among dictators worldwide.

The trap of heaping praise on friendly autocrats while ignoring their abuses is hard to avoid, and all previous presidents have occasionally fallen into it. But most of them at least sought to find a balance, applying pressure when they felt they could and articulating a general principle of support for freedom. That is what has changed since the election of Trump, who doesn’t even pretend to support freedom. Instead, Trump has lovingly embraced such dictators as Putin, the North Korean leader Kim Jong Un, and Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman of Saudi Arabia, known as MBS, while treating European and other democratic allies with derision and contempt.

Trump’s disregard for democratic norms is contributing to a growing and dangerous sense of license among dictators worldwide. Consider the case of Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni. In early October 2017, I received a distressing e-mail from Nicholas Opiyo, one of Uganda’s leading human rights lawyers. In late September of that year, soldiers had entered Parliament and beaten up members resisting a deeply unpopular constitutional amendment that would allow Museveni, who had then been in power for over 30 years, to rule for life. “It appears to me the whole region is in a steep democratic recession partly because of the loud silence from their western allies,” Opiyo wrote. “In the past, the state was a little reluctant to be this [brutal] and violent and had some measure of shame. It is all gone.”

Autocrats around the world are hearing the same message as Museveni: U.S. scrutiny is over, and they can do what they please, so long as they do not directly cross the United States. Rodrigo Duterte, the president of the Philippines, had surely taken this message to heart as he purged his country’s chief justice, arrested his leading foe in the Senate, and intimidated journalists and other critics of his ostensible war on drugs, a murderous campaign that has caught both

political rivals and innocent people in its net. Freed from American pressure, President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi has launched a thorough, brutal crackdown on all forms of opposition and dissent in Egypt, leaving the country more repressive than it was at any time during Mubarak's 29 years of rule. And MBS has literally gotten away with murder: he faced almost no repercussions after evidence emerged that he had ordered the brutal assassination and dismemberment of the journalist Jamal Khashoggi in the Saudi consulate in Istanbul in October 2018.

The growing assertiveness of two major authoritarian states is also setting back democracy. In the past decade, Russia has rescued the regime of President Bashar al-Assad in Syria, conquered and annexed Crimea, and destabilized eastern Ukraine. China, meanwhile, has been investing extraordinary sums of money and diplomatic energy to project its power and influence around the world, both on land and at sea. A new era of global competition has dawned—not just between rival powers but also between rival ways of thinking about power.

To add to the threat, the competition between democratic governments and authoritarian ones is not symmetrical. China and Russia are seeking to penetrate the institutions of vulnerable countries and compromise them, not through the legitimate use of “soft power” (transparent methods to persuade, attract, and inspire actors abroad) but through “sharp power,” a term introduced by Christopher Walker and Jessica Ludwig of the National Endowment for Democracy. Sharp power involves the use of information warfare and political penetration to limit free expression, distort the political environment, and erode the integrity of civic and political institutions in democratic societies. In the words of Malcolm Turnbull, the former prime minister of Australia, it is “covert, coercive, or corrupting.” In Australia and New Zealand, the Western democracies that have been most affected by these tactics, there is almost no Chinese-language media source that is independent of Beijing, and former officeholders earn lucrative benefits by promoting Chinese interests. Australia has had some success pushing back with legislation. But China's efforts to penetrate media, civic organizations, and politics meet less resistance in more vulnerable emerging-market democracies, such as Argentina, Ghana, Peru, and South Africa. And China's influence efforts are now extending to Canada and the United States, threatening the independence and pluralism of Chinese-language media and community associations there, as well as freedom of speech and inquiry within Canadian and American think tanks and universities.

There is no technical fix for what ails democracy promotion. The problem is big and deep and has been long in the making. So must be the response. To begin with, American leaders must recognize that they are once again in a global contest of values and ideas. Both the Chinese Communist Party and the Kremlin are fighting cynically and vigorously. The Kremlin's central tactic is to destroy the very premise that there can be objective truth, not to mention universal values. If there is no objective truth, and no deeper moral value than power itself, then the biggest liar wins—and that is certainly Putin. China's leadership is playing a longer game of penetrating democratic societies and slowly undermining them from within. It has at its disposal a broader range of methods and a far more lavish base of resources than Russia does—not least of which is a vast, interconnected bureaucracy of party, state, and formally nonstate actors.

Countering these malign authoritarian campaigns of disinformation, societal penetration, and ideological warfare will be critical for the defense of democracy. Democratic governments must begin by educating their own citizens, as well as mass media, universities, think tanks, corporations, local governments, and diaspora communities, about the danger posed by these authoritarian influence operations and the need for “constructive vigilance,” according to “China's Influence and American Interests,” a 2018 report by a group of China experts convened by the Hoover Institution and the Asia Society, which I co-edited with Orville Schell. The response must be constructive in that it must avoid over-reaction or ethnocentrism and seek to put forward democratic values as much as possible. But it must be vigilant in its awareness and scrutiny of China's and Russia's far-flung efforts to project their influence. Thus, democratic societies must insist on rigorous transparency in all institutional exchanges, grants, contracts, and other interactions with China and Russia. And democracies must demand greater reciprocity in their relations with these countries: for example, they cannot allow supposedly independent journalists and broadcast media from these authoritarian juggernauts unlimited access to their countries while their own journalists are severely restricted or denied visas and their cable news networks are completely shut out of China's and Russia's broadcast markets. Democracies, and democratic institutions such as universities and think tanks, must also coordinate more closely with one another to share information and protect against divide-and-rule tactics.

Beyond this, the United States must go back to being present in, and knowledgeable of, the countries on the frontlines of authoritarian states' battles for hearts and minds. This means a dramatic ramping up of programs such as the

Fulbright scholarships (which the Trump administration has repeatedly proposed cutting); the Boren Fellowships, which support U.S. students studying critical languages abroad; and other State Department programs that send Americans to live, work, lecture, perform, and study abroad. It must also go back to welcoming people from those countries to the United States—for example, by bringing many more journalists, policy specialists, civil society leaders, elected representatives, and government officials to the United States for partnerships and training programs. This is precisely the wrong moment for the United States to turn inward and close its doors to foreigners, claiming that it needs to focus on its own problems.

American leaders must recognize that they are once again in a global contest of values and ideas.

To confront the Chinese and Russian global propaganda machines, the United States will need to reboot and greatly expand its own public diplomacy efforts. China is audaciously seeking to control the global narrative about itself, its intentions, and its model of governance. Russia is spreading its own line—promoting Russia and Putin as the defenders of traditional Christian values in an era of gay rights, feminism, and cultural pluralism—along with general contempt for democracy and blatant lies about the United States. Washington must push back with information campaigns that reflect its values but are tailored to local contexts and can reach people quickly. At the same time, it must wage a longer struggle to spread the values, ideas, knowledge, and experiences of people living in free societies. It will need to use innovative methods to bypass Internet firewalls and infiltrate authoritarian settings—for example, distributing texts and videos that promote democracy in local languages on thumb drives. It must also create new tools to help people in autocracies safely and discreetly circumvent Internet censorship and control.

The United States once had a good instrument to wage such a battle of information and ideas: the U.S. Information Agency. In 1999, however, it was shut down in a deal between the Clinton administration and Senator Jesse Helms of North Carolina, a conservative Republican who sought to cut back on American engagement abroad. To spare cuts to other budgets for U.S. global engagement, the Clinton administration reluctantly agreed to shut down the USIA. Its budget and operations were moved—never very effectively—into the State Department, and a critical tool for promoting democracy was severely damaged. In 2016, the Obama administration created the Global Engagement Center, a group within the State

Department charged with countering foreign propaganda and disinformation. But Rex Tillerson, Trump's hapless first secretary of state, failed to spend the allocated resources; the initiative is only now gaining momentum under a new secretary of state, Mike Pompeo, who understands its importance.

What the United States needs now is not just a single program but an information agency staffed by a permanent, nimble, technologically innovative corps of information professionals—or, in the words of James Clapper, the former director of national intelligence, “a USIA on steroids.” The purpose of a revived USIA would not be to one-up China and Russia in the game of disinformation. Rather, it—along with the U.S. Agency for Global Media, which oversees such independent U.S. foreign broadcasting as the Voice of America and Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty—would observe the dictum of the famed journalist Edward R. Murrow, who was director of the USIA under President John F. Kennedy: “Truth is the best propaganda and lies are the worst.” And the truth is that people would prefer to live in freedom. The most effective way to counter Chinese and Russian propaganda is to report the truth about how the two gigantic countries are really governed. These facts and analyses must then be broadly and innovatively conveyed, within China, Russia, and other closed societies, and also within more open societies that, as targets of Chinese and Russian propaganda efforts, are no longer receiving a full and true picture of the nature of those regimes.

Transparency can also play a role in the fight for democracy. The soft underbelly of all malign autocracies, including China and Russia, is their deep and incurable corruption. No state can truly control corruption without instituting the rule of law. But that would be unthinkable for both countries—because in China, it would mean subordinating the party to an independent judiciary, and because in Russia, the regime is an organized crime ring masquerading as a state. Yet leading democracies have some leverage, because much of the staggering personal wealth generated by corruption pours into the banks, corporate structures, and real estate markets of the United States and Europe through legal loopholes that benefit only a privileged few. These loopholes allow dictators and their cronies to stash and launder dirty money in and through anonymous shell companies and anonymous real estate purchases. The United States, for its part, can legislate an end to these practices by simply requiring that all company and trust registrations and all real estate purchases in the United States report the true beneficial owners involved. It can also ban former U.S. officials and members of Congress from lobbying for foreign governments and enhance the legal authority and resources

of agencies such as the Treasury Department's Financial Crimes Enforcement Network to detect and prosecute money laundering.

Finally, if the United States is going to win the global battle for democracy, it has to start at home. People around the world must once again come to see the United States as a democracy worthy of emulation. That will not happen if Congress remains gridlocked, if American society is divided into warring political camps, if election campaigns continue to drown in "dark money," if the two parties brazenly gerrymander electoral districts to maximum partisan advantage, and if one political party comes to be associated with unrelenting efforts to suppress the vote of racial and ethnic minorities.

This is not the first time that global freedom has been under threat. Back in 1946, as the Cold War was coming into view, the diplomat George Kennan sent his famous "Long Telegram" from the U.S. embassy in Moscow. Kennan urged the United States to grasp with clarity the diffuse nature of the authoritarian threat, strengthen the collective military resolve and capacity of democracies to confront and deter authoritarian ambition, and do whatever it could to separate the corrupt authoritarian rulers from their people.

But Kennan also understood something else: that the greatest asset of the United States was its democracy and that it must find the "courage and self-confidence" to adhere to its convictions and avoid becoming "like those with whom [it is] coping." Kennan advised: "Every courageous and incisive measure to solve internal problems of our own society . . . is a diplomatic victory over Moscow worth a thousand diplomatic notes and joint communiqués."

Today, as the United States confronts not a single determined authoritarian rival but two, Kennan's counsel deserves remembering. The United States stands at a precipice, facing a time when freedom and democracy will be tested. It remains, within the world's vast web of alliances and organizations, the indispensable democracy. Now, as much as ever, the fate of American democracy is bound up with the global struggle for freedom. And the outcome of that struggle depends on Americans renewing the quality of their own democracy and their faith in its worth and promise.

Source : [https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/2019-06-11/democracy-demotion?fbclid=IwAR0YuRADNTIH5VXjnKr1Gkos7FiWV34e6ceqTjBbJjDBvGB0ZGbc3mmKO\\_Q](https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/2019-06-11/democracy-demotion?fbclid=IwAR0YuRADNTIH5VXjnKr1Gkos7FiWV34e6ceqTjBbJjDBvGB0ZGbc3mmKO_Q)

## Sabotage diplomacy | Editorial

Tensions in the Middle East continue to rise with Iran's supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei ruling out talks with US President Donald Trump, soon after two ships were hit by alleged sabotage attacks. The US quickly blamed Iran for the attacks, but pat came the denial. After US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo's initial accusation, Iranian Foreign Minister Javad Zarif hit back by claiming that the attacks were part of 'sabotage diplomacy' adopted by the US's 'B Team' which he has previously identified as including US National Security Adviser John Bolton, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman and Abu Dhabi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Zayed. In a tweet, he also curiously named Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe in the group.

Abe was on the first visit to Iran by a Japanese premier since the 1979 Islamic Revolution. But the trip appears to have been largely unsuccessful, even though he said the supreme leader assured him that Iran has no intention to make, hold, or use nuclear weapons. Coming from a Japanese leader, those words have great sway. There have also been multiple reports that Israel and Saudi Arabia are exerting their influence over Trump and his administration to get into a war that serves little strategic purpose for the US, but great purpose for Iran's two main regional rivals. Trump administration hawks such as Bolton — the neocon mind behind the Iraq War — have been braying for war with Iran for decades.

The volatility in the region is in no small part due to the violation of the Iran nuclear deal by the US. Yes, it was the US that broke the treaty, but as is common with US breaches of international agreements, it is the law-abiding party that gets the stick. Given the significance of the deal, it is unsurprising that despite the US's garish diplomatic behaviour, Germany, France, China, Russia and other signatories have all been making efforts to salvage the deal.

Source : [https://tribune.com.pk/story/1992688/6-sabotage-diplomacy/?fbclid=IwAR13Z7sNTiYkP\\_mwg1vfSKLbQbKpGhjWo22Dcw6bB73c\\_mrNIRwXT7tbP\\_oE](https://tribune.com.pk/story/1992688/6-sabotage-diplomacy/?fbclid=IwAR13Z7sNTiYkP_mwg1vfSKLbQbKpGhjWo22Dcw6bB73c_mrNIRwXT7tbP_oE)

## World slipping out of US hands By M Ziauddin

The world today is in the midst of the Asian Century. Led by China this new Century is shifting wealth and power from the first world to the third world with the US, the global hegemon of yester-years watching helplessly the world slipping out of its hands which are immersed in what is called the infamous military-industrial complex. American journalist, Fareed Zakaria in one of his candid pieces (The Self-Destruction of American Power) published in July/August, 2019 issue of Foreign Affairs magazine laments that in recent years Washington had squandered its unipolar moment. In Fareed Zakaria's opinion, sometime in the last two years, American hegemony died. The age of U.S. dominance, according to him, was a brief, heady era, about three decades marked by two moments, each a breakdown of sorts.

He says, it was born amid the collapse of the Berlin Wall, in 1989. The end, or really the beginning of the end, was another collapse, that of Iraq in 2003, and the slow unraveling since. He maintains that it was the US itself which 'mishandled' its hegemony and 'abused' its power, 'losing allies and emboldening enemies'. And now, according to him, under the Trump administration, the United States seems to have lost interest, indeed lost faith, in the ideas and purpose that animated its international presence for three-quarters of a century. Fareed says that just as American hegemony grew in the early 1990s while no one was noticing, so in the late 1990s did the forces that would undermine it, even as people had begun to speak of the United States as "the indispensable nation" and "the world's sole superpower."

First and foremost, Fareed Zakaria recognizes the rise of China, right at a time when the US is seen 'mishandling' and 'abusing' its hegemony. It is easy to see in retrospect, according to Fareed, that Beijing would become the only serious rival to Washington, but it was not as apparent, he insists, a quarter century ago. Although China had grown speedily since the 1980s, it had done so from a very low base. Few countries had been able to continue that process for more than a couple of decades. China's strange mixture of capitalism and Leninism seemed fragile, as the Tiananmen Square uprising had revealed. Conceding that China's rise persisted, and the country became the new great power on the block, Fareed acknowledges that this country today has the might and the ambition to match the United States. Russia, for its part, as Freed observes, went from being both weak and quiescent in the early 1990s to being a revanchist power, a spoiler with enough capability and cunning to be disruptive. With two major global players outside the

U.S.-constructed international system, the world, in the opinion of Fareed, had entered a post-American phase. Today, he says, the United States is still the most powerful country on the planet, but it exists in a world of global and regional powers that can—and frequently do—push back.

The 9/11 attacks and the rise of Islamic terrorism, according to Fareed, played a dual role in the decline of U.S. hegemony. At first, the attacks, he said, seemed to galvanize Washington and mobilize its power. As such, according to Fareed in 2001, the United States, still larger economically than the next five countries put together, chose to ramp up its annual defense spending by an amount—almost \$50 billion—that was larger than the United Kingdom's entire yearly defense budget. When Washington intervened in Afghanistan, in the opinion of Fareed, it was able to get overwhelming support for the campaign, including from Russia. Two years later, despite many objections, it was still able, he laments, to put together a large international coalition for an invasion of Iraq.

The early years of this century marked the high point of the American imperium, as Washington tried to remake wholly alien nations—Afghanistan and Iraq—thousands of miles away, despite the rest of the world's reluctant acquiescence or active opposition. In Fareed's opinion Iraq in particular marked a turning point. The United States embarked on a war of choice despite misgivings expressed in the rest of world. It tried to get the UN to rubber-stamp its mission, and when that proved arduous, it dispensed with the organization altogether. It ignored the Powell Doctrine—the idea, promulgated by General Colin Powell while he was chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff during the Gulf War, that a war was worth entering only if vital national interests were at stake and overwhelming victory assured.

On the other hand, insisting that the vast challenge of occupying Iraq could be undertaken with a small number of troops and a light touch, the Bush administration believed Iraq war would pay for itself. And once in Baghdad, Washington decided to destroy the Iraqi state, disbanding the army and purging the bureaucracy, which, according to Fareed, produced chaos and helped fuel an insurgency. Any one of these mistakes might have been overcome, insists Fareed, but together they ensured that Iraq became a costly fiasco. After 9/11, Washington made major, consequential decisions that, in Fareed's opinion, continued to haunt it, but it made all of them hastily and in fear.

But truthfully, more than anything else, according to Fareed, under Trump, the United States has withdrawn from the Trans-Pacific Partnership and from

engaging with Asia more generally. It is uncoupling, Fareed continuous, itself from its 70-year partnership with Europe. It has dealt with Latin America through the prism of either keeping immigrants out or winning votes in Florida. It has even managed to alienate Canadians (no mean feat). And it has subcontracted Middle East policy to Israel and Saudi Arabia. With a few impulsive exceptions—such as the narcissistic desire to win a Nobel Prize by trying to make peace with North Korea—what is most notable about Trump’s foreign policy is its absence.

Had the country acted more consistently in the pursuit of broader interests and ideas, in the opinion of Fareed, it could have continued its influence for decades (albeit in a different form). The rule for extending liberal hegemony seems simple: be more liberal and less hegemonic. But too often and too obviously, Washington pursued its narrow self-interests, alienating its allies and emboldening its foes. Unlike the United Kingdom at the end of its reign, the United States is not bankrupt or imperially overextended. “It remains the single most powerful country on the planet. It will continue to wield immense influence, more than any other nation. But it will no longer define and dominate the international system the way it did for almost three decades.

“What remains, then, are Americ

an ideas. The United States has been a unique hegemon in that it expanded its influence to establish a new world order, one dreamed of by President Woodrow Wilson and most fully conceived of by President Franklin Roosevelt. It is the world that was half-created after 1945, sometimes called “the liberal international order,” from which the Soviet Union soon defected to build its own sphere. But the free world persisted through the Cold War, and after 1991, it expanded to encompass much of the globe. The ideas behind it have produced stability and prosperity over the last three-quarters of a century. The question now is whether, as American power wanes, the international system it sponsored—the rules, norms, and values—will survive. Or will America also watch the decline of its empire of ideas?”

Source : [https://pakobserver.net/world-slipping-out-of-us-hands/?fbclid=IwAR18uc7ewd-quqysKZbSDPJsXGOuq2GYrVO\\_kVwyYnVU73e5MDuFw6yrBdA](https://pakobserver.net/world-slipping-out-of-us-hands/?fbclid=IwAR18uc7ewd-quqysKZbSDPJsXGOuq2GYrVO_kVwyYnVU73e5MDuFw6yrBdA)

## The US in Afghanistan: is the 'withdrawal debate' a mass deception By Umair Jamal

America's envoy for Afghanistan, Khalilzad, recently visited Pakistan after a long phase of hearings and meetings with President Trump's team which is expecting another round of dialogue with the Taliban. Clearly, Khalilzad is under pressure to deliver something to the White House. However, the pressure being built on Khalilzad is primarily the work of his country's policy for Afghanistan. Let me explain.

It's important to note that while the U.S. has talked about leaving Afghanistan, the former has only inspired ambiguity when it comes to putting out a clear policy. Thus, the Afghan Taliban should not be expected likely to Fall for the US's "withdrawal narrative unless some concrete measure is taken by the U.S. Another recent statement from the Taliban's official's media channels states that peace cannot return to Afghanistan unless the US offers a clear timeline of its withdrawal from the country. It is becoming increasingly clear that the issue of US's troop's withdrawal has become one of the key factors when it comes to the existing deadlock in the dialogue process.

Washington expects the Taliban to issue some sort of recognition of the former's conditions such as a willingness to make a deal with the Afghan government. The Taliban on their part, are apprehensive of conceding position without the U.S. making its position clear on the withdrawal timeline. Arguably, the last year's statements coming out of Washington have not been able to convince the Taliban when it comes to trusting the narrative around the U.S. expected withdrawal from Afghanistan. Moreover, it's also possible that the U.S. has attempted to negotiate with the Taliban by speculating about its impending withdrawal from Afghanistan.

The uncertainty is reflective of the U.S.'s announcement of sending more troops to Afghanistan. A few days ago, the US announced to deploy more troops under operation Freedom Sentinel, the official name for the mission succeeding the so-called Operation Enduring Freedom. The troop's number being deployed is not big, the timing and timeline of the deployment say a lot about the existing confusion concerning the U.S.'s Afghanistan policy. It's important to understand that the decision to deploy more troops comes at a time when the U.S. and the Taliban are trapped in a stalemate situation where both actors expect major concessions from the other.

While the Taliban gain diplomatic and political clout by engaging with regional states, the U.S.'s frustrations in Afghanistan are only going to grow in the coming months

On the one hand, the U.S. has announced to leave Afghanistan while on the other hand, the country is planning to send more troops to the country which is contradictory to the Taliban's demands. In this regard, the Taliban's refusal to change its fundamental position on the issue and demands from the U.S. concerning clarity on the withdrawal timeline are an indication that the group is under no pressure or hurry to make a deal with the U.S. Clearly, Washington's decision to send more troops to Afghanistan is likely to create differences between the two actors.

Another interesting factor concerning the deployment of U.S. troops is the timeline of the deployment. The placement is expected to take place during the next five to six months which means the expected withdrawal of U.S.'s troops from Afghanistan is not likely to happen anytime soon. It's also possible that the Trump administration is attempting to put pressure on the Taliban by making such announcements. Regardless, such a deceitful play is only going to hurt the peace process.

The existing lack of clarity among various policy-making circles in the US has even undermined the work of Khalilzad. The growing pressure on Khalilzad means Washington may further put pressure on Pakistan to deliver a ceasefire in Afghanistan – if not an agreement. However, Pakistan should not be expected to deliver on any front except offering diplomatic assistance to the parties involved. A few days ago, the Afghan Taliban leaders issued a statement, asking their fighters to continue fighting as they believe “the victory is near.” “The Islamic State Emirate believes that conditions for a peaceful Afghanistan require an Afghanistan that is free from a foreign occupation where neither our sovereignty nor freedom are usurped nor our land and air space used to harm others,” said the statement. Afghan Taliban, on their part, continue to blame America for the failure of the peace talks as the group believes that the US should “adopt a policy of reason and understanding to remain a sincere partner in the negotiations process.”

It cannot be said more clearly that the Taliban want their proposals on the peace process to be accepted by the U.S. which demand the withdrawal of international troops from Afghanistan. While the Taliban gain diplomatic and political clout by engaging with regional states, the U.S.'s frustrations in Afghanistan are only going

to grow in the coming months. Afghanistan's peace process is in limbo for the probable future.

Source : <https://dailytimes.com.pk/412506/the-us-in-afghanistan-is-the-withdrawal-debate-a-mass-deception/?fbclid=IwAR171zxhIJJ7R2NdmW739NDkd3USPM28CgxHLnkh9hLB y3ali93CbF87ykA>

## Invading Iran will ruin America By S Mubashir Noor

A string of attacks on oil tankers in the Persian Gulf over the last two months have raised temperatures in the Middle East to the point where some manner of armed conflict between the US and Iran appears inevitable.

Indeed, US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo pulled no punches while publicly slamming Tehran in mid-June for “unprovoked attacks” on two oil tankers that caught fire from unknown explosions in the Gulf of Oman.

Iran has summarily dismissed the accusations as another example of Washington’s wanton warmongering and declared they were a “false-flag” to build the case for invasion, one that would prove very costly for the US.

The US and Iran have been at the brink of war since US President Donald Trump pulled out of the P5+1 nuclear treaty in 2018 and snapped back punitive sanctions that have again isolated Iran’s economy and made it near impossible to participate in global trade.

That said, there are broader contours to this face off than merely trigger-happy hawks in the Trump administration or ensuring freedom of navigation through the Strait of Hormuz, the world’s busiest oil shipping lane.

In short, America’s arithmetic for war with Iran is not in its favor for two major reasons: the absence of a moral high ground and renewed major power competition.

If the endgame is peace in the Middle East as the Americans keep harping on, Washington must learn to treat Iran as a partner and not a pariah

First, this is not 1945 nor is it 2003. While America’s foreign policy has always implicitly acknowledged its transactional nature, Trump has unabashedly paraded it at every diplomatic engagement.

From trade to collective defense pacts, he has panned every one of them for disproportionately burdening the US. Many European allies will quietly be hoping he gets booted out of office in 2020.

This “help me, help yourself” approach to international relations has yielded a major minus: America for perhaps the first time since World War II does not hold

the moral high ground in dealing with an adversary it perceives a major menace to global peace and security.

It is important to recognize that America's sustainability as a superpower has not simply manifested from its military prowess. Sure, there is that but every major power needs a virtuous ideology others can get behind, or at least rationalize their helplessness with, and Washington's has been "moral exceptionalism."

This was the carefully curated perception that America would do whatever it took to uphold freedom and human rights worldwide. Yet moral exceptionalism only worked so long as the primary villain had an equally compelling ideological narrative and relative parity in military and economic might.

Bullying the weak, as Washington began in 1991 with the First Gulf War, marked the turning point when principled stands devolved into major power hubris. It has been a slow-moving train wreck ever since.

Rewinding to the Cold War, systematic acts of regime change, especially in Latin America and the Middle East, and actively igniting war theatres in Asia and Africa were business-as-usual for Washington, yet it retained the facade of moral exceptionalism thanks to the threat of the Soviet Union that America opportunely hyped up with global media control.

After all, who would point fingers at Washington when it had single-handedly rebuilt battered Europe and Japan after World War II through the Marshall Plan while the "evil commies" under Soviet leader Joseph Stalin were busy purging millions? The moral equation remained firmly on Washington's side right until the Iron Curtain fell near the end of the 20th century. No more.

Another equation no longer in Washington's favour is geopolitical. Increasingly militaristic Russia and new economic powerhouse China have ganged up after years of estrangement to challenge America's pole position in world politics.

And the Iran issue has sufficient moral latitude for them to lean into, specifically Russia that helped Shia militias and the Syrian government defeat the Daesh terrorist group in 2018 where the US-led coalition had failed.

Moscow's role in defeating Daesh dealt a crushing blow to America's long-standing influence in the Middle East and Russian President Vladimir Putin emerged as the Arabs' new savior.

Moreover, the construction of multiple Russian military facilities in the region suggests Washington can no longer dictate terms, which crystallized in its failure to topple Syrian President Bashar al-Assad after pronouncing it the primary goal of the US-led combat mission.

China meanwhile sees Iran as a crucial node in President Xi Jinping's marquee Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and an important export market for its infrastructural development expertise similar to Pakistan and Sri Lanka.

Given that the US has been pressuring Beijing militarily in its maritime space and started a damaging trade war to deflate its booming economy, Iran is the perfect lever for payback and therefore bankrolling any plan that damages US interests in the Middle East is likely to China's advantage.

Then there are Trump's troubles at home that may force his hand. His approval ratings have taken a real beating after the congressional inquiry on the 2016 presidential election insinuated he may have colluded with Moscow to defeat Hillary Clinton who was widely tipped to win.

Accordingly, to repair his reputation ahead of the 2020 polls, Trump may in classic Republican fashion resort to a grand show of force that will appeal to his White evangelical (aka "Christian Zionists") voters who see Ayatollah Iran as Israel's mortal enemy and desire its destruction.

Their influence on the administration cannot be discounted for they comprise nearly 27 percent of national voters and appeasing them drove the American president to shockingly recognize Jerusalem as Israel's capital and move the US embassy there.

Loyal ally Saudi Arabia that also seethes at Iran's growing clout in the region and is waging its own war on Iranian proxies in Yemen will also cheer heartily any military operation to effect regime change.

Yet if the endgame is peace in the Middle East as the Americans keep harping on, Washington must learn to treat Iran as a partner and not a pariah. Failure to do so will only set the region ablaze again and bring ruin to US regional interests as in Afghanistan.

Source : [https://dailytimes.com.pk/412518/invading-iran-will-ruin-america/?fbclid=IwAR3sTScrVd2qgIzL9ke-gvny-oFWQGMFd6\\_Mv9QpSVU9SDbdgB4liDJ4paQ](https://dailytimes.com.pk/412518/invading-iran-will-ruin-america/?fbclid=IwAR3sTScrVd2qgIzL9ke-gvny-oFWQGMFd6_Mv9QpSVU9SDbdgB4liDJ4paQ)

## The End Of The Syrian Civil War: The Many Implications – Analysis By Eyal Zisser

The civil war that raged in Syria over the past eight years seems to be drawing to a close. In July 2018, the Syrian regime regained control of the southern part of the country, including the town of Dar'a where the revolt began in March 2011. Five months later in December 2018, U.S. president Donald Trump announced his decision to withdraw U.S. troops from Syria, driving the final nail in the coffin of the rebellion.

Although the return of stability and security to the war-torn country is still a far-off goal, the military campaign is effectively over. The efforts of the rebel groups—supported by large segments of the Syrian population—to overthrow the Assad regime, which has ruled the country since 1970, have failed. President Bashar Assad emerged as the undisputed winner though he did so only thanks to the massive military aid rendered by Moscow, Tehran, and Iran's Hezbollah Lebanese proxy. How will the end of the war affect Syria's relations with its patrons, and what will be its implications for wider Middle Eastern stability?

### The Ongoing Struggle for Syria

Viewed from a broad historical perspective, the end of the civil war concludes yet another chapter in “the struggle for Syria” that has plagued the country since gaining independence in April 1946, or indeed, since its designation as a distinct political entity under French mandate at the end of the 1920s.[2]

For the first one-third of this time, the Syrian state was a weak entity, lacking in stability, subject to frequent military coups and regime changes with no effective ruling center, a punching bag for regional and great power interference alike. Hafez Assad's rise to power in November 1970 seemed to have brought this struggle to an end by ushering in a prolonged spell of domestic stability and regional preeminence that continued into the reign of Bashar, who in June 2000 succeeded his father. This was due in no small part to the broad social base underpinning the regime, comprising a diverse coalition of minority communities and groups led by the Alawites, on the one hand, and the Sunni peasantry on the other.[3]

With the outbreak of the civil war, the struggle for Syria was renewed. For most belligerents—whether Bashar and his supporters or the various opposition factions, including some Islamist groups not connected to the Islamic State (ISIS)—the struggle revolved around keeping or gaining control of the Syrian state

and determining its future character and governance (i.e., Baathist secularism vs. Islamist rule) as none of them wished its demise or incorporation into a wider entity.

In this respect, the role played by ISIS in the Syrian civil war, with its avowed goal of incorporating the Levant into the newly proclaimed caliphate, was the exception. If anything, ISIS is more a product of the Iraqi rather than the Syrian political scene: It is there where its leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi emerged, operated, and proclaimed himself caliph. By contrast, ISIS's Syrian branch, Jabhat an-Nusra, led by the Syrian Abu Muhammad Julani, has always been considered an integral part of Greater Syria (ash-Sham): hence, Jabhat an-Nusra's conflict with its parent organization and hence its later conflict with al-Qaeda, with which it subsequently came to be affiliated.[4]

### Debunking the "Arab Spring" Illusion

In an address at Damascus University on June 20, 2011, three months after the outbreak of the anti-regime uprising, Assad assured his audience that these "intrigues and acts of murder do not have it in their power to prevent the blossoming in Syria," vowing

to turn this decisive moment into a ... day, in which the hope will throb that our homeland will return to being the place of quiet and calm we have become accustomed to.[5]

It took the Syrian president nearly eight years to restore (a semblance of) the promised "quiet and calm," albeit at the horrendous cost of more than half-a-million fatalities, two million wounded, some five to eight million refugees who fled the country, and untold mayhem and destruction. What made this bloodbath particularly ironic is that on his ascendance a decade earlier, the young Bashar tried to introduce certain changes, and even some limited reform, in the socioeconomic realm. Yet, having realized that these winds of change were turning into a storm, he backed down and brought the short-lived "Damascus Spring" to an abrupt end. Those who had raised their voices in favor of reform and change, in no small measure at the encouragement of Bashar himself, were imprisoned, and severe restrictions on the freedom of expression were reintroduced.[6]

But in 2011, Assad was confronted with a fresh and much less controllable "spring" not of his own making, comprised of large numbers of disgruntled peasants and periphery residents yearning for improvement in their socioeconomic lot rather than Damascene intellectuals and thinkers. Now, Assad was forced to use harsher measures to repress the rapidly spreading rebellion. His predicament was

substantially aggravated by the fact that the Syrian upheaval was the local manifestation of a tidal wave of regional uprisings that ensued in December 2010 and led to the fall of the long-reigning dictatorships in Tunisia, Egypt, Yemen, and Libya. More worryingly, with the uprisings lauded in the West as “the Arab Spring” and actively supported by Western powers—whether tacitly as in the Obama administration’s pressure on Egyptian president Mubarak to step down or directly through the military intervention that overthrew Libya’s dictator Mu’ammar Qaddafi—the Assad regime seemed to be next in line on the Western hit list. As President Obama put it in a May 2011 speech, “The Syrian people have shown their courage in demanding a transition to democracy. President Assad now has a choice: He can lead that transition, or get out of the way.”[7]

The Assad regime weathered the storm through massive military support from Tehran and Moscow, which also shielded it from repeated U.S. intervention threats—most notably in August 2012 when Obama announced his intention to launch a punitive strike in response to the deadly gassing of more than a thousand Syrian civilians.

In doing so, the Assad regime not only defeated a lethal threat to its existence but also spelled the end of Western delusions of regional democratization and openness that would allow ordinary Middle Easterners to determine their own fate and the fate of their respective societies and states.[8] Eight years after it was triggered by the self-immolation of a disgruntled Tunisian peddler, the “Arab Spring” had not only failed to bring the region closer to these cherished ideals but made their attainment ever more remote, and nowhere more so than in Syria. Apart from the horrendous loss of life and disastrous destruction of properties and infrastructures, the civil war dealt a mortal blow to the yearning for change and the readiness to fight for it. Even more, it undermined the faith in the ability of the individual and society to bring about the desired changes.

Most Western observers of the Middle East should have paid greater heed to their regional counterparts who had long argued that, given the historical legacy and socioeconomic conditions attending decades of rule by authoritarian monarchies and military dictatorships, the Arab world was not ripe for a change, certainly not for democracy.[9] Local analysts were, therefore, much more cautious and circumscribed in defining the regional turbulence, using the term *harak*—a movement or a shift that might not necessarily lead anywhere—rather than euphoric terms signifying a sharp change of direction or break from past practices. Indeed, careful examination of the circumstances in each state affected by the

“Arab Spring,” especially the dynamics of the events and the actors involved in them, reveals that nowhere were these upheavals initiated by forces seeking liberal-type freedoms and democratization. Rather, they were in many instances a corollary of socioeconomic protests by youths seeking status and a more meaningful role for their generation. They were a far cry from the Western notion of an “Arab Spring.”[10]

### Denting the Pan-ideologies

Just as the Syrian civil war exposed the hollowness of the euphoric Western depiction of the Arab uprisings, so it dealt a devastating blow to the related ideal of pan-Arabism, which had dominated inter-Arab politics for much of the twentieth century.

To be sure, the notion of the “Arab Nation” (or the “Arab World”) underpinning the pan-Arab ideal had been in steady decline since Syria dissolved its unification with Egypt in 1961 followed by the astounding Israeli victory over an all-Arab coalition in the June 1967 war. So much so, that American academic Fouad Ajami pronounced the “end of Pan-Arabism”[11] upon the signing of the September 1978 Israel-Egypt Camp David agreements, which culminated six months later in a full-fledged peace accord. Thus, when the Arab uprisings broke out, they were widely seen as a resurgence of Arabism (and Sunni identity) that would uplift the “Arab Nation” from the depths to which it had sunk and cut non-Arab Turkey and Iran down to size.[12]

In fact, the opposite happened. Not only did the uprisings not lead to greater Arab unity and solidarity, but they allowed Tehran and Ankara to extend their power and influence across the region. In this respect, the Syrian civil war, too, played a key role. Within this framework, Ankara exploited the civil war to gain a foot-hold in Syria’s northern part—a longstanding goal dating back to the fall of the Ottoman Empire and the post-World War I redrawing of the Middle East’s borders. For its part, Tehran used its support for the Assad regime to establish a firm military foothold in Syria, both directly via its Islamic Revolutionary Guards and indirectly through Hezbollah and other proxy Shiite militias. Tehran has thus come closer than ever to creating a land corridor from the Iranian border all the way to the Mediterranean Sea.[13]

It is indeed doubly ironic that Syria, which has long cast itself as “the beating heart of Arabism,” has been forced to rely on non-Arab Iran for survival while confronting some of its most prominent Arab sisters (notably Riyadh and the Gulf monarchies),

and that its avowedly secularist Baathist government has been saved by an Islamist regime. And while this dependence has been mitigated by Russia's military presence, it has, nevertheless, drawn Damascus into the maelstrom of international politics and reduced its control over its own destiny as when in January 2018 and February 2019, Moscow, Tehran, and Ankara held summit meetings to discuss Syria's future.[14] This reliance on Iran has also put the Assad regime on a collision course with Israel, which has sought to prevent the entrenchment of Tehran's military presence through sustained air strikes against Iranian targets in Syria.

### Islamism's Moderate Revival

Not surprisingly, the steady decline in pan-Arabism was matched by a corresponding rise in Islamist power and influence given the zero-sum relationship between the two rival ideologies. For a while, it seemed that the post-World War I Middle Eastern system, based on the territorial nation state and largely ruled by predominantly secularist, authoritarian regimes, would provide a lasting substitute to this order. But the powerful religious undercurrents among the region's deeply devout societies continued to bedevil the regimes (e.g., the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood's decades-long violent resistance), gaining strong momentum from the 1979 Islamic Revolution in Iran and the attendant surge of Islamist terror groups (e.g., Hamas, Hezbollah, al-Qaeda). These currents then culminated in the "Arab Spring" with the replacement of autocratic rulers in Tunisia and (temporarily) in Egypt by Islamist regimes.

Turkistan Islamic Party (TIP) parade in northwest Syria featured in propaganda

Islamization played an important role in the Syrian civil war as well, with Islamic slogans and terminology becoming a unifying factor and force multiplier for the various rebel groups while those loyal to pan-Arabism or Syrian territorial nationalism fell behind. Nor was this the first time for the regime to be endangered by violent Islamism. Hafez Assad was confronted with a nationwide Muslim Brotherhood revolt in the early 1980s, which he suppressed with great difficulty and the utmost brutality. The revolt culminated in the notorious February 1982 Hama massacre where thousands of civilians were slaughtered and large parts of the city were razed. The Syrian Brotherhood never recovered from this setback, and the Islamist banner during the 2011-18 uprising was raised by Salafist and jihadist groups whose following in the country's rural and peripheral areas was wider than the Brotherhood's mainly urban support base.[15] The result has been

a far heavier human toll attending the suppression of the recent revolt and the preservation of the Baathist-type of “political secularism,” in which the ruling elites and significant parts of the population refuse to grant clerics political control over their lives.

### Changing the Great-power Game

Apart from its far-reaching domestic and regional implications, the Syrian civil war played a key role in expediting the end of the Pax Americana that began with the 1991 Kuwait war and reached its peak following the collapse of the Soviet Union and the East European bloc. Yet this dominance was rapidly undone by President Obama’s hasty disengagement from Afghanistan and Iraq, which created a power vacuum that allowed the Taliban to intensify their fight against the Kabul government and laid the groundwork for the advent of ISIS and the establishment of the Islamic State in vast tracts of Iraq and Syria.[16]

The Syrian civil war accelerated the process of U.S. regional retrenchment. With Obama’s repeated calls for Assad’s abdication and warnings of harsh retribution ignored by the Syrian dictator, and Moscow and Tehran throwing their weight behind their prized protégé, Washington looked a pale shadow of the omnipotent superpower it seemed two decades earlier—an exhausted and disillusioned power, lacking the will and the power to engage in the region’s volatile affairs.

This image was reinforced by President Trump’s America-First policy. To be sure, in April 2017 and again in April 2018, the administration bombed Syrian regime targets in retribution for its use of chemical weapons against civilians (something repeatedly threatened but never done by Obama) thus restoring a semblance of U.S. deterrence—but this was the exception. Following in its predecessor’s footsteps, the Trump administration continued to prosecute the “small war” of fighting ISIS, which played a secondary role in the Syrian civil war, while leaving Moscow a free hand to suppress the anti-regime rebels (some of whom were armed and trained by Washington). Then Washington announced in December 2018 its intention to withdraw U.S. troops from Syria. Little wonder that as Assad emerged victorious from his eight-year struggle for survival, Russian president Vladimir Putin has come to be seen as the real winner of the conflict, having put his political prestige on the line to ensure his protégé’s survival against the widespread warnings of a replay of Russia’s Afghanistan debacle. Standing in stark contrast to Washington’s passivity and inaction, this determined risk-taking

allowed Moscow to regain its long-lost position as the Middle East's preeminent foreign power.

It is, nevertheless, far too premature to pronounce the end of U.S. Middle East preeminence, let alone abdication of its regional duties and interests. It is true that U.S. administrations have experienced repeated setbacks since entering the region in strength in the post-World War II era, including the 1950s loss of the Egyptian foothold and the 1979 loss of Iran as an ally. But Washington has always found the determination and sense of purpose to rebound as it did when detaching Egypt from Moscow in the 1970s, reversing Iraq's 1990 annexation of Kuwait, and presiding over Israel's growing reconciliation with its Arab neighbors.

Moreover, to the credit of the Obama and the Trump administrations, it should be noted that Syria has never featured prominently in U.S. interests. When, in the 1950s, the country came under Soviet patronage, Washington focused on preventing Damascus from disrupting its regional interests rather than turning Syria into a full-fledged U.S. ally. At times, Washington tried to rally Damascus behind its interests, for example, through participation in the 1991 anti-Iraq war coalition and the U.S.-sponsored negotiations with Israel in the 1990s.

In this respect, the looming withdrawal of U.S. forces from Syria is not out of line with Washington's post-WWII policy or without its own logic, namely, disengaging from the Syrian marsh after attaining the desired goal, however modest and local, rather than sinking deeper into this treacherous water. President Trump's derisive characterization reflects this policy: "Syria was lost long ago. ... we're not talking about vast wealth, we are talking about sand and death." [18] It, nevertheless, remains an open question whether greater support for the rebels at the early stages of the conflict and enforcement of Obama's threatened retribution for Bashar's use of chemical weapons would have entailed real gains for Washington, perhaps even sparing the need for later military intervention.

## Conclusion

With the anti-regime revolt all but suppressed, President Assad will likely focus more on reasserting his authority and rebuilding the security forces than reconstructing the Syrian state and society—beyond providing the population with the basic necessities of life. He is unlikely to be concerned about absorbing the millions of refugees who fled the country. [19] In fact, the regime seems to view the mass exodus as a blessing in disguise that rid the country of a large, hostile population and helped reduce the economic burden created by Syria's rapid

prewar natural population growth—one of the highest in the world and an important impetus for the rebellion. In Bashar's words:

In this war we lost our best sons. The country's economic infrastructure has been destroyed almost completely. We spent a lot of money, and the war cost us in blood and sweat. All this is true, but in return we have gained a healthier and more harmonious society in the true and deepest sense of the term harmony.[20]

This in turn means that the end of the civil war does not portend a new departure for Syria. Domestically, it promises a return to the prewar reality of underdevelopment and backwardness under a dictatorial regime. Internationally, it will likely mean continued hostility and suspicion toward the West, especially the United States and Israel, and continued deference to Russia and Iran coupled with an attempt to widen the regime's room for maneuvering and freedom of action vis-à-vis these patrons. Damascus will also endeavor to limit Israel's military operations against Iranian targets on Syrian soil while seeking to avoid an all-out confrontation.

More importantly, postwar Syria can be viewed as a microcosm of regional processes and undercurrents in the post-Arab uprisings era—a region pointed to the past rather than the future, whose inhabitants live in misery and hopelessness, lacking basic freedoms and human rights, and ravaged by endemic violence, radicalism, and terrorism. With the local dictatorial regimes that ruled the region for most of the twentieth century proving their ability to retain power in the face of the challenges posed by militant Islam and (to a far lesser extent) liberal democracy, the Middle East will continue in the foreseeable future to hover on the abyss while narrowly avoiding falling into it.

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## Keeping The Nuclear Arms Control Alive – Analysis By Alexander Savelyev

“Back to the heydays of the global Cold War, what eventually kept the US and the USSR from deploying nuclear weapons was the dangerous and costly struggle called: ‘mutual destruction assurance’. Already by the late 1950s, both sides achieved parity in the number and type of nuclear warheads as well as in the number and precision of their delivery systems.

Both sides produced enough warheads, delivery systems’ secret depots and launching sites to amply survive the first impact and to maintain a strong second-strike capability. Once comprehending that neither the preventive nor preemptive nuclear strike would bring a decisive victory (put a premium on striking first to gain the initial advantage and set the course of the war, by element of surprise and quick assertion), but would actually trigger the final global nuclear holocaust and ensure total mutual destruction, the Americans and the Soviets have achieved a fear–equilibrium through the hazardous deterrence. Thus, it was not an intended armament rush (for parity), but the non-intended Mutual Assurance Destruction – MAD – with its tranquilizing effect of nuclear weaponry, if possessed in sufficient quantities and impenetrable configurations – that brought a bizarre sort of pacifying stability between two confronting superpowers” – Prof. Anis H Bajrektarevic stated in his well-read policy paper on Security structures of Asia and Europe, concluding that: “MAD prevented nuclear war, but did not disarm the superpowers.”

What is the state of nuclear disarmament today? Following lines are giving a comprehensive overview of the efforts in the post-Cold period.

For almost eight years we have been witnessing a decline (or even absence) of Russian and U.S. efforts in the sphere of nuclear arms control, which can be seen at both the official and expert levels. The last achievement in this field was the Treaty on Measures for the Further Reduction and Limitation of Strategic Offensive Arms (New Start Treaty) which was signed by Russia and the United States in 2010 and entered into force in February 2011. Since then, issues pertaining to further steps in nuclear disarmament have disappeared from the agenda of Russian-American relations.

In the past, such pauses were filled with active consultations and were used to rethink one’s own policy in this area and comprehensively assess the other party’s position. Preparatory work continued even in the period between the fall of 1983

(when the Soviet Union withdrew from all nuclear arms negotiations with the United States) and the spring of 1985 (when the negotiations were resumed), while informal contacts between the parties (primarily through scientific communities) became much stronger.

Over a period of fifty years, the United States and the Soviet Union/Russia achieved significant progress in curbing the nuclear arms race and gradually and steadily lowering the level of nuclear confrontation between the two major nuclear powers. In the Soviet Union/Russia, the greatest achievements in nuclear arms control were made during the rule of Leonid Brezhnev and Mikhail Gorbachev. Vladimir Putin played an important role in the ratification of the START II Treaty (2000) during his first term as president, as he convinced legislators of its effectiveness and usefulness for Russia's security interests, and in the conclusion of the Russian-American Strategic Offensive Reductions Treaty (2002). Dmitry Medvedev earned a place for himself in the history of nuclear disarmament by signing the aforementioned 2010 Treaty. It was only during the brief rule of Yuri Andropov (from November 1982 to February 1984) and Konstantin Chernenko (from February 1984 to March 1985) that there was no tangible progress in nuclear arms control.

In the United States, all the eight presidents that preceded Donald Trump—from Richard Nixon to Barack Obama—had achievements in this field. It is still an open question whether Trump will want to break with this tradition. In any case, there are several arguments both in favor of and against such a possibility. It should be emphasized that not everything depends on the desire or unwillingness of the U.S. administration to conclude new agreements in this area. Russia's position has an equal role to play, and this position does not inspire much optimism at the present time.

Politicians and experts name many reasons for the breach of Russia-U.S. relations in the field of nuclear arms control. One of them is believed to be the deterioration of Russia-West relations over the Ukraine crisis. But facts show that the problem arose much earlier. In March 2013 (that is, one year before the events in Ukraine), former chief of the presidential administration of Russia Sergei Ivanov openly said that Russia was not interested in further reductions in armaments and named the reason for that: the completion of the modernization of Russia's strategic nuclear forces and its unwillingness to eliminate new strategic weapons that had only recently entered service.

Another argument, named by President Putin in February 2012, is the need to involve third nuclear powers in the nuclear disarmament process after the 2010 treaty. Further explanations provided by some other officials, including Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov, claimed that deeper reductions (outside the treaty's framework) would make the strategic offensive weapons of Russia and the U.S. "comparable" with those of third nuclear powers.

Moscow puts the main blame for the failure to achieve new nuclear arms control agreements with the U.S. on the missile defense problem. This problem arose now and then in Soviet times and came to a head in 1983 when President Reagan proposed the Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI). The SDI slowed down START I negotiations and nearly blocked the conclusion of this and other nuclear disarmament agreements. The United States' withdrawal from the open-ended ABM Treaty in 2002 and its subsequent efforts to create and deploy missile defense in its own territory and territories of its allies, coupled with unsuccessful attempts to reach agreement with Russia on joint missile defense programs, exacerbated the situation still further.

Moscow also explains the lack of progress in strategic nuclear arms reductions by the possession of nuclear weapons by Washington's NATO allies. Anatoly Antonov, who at that time was Russian deputy defense minister, said this factor "cannot be ignored." Other factors that Moscow says should be "taken into account" include the "Global Strike" concept, the deployment of strategic precision-guided conventional weapons, plans to deploy weapons in outer space, the presence of U.S. non-strategic nuclear weapons in Europe, and some other disproportions, many of which are mentioned in Russia's present National Security Strategy, approved by Putin in late 2015.

Russia's position on further steps towards nuclear disarmament resembles that of the Soviet Union in the late 1960s. It is based on the principle of "equal security," which means that all factors determining the balance of power between the opposing sides should be taken into account. This explains why in negotiations with Washington on strategic nuclear weapons, the Soviet Union considered it justified to demand compensation for imbalances in other categories of arms.

Naturally, fifty years ago, the categories of weapons subject to "compensation" were different from those of today. They did not include conventional weapons of any kind. Moscow was concerned about nuclear weapons possessed by the U.S.'s NATO allies, and U.S. forward-deployed nuclear weapons in Europe. Now Russia

has taken a broader approach, focusing more on non-nuclear armaments, which creates additional difficulties in the search for mutual understanding with the United States and which calls into question the possibility of concluding new agreements.

If we recognize that Russia's concern over the effect of missile defense and precision-guided and other conventional weapons on the strategic balance is of a fundamental nature, a natural question arises: How to accommodate this concern if a political decision is made to continue the nuclear disarmament process? And should Russia agree to deeper reductions in nuclear weapons if its concern is ignored?

Needless to say, no agreement on strategic offensive arms can set unequal ceilings on the number of warheads and their strategic delivery vehicles remaining after reductions. That would be at variance with the very meaning of an international treaty, which should be based on the principle of equality of the parties and which should conform to its subject matter.

Nevertheless, there are other ways to accommodate the aforementioned concerns. For example, in the second half of the 1980s, the Soviet Union was very concerned about the SDI program and American nuclear weapons deployed in Europe. This is why a package solution was proposed—simultaneous negotiations on three issues: medium-range nuclear weapons in Europe, strategic offensive arms, and defense and outer space. Moscow put forward a condition that the three planned agreements should be signed simultaneously. Washington did not object. However, the Soviet Union did not adhere to this position for long. At first, the term 'nuclear delivery vehicles' was used to designate only land-based ballistic and cruise missiles, while aviation was excluded from the negotiations. Later, Moscow removed this category of weapons from the initial package, after which, in December 1987, the parties signed the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty (INF Treaty), which is of unlimited duration.

For a much longer time, almost until all provisions of the START I Treaty were agreed, the Soviet Union insisted on a linkage between strategic offensive and defensive weapons, which was reflected in official statements and the structure of the Soviet delegation to the talks. Moscow sent one delegation to the talks on these two types of weapons. Negotiations on defense and outer space were conducted by a separate group within the delegation. The United States was represented by two separate delegations. One worked on START I, and the other held consultations on defense and outer space. When it became clear that the defense

and space negotiations would fail and that the START I Treaty was almost ready, the Soviet Union signed the treaty but made a unilateral statement on the need to observe the ABM Treaty as a condition for implementing START I.

This experience proves that one real way to accommodate concerns is to conclude separate agreements on the most pressing security problems, including missile defense, precision-guided long-range weapons, and space weapons. The authors of World 2035. Global Forecast, published by the Primakov Institute of World Economy and International Relations in 2017, admit of this possibility but consider it the least likely of the proposed four scenarios for the development of the military-political situation in the world in the period until 2035.

Speaking of concrete ways to accommodate concerns, one should assess, at least approximately, the effect of missile defense, precision-guided weapons and space weapons on the Russian-U.S. strategic balance. First of all, let us note an interesting circumstance. When it comes to the effect of various factors on the strategic balance, Russian officials insisting that this effect should be taken into account somehow fail to mention air defense. If we follow this logic, then any weapons capable of combating strategic offensive weapons should be included in the overall balance of power, especially if they are intended to combat retaliatory systems. These weapons definitely include the aviation component of the strategic triad. Without going into further discussion, let us note that this omission of air defense issues seems to be due to some other considerations than a desire to strengthen strategic stability.

Of the remaining three categories of weapons, which, in the opinion of the Russian leadership, have an effect on the strategic balance, space weapons are the most interesting from the point of view of concluding a possible agreement. The fact is, there are no such weapons yet, as far as we know. Therefore, they have no effect on the strategic balance. It is worth recalling the Soviet Union's struggle against the SDI program in the second half of the 1980s. Many experts said then that "space strike weapons" would be created in the foreseeable future. The most skeptical participants in discussions said that such systems would appear in 20 to 25 years at the earliest. 30 years have passed since then, but this type of weapons (space-based lasers, railguns and other exotic weapons) has not come into existence so far. There are no serious reasons, either, to suggest that space weapons will be in the strategic arsenal of the United States or other countries within the next two to three decades, even if new technologies make this possible. In this case, the following factors will come into play: cost, combat effectiveness of

weapon systems, their vulnerability, and possible reaction from the domestic opposition, individual countries and the international community as a whole. These factors may not only slow down but prevent the militarization of space.

In addition, there are no commonly agreed definitions for such terms as 'weapons', which can be the subject of an agreement on space issues. Unfortunately, such an agreement can hardly be based on the draft international Treaty on Prevention of the Placement of Weapons in Outer Space, the Threat or Use of Force against Outer Space Objects, submitted by China and Russia to the Conference on Disarmament in 2008 (and its updated version, submitted in 2014). The draft only proposed preventing the deployment of weapons in outer space and made no mention of prohibiting their development or testing in space. Nor did it mention weapons deployed on Earth but capable of destroying outer space objects.

Criticisms of this document can be continued, but the main problem is whether it is possible to reach a verifiable agreement on limiting or banning space weapons, whatever this term might mean, even if all parties show real interest in it. There are more doubts than optimism regarding this possibility. Answering this question requires more than just efforts by diplomats, the military and developers of space weapons. More experts should be involved in these efforts, including scientists from countries that may be parties to future agreements.

Another interesting question concerns long-range precision-guided conventional weapons and their effect on the strategic balance. According to the majority of specialists, this type of weapons includes cruise missiles, non-nuclear ICBMs, and some weapon systems (for example, hypersonic gliders). As a rule, the degree of effect such weapons may have on the strategic balance is not assessed. Nevertheless, it is asserted that they can not only weaken but also undermine strategic stability. This is a doubtful statement.

If we view these systems from the point of view of strengthening the offensive capability, they are absolutely incommensurable with nuclear weapons in terms of power. Precision-guided weapons are absolutely unsuitable for preemptive strikes for many reasons. Speaking of non-nuclear ICBMs, their accuracy should by far exceed that of nuclear ICBMs. Otherwise, they won't be able to destroy hard targets (such as missile silos or command centers). According to open source data, modern ICBMs have accuracy (circular error probable – CEP) of several dozen meters, at best. Destroying a hard target with a conventional warhead

requires this accuracy of not more than several meters, which is impossible to achieve at the present technological level of these systems.

But this is not the main concern. If an aggressor decides to use precision-guided weapons (conventional ICBMs) in a surprise attack to destroy a significant part of the opponent's nuclear arsenal, it will have to plan a massive attack. Such an attack cannot go unnoticed due to a missile warning system. There is no guarantee that the attacked party will not use nuclear warning systems when it receives information confirming the attack. So, it does not really matter to the victim of such aggression whether the approaching ICBMs carry nuclear or conventional warheads. The response will almost certainly be nuclear, with all the ensuing consequences.

Finally, one more important argument is that if Russia or the United States decides to deploy a great number of non-nuclear ICBMs, they will most likely have to do this at the expense of their own strategic nuclear weapons. If the 2010 treaty remains in effect (until 2021) and if it is extended (until 2026), all ICBMs will be counted under the treaty's limits for strategic delivery vehicles (700 deployed delivery vehicles for each party). In order for non-nuclear ICBMs not to be counted under the treaty, one needs to create a new strategic delivery vehicle and prove that this weapon system is not covered by this treaty. This will be very hard to do, given the strained Russian-American relations. Unilateral actions will most likely lead to the collapse of this international agreement.

As regards cruise missiles as an element of precision-guided weapons, one important issue should be clarified above all. Under the New START Treaty of 2010, long-range (over 600 km) nuclear cruise missiles are not counted as strategic offensive arms. In other words, in the opinion of Russia and the United States, they are not strategic weapons. Each heavy bomber carrying nuclear-tipped air-launched cruise missiles is counted as one delivery vehicle and one warhead, no matter how many missiles it may carry. Sea-launched cruise missiles are not covered by this treaty at all. It does not even mention the term 'long-range nuclear cruise missile.' Simply put, the parties do not think that these nuclear weapons can undermine the strategic balance; therefore, they see no reason to limit them in the START Treaty. In this case, however, it is completely unclear why long-range nuclear cruise missiles do not affect the strategic balance between the parties, as Moscow and Washington stated in the above-mentioned agreement, whereas similar conventional weapons should undermine strategic stability,

especially since some studies show that conventional cruise missiles are not capable of destroying highly protected strategic offensive weapons.

It is believed in Russia that the most serious threat to strategic stability comes from missile defense. However, there is much more ambiguity in this issue than evidence confirmed by practice. First of all, many experts and politicians follow a strange logic when talking about missile defense issues, and their logic differs significantly from the normal perception of the security problem. For example, it is claimed that the U.S. missile defense system “threatens” Russia’s strategic potential. But such a threat can be translated into action only after Russia strikes with ballistic missiles. For as long as these missiles are not used, missile defense does not threaten them. Saying that missile defense poses a threat to someone’s nuclear potential is the same as saying that a hard hat worn by a construction worker is a threat to a brick that may fall on his head.

Opponents of missile defense argue that it will be used after the enemy delivers a first strike against its opponent’s strategic forces, thus greatly weakening the latter’s retaliatory strike. It is this retaliatory strike that will have to be intercepted by missile defense. This abstract and senseless reasoning underlies the logic of missile defense opponents who denounce any programs for creating and deploying missile defense. They view such efforts as an attempt to achieve military superiority and create conditions for victory in a nuclear war. In fact, the entire concept of strategic stability is based on the assessment of the consequences of a first strike and the aggressor’s ability to repulse a retaliatory strike.

Debates over the effect of missile defense on strategic stability have been going on for sixty years, so there is no need to cite here all arguments for and against, set forth in numerous publications. Let us only note that these debates were largely held in the U.S. In the Soviet Union and Russia, an overwhelming majority of experts shared the view that the development of missile defense systems undermines strategic stability, increasing the probability of a first strike in crisis situations and spurring a race in strategic arms in all areas. As a rule, the debates focused on the assessment of effectiveness of missile defense systems and time required for the deployment of new weapon systems.

Now let’s see how the United States can repulse Russia’s “retaliatory strike” after its own “large-scale nuclear attack,” if such plans really exist. First of all, let’s take a look at the geography of U.S. missile defense systems. If the main task of the U.S. were to defend against a Russian retaliatory strike, it would deploy its missile

defense system primarily along its borders and deep in its heartland. A thin defense of the country would require at least 10 to 12 deployment areas with several dozen interceptor missiles in each. As far as is known, nothing like this is happening. Such a program does not exist, and such proposals have never been submitted. By the end of 2017, 44 Ground-Based Interceptors (GBI) are to be deployed in U.S. territory (40 in Alaska and 4 in California). By 2025, the number of GBIs is planned to be increased to 56.

It should be recalled here that the most important provision of the 1972 ABM Treaty (from which the U.S. withdrew in 2002) was the limitation of interceptor missiles capable of shooting down incoming ICBM warheads. Each party was permitted to have up to 200 ABM systems in two ABM deployment areas. The Protocol of 1974 to the Treaty limited the number of ABM systems to 100 at each ABM site. In other words, the U.S. has not yet exceeded the limit set by the ABM Treaty and will not do so in the foreseeable future, which means that strategic stability, as understood by missile defense opponents, is not undermined.

Russia is greatly concerned over the proposed missile defense system for Europe and keeps an eye on programs for deploying similar systems in the Middle East and some Asian countries. But all these systems are not strategic in terms of location and performance. Of course, some modifications of the U.S. Standard interceptor missiles, THAAD and some other systems have a certain potential to combat strategic ballistic missiles. But they are not intended to perform such tasks and can shoot down ICBM warheads only accidentally. It is also important that the above BMD systems have never been tested against strategic missiles (warheads); so they cannot be relied on for intercepting retaliatory strikes with strategic ballistic missiles.

In addition, these systems pose no threat to Russia's strategic potential due to the geography of their deployment. This will be clear if we move from a two-dimensional to a three-dimensional vision of this geography. Simply put, we should be looking not at the flat map of the world, but at the globe. Then many things will look differently. For example, we will see that the shortest way from Russia to America is not via Amsterdam or Paris, but across the North Pole.

To my view, there are no serious military-strategic obstacles to further dialogue between Russia and the United States on more reductions in strategic offensive arms. The effect of precision-guided and space weapons on the strategic balance

between the parties is clearly exaggerated. In the foreseeable future, their effect will continue to be minimal, if at all.

U.S. missile defense programs are limited in terms of their impact on Russia's ability to deliver a crushing retaliatory strike, even if weakened by a U.S. first strategic strike. The latter, too, is a very dubious strategic concept, which, nevertheless, underlies many discussions about ways to strengthen security and so-called strategic stability. No sane leader of a country would rely on an unreliable missile defense system, which has failed many tests and which can be bypassed by changing the direction of attack.

As for political obstacles to new negotiations, they have piled up both in Russian-American and Russia-West relations. They are difficult to overcome, and this will most certainly take much time and effort. There is a view that negotiations on deeper reductions in strategic offensive arms are possible only after relations between the two countries more or less improve or, at least, show a clear tendency towards improvement.

But this problem can be approached from a different perspective by setting the goal of concluding a new agreement on deeper reductions in strategic offensive arms and limiting the number of strategic warheads to 1,000 for each party. If concluded, the new agreement could serve as a positive example of cooperation and give a chance to reach mutual understanding in other areas. This will be facilitated by the beginning of broad consultations on the whole range of security problems, including those that evoke Russia's concern.

In July 2018 in Helsinki Putin and Trump agreed to pay special attention to the problem of extension of a New START Treaty for the following 5 years (until the year of 2016), as well as to preserving the INF Treaty which became a subject of serious criticism during the last 3-4 years. It is obviously a positive step into a right direction. But it is not enough. Both states have quite a big potential for further reductions of their nuclear arsenals – strategic and tactical as well even without the participation of the third nuclear states in this process. This possible participation needs serious investigation and special attention of all the interested parties.

Source : <https://www.eurasiareview.com/17062019-keeping-the-nuclear-arms-control-alive-analysis-2/?fbclid=IwAR1rwB9HenvXQfVVHo4G9gWjaZKnwDAecMfCETMsLVYeDZLQ9Zxw8GdnGz8>

## Iran: America's Latest Drive For War – OpEd By Ryan McMaken

This week, two oil tankers exploded in the Persian Gulf, reportedly as a result of a limpet mine attack. Neither tanker flew a US flag. One was Panama-flagged, and the other was Marshall Islands-flagged. No one was killed.

Secretary of State Mike Pompeo immediately accused the Iranian regime of being responsible for the attack. Pompeo told reporters that the accusation was “based on intelligence, the weapons used, the level of expertise needed to execute the operation, recent similar Iranian attacks on shipping.”

It's unclear yet what course of action the administration will opt for in coming days. But, it's likely to include calls for new sanctions at the very least. But it may also include calls for invasions, bombings, and yet another US-involved war.

Needless to say, we've all seen this movie before, and we know how it works: the US government claims that something a foreign country has done poses a grave threat both to the international order and to the United States directly. Or we may be told the foreign regime in question is perpetrating horrific human rights violations against its own people. The US then insists it must launch new airstrikes, enact new economic sanctions, or even orchestrate a new invasion and occupation of a foreign country.

The administration will claim that it has special “intelligence” that the foreign culprit has “weapons of mass destruction.” The US government may offer some grainy video or some still photos purporting to show the enemy in flagrante delicto, or at least a gruesome aftermath.

The US media will enthusiastically assist the administration in spreading whatever images and bullet points the administration wants it to.

If the US government succeeds in getting what it wants, it will send naval vessels and troops to the selected battlefield, and spend trillions of dollars on a long, protracted “war of attrition” which we'll be repeatedly assured is absolutely necessary to maintain the security of the United States.

What exactly this has to do with the defense of the US is unclear. For example, even if the Iranians are responsible for the explosions, how is an attack on two non-US oil tankers a threat to the United States? In the wake of the US's (failed)

drive for an invasion of Syria, Tucker Carlson asked the obvious question: how will the proposed war “make the US safer”?

The question naturally applies to any proposed war against Iran as well.

As far as the case for Iran as any sort of threat to the US “homeland,” the administration and its pro-war backers do not appear to even be bothering themselves with such trivialities.

The Iranian regime’s tiny air force and navy pose no threat to a country with a navy many times larger than any other navy, and which spends more on military projects than the next eight most militarized regimes combined. As President Dwight Eisenhower understood — as he cut military spending in the face of a resurgent Soviet Union — the US’s huge nuclear arsenal is a deterrent countries like Iran have no hope of sidestepping.

But even if the Iranians potentially posed a true threat to the US — which, again, they do not — the burden of proof is still on the US government to affirmatively demonstrate that in this instance, the Iranian regime somehow endangers the United States, its borders, and its population.

This will not happen, however, because that’s not how foreign policy is made in the US. There will be no meaningful debate in Congress, and little more than accusations and innuendo will be issued from the administration and other organs of the executive branch. “Trust us, we wouldn’t lie” will be the central claim of the American war promoters. Americans will, yet again, be told to sacrifice both treasure and freedoms to satisfy the latest schemes of the American military establishment.

Given that only a portion of the population will buy any claims that Americans are in danger, we’ll hear vague platitudes about humanitarian missions, and how the Iranian regime must be stopped for the sake of decency and human rights. We heard the same thing in both Iraq and Libya before regime change was effected there in the name of humanitarianism. In both cases, however, the region was only made less stable, and more prone to radical Islamism. The result has been anything but humanitarian or decent.

Nor can advocates for war supply any answer to the question of what would replace the Iranian regime were the US to carry out regime change there. The most likely candidates are radical Islamists of the type we saw rise up in the wake of the Iraq and Libya invasions.

Moreover, so long as the US continues to ignore the humanitarian disaster in Yemen being perpetrated by American ally Saudi Arabia, any claims of “humanitarian” intent are not credible.

Indeed, any alliance with Saudi Arabia makes a mockery of American claims to be supporting human rights. The Saudi regime, a brutal, terrorism-sponsoring dictatorship, tolerates no religious group outside the state-sponsored brand of fanatical Wahhabism. Christianity is essentially outlawed in the country. Judaism has been completely banished. The regime tolerates no political dissent, as was illustrated in 2017 when Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman rounded up and tortured his rivals. While Iran is hardly a beacon of religious freedom, it looks downright tolerant compared to Saudi Arabia. Both synagogues and Christian churches function openly in Iran.

I don't note these facts to claim that Iran is a liberal and freedom-loving place. The fact that Iran compares favorably to Saudi Arabia is quite relevant, however, because the Saudi regime stands to benefit the most from regime change in Iran. The collapse of Iran would produce a power vacuum in the Gulf region allowing the Saudi regime to further spread its brand of radical Islamism. Thus, US claims that it is fighting terrorism or radicalism by opposing Iran are dubious at best.

More astute observers, of course, know the US drive for yet another war in the Persian Gulf region has nothing to do with human rights or defense of the United States.

The real motivation behind the latest drive for war might be found by employing a strategy recently suggested by Lew Rockwell in regards to the proposed Syria war. Rockwell writes:

When you hear the words “national security” or “national interest” used by people in Washington, I think it's important to substitute “imperial” for “national.” So is it in the national interest of the United States to bomb Syria? No. Is it in the imperial interest of the American Empire to do so? Yes.

In other words, the US state and many of its allies stand to benefit significantly from war with Iran.

As Randolph Bourne pointed out a century ago, “war is the health of the state,” and yet another war will help the American regime justify larger budgets, larger deficits, more taxes, and more state power in general.

For this reason, there has always been a close connection between the ideology of laissez-faire liberalism, and the ideology of peace. In the 19th century, it was free-market liberals like Richard Cobden and his friend Frédéric Bastiat who regarded economic intervention, slavery, and war as all part of one authoritarian package. This mantle was later picked up by the great liberal economist Ludwig von Mises, and then by his student Murray Rothbard.

Even in the cases where defensive war might have been justified, the costs of war, the liberals understood, have been far more grave than our rulers would have us believe. War is always a disaster for life, for liberty, and for the quality of life for those who survive. The only exception, it seems, are those organs of the state that benefit so handsomely from armed conflict.

But, on the matter of war, the position of the liberals — those we now know as “libertarians” — have long been firmly on the side of peace whenever possible:

source : [https://www.eurasiareview.com/15062019-iran-americas-latest-drive-for-war-oped/?fbclid=IwAR0\\_37ZfSBgr\\_yUI0-a9uLGMPpt7R9qtlyp58bF6Up8GHONcHun\\_8QG66sl](https://www.eurasiareview.com/15062019-iran-americas-latest-drive-for-war-oped/?fbclid=IwAR0_37ZfSBgr_yUI0-a9uLGMPpt7R9qtlyp58bF6Up8GHONcHun_8QG66sl)

## The Peace Problem: Is America Saving the World or Destroying It By Christopher A. Preble

Christopher Preble's latest book takes a deep dive into the past and examines the impact that America's foreign policy tactics have had abroad and at home.

Christopher Preble, "Chapter 3: The Anti-Imperial Empire," *Peace, War, and Liberty: Understanding U.S. Foreign Policy* (Washington, DC: Libertarianism.org Press, 2019).

Many in America's founding generation believed that the United States would eventually achieve greatness. How it would go about doing so was often in question.

The Founders expected to do great things in the New World. A few even believed that God willed it. Though they arrived in what would come to be known as North America, some saw the territory as a New Israel, God's new chosen land.

They took their cue from the New Testament and their words from Jesus's Sermon on the Mount: "You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden." The Puritan leader John Winthrop invoked the phrase "city on a hill" in an address to his congregation sometime in 1630 while en route from Southampton, England, to New England in North America. Over the ensuing few centuries—but mostly in just the last few decades—the idea has transitioned, notes Hillsdale College's Richard Gamble, "from biblical metaphor to nationalist myth."

Myth or not, the idea that God had bestowed his grace on the United States and its people was widely believed. His chosen people, popular belief also went, had a special obligation to spread ideas about good governance and justice, not merely within North America but ultimately throughout the world.

But the American colonists' bitter experience under British rule tempered their enthusiasm for imitating its methods in their quest to propagate their particular worldview. Many Americans harbored doubts about the scope of any given country's power and influence, and whether and how that power could justly be wielded. After all, the skepticism about whether a distant metropole could exercise effective and legitimate political control over a great and growing population was one of the defining themes of the revolution that eventually threw off the British yoke. "Small islands not capable of protecting themselves, are the proper objects for kingdoms to take under their care," scoffed Thomas Paine in *Common Sense*,

but there is something very absurd, in supposing a continent to be perpetually governed by an island. In no instance hath nature made the satellite larger than its primary planet, and as England and America, with respect to each other, reverses the common order of nature, it is evident they belong to different systems; England to Europe, America to itself.

Many of the Founders, and their descendants, held similar views. For the few and small to dominate the many and large defied common sense. Resistance to imperialism, British style or otherwise, thus persisted well into the 20th century and beyond.

On the other hand, Paine's sense of what the Americans might achieve should they gain independence from England was breath-taking in its grandiosity. Indeed, it was biblical—this time of the Old Testament variety. “We have it in our power to begin the world over again,” he predicted. “A situation, similar to the present, hath not happened since the days of Noah until now. The birthday of a new world is at hand.”

In the late 18th or early 19th century, it was preposterous to think that the new nation tucked along the Atlantic seaboard in North America could wield power over others many thousands of miles away, as the British had effectively done. But as the United States prospered and grew, so did its influence.

Americans' views on the question of what type of empire the United States could be, and should be, evolved over time. In the earliest days of independence, before the ratification of the new Constitution, Thomas Jefferson labeled the United States the “Empire of Liberty.” It would offer freedom to those already on the land and to new immigrants from the Old World. A quarter century later, after the U.S. government had enacted the Northwest Ordinance and completed the Louisiana Purchase, Jefferson envisioned the United States as a great “Empire for Liberty.” “Jefferson's revision,” explains historian Richard Immerman, “signaled a commitment to a more aggressive, proactive extension of that sphere of liberty,” throughout the New World, and perhaps someday beyond it.

This was more than a semantic distinction. Immerman notes that “empire” was not a loaded term in the late 18th century. Empire did not per se signal exploitation or necessarily imply illegitimate rule.

The American colonists who rose up against their colonial masters objected to the manner in which Britain ruled them, not its being a nascent empire. Indeed, one of the grievances against the British Crown that the revolutionaries cited as a reason

for separation was the prohibition on westward expansion after the French and Indian Wars. In other words, they were offended that the British Empire was denying them the right to exploit neighboring territories.

After the Treaty of Paris, which formalized the former colonies' separation, the unshackled Americans got busy growing. And with each successive generation, the hunger for new land drove them inexorably west. In this sense, a number of Native American communities saw the new United States as a far more oppressive colonizer than the British Empire that came before.

Americans justified territorial expansion throughout the contiguous landmass of North America on both economic and security grounds. They also had an eye on lands separated by water: Cuba, Santo Domingo, and other Caribbean isles; then Hawaii and the Philippines; and later Panama. By the early 20th century, the United States had in fact acquired a collection of colonies through conquest and coercive diplomacy rivaling that of many traditional European empires, though not yet close to that of Great Britain at the time.

The single factor that may have differentiated the United States from other colonial empires was not the scale of its expansion, but the reluctance that accompanied it. The United States is, writes Immerman, "an imperialist with a history of opposing imperialism." It encountered "an unprecedented amount of trouble imposing its will on its dependents." In the raucous rough and tumble of American politics, there were always those who accused their political adversaries of betraying the nation's most cherished principles whenever some major territorial acquisition was in the offing. Such charges were invariably answered by loud protestations to the contrary. "Americans' self-image as the bastion of liberty and their identification with the Constitution," which enshrined classical liberals' ideas about the proper balance between the government and the people it served, Immerman explains, constrained both the politics and practice of the American empire.

American history students are taught that Thomas Jefferson's 1803 purchase of the vast territory of Louisiana from France was a signature achievement of his presidency and an essential step on the path to American greatness. Even those historians who were not generally inclined to extol Jefferson and his governing philosophy were effusive in their praise. Henry Adams recorded that the acquisition of Louisiana had been "an event so portentous as to defy measurement" and an "unparalleled" diplomatic move.

The price was a bargain: 828,000 square miles at a cost of \$15 million, a mere 4 cents per acre. It paved the way for westward expansion, eventually all the way to the Pacific. The acquisition of Louisiana eliminated any lingering French threat in North America and removed a buffer between the United States and Spain, bringing new pressure to bear on the declining Spanish empire. Jefferson saw the Louisiana Purchase as a key component of his vision for creating an Empire of Liberty.

But while most Americans at the time shared Jefferson's enthusiasm, some questioned the move. Many of these criticisms were grounded in classical liberals' anxieties about the dangerous growth of state power, particularly in the realm of foreign affairs. Jefferson had clearly violated the limited and enumerated powers of the Constitution in concluding the purchase without Congress's approval. By what authority, critics wondered, had he pledged to dramatically expand the supposedly limited federal government's dominion and pay this substantial sum?

Jefferson had to overcome his own qualms about the purchase. The Constitution, he noted, "made no provision for our holding foreign territory, still less for incorporating foreign nations into our Union." To Sen. John Breckinridge of Kentucky, he confided that his unilateral executive action clearly constituted "an act beyond the Constitution."

On the other hand, Jefferson was worried that Bonaparte would change his mind and renege on the agreement. Jefferson therefore hoped to conclude the deal quickly and avoid needless delays. His cabinet officers, including his secretary of state, James Madison, convinced him that a constitutional amendment was unnecessary. Jefferson convened a special session of Congress in October 1803 to approve the sale and pass the necessary companion legislation. The Senate vote far exceeded the required two-thirds for treaty ratification—a mere five senators voted against—and the House swiftly passed legislation providing the necessary funds.

Source : [https://nationalinterest.org/feature/peace-problem-america-saving-world-or-destroying-it-62592?fbclid=IwAR1gU3DVSB03clo9IKhF5gIgmDsv8HAZWmjm05Cn\\_VRDVphziiCiB-H8vyw](https://nationalinterest.org/feature/peace-problem-america-saving-world-or-destroying-it-62592?fbclid=IwAR1gU3DVSB03clo9IKhF5gIgmDsv8HAZWmjm05Cn_VRDVphziiCiB-H8vyw)

## US-Russia-China and new Cold War by Naveed Aman Khan

HOW America would fight China and Russia in future? Joining hands of Russia and China recently have pushed America back in the blue water. The American contest with China and Russia will define the 21st Century. China will be more formidable adversary than Russia ever was. The wars of the future would be naval, with all of their abstract battle systems, even though dirty counterinsurgency fights were all the rage years ago. That future has arrived, and it is nothing less than a new cold war. The constant, interminable Chinese computer hacks of American warships' maintenance records, Pentagon personnel records, and so forth constitute war by other means.

This situation will last decades and will only get worse, whatever this or that trade deal is struck between Chinese and American Presidents that sends financial markets momentarily skyward. The new cold war is permanent because of a host of factors that generals and strategists understand but that many, especially those in the business and financial community still prefer to deny. The US- China relationship is the world's most crucial with many second and third order effects a cold war between the two is becoming the negative organizing principle of geopolitics. This is because the differences between the United States and China are stark and fundamental. They can barely be managed by negotiations and can never really be assuaged.

The Chinese and the Russians are committed to pushing US naval and air forces away from the Gulf, Western Pacific the South and East China seas, whereas the US military is determined to stay put. The Chinese and the Russian commitment make perfect sense from their point of view. They see the South China Sea the way American strategists saw the Caribbean in the 19th and early 20th centuries. The principal blue water extension of their continental land mass, control of which enables them to thrust their navy and maritime fleet out into the wider Pacific and the Indian Ocean, as well as soften up Taiwan. It is similar to the way dominance over the Caribbean enabled the United States to strategically control the Western Hemisphere and thus affect the balance of forces in the Eastern Hemisphere in two world wars and a cold war. For the United States, world power all began with the Caribbean, and for China, it all begins with the South China Sea.

But the Americans will not budge from the Western Pacific. The US defence establishment, both uniformed and civilian, considers the United States a Pacific

power for all time. Witness Commodore Matthew Perry's opening of Japan to trade in 1853, America's subjugation and occupation of the Philippines starting in 1899, the bloody Marine landings on a plethora of Pacific islands in World War II, the defeat and rebuilding of Japan following World War II, the Korean and Vietnam wars, and, most important, American current treaty alliances stretching from Japan south to Australia. This is an emotional as well as a historical commitment. Something I have personally experienced as an embed on US military warships in the Gulf have encircled Iran, Pakistan, Turkey, China and Russia.

With the Xi-Putin shake hand Trump is shaken . The US is much more shaken by the China and Russia threat. It considers China, with its nimble ability as a rising technological power unencumbered by America's own glacial bureaucratic oversight to catch up and perhaps surpass the United States. Russia and China are the pacing threats the US military now measures itself against. American economic and military tension with China and Russia will never significantly lessen, they will only inflame the military climate. When a Chinese or Russian vessel cut across the bow of an American destroyer, or China and Russia denied entry of a US amphibious assault ship to Gulf and Hong Kong. With the waning of the liberal world order, a more normal historical era of geopolitical rivalry has commenced, and trade tension is merely accompaniments to such rivalry. In order to understand what is going on, we have to stop artificially separating US- China trade tension and US-China-Russia military tension.

There is also the ideological aspect of this new cold war. For several decades, China's breakneck development was seen positively in the United States, and the relatively enlightened authoritarianism of Deng Xiaoping and his successors was easily tolerated, especially by the American business community. But under Xi Jinping, China has evolved from a soft to a hard authoritarianism. Rather than a collegial group of uncharismatic technocrats constrained by retirement rules, there is now a president-for-life with a budding personality cult, overseeing thought control by digital means including facial recognition and following the internet searches of its citizens. It is becoming rather creepy, and American leaders of both parties are increasingly repelled by it. The philosophical divide between American and Chinese systems is becoming as great as gap between American democracy and Soviet communism. Regaining strength of Putin's Russia and emergence of Xi's China as now military and economic giants have pushed the US back.

## Can India become regional power sans US support By Durdana Najam

The South Asian political structure has been carved as much from the elements of colonial policies as from the alliances with the militarily and economically strong states, such as the US, Russia and now China. Post World War II, South Asia has been at the centre of international politics. It was here that the Cold War was fought and brought to an end. It was here that the war on terrorism began and seems to remain on the radar for unforeseeable future. It was there that China established its Blue Chip Project, the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), a strategic part of the Belt and Road initiative.

Pakistan, because of its geographical positioning in the region, happened to be an integral part of all these three developments. A resource-deficit country, with a Machiavellian neighbour at its eastern border, who had played a deceiving role in its breakup during the 1971 civil war, Pakistan could not have refused standing with the US in its wars in the region.

However, post-9/11, the US, as compared to Pakistan, drew closer to India, through different defence agreements and pacts, to subvert China's rising influence. This strategic partnership between the two fed into the sense of entitlement India have had towards the region. In the manifestation of this hegemony, India would provoke the Madhesis of Nepal to seek changes in its constitution; cross over into Pakistan's settled area of Balakot, in a complete disregard of the internationally-recognised Line of Control (LoC), to seek out terrorists; enter into a standoff with China at Doklam Plateau, apparently to shield Bhutan; begin constructing airport at the disputed land of Hollings in Partum Pare district of Arunachal Pradesh; compete with China in the 'politics of corridors' by entering into the International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC) agreement. It will connect India with Russia, Central Asian countries, and Nordica and Arctic region. This corridor is being dubbed the Indian version of the BRT project.

Earlier, to erode CPEC's influence and to damper Afghanistan's dependence on Pakistan for its trade, India has invested in the Chabahar port in Iran. India's effort to build hydropower dams along rivers in Afghanistan that flow into Pakistan and Iran is another step towards raising India's strategic importance in the region.

Previously, India had unilaterally made ineffective the South Asian Association of Regional Corporation (Saarc). Pressures were applied on Bangladesh, Bhutan,

Afghanistan, Sri Lanka and the Maldives in 2016 to not attend the conference, because it was being hosted in Pakistan.

Last but not the least, India has joined hands with the Afghanistan's intelligence agency, the National Directorate of Security, to destabilise Pakistan through supporting insurgency in Balochistan and lately by helping the Pashtun TahaFfuz Movement gain traction.

No wonder US Secretary of States Mike Pompeo in 2017 said, "We fully support India's rise as a leading global power."

However, that was in 2017. That was when India had not figured in the US list of candidates for the trade war. Today, India is in the crosshair of Donald Trump's angst that sees the US a victim of unfair trade deals both with its allies and others.

The White House has removed India from the list of Preferential Trade Benefit. India has been exporting goods worth six billion dollars under the agreement, according to the Congressional Research Service.

The psychological effect of this decision far exceeds its economic cost to India. The optics of yanking benefits from an ally could send all the wrong signals, about the future of the US-India strategic partnership, especially in the context of India's desire to affront China in the contest of regional power.

Revamping trade policy has been one of Trump's election promises, to move the US from the periphery to the centre stage of political economy. With just over a year to go until the next US presidential election, Trump may not be relenting, any time sooner, on his trade policy with India.

Putting India in this tight slot, designed only for the opponents such as China and Mexico, could be read as India being used as an instrument of geopolitics to further the US interest in South Asia with an aim to contain China.

Like Trump, Modi has come to power on the wave of nationalism, therefore, any optic that puts India in a suboptimal position may not go well with the newly-installed BJP government. It will be interesting to see how India adjusts its tariffs and protectionist measures to realign with the US in the new scenario. It remains to be seen whether India has the wherewithal to become a regional power, leave alone global power, sans the US backing; and whether this new shift in the US-India relation will have an effect on India's posturing — an archrival vying for power — towards China.

I reached out to talk about these issues with Dr Syed Qandeel Abass from the School of Political Science and International Relations of Quaid-e-Azam University, “I doubt that India has reached the stage where, independent of the US, it could assert the debonair of a global leader. One example of it has been India’s compliance to the US decision to remove waiver to trade with Iran. It will be a chore for India to divert the fulfillment of its energy needs away from Iran. Yet, India has agreed. It was in this context that Iran had offered to link Chabahar with Gwadar.

“To offset US and India’s influence, a new block comprising Russia, China and Iran is emerging in the region. Pakistan should become part of this block immediately.

“The US will do everything, and for that India would be handy, of course, to sabotage the CPEC project. This is also in the favour of India. That is where the US and India meet for a common goal.

“Pakistan has to move away from the politics of reaction and become proactive, which will help the country in shedding the enigmatic India-centric foreign policy option.

Source :<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1994485/6-can-india-become-regional-power-sans-us-support/?fbclid=IwAR2b3Enwi97pmCpJ9aa2iTSwrbc98ZGmxRneoONwsTWwTPB38P4wndFP73s>