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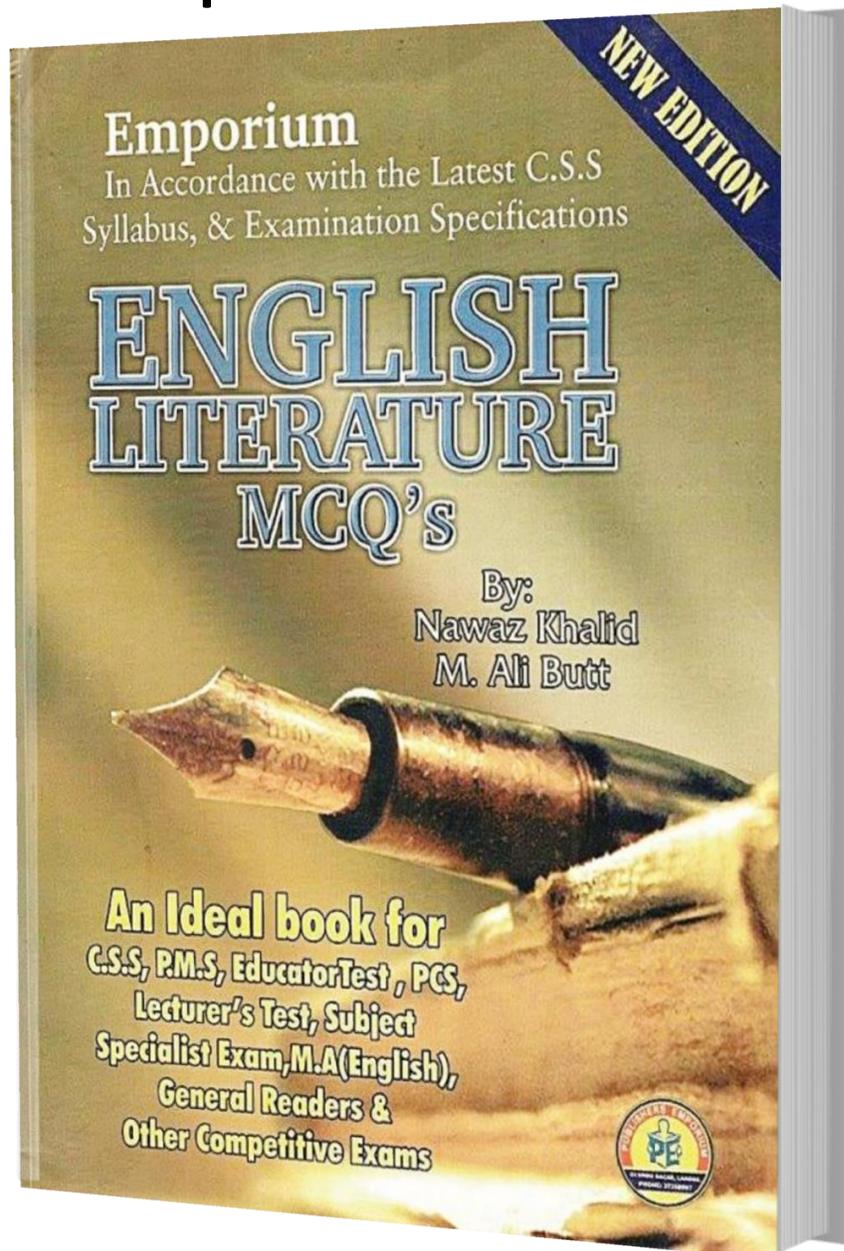
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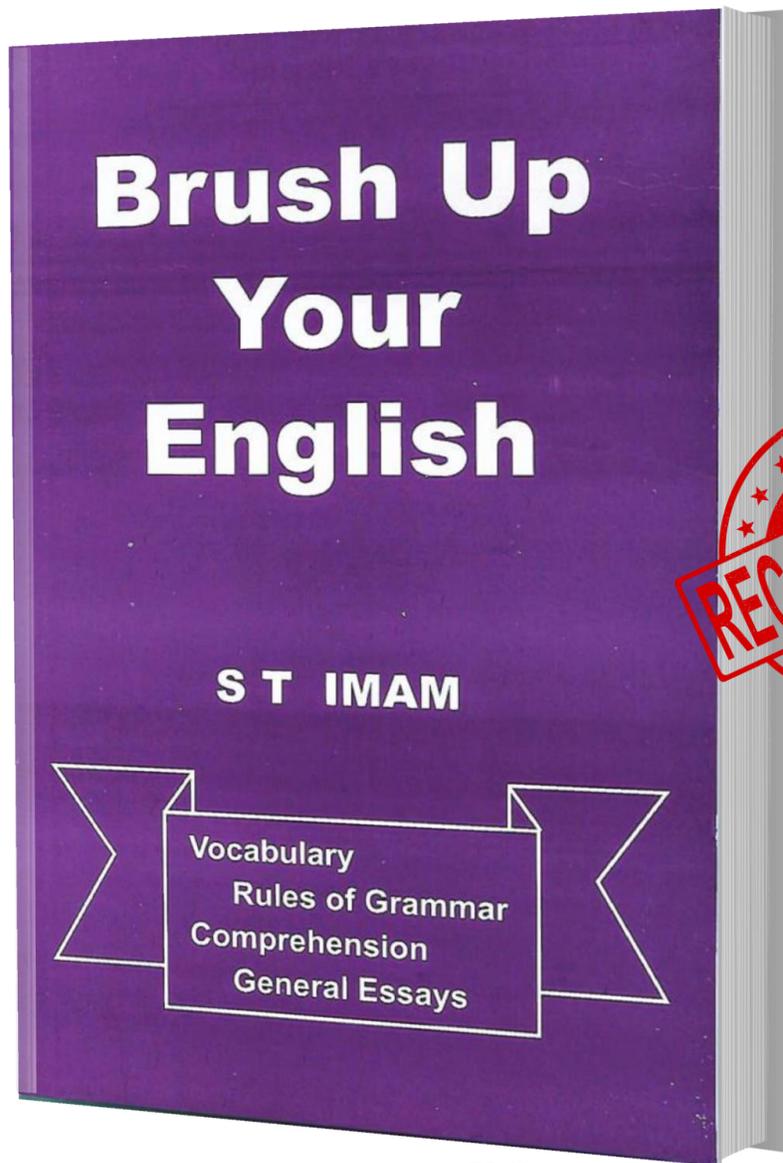


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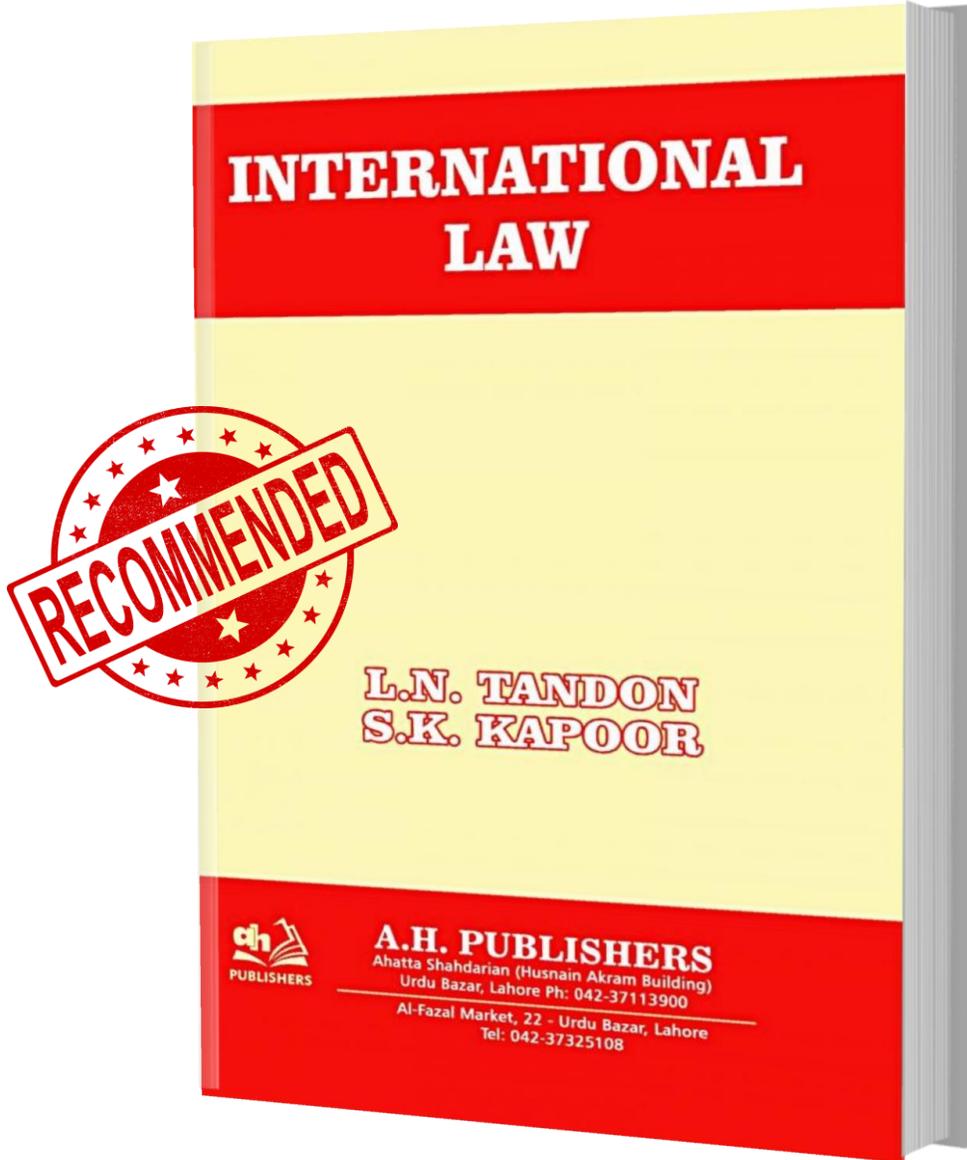


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# Table of Contents

## PAKISTAN

1. Standing With Kashmir   Editorial .....	9
2. President Erdogan's Visit By Amna Ejaz Rafi.....	12
3. Unpacking the Dramatic Upswing in Pak-US Ties By Bilal Lakhani .....	14
4. Robust Safety: How Pakistan Secures Its Nukes By Zeeshan Ahmad .....	16
5. Afghan Refugees   Editorial .....	20
6. Unshakable Pak-Turkey Ties   Editorial .....	21
7. Pakistan-Bangladesh Relations Thaw By Abid Hussain.....	23
8. UN Chief's Visit   Editorial .....	26
9. Eradicating Polio   Editorial .....	27
10. A New Era Ushered in Pak-Turkey Relationship By Syed Qamar Afzal Rizvi.....	28

## ECONOMY

1. Brexit Provides Chance to Deepen Pak-UK Trade Ties By Salman Siddiqui .....	31
2. Pakistan Open For Business By Dr Marc Siegel.....	34
3. Positive Vibes From FATF Meeting By Malik Muhammad Ashraf .....	37
4. E-commerce: An Economic Game Changer By M Ziauddin .....	40
5. FATF: Pakistan Removal From Grey-list? By Syed Qamar Afzal Rizvi.....	42
6. IMF Talks   Editorial .....	45
7. Dynamics of GDP Growth in Pakistan By Arsalan Ahmad.....	47
8. FATF Reprieve   Editorial .....	50
9. Trade With US   Editorial.....	51

## EDUCATION

1. Education Concerns   Editorial .....	52
2. Education Report   Editorial .....	53
3. Prioritizing Higher Education By Muhammad Murtaza Noor .....	55
4. The Mediocrity of CSS in 2020 By Anwar Ali.....	58

## WORLD

1. Brexit Is Just the Beginning By Pippa Norris .....	61
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2. Genocide in Myanmar: Will Rohingyas Get Justice in ICJ By Asad Ali .....	65
3. Corona Virus: A Global Outbreak By Imtiaz Rafi Butt .....	67
4. Trump Impeachment   Editorial .....	70
5. Drivers of Globalization and Kashmir Siege By Dr Samra Naz .....	71
6. Arms Race, A Major Threat to World Peace By Rashid A Mughal .....	74
7. UN's Strong Stance   Editorial .....	77
8. Afghan Peace Deal   Editorial .....	78
9. How To Save The Failing World Order? – Analysis By Emil Avdaliani.....	79
10. Trump in India   Editorial.....	81
11. Controlling Coronavirus Will Mean Keeping People Apart By Benjamin Cowling.....	83
12. Global Impacts Of Brexit: A Butterfly Effect – OpEd By Csaba Barnabas Horvath .....	88
13. Implications of Trump's Visit to India By Talat Masood .....	93
14. Historic Peace Deal   Editorial .....	96
15. Indo-US Arms Deal   Editorial.....	98
16. Can Russia and Turkey Step Back from the Brink in Syria? By Dimitri Alexander Simes .....	100
17. The Dismal Kingdom By Paul Romer .....	104

# PAKISTAN

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## **Standing With Kashmir | Editorial**

It has been almost thirty years since Kashmir Day was first announced, but perhaps, in the history of the subcontinent, there has never been a moment when this day was more significant than it is today. India's repression of Kashmiri rights has continued since it first took control of Indian-Occupied Kashmir (IOK) but this has turned into a new and entirely different strategy ever since the Modi government came into power.

The actual execution of this plan began in August last year, however, the writing was always on the wall for all to see. Modi's fascist ideology was included in BJP's manifesto, the repeal of Article 370 was planned ahead of time and the status quo as it stands, is exactly what Modi had wanted all along. It is no accident that Kashmiris have been under lockdown for 185 days, nor is the state-sponsored terrorism, the use of pellet guns and violence an unhappy coincidence. It is all a systematic effort to break an organic resistance movement for self-determination and a means to take Kashmir from those it belongs to; its inhabitants.

In Modi's objective to build an India divided along religious lines and try and suppress the rights of Kashmiris through a more permanent policy, controlling the narrative was supremely important. From using Pakistan and anti-Muslim sentiments in his election campaign, to accusing us of fomenting terrorism as a means to deflect from his own heinous actions: the Indian Prime Minister's RSS roots have formed the base of this rejuvenated Hindutva policy ever since the BJP's rise to power.

India is fighting tooth and nail on all diplomatic fronts to try and isolate Pakistan, because it knows that by doing this it can effectively tailor the narrative on Kashmir and pretend that its brutal actions there are only peaceful developmental initiatives. In this fight, our defensive capabilities are already well-prepared and ready for anything the enemy might throw at us. But equally important is fighting

the narrative that India is trying to build; normalising brutality in Kashmir and painting us as the villain.

This is one fight where each and every Pakistani has to contribute; we must continue to sift through the lies propagated on both traditional and social media by the eastern neighbour. Thankfully our government, the armed forces and average citizens have been successfully defending against the information warfare that the enemy is engaged in and have put in a crucial contribution in turning the tide against the Indian narrative internationally.

The journalists, hawks, politicians and all other right-wing individuals from across the border can parrot the opinions of the Modi government all they want; their views now only exist in an echo-chamber. The rest of the world recognises that the Modi government in India has gone beyond the rights afforded to a state and marginalised a community of 200 million people, alongside imprisoning 8 million of them in an open prison.

India has used its economic clout and the façade of being the world's largest democracy to its fullest extent, and only its close relationship to some important nation states has kept the issue of Kashmir from being a key agenda item on every international forum in the past six months. But even this has not been enough. India's trading partners across the world have condemned India's actions in IOK. Key trading partners such as Malaysia have openly sided with Pakistan, world powers such as the US and UK have also voiced their apprehensions and even neutral bodies such as the UN have come out in support of Kashmiris. The fact that the security council discussed Kashmir as an agenda item in a closed-door session is a feat in itself; and India only has itself to blame for becoming a worldwide example of injustice.

Comparisons have been drawn to the Nazi state of Germany, and it is all but established that India is taking lessons straight out of the Israeli playbook on how to marginalise an entire community based on their religion. This perception of India does not only exist here at home, there are protests all over the world against the Modi government's actions. The fact that the Indian people themselves have stood up against this injustice in large numbers tells us that Prime Minister Modi's days are ultimately numbered. The world no longer has the space for this divisive narrative, and a reaction against such policies will always

rise up organically, no matter how hard the government tries to stifle independent thought and action.

Today, much like the past 185 days, are thoughts are with the Kashmiris in IOK; those that have been tortured, lost family members, been abused, arrested or are currently restricted to their homes without any contact with the outside world. If they had access to our words, we would reiterate our commitment to their cause and reassure them that they are never alone. The prayers of over 200 million Pakistanis are always with them, and we will do everything in our power to ensure that our shared dream of Kashmiris successfully wresting their right to self-determination, will one day – in the not-too-distant future – turn into reality.

Source: <https://nation.com.pk/05-Feb-2020/standing-with-kashmir>

# **President Erdogan's Visit By Amna Ejaz**

## **Rafi**

President Recep Tayyip Erdogan's visit to Islamabad at a time when the region faces the challenge of peace and stability amidst India's abrogation of Article 370 and 35 (A) of its Constitution shows Turkey's interest towards regional peace. President Erdogan's address to our Parliament and support to the people of India-Occupied Jammu and Kashmir signifies the importance of a peaceful solution to the ongoing unrest in the disputed territory. It is also a message to the regional quarters that the unjust practices and coercive means employed by India to suppress the right of self-determination is not an answer to a conflict. In the words of President Erdogan, "Our Kashmiri brothers and sisters have suffered for decades and the transgressions have become graver." He has also called for a just solution to the longstanding Kashmir issue through peace and dialogue.

President Erdogan's visit to Pakistan is likely to pave the way towards a cooperative relationship. He and Prime Minister Imran Khan chaired the Sixth Session of Pakistan-Turkey High Level Strategic Cooperation Council and signed 13 Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs). Both sides agreed to strengthen cooperation in security and promote people-to-people interaction through tourism and media cooperation. At present, the strength of Turks living in Pakistan is around 200 and of Pakistanis living in Turkey is 2,000. These numbers are not very encouraging, but the agreements signed during the visit and the eagerness to cooperate at the regional front is likely to enhance the political interaction and improve people-to-people contact. Both Pakistan and Turkey are members of D-8 Organization for Economic Cooperation, along with Bangladesh, Indonesia, Malaysia, Egypt, Nigeria and Iran. Pakistan is in dire need of foreign direct investment, and Turkey would like to expand its markets to other countries. Thus, the growing economic interests of both countries can translate into a strategic partnership. The bilateral trade of \$900 million, after the signing of a free trade agreement, is expected to increase to \$10 billion by 2022. The enhanced economic cooperation will also diversify Turkish investments in Pakistan, and other than the energy and infrastructure sectors, new areas of cooperation will be explored. It will open avenues for entrepreneur exchange between the two countries with the present strength of Turkish companies in Pakistan being 17 and of Pakistani companies in Turkey being 233.

Pakistan and Turkey have struggled towards empowerment, and have defeated the odds in one way or the other. Both countries, through collaborative arrangements, can deter the extremist tendencies and work towards balanced approaches. Pakistan's fight against the militant threat has dismantled extremist tendencies both at the internal and regional fronts. The adversarial designs to isolate Pakistan still exist. Despite these challenges, Pakistan stands tall. The country has geared up its geostrategic position to become economically strong. The support to Pakistan's stance on regional issues as apparent by the visit of the Turkish President also reflects that Pakistan's image as a strong Muslim country is gaining recognition. In fact, it is the outcome of the sacrifices and steadfastness against disgruntled elements. Let the regional quarters know that Pakistan supports the efforts towards peace, and the ongoing atrocities in IOK pose a threat to humanity. Pakistan and Turkey, through collaborative efforts, can promote the idea of peace, defeat the burgeoning extremist forces and negate the negativity linked with Muslim countries. In particular, the cooperation among Muslim countries is supposed to foster learning and progress economically for the betterment of humanity and peace.

Published in The Express Tribune, February 19th, 2020.

Source: <https://tribune.com.pk/story/2159538/6-president-erdogans-visit/>

# **Unpacking the Dramatic Upswing in Pak-US Ties By Bilal Lakhani**

If the relationship between America and Pakistan is to take the ‘10-year challenge’ on social media, the transformation would be almost unbelievable. From a low trust, do more, frequent breakdown in communication relationship, we now have President Donald Trump and Prime Minister Imran Khan meeting three times in just 7 months. Trump famously proclaimed that the US and Pakistan could do ‘10 and even 20’ times the amount of bilateral trade and investment we’re doing now. America’s biggest critique of Pakistan has pivoted away from terrorism and Taliban to our relationship with China. What’s going on here?

Pakistan’s relationship with America has often been described as the love-hate relationship. The primary driver of the recent improvement in our relationship appears to be Pakistan’s constructive role in facilitating the Afghan peace process. “Pakistan is playing a very different role today in the Afghan peace process versus what they did during the Obama Administration,” shares Vali Nasr, one of the most prolific and astute observers of the region, who also served as a Senior Advisor to US Special Representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan, Ambassador Richard Holbrooke, between 2009 and 2011.

“Afghanistan matters to President Trump,” shares Nasr. “And Pakistan understands that Trump is serious about negotiating with the Taliban and withdrawing from Afghanistan. The change in Pakistan’s role in facilitating the peace process is very clear in Washington DC.”

Another important factor in the upswing in relations between the two countries is the personal relationship between Trump and Khan. “At a time when American diplomacy is personalized around Trump, three meetings between him and Prime Minister Imran Khan elevate the status of Pakistan,” shares Nasr.

More interestingly, anti-US sentiment on Pakistani streets has also sharply receded. Part of the credit for this goes to the deep investments the US has made within Pakistan. Besides, at 29,000 people, Pakistan also has the largest alumni network for US exchange programmes, who serve as a critical bridge for understanding and empathy between the two countries.

Moreover, the Pakistani American community is also coming of age, with sincere and unprecedented efforts to organise, mobilise and institutionalise their representation in American society. I believe we could see a Pakistani American elected to Congress within this decade. And it's not just on the political side but also when it comes to business, social work and media representation, where Pakistani Americans are stepping up to plate. For example, take a tour de force like Shamila Chaudhary, who after serving as the Pakistan Director at the National Security Council under the Obama Administration, has recently come onboard as the President of the American Pakistan Foundation.

However, as is always the case with relations between Pakistan and America, the good times don't always last and are not always what they appear to be. In my conversation with Nasr, he argued that Pakistan's relationship with America was built around counterterrorism from Musharraf's time and there's not much depth or anchoring for the relationship after the Afghanistan war ends. An 80s-style US withdrawal from Afghanistan would mean there's little to hold this relationship together or strengthen it. Moreover, America is obsessed with China's rise and while India is a counterbalance to China, Pakistan is a problem because of CPEC. Net, Nasr's argument is that Pakistan-US relations look a lot better on optics than they do on substance.

While I agree to Nasr's argument, the progress made in the Pak-US ties over the last 12 months is palpable. What's important now is to build on this progress by creating more depth in the relationship through Pakistan becoming a serious economic player in the region, people-to-people contact and the Pakistani American diaspora rising to serve as a bridge and shock absorber for the relationship between the two nations.

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

Source: <https://tribune.com.pk/story/2152864/6-unpacking-dramatic-upswing-pak-us-ties/>

# **Robust Safety: How Pakistan Secures Its Nukes By Zeeshan Ahmad**

Pakistan on Monday provided an in-depth peek into its 'stringent' nuclear safety mechanisms as it participated in a global summit on nuclear security in Vienna.

Titled 'Pakistan's Nuclear Security Regime', the booklet released alongside the International Atomic Energy Agency's (IAEA) third International Conference on Nuclear Security (ICONS) aims to demonstrate the country's "commitment and contribution to the global objectives of nuclear security."

"This step is part of Pakistan's practice to share information on the measures taken to further strengthen nuclear security and to demonstrate the high-level attention that nuclear security continues to receive in Pakistan," the Foreign Office said in a statement. It added that the document was being distributed among all ICONS participants.

International atomic watchdog commends nuclear security measures taken by Pakistan

The booklet, a copy of which The Express Tribune was able to obtain, outlines Pakistan's nuclear safety regime in the form of three 'pillars', namely legislative and regulatory framework, state institutions and organisations, and the security systems and measures.

Laying out the first of these, the document explains that the legislative and regulatory framework includes "establishing independent regulatory bodies with adequate legal authority to fulfill their assigned nuclear security responsibilities," such as the National Command Authority (NCA), Pakistan Atomic Energy Commission (PAEC), Pakistan Nuclear Regulatory Authority (PNRA) and Strategic Export Control Division (SECDIV).

"In order to cover the entire spectrum of activities, the NCA Act was promulgated in 2010... [with] wide jurisdiction and adequate legal authority to regulate activities of various entities working within its domain," the booklet states. It also highlights legal frameworks that existed prior to the NCA Act, such as the PAEC

and PNRA ordinances, and the Strategic Export Control Act, which strengthens export controls on “sensitive and dual use goods/technologies related to nuclear and biological weapons and their means of delivery.”

To prevent unauthorised removal of nuclear material and curb the risk of sabotage, PNRA promulgated ‘Regulations on Physical Protection of Nuclear Material and Nuclear Installations — (PAK/925)’ last April, the booklet notes. “This regulation takes into consideration IAEA’s Nuclear Security Recommendations on Physical Protection of Nuclear Material and Nuclear Facilities and the obligations of Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material.”

Outlining the country’s nuclear security architecture, the document emphasises a ‘multi-layered defence’ as its cornerstone. “A concept of 5Ds – deter, detect, delay, defend and destroy – is followed to respond to these threats,” it states.

For physical protection, the booklet explains that Pakistan has deployed modern technological solutions, such as intrusion detection systems, access control systems, delay barriers and search systems and a central alarm station. “In addition, land-based and sea-borne response capabilities of response forces have also been strengthened,” it adds.

The booklet highlights the ‘effective’ National Nuclear Detection Architecture (NNDA) to regulate authorised imports and exports and prevent illicit trafficking of radioactive materials. “Designated entry/ exit points have been equipped with hand held radiation detection equipment as well as radiation portal monitors (RPMs),” it states.

It also reveals that a Nuclear Emergency Management System (NEMS) has been put in place to respond and manage nuclear or radiological emergencies. “Under this system, technical expertise will be provided by PAEC and PNRA; administrative coordination would be done by National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA); while NCA would offer support to address nuclear or radiological emergency.”

To build capacity and human resources for nuclear security, the country has also established the Pakistan Centre of Excellence for Nuclear Security, National

Institute of Safety and Security and the Pakistan Institute of Engineering and Applied Sciences, it points out.

Pakistan conducts successful training launch of Ghaznavi ballistic missile

Finally, the booklet also highlights the international instruments the country adheres to in order to ensure a robust nuclear security architecture, such as the IAEA Code of Conduct, UN Security Council Resolution 1540, Nuclear Security Summit Process, Nuclear Security Contact Group and Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism.

“In the months and years ahead, Pakistan looks forward to working closely with IAEA and its member states to ensure nuclear security continues to receive high level attention, appropriate salience in the agency’s work, unfailing vigilance at the national level and robust international cooperation,” it concludes.

In the foreword he wrote for it, Foreign Secretary Sohail Mahmood notes that the booklet “reflected Pakistan’s commitment towards ensuring a comprehensive national nuclear security regime.”

“Nuclear security is a state responsibility and it receives the highest level of attention in Pakistan in accordance with our domestic and international obligations,” he writes, adding that the regime is based on “extensive legislative and regulatory framework” and backed by “strong institutions and organisations”.

Speaking to The Express Tribune, some of Pakistan’s pre-eminent defence experts noted that the country’s spotless nuclear safety record attested to the robustness of its security regime.

“We have a very effective command and control structure and our nuclear workforce operates under a very strict and secure framework,” said Maj Gen (retd) Inamul Haque. “The mere fact that there has been no nuclear incident – no accident or alert, no theft of nuclear material or kidnapping of any of our nuclear programme personnel – even though we were in a state of war for 15 years is a testament.”

“Our nuclear safety record proves itself to be very credible and speaks for itself. By and large, this credibility has only enhanced with time and the credit for that

goes to both our nuclear scientists and nuclear managers,” added Lt-Gen (retd) Talat Masood. “We do not take anything for granted and the custodians of our nuclear assets do not rest on past laurels. The safety of our nuclear assets continues to be a primary focus for our civil and military authorities,” he stressed.

Speaking about concerns the global community voices every now and then regarding Pakistan’s nuclear programme, both analysts concurred it was driven by some ‘malice’.

“When we speak of nuclear concerns, there are two different camps in the world,” said Talat. “The first of these is concerned about nuclear proliferation as a whole and is opposed to the very existence of nuclear weapons no matter which country’s arsenal they are part of. The concerns of this camp as such are generalised and are a different matter entirely.”

“The second camp that is focused on particular nations only, at least in Pakistan’s case, is motivated by malicious reasons,” he added.

According to Inam, concerns about Pakistan’s nuclear programme mainly stemmed from the ‘A Q Khan episode’. “That incident continues to colour world opinion about our nuclear safety but these repeatedly voiced concerns are by now just propaganda,” he said. “To counter that, we have to keep repeating our message and that is where this booklet comes in.”

The booklet is the second version of ‘Pakistan’s Nuclear Security Regime’, which was first published in the form of a brochure on the sidelines of the previous ICONS in 2016.

Source: <https://tribune.com.pk/story/2153977/1-pakistan-shares-measures-taken-strengthen-nuclear-security/>

## **Afghan Refugees | Editorial**

NEXT week, Pakistan will host a conference along with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees on the status of Afghan refugees in the country as a timely reminder to donor nations and international aid agencies to live up to their promises. The event will be attended by the UN Secretary General António Guterres and UNHCR chief Filippo Grandi. Last year, several donor countries (including the US) had taken a pledge to do all they could to help in the repatriation of Afghan refugees — with all the dignity and respect that these displaced families deserve — and yet, it seems as if the global community keeps forgetting about the plight of the second-largest refugee population in the world, along with all the promises it has made to them. The issue is especially relevant given the current talks taking place among Afghanistan’s various stakeholders since one cannot help but wonder: where do the millions of Afghan refugees fit in this so-called peace plan? Given that the world, including the former and present superpowers, have contributed to the countless challenges faced by the Afghans it is only fair they play their part to help solve their problems now. The Afghans have suffered multiple wars, invasions and militarisation, and have seen foreign actors fight for their own vested interests through the use proxies over the years, resulting in a steady stream of refugees escaping violence and poverty to seek sanctuary in other lands. For decades, Afghanistan has been described as ‘war-torn’. This has remained its greatest tragedy and given rise to a host of other malaises.

In 2019, the BBC reported that an average of 74 Afghans were killed per day in the month of August alone — three times higher than in the more recently declared ‘war-torn’ countries of Syria and Yemen. As long as Afghanistan is wreaked by violence, terrorism and religiously inspired militancy, there is little hope that any solution carved out for its refugee population will prove long-lasting. Till last year, there were an estimated 1.4m documented Afghan refugees living in this country. Despite various repatriation programmes, their numbers have been consistently high and many of those who live in Pakistan are still undocumented. In accordance with the laws, those born in the country are supposed to be awarded citizenship, yet this has often not been the case and millions are forced to live a life of uncertainty.

Source: <https://www.dawn.com/news/1534203/afghan-refugees>

## **Unshakable Pak-Turkey Ties | Editorial**

TURKISH President Recep Tayyip Erdogan's visit to Pakistan has once again highlighted the warmth that has always been there between the two brotherly countries and remains unaffected by some transitory developments. During comprehensive discussions the leadership of the two countries has agreed to continue supporting each other on crucial issues and transform their relationship into a strong and vibrant trade and economic partnership.

Turkey has always been close to heart of every Pakistani because of unparalleled commitment and sincerity of its leadership to well-being and prosperity of people of Pakistan and unconditional support to the core causes of the country. The spontaneous warm welcome that the Turkish leader receives during his visit to Pakistan is reflection of the deep love and affection of the people of Pakistan. Prime Minister Imran Khan, departing from the latest protocol, went to the Noor Khan airbase to greet the distinguished guest and drove him to the PM House for welcoming ceremony. The talks of President Erdogan with Pakistani leaders and his epoch-making address to the joint session of Parliament have strengthened the belief that the mutual relationship between the two countries was unshakable and that Turkey is ready to go to any extent to express solidarity with Pakistan and provide meaningful assistance for its progress and development. The agreement of the two countries to extend mutual support on issues of each other's core interest assumes significance in the backdrop of latest developments in Occupied Kashmir. President Erdogan won hearts of people of Pakistan by condemning the Indian move of illegal annexation of the occupied territory and draconian measures imposed there that have taken away fundamental rights of Kashmiris. Pakistan is also making frantic efforts to increase exports and attract foreign investment and the large business delegation, which accompanied the Turkish President, has intensive interaction with Pakistani counterparts on almost all aspects of economic ties including trade, investment and cooperation on tourism, military procurement, cooperation in other areas of defence industry to energy, construction, textile, food, livestock, import and export, airways, real state, tourism, consultancy trade, shipping, agriculture, jewellery, automotive, construction and production, tractor and engine, casting, paper production and on-vehicle equipment. There are genuine expectations that this interaction and understanding developed between the private sectors of the two countries would help boost bilateral trade to the mutual

advantage. It is also expected that issues like imposition of protective duty imposed by Turkey on textiles would be resolved because, analysts point out, the existing trade volume between the two countries has dropped drastically from \$1.08 billion to \$792 million after levy of a protective duty on textiles by Turkey. Previously, the textile exports to Turkey were based on normal tariffs, but later Turkey imposed a very high 18% protective duty, leading to a decline in the textile exports. Turkish President has been lending an ear to grievances of Pakistan as demonstrated by his approach to the Karkey dispute. The intervention of the Turkish President helped Pakistan save a huge penalty of US\$ 1.2 billion imposed by ICSID [International Centre for Settlement of Investment Disputes] as Pakistan had lost litigation with Turkish power company Karkey Karadeniz Elektrik Uretim (KKEU). Apart from increased potential for trade, there are also bright prospects for enhanced Turkish investment in infrastructure development, energy, low cost housing and municipal services (A Turkish Company is already doing wonders in the area of waste management in Punjab). We have been emphasizing in these columns the need for initiating joint ventures especially in the realm of defence production as the two countries, through research and development, cannot only meet most of their own defence requirements but also capture the foreign market. The statement made and sentiments expressed by President Erdogan during his address to the joint session of Parliament have also gone well with people of Pakistan as was also evident from enthusiastic response from MPs. Erdogan spoke from core of his heart in expressing complete solidarity with Pakistan in every respect. It is because of his sincerity and deep commitment to the causes of humanity in general and Muslims in particular that in Gallup International's annual popularity index of world political leaders, President Erdogan has emerged as the topmost Muslim leader and the fifth most-favoured leader in the world. The visit of the Turkish leader has laid foundations for an intensified cooperation between the two countries and it now depends on the ability of our ministries and departments concerned as to how quickly they translate this understanding into practical projects and programmes.

Source: <https://pakobserver.net/unshakable-pak-turkey-ties/>

# **Pakistan-Bangladesh Relations Thaw By**

## **Abid Hussain**

Pakistan's relations with many countries in South Asia do not get proper attention at home and abroad for too many reasons. SAARC is regarded as a great platform for South Asian countries like Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Nepal, Sri Lanka and Maldives but the relationship between Bangladesh and Pakistan has gone through many ups and downs. The execution of Abdul Quader Molla (a leader of the Jamaat-e-Islami in Bangladesh) on 12 December 2013, brought a new turmoil in the relationship between two countries. While Molla was being executed in Bangladesh, Pakistan was upset about Bangladesh punishing him with the death sentence and a resolution was passed on 16 December 2013 by the Pakistani Parliament in condemnation of Molla's death penalty, and PTI Chairman Imran Khan expressed the view that that Molla was an innocent man. Then Interior Minister Ch Nisar Ali Khan said to the National Assembly that the whole nation was saddened by this tragic incident. Despite all these expressions of concern, the government of Bangladesh executed Molla as a war criminal in the 1971 conflict.

It is believed that the Liberation War in 1971 was a determining factor in Bangladesh-Pakistan Relations. The Indian influence in the region has also made the bilateral relationship between Bangladesh and Pakistan suffer. The support of Indian Government for the Awami League is known as a turbulent factor. The long term Indian plan for isolating Pakistan in South Asia region has made Bangladesh remain hostile and antagonistic to it. Pakistan has always presented a gesture of a friendly relationship from time to time, but a response from Bangladesh has not helped, remembering the war trials as central to its healing and national reconciliation.

Signing a 25-year friendship treaty in 1971 with India, Bangladesh always remained committed to India most in security matters. The initial support to the Awami League by New Delhi has always made Bangladesh prefer India as the key ally rather than Pakistan. But it has been argued that the CAA and NRC in India have badly affected the relationship with South Asian countries, particularly with Bangladesh.

There is a dire need for policy shifts by both governments to resolve the old issues in an expeditious manner to meet new challenges posed by the world order. Both governments should formulate a policy plan to overcome the economic conditions in the way of people-to-people contacts. To address the old issues, both countries should work together in their business visa regimes. Sports diplomacy can further improve the relationship between the two countries. Cricket series like the one being played will further cement relations between both countries, and they will support each other as two brothers and friends rather than fighting one another as between two rivals. The latest data report from the UN shows Pakistani exports to Bangladesh were \$778.8 million and imports by Pakistan amounted to \$72 million in 2018, which is a good basis for building steady economic relations between two countries. If they can forget about the past for a better future, both governments of Bangladesh and Pakistan may come together to show the world that we were together, are together and will be together

The Bangladesh government always continues to accuse Pakistan of war crimes and demand official apologies for the events of 1971 war. Islamabad has denied war crimes and avoids Bangladesh for declaring them guilty of such heinous crimes.

Biharis in Bangladesh remain an unsolved issue for both Bangladesh and Pakistan since 1971 war. Many Biharis in Bangladesh are living in camps and are deprived by the government of Bangladesh of the basic rights of citizenship. It is said that people of the third generation have still been marginalized by not providing them with the right to live as citizens of Bangladesh.

Dealing with the BNP Government, the bilateral relationship between Bangladesh and Pakistan were more active rather than during the reign of the Awami League. It is a clear fact that the Awami League is pro-Indian and anti-Pakistan with deep relationships with the Indian government. The Awami League does not want a close relationship with Pakistan, because it has always supported the Indian government and remained anti-Pakistani. It is believed that the Awami League is a big hurdle for improving the relationship between Bangladesh and Pakistan.

The people who once were united under the flag of Pakistan look very far apart now. The events of 1971 still haunt both Pakistan and Bangladesh. It has now become an established fact that whenever there is a government of Awami

League in Bangladesh the relations between two countries will remain strained. The bitter memories of the past do not let them get along together.

The reconciliation process between the two countries remains unfinished because of the unsettled disputes which were started in 1974, when Pakistan recognized Bangladesh. In friendship gestures, Pakistan has always remained active and pliable, whereas Bangladesh has remained obdurate about not settling the old disputes between the two governments. The unnecessary and exceptional delay in peace settlement may be brought to an end by forgetting the memories, for strong bilateral relations between the two countries.

There is a dire need for policy shifts by both governments to resolve the old issues in an expeditious manner to meet new challenges posed by the world order. Both governments should formulate a policy plan to overcome the economic conditions in the way of people-to-people contacts. To address the old issues, both countries should work together in their business visa regimes. Sports diplomacy can further improve the relationship between the two countries. Cricket series like the one being played will further cement relations between both countries, and they will support each other as two brothers and friends rather than fighting one another as between two rivals. The latest data report from the UN shows Pakistani exports to Bangladesh were \$778.8 million and imports by Pakistan amounted to \$72 million in 2018, which is a good basis for building steady economic relations between two countries. If they can forget about the past for a better future, both governments of Bangladesh and Pakistan may come together to show the world that we were together, are together and will be together.

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Source: <https://www.pakistantoday.com.pk/2020/02/14/pakistan-bangladesh-relations-thaw/>

## **UN Chief's Visit | Editorial**

United Nations Secretary General Antonio Guterres has called for restraint from both India and Pakistan and a return to diplomacy and dialogue to settle disputes. The UN chief is in Islamabad to attend a UNHCR conference on Afghan refugees. The head of the UN stressed the need for the two countries to “de-escalate, both militarily and verbally”. Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi spent most of the joint press conference highlighting Pakistan’s concerns regarding Occupied Kashmir and “unilateral” move by New Delhi to strip the region of its special status. Qureshi also noted the increase in ceasefire violations along the Line of Control since India revoked Kashmir’s special status last August. Guterres expressed “deep concern” over the increasing ceasefire violations while stressing “the importance of exercising maximum restraint”. He also reiterated his “offer to exercise my good offices should both sides ask.” India, unfortunately, has seemingly lost interest in peace, having rebuffed similar offers from President Trump as well.

The UN chief also praised “Pakistan’s commitment to peace” by singling out the opening of the Kartarpur Corridor, along with appreciating the efforts of Pakistani troops participating in UN peacekeeping missions and hosting millions of Afghan refugees. He also noted Pakistan’s climate change mitigation efforts. On the security front, he acknowledged that Islamabad looking like a “military camp” due to the domestic militant threat to once again being designated a ‘family station’ for UN staff. All in all, it was a positive start to a four-day tour, and despite Guterres having also called for Pakistan to show restraint, his broader comments will help silence naysayers. Also, in his later meetings with Pakistan’s top political leaders, maybe the popular ex-PM of Portugal can explain a thing or two about successful budget management and privatisation — two issues that the incumbent government could undoubtedly use advice on.

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Source: <https://tribune.com.pk/story/2158770/6-un-chiefs-visit/>

## **Eradicating Polio | Editorial**

Monday marked the start of the first nationwide anti-polio campaign of 2020. Before the commencement of this latest drive, it almost seemed as if the government had completely given up on the idea of eradicating polio from Pakistan.

To be fair, completing a national immunisation drive is no easy task, and one that is fraught with many dangers, particular for the vaccinators on the ground that deal with threats, refusals and a host of other problems. But this does not understate the importance of eliminating polio in the country.

An effective response to the polio virus is desperately needed. 2019 saw the number of incidents jump up to 144 from 2018's 12 cases and a total of 7 cases in 2017. Compare that to this year, where barely a month has passed us by and we already have 17 confirmed cases around the country.

Last year's lacklustre efforts to counter it have led to an unprecedented increase in the number of cases; the ruling party has a part to play in this failure. The ten-month immunity gap of last year – only two vaccination drives were held in 2019, one each in January and December – must not be repeated.

There is a reason 2019 saw over 100 cases of polio – the lack in immunisation drives are definitely a contributing factor. The government must take this more seriously. The well-being of future generations is at stake. We must get our name off the list of countries that still have the disease – only three remain – and stop threatening the lives of our children any longer.

Source: <https://nation.com.pk/18-Feb-2020/eradicating-polio>

# **A New Era Ushered in Pak-Turkey Relationship By Syed Qamar Afzal Rizvi**

WITH Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan's current visit to Islamabad (Feb 13-14), a new dawn in the relationship between Ankara and Islamabad sparks while bringing the two Islamic states much closer via gaining more momentum through a recently revitalized defence industry collaboration in which both countries are gravely committed to contributing to regional safety and security. The voyage of the relationship between Pakistan goes through a span of seven decades. By weaving a new web of bilateral engagement in joint research programs in the areas of military training and Pakistan's acquisition of several defence products from Turkey, both countries have shown keen interest in further bonds that would enable them to contribute to national and regional security.

Turkish President's reference of history regarding Pakistan-Turkey relationship holds ultimate truth. Though the history of Pakistan-Turkey relations is richly evident of the fact that both the states enjoyed a proverbial record of bilateral relations, under President Tayyip Erdogan the pace of relationship has been tremendously fast multidimensional. And yet under President Erdogan, Pakistan-Turkey relations have witnessed an epochal transformation. The pendulum of Turkish Foreign policy swung towards Iran-Pakistan -Afghanistan forming a geostrategic gamut. Because of Turkey's strategic location and recent developments in the region, which made progress in the defence sector more vital than ever.

It is a well-known fact that dependency on other countries in the field can also be a major obstacle. With Turkey's rise in the defence industry, Pakistan has emerged as one of its top partners. "While our bilateral relations are centuries old and spread across a broad spectrum of areas, the defence sector has emerged as one of the most important areas of cooperation and collaboration between the two sides in recent years," Pakistani Ambassador to Ankara Syrus Sajjad Qazi told Daily Sabah. He added that both countries enjoy a convergence of views on both regional and international issues, especially in their concern for safeguarding and strengthening regional security.

The Pak-Turk Military Consultative Group—being established in 1988— was aimed to strengthen military relations between the two countries. However, as

ties improved, the scope of cooperation expanded and took on a new name, the High-Level Strategic Cooperation Council (HLSCC). President Erdogan and Prime Minister Imran Khan co-chaired the sixth session of the Pakistan-Turkey High-Level Strategic Cooperation Council. PM Khan said the Council meeting is one of the most important symbols of the friendship between two nations. “We have deliberated our relationship in detail during the Council meeting,” Khan said, adding that the 13 memorandums of understanding (MOU) signed by both parties is an indication of “how important the relations between us are”. The positive reflection of the excellent bilateral relations can also be seen in the international fora. Turkey and Pakistan are supporting each other in all international platforms. Pakistan also adopts a highly supportive approach on international matters, which are of special interest for Turkey. Importantly, the Strategic Council approved a Strategic Economic Framework (SEF) and an accompanying elaborate plan of action to implement the new vision for the ties. The SEF aims at realising the target of enhancing bilateral trade to \$5 billion by 2023 from the current \$800 million. Turkish President Erdogan, while speaking at a press conference with Prime Minister Imran Khan after the signing ceremony, described the SEF and the 71-point plan of action, as the “roadmap for deepening economic cooperation.

With the improvement of military ties, both states are convinced to enhance their economic partnership in various fields. Therefore, seven joint groups work under the Council to improve ties in trade and investment, energy sector, banking and finance, transport and communication, tourism and culture and education and political coordination. Understandably and proverbially the most important part of this visit is marked by the announcement of a landmark deal for dual nationality between Turkey and Pakistan. The two countries are considering a plan to make it easier to provide dual nationality for their citizens, in what would be a significant boost in relations. Under the citizenship initiative, meanwhile, the citizens of Pakistan and Turkey would be able to attain joint citizenship and dual passports from each other’s’ countries, adding significantly to their already strong relations. Earlier this month, Pakistan extended the scheduled date for the delivery of Turkey’s T129 attack helicopters, which were delayed due to U.S. sanctions imposed on Turkey. In May last year, Pakistan also added Turkey to its visa-free travel list which aims to promote tourism and business between the two countries.

The two sides are committed to working closely to combat Islamophobia, hate speech, efforts to link terrorism with Islam, and other manifestations of intolerance towards Muslims, including stereotyping of Muslims. Joint initiatives will be taken to counter stereotyping and defamation of Islam and Muslims, including incitement to acts of violence, xenophobia, and related intolerance and discrimination against Islam, its religious symbols, and venerated personalities, by means of print, audio-visual & electronic media, the Internet, as well as entertainment media such as movies, videos and digital games. The two countries note with appreciation the UN Secretary General's Strategy and Action Plan on Hate Speech and call for convening a special session of the UN General Assembly on measures to combat Islamophobia; The two sides underscored need for resolution of all outstanding disputes between Pakistan and India, including the core issue of Jammu & Kashmir through a sustained dialogue process and in accordance with relevant UN Security Council resolutions.

In this regard, Pakistan expresses its deep appreciation for Turkey's principled stance on the issue as well as its offer for mediation. Sustainable peace and stability in Afghanistan can only be achieved through an Afghan-led and Afghan-owned peace process. Turkey appreciates Pakistan's support to the Afghan peace process. Foreseeably, both Islamabad and Ankara can play a vital role in strengthening the OIC bonds on the one side while making greater role in enhancing the bilateral strategic, economic cooperation in the field of economic, trade, health, and education. In the current scenario, both Turkey and Pakistan are willing to foster a common stand regarding the issues faced by the Muslim Ummah today.

—The writer, an independent 'IR' researcher-cum-analyst based in Pakistan, is member of European Consortium for Political Research Standing Group on IR, Critical Peace & Conflict Studies, also a member of Washington Foreign Law Society and European Society of International Law.

Source: <https://pakobserver.net/a-new-era-ushered-in-pak-turkey-relationship/>

## ECONOMY

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### **Brexit Provides Chance to Deepen Pak-UK Trade Ties** **By Salman Siddiqui**

Brexit – the departure of the United Kingdom (UK) from the European Union (EU) – that took place last Friday has provided an opportunity to further strengthen and widen trade and investment ties between Pakistan and Britain.

“Brexit and our departure from the European Union provides a catalyst...to boost trade both ways. It is an excellent opportunity for the UK and Pakistan to deepen trade ties,” Her Majesty’s Trade Commissioner for Middle East, Afghanistan and Pakistan Simon Penney said while talking to a group of journalists at the British Deputy High Commission, Karachi on Monday.

“It (Islamabad) is already a very, very important trading relationship...we believe it (trade and investment relationship) has a significant potential to grow further,” he said. He said bilateral trade between the two countries grew to £3.1 billion, which was in favour of Islamabad as its exports to London stood at £1.9 billion in the year ended December 2018. “Bilateral trade volume can easily be doubled,” he stressed.

Trade volume between the two countries also grew during the year ended December 2019. The UK department concerned is yet to publish the updated numbers.

Two-way trade has been growing at 6% per annum. “The UK is Pakistan’s third largest export market globally just behind the US and China,” he said.

He pointed out that the EU had not necessarily prevented the UK from doing trade and business. “But now Brexit allows the UK to focus more on...countries outside the EU. The IMF has forecast 90% economic growth will occur outside the EU over the next 10 years,” he said.

British Deputy Commissioner Trade Director for Pakistan Mike Nithavrianakis, who accompanied Penney, said there was a significant positive change in Pakistan, which was well acknowledged by the countries around the globe.

“Members of the British royal family recently paid a visit to Pakistan. International cricket is resuming here; Sri Lanka (came to play) first of all and now Bangladesh. British Airways restarted flights to Pakistan after almost a decade...These all are very positive aspects happening on the ground,” Nithavrianakis said.

He acknowledged that the security situation had improved a lot in Pakistan, especially in the city of ports – Karachi. “There is 80% reduction in terrorism and other associated political violence. Something positive is happening on the ground,” he said.

#### GSP Plus status

Speaking about the GSP Plus status which the EU member countries granted to Pakistan a few years ago, Penney said Brexit had changed nothing about the GSP Plus status for Pakistan. “Our ambitions remain the same as they were before Friday (when Brexit happened). During the transition period (from now till the end of December 2020), we will continue to trade on the same basis as we did before Friday,” he said.

Islamabad has been exporting a number of products at almost zero duty under the special trade status to EU member countries and the UK for the past several years. Textile remains the largest export product for the European countries.

#### UK investment

Nithavrianakis said several big British firms were already operating in Pakistan. Unilever Pakistan has recently concluded investment worth \$120 million to expand its volumetric production in the country.

GSK in the pharmaceutical sector has also made fresh investment to expand its manufacturing line. Shell Pakistan is looking to enter the LNG sector here, he said.

British Airways (BA) may consider beginning commercial flights from Karachi and Lahore after Islamabad in June last year as there was growing keenness among people to fly with BA from other cities of the country, he said.

“Existing companies are here for decades and decades to come,” he said. Penney acknowledged that Pakistan had gained 28 places in the World Bank’s (WB) Ease of Doing Business Index as all reforms were positive.

He, however, stressed that Islamabad needed to bring consistency in the regulatory environment. “Inconsistency in regulation has remained a big concern for several other UK firms while deciding whether to invest in Pakistan or not,” he said.

Penney revealed that there were only 135 UK-based companies operating in Pakistan compared to around 5,000 in the UAE. He acknowledged that there was a huge potential for Pakistan to attract more UK firms not only from Britain, but the UK-based firms operating in the UAE.

More UK-based companies may invest in manufacturing, pharmaceutical and education sectors in Pakistan, he said.

#### Unutilised UK funds

Penney pointed out that the UK increased financing from 400 million pounds to one billion pounds for the Pakistani companies involved in importing goods and services from Britain last year. However, the utilisation has remained zero. “We need to do more awareness,” Penney said.

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Source: <https://tribune.com.pk/story/2149697/1-brexite-provides-chance-deepen-pak-uk-trade-ties/>

# **Pakistan Open For Business By Dr Marc Siegel**

I have been working in Pakistan for five years and have had the honour of participating in the Pakistan Pavilion at the World Economic Forum (WEF) in Davos for the past three years. One thing you notice immediately upon arriving in Pakistan is that there is a large gap between the perception one obtains in the Western world and reality on the ground in Pakistan.

Pakistan is a country of enormous potential. The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) makes Pakistan the gateway and conduit for business and commerce to Central Asia and Western China. This is a vast, largely untapped, market now connected via modern infrastructure running the length of Pakistan. CPEC provides worldwide access to growing markets and enormous natural resources. However, more importantly it opens huge possibilities for Pakistan's most valuable and important resource — its people. In terms of size and scope, Pakistan has a very large pool of talent and human resource potential waiting to be tapped. There is a great windfall for multinational companies who take advantage of Pakistan's impressive talent pool, hardworking people, and CPEC infrastructure.

Speaker after speaker at the Pakistan Pavilion referred to Pakistan's impressive pool of talent and declared "Pakistan is open for business." Unfortunately, this "build it and they will come" perspective is the attitude of countries throughout the developing world. While Pakistan may have a large and diverse talent pool, it needs to differentiate itself from its competitors in order to attract international partners. International corporations are not just looking for talent; they are looking for reliable, safe, and professional business environments to invest in. This is a particular challenge for Pakistan where perceived risk of doing business is much exaggerated from the actual level of risk of doing business in the country. Pakistanis cannot dismiss this. To succeed it is critical to manage the perceived risks of potential business partners while competently managing the actual risk to business. This also means that Pakistani companies must sell their country and their business sector along with marketing their individual companies for Pakistan's share of the international business pie to grow.

In order to achieve its potential and differentiate itself from its competitors in the developing world, Pakistan needs to develop support infrastructure for its human capital. The challenge is significant because the bar to overcome is the perceived risk of doing business in the country. But by investing in developing governance, compliance, and risk management skills throughout its business community, Pakistan has the potential to repeat the transformation of countries like Singapore, Israel, South Korea, and Finland. These countries used their human resources to become modern, affluent societies built on knowledge-based industries. Pakistan has the advantage of developing its knowledge-based industries, while also pursuing manufacturing opportunities using its affordable labour force. But this will only happen if international businesses feel comfortable in doing business in Pakistan. This means Pakistani companies need to proactively demonstrate they can manage the perceived and actual risk of international partners.

In order to attract international investors and business, Pakistan needs to tackle the concerns of the international business community head-on. Perhaps even more important than access to talent, international businesses want to be sure any local business partner has world-class governance, compliance, and risk management procedures in place. Potential partners want to be certain that legal, regulatory, contractual, labour, safety, environmental obligations can be met, as well as assurance that quality, continuity of operations, security, and brand/reputation protection measures are exemplary. In other words, in addition to talent, international organisations are looking for a comprehensive and holistic approach to managing all the risks their organisation perceives. Given the perception of risk in Pakistan, this means to succeed Pakistani companies need to proactively address potential partners' perception of risk by preemptively approaching potential partners with a risk management plan addressing the potential partners' concerns.

Pakistani companies also need to realise that they must sell their country, not just their individual businesses. At this early stage of attracting foreign business, success breeds success, while a lack of professionalism will reflect poorly on doing business in Pakistan in general. There is the need to target industry sectors with the greatest potential for foreign investment and create mechanisms to enhance professionalism across the sector, as well as promote fellow Pakistani companies. This means avoiding bad-mouthing competitors, while highlighting that your company has something special to offer. Joint marketing by

professional societies of what Pakistan has to offer, while enhancing business management and communications skills will encourage foreign investments and partnerships.

There is also a need to enhance the image of Pakistan as a competitor in knowledge-based industries. One approach that has proven successful time and again is the establishment of technology transfer offices at universities and research institutes, including incubator programmes. The secret to attracting foreign attention is for universities and research institutes to jointly market their offerings to show that the country as a whole has a critical mass of investment opportunities. Jointly marketing this critical mass at international conferences and online forums produces an image of Pakistan having a critical mass of opportunities to encourage a second look at Pakistan rather than smaller developing countries.

In a world of globalisation and decentralised supply chains, any country can become a player. The countries that succeed will be the countries that can demonstrate not only that they have large talent pools, but that they have a critical mass of business opportunities and that they can also proactively address the risk management concerns of potential partners. Pakistan has the ingredients to become an international player and transform the future of its large pool of talented young people. The time has come to promote less of the physical infrastructure CPEC has created and emphasise the business and risk management acuity of its business sector. Working together, Pakistanis can encourage international businesses to give the country a second look by demonstrating its businesses have world-class governance, compliance, and risk management practices capable of protecting their partners' interests.

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Source: <https://tribune.com.pk/story/2152200/6-pakistan-open-business/>

## **Positive Vibes From FATF Meeting By Malik Muhammad Ashraf**

Whether Pakistan will remain on the grey list for another extended period or get out of it will be decided by the FATF plenary meeting in Paris later this month. However, Pakistan delegation led by Minister for Economic Affairs Hammad Azhar seems to have successfully defended its compliance report at the meeting of Asia Pacific Group of FATF in Beijing during December 2019 as the vibes emanating from it are quite positive. Reportedly the meeting expressed satisfaction over the compliance report submitted by Pakistan in spite of best efforts by India to ensure penalties on her. No member of the FATF including US and EU supported the Indian view. This development not only represents a major blow to the Indian diplomatic efforts but is also a good augury for Pakistan in regards to getting out of this conundrum.

Now Pakistan requires mustering up diplomatic support for its efforts to come out from grey list and land into the white as it will need 12 votes out of total 39 in the next plenary meeting of the FATF. Pakistan was put on the grey list by FATF in June 2018 and had been given 27 action plans till September 2019 to comply for coming out from it. Asia Pacific Group of the organization was assigned the task to monitor Pakistan's progress on the action plans and submit a report to the parent body. Since then Pakistani authorities have held a number of review meetings with the group, the last one in last October. Pakistan was found of having complied with 36 out of 40 parameters. However the Joint Working Group found Pakistan largely compliant on 10 points, partially compliant on another 10 points and non-compliant on seven points out of the 27 action plans given by the FATF. Pakistan was kept in the grey list and asked to comply with rest of the action plans and submit compliance report till December which it did and on the basis of which the FATF members have expressed their satisfaction.

In my considered opinion the issue has attained political dimensions. The placing of Pakistan on the grey list was surely motivated by such considerations with a view to keep Pakistan under pressure. One must not forget that Pakistan was put on the grey list in June 2018 on the basis of a US sponsored motion to have Pakistan grey-listed and the move as usual was supported by her western allies like Britain, France and Germany among others. It was very much expected in

the backdrop of the nosedive in relations between Pakistan and USA since the announcement of the new Policy on South Asia and Afghanistan by President Donald Trump and its outright rejection by Pakistan.

It was the most unfortunate development in view of the fact that Pakistan which had been the US ally since early fifties and had suffered the most in the war against terrorism remained a suspect in the eyes of the latter in regards to its indiscriminate action against the terrorist outfits.

The reality is that Pakistan has been a sincere partner in the war on terror and has not only dismantled the infrastructure of all the terrorist outfits based on its territory including North Waziristan but is also faithfully engaged in eliminating the remnants of their supporters within the country. It has also taken all possible administrative and legal measures to check and block the sources of funding to the terrorist organizations. Pakistan had already promulgated a Presidential Ordinance to amend the anti-terror legislation in order to include all UN-listed individuals and groups in the national listings of proscribed outfits and persons. Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP) also took measures in keeping with the FATF regulations and issued Anti-Money Laundering and Countering Financing of Terrorism Regulations 2018. The government had also chalked out a comprehensive plan to eradicate terrorist financing which was shared with the international watch-dog. The FATF decision was reflective of the US rhetoric of do more. It was also indicative of how much influence US could exercise on world bodies like FATF.

It is pertinent to point out that a spokesman of the Chinese Foreign ministry referring to FATF decision had said “In recent years Pakistan has actively taken measures to strengthen financial supervision and crack down on terrorist financing and made important progress. We have always believed that the great efforts and sacrifices made by the Pakistan government and people for the fight against terrorism are obvious to all. The international community must give full recognition and trust to these efforts and treat those efforts objectively and impartially instead of relying on criticism and pressure” The statement adequately unraveled how the decisions were taken under pressure at the global forums.

Before the Beijing meeting Pakistan had done its homework well. Besides taking administrative and legal measures to comply with the FATF requirements it also undertook intensive lobbying and diplomatic efforts to muster support for her

cause. Foreign minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi met US secretary of State Mike Pompeo and discussed the issue with him seeking support for getting out of the grey list. Prime Minister in his meeting with President Trump on the sidelines of Davos Forum among other things also deliberated on the issue of FATF. The relations between US and Pakistan which had gone into a nosedive when President Trump announced his policy on Afghanistan and South Asia, have been transformed into a renewed bonhomie due to the role that Pakistan has played in bringing the US and Taliban on the negotiating table which has almost brought the two sides close to an agreement to end decades old conflict in Afghanistan.

In view of recalibration of relations between US and Pakistan and the concrete and credible steps taken by Pakistan ever since placement in the grey list, it could be genuinely hoped that things would have a positive outcome at the Paris meeting. Pakistan however will have to further step up her diplomatic efforts in the run up to the Paris meeting to win the support of maximum members of FATF to thwart the Indian designs. It is pertinent to point out that Pakistan has avoided being pushed into the black list because of the persistent support of China, Turkey and Malaysia.

Source: <https://nation.com.pk/08-Feb-2020/positive-vibes-from-fatf-meeting>

# **E-commerce: An Economic Game Changer**

**By M Ziauddin**

While acknowledging the role startups are playing in the country's economic growth and financial inclusion, Prime Minister Imran Khan the other day said his government would facilitate talented entrepreneurs in transforming their innovative ideas into sustainable businesses. He was addressing a ceremony at the National Incubation Centre (NIC) for startups under its Ignite program.

The official Startup friendly policies are expected to bridge the gap between Pakistani ecosystem and global best ecosystems, including Silicon Valley, Europe, South East Asia and also for sharing of resources, best practices and knowledge.

Over the last three years, dozens of incubations, accelerators and startups have been launched in Pakistan mainly focusing on filling the gaps in our e-commerce industry whose market in terms of revenue income is said to have expanded to an estimated \$1 billion in 2019 with a projected growth rate of 30-40% in 2020. It is just a minutest fraction of global e-commerce revenue income which was nearly about \$3.50 trillion in 2019 and was about \$2.95 trillion in 2018. The growth rate is estimated at 20% in 2020.

The exceptionally immense growth anticipated in the e-commerce revenue in Pakistan is due to the ongoing development in the digitalisation in the country. Secondly, the growth in the potential for the e-commerce industry in Pakistan is also backed by the most important ingredient of any e-commerce industry, 'the free and liberal access to internet'.

A rapid growth in the availability of internet, mobile and broadband over the last few years has added to the acceleration of e-commerce business in the country. In 2019 the number of internet subscribers was 71 million. This number is expected to reach 80 million in 2020. This is a huge untapped e-commerce market in Pakistan.

In Pakistan, online shopping is the major contributor of the total e-commerce revenue. The Online Shopping domain is growing exponentially in Pakistan. The number of online shopping websites are growing every single week, almost all

the top trusted clothing brands have an e-commerce handle in the form of e-commerce website, Facebook or Instagram page.

Though the Industry has a lot of potential and is growing rapidly, a number of hurdles are still retarding its pace and its universal acceptance. The main one being the absence of PayPal, globally the most preferred payment method.

It is very challenging for consumers to find the right product from the right source because the top online shopping websites in Pakistan are mostly vendor-based and, therefore, mostly lack a system of authenticating the vendors which sometimes leads to the consumers ending up being the victim of false information about quality of the product and its price, even burdened with fake products.

Secondly, most of the websites in Pakistan lack the ideal navigating and search systems which would allow visitors to search for their desired product in the shortest possible time. What is needed is said to be a navigating and search system catering to say 2-3 million products database from 100-150 online stores all at one place. A new startup named, Shoppingum, launched in Pakistan recently is said to come very close to a reasonable mass of products. The startup is helping online consumers to search and navigate them to their desired products in no time. Do follow the link <https://www.shoppingum.com>.

Late delivery times, inconvenience in returning the products if the product is not as mentioned in the provided information on the website, refunds and weak customer support are the other major reasons why many people in Pakistan still avoid online shopping.

The resolution of these major problems will not only open up a vast new world of global business for Pakistan but, in the process, help boost our economy as well. We need to urgently frame the right policies that would support the industry, helping it to grow rapidly.

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Source: <https://tribune.com.pk/story/2156971/6-e-commerce-economic-game-changer/>

# **FATF: Pakistan Removal From Grey-list?**

**By Syed Qamar Afzal Rizvi**

WHETHER— Pakistan's name be retained or removed from the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) grey list—the decision will be duly made during FATF's preliminary session (Feb16-21 to be held in Paris as the intergovernmental organization, reviews Pakistan's measures at the meeting. If power politics is not on the cards but an exercise of judicious perceptivity remains the core of the FATF's decision-making, there appear some pragmatic hopes that Pakistan's name will be removed from the Grey-list. Xiangmin Liu, DG of the Legal Department at Beijing's Central Bank, is the current FATF President.

In its last plenary session in China (October-2019), Pakistan rightly despatched a detailed reply to a Joint Group of the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) in order to impart the due progress on curbing money laundering and terror financing in Pakistan. According to a report in The News, a top government official has confirmed the development. The progress report, which is 120 pages in length and has a 500-page long annexe as well, has been properly scrutinised by the FATF body. All required details were objectively deemed necessary to share progress on the 22 points that must be met before Pakistan could justifiably claim to come out of the grey list. The FATF has shown its official satisfaction on just a five-point action plan out of the total 27, making it a challenge for Pakistan to comply with the remaining points in the stipulated time. That has been the main reason Pakistan was kept on the grey list for an extended period until February 2020.

The FATF's advocated guidance aims to provide support in designing Anti-Money Laundering and Terrorist Financing (AML/CFT) measures that meet the goal of financial inclusion, without compromising the measures that exist for the purpose of combating crime. The revised guidance reflects the changes made to the FATF Recommendations in 2012—focusing on the reinforcement of the risk-based approach (RBA), as a general and underlying principle of all AML/CFT systems. The FATF's prime purpose is to develop and enhance policies at international and national levels to target money laundering and terrorist financing. In its own words, the FATF “works to generate the necessary political will to bring about national legislative and regulatory reforms in these areas.”

The membership of international organizations in the FATF with an AML/CFT mandate seems to have created a vertical crossover of the FATF in international law policymaking. This obviously derives from the close relationship between the UN and the FATF which has been endorsed by the UNSC resolutions both current and previous. Principally, the UNSC Resolution 2462 (2019 under chapter VII) refers to previous UNSC resolutions that require all countries of the world to ensure that their domestic laws and regulations establish serious criminal offences that enable prosecution and penalization of terrorist funding and financing. To honour the respective international law implications of the FATF, Pakistan has introduced a series of domestic reforms legislation in 2019 including the establishment of the FATAF cells at both the NAB headquarters and the FIA. In addition, the NAB has signed the MoUs with the FBI and UK's Crime Agency.

According to FATF norms, Islamabad has to completely overhaul its financial network system to strengthen its anti-money laundering/countering the financing of terrorism regime, or AML/CFT, regime. So far, Pakistan has only largely addressed five of 27 action items, with varying levels of progress made on the rest of the action plan. The FATF strongly urged the country to swiftly complete its full action plan by February 2020. Islamabad is diplomatically engaged in warding off the fears from any FATF actions "Should significant and sustainable progress not be made across the full range of its action plan by the next plenary, the FATF will take action, which could include the FATF calling on its members and urging all jurisdictions to advise their FIs (financial institutions) to give special attention to business relations and transactions with Pakistan," the FATF said in a previous statement. In the last FATF's session, The Pakistani authorities told the FATF body that sanctions have been imposed on the outlawed outfits.

The delegation also informed the watchdog that case registration over terror financing in Pakistan has increased by 451 per cent. Arrests over terror financing have increased by 677 per cent while the process of giving penalties in such cases has increased by 403 per cent, the FATF was told. As of December 2019, some 827 cases of terror financing have been registered, the Pakistani delegation told the FATF. While responding to Pakistan's progress report, a regional affiliate of the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) last month forwarded 150 comments and clarifications in all sectors, but mostly related to the action taken by the country against banned groups and proscribed persons. "Sources in

the Interior Ministry said that there were several questions regarding action taken against seminaries affiliated with banned organisations or proscribed persons who have been listed in VT Schedule of the Anti-Terrorism Act (ATA). The FATF has also sought other details including copies of lawsuits filed against banned organisations and proscribed persons. Originally there were 27 objections over Pakistan and the country was able to respond to five of them.

However, both the US and China have appreciated Pakistan's progress on the FATF required action. The comments of Ambassador Alice Wells – US Acting Assistant Secretary of State, Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs during her latest visit, have been positive regarding Pakistan's progressive actions. Now Pakistan urgently requires mustering up diplomatic support for its efforts to come out from grey list and land into the white as Islamabad needs 12 votes out of total 39 in the plenary meeting of the FATF scheduled to be held in Paris on 16 February 2020," the news report said. Yet a pragmatist view advocates that the FATF body may extend Pakistan's present grey-list status thereby giving the space to take further action to be taken by Pakistan regarding FATF remaining compliance agenda. And hopefully, in the FATF plenary session to be held in June (June-20-26) in China, Pakistan's name may be removed from the grey-list.

—The writer, an independent 'IR' researcher-cum-analyst based in Pakistan, is member of European Consortium for Political Research Standing Group on IR, Critical Peace & Conflict Studies, also a member of Washington Foreign Law Society and European Society of International Law.

Source: <https://pakobserver.net/fatf-pakistan-removal-from-grey-list/>

## **IMF Talks | Editorial**

It looks like the recent round of talks with the IMF have gone quite well, perhaps better than expected.

It is true that they ended without a staff-level agreement, in which the targets and benchmarks for the forthcoming period are finalised, but all indications suggest that this is now a mere formality.

Read: IMF mission gives sunny outlook of Pakistan's economic situation as review ends

With such a ringing endorsement of the government's performance in the first six months of the programme, there can be little doubt now that an agreement for the next quarter is just around the corner.

The statement released by the Fund on Friday must come as a relief for the government, especially its economic managers, who have been taking a serious battering in recent months with the relentless march of inflation and the lingering slowdown in the economy. The Fund clearly says the economy has stabilised, inflation is now set to trend downwards, and the fiscal and external sectors have performed admirably, in some cases surpassing expectations.

But the moment of relief must be short.

It should be remembered, for one, that the IMF routinely gives positive reviews to Pakistan during programme implementation, especially when ties with the United States are strong or on the mend.

Second, it should also be remembered that the programme is a long one, and the first six months may have brought hard-won gains in the fiscal and external balances, but the road ahead is treacherous and the economy and populace are exhausted under the burden of the sacrifices they have been called upon to make in the name of this adjustment.

The other thing that the same statement makes clear is that much more is yet to come, and the government is soon likely to be reminded that ultimately it is the

people of this country who will decide whether or not its performance has been good, and not the IMF.

Against this background, some sobering facts came to light on the same day that the glowing IMF statement was released.

The country's circular debt has risen to a staggering Rs1.78tr, up by 34pc since September 2018. Over that time period, it has risen by an average of Rs38bn per month, or more than a billion rupees per day. At some point, the growth of this circular debt will need to be arrested, and then reversed.

There is also the question of maintaining the fiscal balance going forward, which will require further taxes or expenditure cuts.

These are some of the loose ends left to be tied up before an agreement can be signed by both parties. But the costs of these measures will be borne by the people of the country, in the form of higher power tariffs, more taxes, and fewer jobs. The IMF's words of praise will not help as this journey continues. Dedicated focus on running things will.

Published in Dawn, February 17th, 2020

Source: <https://www.dawn.com/news/1534970/imf-talks>

# **Dynamics of GDP Growth in Pakistan By**

## **Arsalan Ahmad**

GDP growth rate which is widely accepted as the most reliable growth indicator across the world has been very volatile in case of Pakistan attaining peaks as high as over ten per cent and troughs as low as one per cent or less. The fundamentals of growth have never been stronger enough to provide economy of Pakistan with sustained pattern of growth, however, short patterns of support by the donors in the form of foreign aid or any other external stimuli as result of changes in geo-strategic dynamics have always kept Pakistan afloat.

Never could Pakistan maintain exceptional higher levels of growth for significantly longer period rather the pace of such higher levels have always been followed by or short circuited by unforeseen factors that include wars, insurgencies, instability, etc which resulted in receding the pace of growth maintained earlier. The 70-year economic history of Pakistan reveals an interesting relationship between such periods of exceptionally higher GDP growth and aforementioned factors especially the wars Pakistan has been dragged into in particular with her eastern neighbour. This relationship is indicative of an emerging pattern that has been repeated in almost all wars imposed on Pakistan.

No denying the fact that the decade of 60s is marked with very higher level of growth of more than six per cent on average and this is the decade which is also characterized with a war in the middle of the decade. Close observation of Pakistan' GDP around that year shows that the average growth rate in preceding three years right before the war year has been close to or slightly over seven per cent (which is a remarkable achievement though), however, this marvellous performance was followed by war in 1965. It is interesting to note that comparing growth rates of Pakistan around all subsequent wars/conflicts bears relationship nearly the same as we find in 65 war. For example statistics show that before the year 1971, again the average growth rate was close to or above seven per cent in preceding three years to war.

The data from Pakistan Bureau of Statistics would show that in years 1962-63, 1963-64 and 1964-65, the growth rates were 7.19%, 6.48% and 9.38% respectively, the average rate for these years come around 7.68%. Likewise, the

growth rates for years 1967-68, 1968-69 and 1969-70 are 6.79%, 6.49% and 9.79% respectively that brings the three-year average growth rate around 7.69% again. Now moving onto another conflict with India i.e. Siachen, which started in 1984, while tracing back the same growth trajectory, what we figure out is that Pakistan has been achieving growth rates of 6.4%, 7.56% and 6.79% respectively for the years 1980-81, 1981-82 and 1982-83 respectively, the average for which comes to around 7% again. Is this mere coincidence? Seems not, rather a cyclical trend seems to be in play.

This arises interest as to go ahead further and check wars in Afghanistan which have affected Pakistan deeply directly or indirectly. Following the former Soviet Union' invasion of Afghanistan in December 1979, Pakistan became part of this war as frontline US ally from the early 80s. So the growth rates prevailing around that period show that in 1979-80, 1980-81 and 1981-82, these were at 7.33%, 6.40% and 7.56% respectively which again bring the average around 7% (though this period also overlaps somewhat with period of Siachen conflict). In the first decade of this century in years 2003-04 and 2004-05, the rate again went up beyond seven per cent but only for two years ie 7.7% and 7.52% respectively, however, the average for three years including year 2005-06 remained slightly below seven per cent threshold ie comes to around 6.9%, immediate following year was 2007 which has been one of the most troublesome years in Pakistan as declaration of war by Osama Bin Laden on Pakistan government, removal of the then Chief Justice, Lal Masjid, assassination of former Prime Minister and war on terror in the form of local insurgency are few of the incidents to mark high level of political instability.

Above facts depict that there is a conspicuous relationship between three-year average growth of around seven per cent and wars or insurgencies/instability Pakistan has been made victim to. Though every state including Pakistan strives for higher and higher levels of economic growth in order to raise standard of living of their people, however, in Pakistan' case there seems to be an upper cap of around 7 per cent, informally though, which if sustained for some three-year period consecutively, may result in activating such external/internal forces that cannot let Pakistan to progress any further economically while high levels of instability and war(s) in particular are likely to be imposed on Pakistan and if history stands any guidance, it certainly carries immense significance and implications for policy makers both at economic and geo-strategic fronts.

—The writer is a freelance columnist, based in Islamabad.

Source: <https://pakobserver.net/dynamics-of-gdp-growth-in-pakistan/>

## **FATF Reprieve | Editorial**

The Financial Action Task Force (FATF) has put off putting Pakistan on its blacklist, but has retained it on its grey list, and will decide in June whether or not the country is compliant with its 27-point Action Plan. This postponement of blacklisting should not be followed by any lack of sincerity in fulfilling FATF demands, and should lead to actions required, no matter the institutional interest that might be protected by the present situation. No institutional interest can be placed above the national interest. It can be argued that FATF is just an extension of the Washington-consensus institutions like the World Bank and the IMF, but it should be remembered that FATF blacklisting would mean the closing of access to the world's financial markets, and so dependent on those markets is the country that government finances would collapse so badly that official institutions would find themselves damaged, perhaps irretrievably so. It should not be forgotten that the IMF programme, by which the government sets so much store, is reliant on Pakistan avoiding being blacklisted.

The FATF Paris meeting gave Pakistan an eight-point plan to ensure compliance with the original plan. The plenary is supposed to have expressed satisfaction with how Pakistan was progressing, after it was informed that Pakistan was either compliant, or close to compliance, on more than half of the action-plan points. If there has been any Indian attempts to have Pakistan blacklisted, they will be defeated by effective diplomacy, which will have to be based on genuine efforts, rather than asking for help in evading the FATF. Pakistan must be clear in doing what is good for it, not serving some other agenda.

The FATF decision coming after Jama'at-ud-Da'wah chief Hafiz Saeed was convicted for money laundering after a number of times being arrested only to be released later. The USA evidently set great store by this. Its wishes should be considered, for if it was to decide to support whitelisting, many other countries, more than the required number, would also lend their support. Pakistan is also crucial to the USA in Afghanistan where a peace deal with the Taliban is within sight. According to the US there are elements still present within Pakistan like Saeed that need to be dealt with. And it cannot be over-emphasised that handling them is in Pakistan's best interests.

Source: <https://www.pakistantoday.com.pk/2020/02/21/fatf-reprieve/>

## **Trade With US | Editorial**

IT is encouraging that as a follow up of the understanding between Prime Minister Imran Khan and President Trump, on up-scaling Pak-US trade and investment ties several-folds, the two countries are holding negotiations to realize the objective. Though the just concluded visit of the Secretary of Commerce Wilbur Ross did not result in any breakthrough in trade promotion but it did afford an opportunity to exchange fruitful ideas for the purpose.

The United States is the second largest trading partner of Pakistan, therefore, has been playing a significant role in the economic development of the country. In recent years, it provided valuable assistance in overcoming the crippling shortage of energy and the projects completed with the US cooperation are playing a crucial role in ensuring power security. Bilateral trade between Pakistan and the United States stood at \$6.54 during 2019 and Pakistan had a \$1.3 billion trade surplus with Washington. However, it may be pointed out that the trade is mostly confined to textile and leather goods and medical instruments, which means there are bright prospects for diversification if the United States adopts a more liberal approach towards Pakistan. According to reports, during parleys with the US trade delegation, Pakistan demanded expansion of GSP Plus list for providing concession on export items from the US side, movement towards TIFA (Trade and Investment Framework Agreement) and initiation of Scoping Study for Free Trade Agreement (FTA) but the United States was non-committal. This has made some commentators to believe that the visit was just aimed at consoling Pakistan at a time when President Donald Trump was offering incentives and technologies to India during his much-trumpeted tour. Pakistan justifiably expects some forward movement on meaningful increase in bilateral trade following clear progress made by Islamabad on meeting FATF requirements and its sincere cooperation in facilitating peace talks with Taliban.

Source: <https://pakobserver.net/trade-with-us/>

# EDUCATION

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## **Education Concerns | Editorial**

EDUCATION may be the constitutional right of every individual between the ages of five and 16, but actually getting children to school has proven to be a consistent challenge for the state. Millions of children never see the inside of a classroom or are forced to drop out early for a host of reasons. These include: the sheer scarcity of public schools in the country, particularly secondary and tertiary-level institutions; having to travel long distances to reach their destination; inadequate infrastructure within the schools such as bathrooms and running water; the lingering problem of 'ghost teachers' who do not show up to perform their duties but still collect their salaries; corporal punishment, bullying and the abuse of power that those in authority abet or turn a blind eye to; and an array of added expenses ranging from uniforms to stationery and transport which can prove to be a burden for many parents, especially those with several children. Given all these issues, a less frequently asked question is, once at school, what are the children learning?

In the Annual Status of Education Report, researchers found that 41pc of the fifth-grade schoolchildren they surveyed in the rural districts could not read a second-grade-level story in Urdu, while 45pc were unable to read English sentences. The perceived poor quality of education in government schools is also one of the major reasons parents across the country dream of sending their children to private schools, which have popped up across the country on a significant scale to facilitate the demand for quality education that the state is not providing. And yet, despite this desire for private school education, many parents cannot afford the tuition fees of such institutions, let alone all the other expenses that add up. It is imperative then that the government not abdicate its responsibility of providing free, quality education to the children of this country. The effects of doing so are already very visible and will be severely compounded in the years to come.

Source: <https://www.dawn.com/news/1533980/education-concerns>

## **Education Report | Editorial**

A harrowing new report on education standards has found that around half of Pakistani fifth graders in rural schools cannot read, write, or answer mathematics questions meant for a second-grader.

According to the Annual Status of Education (ASER) report released on Monday, a study of schools in rural areas found that around 45% of students in grade five could not read English sentences taught in grade two. While some may not be as concerned with rural children's lack of familiarity with a foreign language, a large number of the children also lacked linguistic proficiency in local languages.

Only 59% of grade five students in rural areas could read stories in Urdu or any regional languages, which are introduced in grade two. As for math, only 57% of the fifth graders could successfully solve a two-digit division problem meant for second graders. Only 60% could solve a word problem requiring addition, while just 53% could do one involving multiplication. Even worse, around 40% of the students couldn't even read a clock. Perhaps that is for the better, lest they learn to calculate how much of their precious time their governments have wasted.

Although urban schools fared better than rural ones, the difference essentially amounted to putting lipstick on a pig. The numbers still look terrible. Only 70% of fifth graders in urban schools could read a story in Urdu or any local language at a second-grade level. Around two-thirds of students could read English at a second-grade level, and the same was the case for math problems involving division.

So how terrible is our primary education system? Well, the numbers actually reflect a massive improvement, with increases ranging from 13% to 17% between 2014 and 2019.

And that should be a cause for pause. Our education system is so broken that almost half of students being three grades behind their peers is supposed to be an improvement.

The other findings in the report are not any better. Only 59% of government schools have toilets. This, despite there being ample evidence to show that

access to sanitary facilities improves enrolment and the general health and well-being of students. Even a few private schools too lack toilets. The fact that anyone would pay for their children to go to the 11% of schools that do not even have a toilet is perhaps the most damning indictment of the government school system.

The problems are so expansive that even the report's authors only offered up the simplest of solutions, namely to include the addition of missing facilities into the main school budgets rather than treating it as a separate development head. There is a strong argument there. Instead of just trying to increase enrolment while standards go down a hole in the ground, basic facilities need to be added first. At least then, children will know what it means when they hear about the government flushing their futures down the toilet.

Unlike many of the problems making headlines these days, this is most definitely not a problem caused by the incumbent government. Unfortunately, Prime Minister Imran Khan has done little to alleviate it, with education being one of the critical areas that saw budget cuts. Yes, the ruling party does have some ideas to improve higher education, but they will all be for nought if kids can't even read a wall clock.

Published in The Express Tribune, February 12th, 2020.

Source: <https://tribune.com.pk/story/2154809/6-appalling-education-report/>

# **Prioritizing Higher Education By**

## **Muhammad Murtaza Noor**

No society has progressed without significant and sustained investment in higher education. Today, as the world becomes increasingly interconnected, higher education is considered critical for the achievement of economic progress and prosperity. However, higher education sector in Pakistan, now-a-days is facing a number of problems of severe nature, which have started affecting its progress across the country. Due to budget cuts and low allocations, many of the public sector universities are even unable to pay salaries and pensions. On the other hand, private sector universities which constitute 40% of total recognized universities both at national and Punjab level (83 out of 210 recognized universities with 35 sub campuses at national level and 28 out of 70 universities in Punjab), have also raised serious concerns over higher education policies.

The access to higher education, defined in terms of the participation of youth, in Pakistan is one the lowest in the region i.e. Turkey (69%), Iran (52.2%), Indonesia (32%), India (25%), Sri Lanka (17%), Bangladesh (13.2%), Pakistan (9.5%). The multiple challenges are being faced by higher education sector of Pakistan. There is dire need to pay immediate attention towards these challenges and problems. According to the key recommendations by Task Force on Improvement of Higher Education in Pakistan, universities are considered as the pillars of the higher education system. They must have autonomy from all extraneous influences in order to govern and manage their academic, administrative, and financial functions. In particular, universities must have autonomy to develop their academic programmes; recruit, assess, and develop their faculty; and select, train and educate their students. The Task Force also recommended that each university should be governed and managed as an independent institution, not controlled by the Ministry or Department.

The Steering Committee on Higher Education in its final report also recommended to the Government of Pakistan that Higher Education Commission should be a supportive and facilitative body rather than an intrusive one which has already been realized. The Task Force further recommended that along with focusing principally on strengthening public sector universities, same principles should be adapted for the private sector universities by the government.

Meanwhile the Executive Council constituted, by the Association of the Private Sector Universities of Punjab, through a 10 points charter of demands, emphasized that higher education should be the first priority of the government. As the private sector is the equal partner in delivery of education, an enabling environment is required to be created which would be helpful in improving education and training through joint and collective efforts.

The Association of Private Sector Universities from the most populous province of Pakistan also demanded promotion of creative and research activities, one window operation to further avoid lengthy process that involves years in pursuance and approval of petty things like opening of a new department in a university, funding of private sector universities, review and change of anti-research policies, right of education for deserving students, jurisdiction of private sector universities ( private sector universities may be allowed to operate and function within the powers and autonomy as per provision of their charter in letter and spirit) and management of private sector universities in consultation with stakeholders.

Like the other developed counties who have top ranked higher education system, it is high time to acknowledge the significant contribution of private sector in higher education as private sector institutions have developed over more than two decades, having invested hundreds of billions of rupees in land, infrastructure, equipment, human resource development and have been contributing to the national economy in many ways. These universities, have been navigating through the tough terrain of multiple registration, accreditation and regulatory departments of the government whereby decisions on critical issues would take years, and in some cases, even decades.

The multiple challenges and problems in higher education sector need immediate attention both by the federal and provincial governments through declaring Education Emergency as committed by the ruling party in its election manifesto. As per international standards, at least 4% of GDP should be allocated for the education sector and 25% of total education budget should be spent on universities. Autonomy of the universities needs to be respected and protected both at national and provincial levels. In order to ensure efficient governance and accountability in universities, role of governing boards and syndicates should be strengthened through appointment and nominations of relevant experts. Instead

of announcement of new public sector universities, existing one should be strengthened through provision of required funding and support. If desired, new sub campuses of existing universities should be announced instead of opening new universities. After ten years, these sub campuses should be converted into full-fledge universities. Merit based transparent appointments would also be helpful in improving the state of higher education in Pakistan. The persons with controversial career and background with severe proven allegations should be avoided for key posts in higher education sector.

All the policies of higher education should be formulated in consultation with relevant stakeholders. One sided policies without taking the concerned stakeholders on board, could not yield the desired results. As per follow up of the recommendations presented by Steering Committee and Task Force on Higher Education, the role of private sector should be strengthened in higher education to increase access in higher education sector and equipping youth with required modern knowledge and skills. The genuine grievances of stakeholders especially private sector should be addressed immediately by considering them as partners in higher education sector.

Source: <https://nation.com.pk/18-Feb-2020/prioritizing-higher-education>

## **The Mediocrity of CSS in 2020 By Anwar Ali**

Mediocrity is a hallmark of the Federal Public Service Commission (FPSC), which is assigned with the task of conducting a countrywide yearly competitive examination, the Central Superior Services (CSS), for recruitment in Basic Pay Scale 17.

On February 12, the FPSC commenced the CSS examination for the year 2020. To facilitate mediocre candidates to traverse the field of national competition, whereas the papers of English essay, and English precis and comprehension introduced mediocrity by lowering the English testing standards, a paper of international relations reinforced mediocrity by repeating the questions asked in the immediate past.

On February 15, the FPSC conducted the CSS-2020 examination of international relations through two papers, Paper I and Paper II. Of them, Paper I expressed a dismal state of affairs, when the CSS candidates taking the exam found that the examiner failed to introduce fresh questions to invite novel ideas and trenchant analyses. Instead, to make up six subjective questions, the examiner preferred to pick up four questions from Paper I of international relations for CSS-2018.

The four repeated questions were these: Q.1: What are the points of convergence and divergence in Neo-Realist and Constructivist approaches to the study of state behavior in contemporary international politics? Q.2: Define the concept of strategic culture and highlight the major determinants of Pakistan's strategic culture. Q. 3: Explain the concept of Economic Liberalism and relate its core interests with the concept of Neo-Imperialism or creating Economic Dependency? Q.4: Describe the concept of pre-emptive self-defence in the context of International Law and critically evaluate the legitimacy of US' use of force against Iraq.

That is, in Paper I of international relations for CSS-2020, the examiner repeated exactly not one but four questions from Paper I of international relations for CSS-2018. Even a board examination of intermediate level avoids such a practice and the consequent ignominy. Nevertheless, the invidious practice of repeating questions, in substance or content, points out to the underlying six-pronged strategy of the FPSC.

First, the FPSC enjoys no control over the examiners that it engages for setting papers and checking the resultant answer sheets. The examiners revel in discretion in setting papers not by using their own minds but by preferring to copy and paste questions from the past papers. The implication is simple to understand: when an examiner despises originality and deplores freshness in asking questions, the candidates also follow suit. Answer sheets get replete with parroted banal and hackneyed ideas.

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Second, the FPSC promotes ordinariness by forcing the CSS candidates to solve question papers of the past exams to prepare for attempting papers of the next exam. When the examiners counted on the past papers, the candidates would also bank on the past papers. An examiner sets a trend through the question paper. To follow the trend, the prospective candidates for next year would not prepare for new knowledge but they would look for trite concepts to master the present. The FPSC is complicit in letting an examiner set such a malicious trend favouring mediocre candidates and deprecating the preparatory efforts of studious candidates. The odious trend snatches an opportunity from brainy, brilliant candidates to surpass mediocrity.

Third, the FPSC constrains the CSS candidates to stay blinkered. Instead of encouraging the candidates to study latest published books and journals on ever evolving international relations, the FPSC is obliging the candidates to refrain from any such exploratory activity. The FPSC is making the candidates rely on stale rotting knowledge. The message is this: instead of exploring new avenues of knowledge, prepare the past trite questions to be successful in the future.

Fourth, the FPSC acts as an equalizer by obscuring the line of distinction between studious and mediocre candidates. The latter keep their knowledge circumscribed by seeking answers to the questions given in the past papers. The former felt forced to mediocrity when the knowledge they imbibed through general preparation is not tested. Such a question paper leaves studious candidates with the feeling of their knowledge being under-expressed.

Fifth, the FPSC facilitates the Urdu bazar publishers to churn out books claiming to have solved the past papers. The repetition of questions is like a windfall for local publishers to sell their books. Apparently, the FPSC has been reduced to a textbook board having connections with local publishers to print guess papers and bespoke answer books. By the way, the relationship existing between the officials of the FPSC and the CSS exam-preparatory academies is known to all and sundry. For instance, of many, one manifestation of the link is the leaking out of the list of names, addresses and contact numbers of the candidates who passed the written examination of CSS-2019. Understandably, the FPSC officials cannot disclose the list to CSS academies without seeking some financial reward. The CSS academies in Islamabad and Lahore are the major beneficiaries of such a favour that enables them to contact the successful candidates for conducting their mock interviews. The mock interviews offer a lifeline to these academies, which would claim that their students clinched positions when the final result were declared.

Sixth, the FPSC is discouraging adventure and challenge in the candidates. The fear of unknown keeps CSS candidates on their toes to visit libraries, read books, and learn new concepts to brace for an unforeseen challenge. The fear dissipates when the practice of repeating questions is introduced, though the practice is not new and exclusive to CSS-2020. Mere changing the CSS syllabus, as happened in 2016, cannot serve the purpose of reforms.

In short, the FPSC's examination policy is short of meeting the challenges of time. The policy needs a serious review. Through the agency of the FPSC, a creed of mediocre candidates burgeons to the disadvantage of society, which yearns for brilliant officers to run the administrative affairs. The FPSC is supposed to tell the public the reasons for promoting mediocrity. The FPSC also needs internal reforms to sever the contact of its officials with the CSS academies and local publishers.

Source: <https://www.pakistantoday.com.pk/2020/02/24/the-mediocrity-of-css-in-2020/>

## WORLD

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### **Brexit Is Just the Beginning By Pippa Norris**

On the night of January 31, with little fanfare, without even a Big Ben bong, the United Kingdom will officially leave the European Union. After almost 50 years of EU membership and three years of bitter division over the vote to leave, the moment of formal departure is a historic milestone. But to say that the British are finally “getting Brexit done,” as Prime Minister Boris Johnson has claimed ad nauseam, is hopelessly optimistic. Friday marks the beginning of a new and uncertain phase of Brexit, not its end.

The British government still needs to negotiate the terms of its future relations with the EU, a task so complex that many doubt it can be completed by the end of the year, when another ominous deadline looms. In the meantime, the country will be stuck in EU purgatory, bound by the bloc’s laws and regulations but powerless to shape them. Trade deals with other countries remain to be hammered out. And at home, the toxic fallout of Brexit division will linger—and potentially reshape British politics for years to come.

#### THE NIGHTMARE CONTINUES

Westminster has agreed to pay Brussels a hefty divorce bill, but beyond that much of its future relationship with the EU remains unknown. Predictions about the terms of an eventual deal are usually rooted more in the hopes and fears of the speaker than in any real evidence. Pessimists such as William Keegan, a columnist for The Guardian, predict economic catastrophe for manufacturing and agriculture. Government officials offer Churchillian sound bites about the “sunlit uplands” ahead, but they have been less forthcoming with detailed plans about how to manage the movement of goods, people, and services.

The rights and access to social benefits of the 2.7 million EU citizens who have applied to stay in the United Kingdom remain unclear. (There is chatter of adopting an Australian- and Canadian-style points system for immigrants but no published plan.) Downing Street has expressed its determination to leave the EU’s customs union and single market, and to use that freedom to strike new

trade deals, including with the United States. At the same time, the government hopes to maintain easy access to markets across the channel through a “zero tariff, zero quota” free trade deal with the EU, according to Brexit Secretary Stephen Barclay. Of course, Brussels has no interest in creating a Singapore-on-Thames on its doorstep—a hyper-deregulated competitor that would undercut EU prices and standards on matters such as workers’ rights, environmental protection, and food safety. Trade negotiations will be lengthy and contentious.

For London, a drawn-out process means trouble. If Johnson fails to negotiate a mutually satisfactory deal with the EU by the end of the year, the United Kingdom will crash out of the EU’s economic framework, with all the risks of a “hard Brexit”: tariffs slapped on British goods and services, disrupted supply chains, and reams of customs paperwork while Kent strawberries and Dutch flowers rot in lorries. Even if that worst-case scenario is averted, Brexit will cause costly disruption in the British economy. Indeed, it already has; according to Bloomberg Economics, the price tag stands at around \$170 billion today and will balloon to roughly \$260 billion by the end of 2020—more than the United Kingdom’s total payments to the EU budget over its 47 years of membership. In an ironic twist of fate, the regions expected to be worst hit by the loss of EU regional aid, and by potential tariffs down the line, are pro-Leave strongholds in the Midlands and northern England. For what it’s worth, the United Kingdom has signed trade deals with a handful of countries, including Lebanon, Tunisia, and Liechtenstein—but these are unlikely to compensate for the loss of unrestricted access to markets of 450 million people across the channel.

## AFTERSHOCKS

The arrangements with Brussels may be less fraught, in the end, than the arrangements Britain must make with itself in the wake of all the acrimony and strife of the Brexit years. British politics has the potential to be transformed.

Already, in December, Britain’s general election demonstrated the monumental political shifts that Brexit has occasioned. Johnson campaigned against an unpromising backdrop: nearly ten years of austerity cuts under successive Tory governments, doubts about his flamboyant character, and fratricidal division within his party over Brexit. And yet he triumphed, with the Tories winning their largest parliamentary majority since 1987 and their highest vote share since 1979. Under Jeremy Corbyn, the Labour Party, by contrast, won the fewest number of seats since 1935 and suffered its fourth successive defeat. The party

waving the Remain flag most passionately, the Liberal Democrats, lost its leader's seat and returned with barely enough MPs to squeeze into two London cabs.

The arrangements with Brussels may be less fraught than the arrangements Britain must make with itself.

Johnson likely owes his victory to his focused message. He repeated, with great discipline, the Conservative Party's ultra-vague "Get Brexit done" mantra. Corbyn, meanwhile, assiduously sat on the fence on Brexit, angering both Leavers and Remainers. (Labour also offered a Christmas tree of policy promises and was divided over allegations of anti-Semitism within its ranks.) Johnson further understood the appeal of "one-nation conservatism," blending traditional flag-waving Union Jack nationalism with a commitment to social welfare services. The Tories aggressively targeted the Leave-voting mill and mining districts of northern England, the traditional heartland of Labour, with pledges to end austerity and splash the cash. In many of these areas, they prevailed.

For now, with a substantial majority, a signed withdrawal agreement with Brussels, and opposition parties demoralized and distracted by internal leadership contests, the Conservative government enjoys largely unfettered power in Westminster. That success may fade once Labour and the Liberal Democrats overcome the shock of their electoral drubbing and settle on new leaders—but it may also presage a lasting political realignment around deep cultural divisions between young and old and the country's north and south.

After the Tory landslide, Johnson acknowledged that many pro-Leave Labour voters had "lent" him their vote based on his pledge to "get Brexit done," with some constituencies changing hands for the first time in a generation. Whether he can turn that toehold into a foothold depends, in part, on the success or failure of his one-nation Toryism gamble. The government has promised more public spending in northern England, especially on hospitals, higher education, and railways. But such investments will take many years, even decades, to bear visible fruit, and in the meantime many cities in the north face spending gaps.

Even if public investment eventually improves living conditions in depressed areas in the north, it will do little to address the cultural rifts that drove the vote for

Brexit in that region as much as elsewhere in the country. Deep divisions between cosmopolitan liberals and social conservatives will persist, with one side embracing globalization, multiculturalism, and openness to social change, the other retreating into nationalism, xenophobia, and resentment about the loss of traditional values (a clash that is in part generational, and one that bears striking similarities to debates in contemporary U.S. politics). Those cultural wars may end up benefiting Johnson, but that is not a given. If the promises of the Brexiteers fail to materialize and the United Kingdom's power, prosperity, and status all suffer, people may grow disillusioned with the government. And if, with Brexit in the rearview mirror, the mania of recent years subsides and the political agenda shifts to traditional bread-and-butter concerns such as health care and schools, the opposition parties, particularly Labour, may regain support in their heartland areas. In that scenario, the December election may prove to have been a one-off deviation rather than the harbinger of a long-term populist realignment.

#### A TEMPORARY TRUCE

The signing of the withdrawal agreement on January 24 was “a fantastic moment, which finally delivers the result of the 2016 referendum and brings to an end far too many years of argument and division,” Johnson said. The Brexit civil war has indeed ground to a halt, at least for now. Whether the truce will hold is another matter. Most Remainers, staring into the abyss of electoral defeat, have moved on from denial to grief. They may yet turn to anger if the political and economic impact of leaving the EU is as disastrous as some predict.

It is safe to say that Johnson's bluster about “taking back control” will be severely tested. Leaving the EU has increased pressures for another Scottish independence referendum. And the imposition of customs for goods traded between Northern Ireland and mainland Britain is likely to accelerate demands for Irish reunification. Faced with London's diminished role in the world, the foreign office will seek to bolster transatlantic ties, as always, but with unpredictable results, given U.S. President Donald Trump's questionable loyalty and his love of tariffs. A costly and traumatic divorce may just be the beginning of the United Kingdom's troubles.

Source: <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/united-kingdom/2020-01-31/brexit-just-beginning>

# **Genocide in Myanmar: Will Rohingyas Get Justice in ICJ By Asad Ali**

ON 11 November 2019 The Gambia filed a lawsuit against Myanmar in the International Court of Justice (ICJ) at The Hague alleging that Myanmar's brutalities against the Rohingyas violate various provisions of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide (1948) and requested to take the provisional measures to protect Rohingyas life and property. The case is "state-to-state" litigation between UN member states governed by legal provisions in the UN Charter, the ICJ Statute, and the Genocide Convention. Both The Gambia and Myanmar are signatory to the ICJ Statute. The jurisdiction of International Court of Justice (ICJ) is only to the crime of genocide. The other crimes like crimes of war and crimes against humanity fall under the jurisdiction of International Criminal Court (ICC). This was the first time when a country, which is not directly involved or victim, filed a case against the other country. No other big country or the champions of human rights nation had the moral courage to file the case because most are concerned about protecting their investments and national interests in Myanmar.

Within a few days of the lawsuit filed by The Gambia, a lawsuit was filed by Argentina against leaders in Myanmar, including Aung San Suu Kyi, who is the first Nobel Peace Laureate to face legal charges. The State Counsellor of Myanmar Aung San Suu Kyi continues to justify the torture of Rohingyas while branding them as "terrorists".

The lawsuit by The Gambia is being led by Attorney General and Minister of Justice of The Gambia, Abubacarr Tambadou, who decided to pursue actions after a recent visit to Cox's Bazaar in Bangladesh, a region where about one million Rohingya refugees are living in camps. According to United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs it is the world's biggest refugee camp. Since 2016, the military of Myanmar with the help of local Buddhists killed more than 24000 Rohingyas and destroyed about three hundred villages in Rakhine State (the area with the majority of Rohingya Muslims).

The State Counsellor of Myanmar Aung San Suu Kyi appeared in the court and requested to dismiss the case and challenged the jurisdiction of International

Court of Justice (ICJ). On 23 January 2020 the panel of 17 judges refused the request of Myanmar and voted unanimously to order Myanmar to take “all measures within its power” to prevent genocide.

This includes the prevention of killing and “causing serious bodily or mental harm” to members of the group, as well as preserving evidence of possible genocide that has already occurred. On response to ICJ decision, Minister of Justice of The Gambia, Abubacarr Tambadou, said that he is “very, very pleased”. UN chief António Guterres has welcomed the court decision, his spokesman said in a statement. “The Secretary-General strongly supports the use of peaceful means to settle international disputes. He further recalls that pursuant to the (UN) Charter and to the Statute of the Court, decisions of the Court are binding and trusts that Myanmar will duly comply with the Order from the Court”.

The ICJ decision is legally binding on Myanmar and they cannot appeal against the decision. But the problem is ICJ has no mechanism to force the decision. However, the United Nations Security Council can enforce them. The Gambian Justice Minister was Prosecutor for the Rwanda Genocide case. His personal interest is also involved as he has high moral grounds to file the case. The other fact is that Rohingyas are Muslim and The Gambia is also a Muslim majority country.

Now it is the responsibility of human rights organisations, human rights activists, diplomats, civil society and world media to keep alive the case of Rohingyas and fight for their rights until they get justice because the case of genocide will take time in ICJ. Muslim countries should raise their voice to support Rohingyas without taking any economic pressure. International community also needs to boycott the products which have been produced in the Myanmar’s military owned companies.

– The writer is a Researcher at the Institute of Strategic Studies, Islamabad.

Source: <https://pakobserver.net/genocide-in-myanmar-will-rohingyas-get-justice-in-icj/>

# **Corona Virus: A Global Outbreak By Imtiaz Rafi Butt**

ON 29 January 2020, the Government of China has officially reported that it is facing a chaotic epidemic of a viral infection named Corona Virus which has already infected over 7000 people and the number is rising. Over 300 deaths have already been reported and number is sure to rise. The WHO Director General Tedros Adhanom has made multiple emergency meetings and held press conferences urging the world to come together to avoid a global catastrophe. The spread of the virus from Wuhan city of China to the rest of the globe and its potential for disaster marks an imminent threat to humanity as a whole and sheds light on the direction the world governments are headed with their policies in the field of health and medicine. The coming days will test the efficiency and resilience of not just China to contain this disease but how the whole of humanity can join hands to fight against suffering and death.

The term Corona Virus comes from the latin word Corona, meaning crown. This Virus gets this name from the crown like appearance it shows when viewed under an electron microscope. Without going into the biological origins and complex details of viruses and what is distinguishable about coronavirus, it can be summarized in a way that Corona Virus belongs to a group of viruses that mainly infects animals but due to close contact with humans, it can mutate its genetic structure to infect human beings. Viruses are different from bacteria and are considered to be on the borderline of living and non-living organisms. Viruses can destroy living cells of animals and plants alike, including humans. The chemical name of the current Corona Virus is Ncov-2019, as the earliest case appeared in Wuhan city and Hubei Province of Mainland China. Since, December 2019, 7000 plus persons have been positively diagnosed and are fighting to recover from its adverse effects.

The origins of Corona Virus have been identified though absolute verifications are awaited from WHO and other expert technical organizations in the field of medical research, the first patient from Wuhan China, who was diagnosed as the first victim of CoronaVirus was a shop owner of a fish market. On further study of the patient, it has come to light the Wuhan Fish Market is known for its delicacy of handling snake meat. The present Coronavirus in its original forms is designed

to infect and kill bats, as many snakes feed on bats, the virus must have infected the snake meat which after being handled and consumed by humans, made the genetic mutation to infect them.

After infection, the virus causes flu like symptoms and high grade fever after four to ten days of exposure. Following the incubation time period, the virus causes a severe sore throat and cough that leads to pneumonia of the lungs leading to critical medical condition which can lead to death of the patient. The worst part of this epidemic is that upon the coughing or sneezing of the patient, the virus can infect other persons nearby and the virus stays in the air for over 48 hours. Children under the age of 12 and elderly persons above the age of 50 are more likely to face fatal symptoms. Also, areas and countries that do not have highly developed medical facilities and sanitation will be unable to avoid massive infections levels that can create havoc in millions of people. It is important to point out that Wuhan city consists of a population of 11 Million and the virus has already reached other cities. According to WHO, every infected patient will infect three more. In order to prevent an outbreak, the patient is to be quarantined under WHO set standards of hospitalization. Now, the bigger question is whether this virus epidemic can be contained before it becomes a global threat or should we be prepared for the worst?

As the virus spread in Wuhan and neighboring areas, the Government of China resorted to a complete lock down of Wuhan. All flights, buses, transportation and roads were blocked. But it so happened, that this measure was taken only when over 2000 persons were already infected and many had left Wuhan city to other parts of the world and China. The people living in Wuhan describe their daily lives as horrific with streets abandoned and medical teams roaming the city with Hazmat Suits collecting evidence and looking for new victims of the virus. Blood samples and autopsy reports of the dead are being sent to medical research centers all over the world, so that a vaccine or prevention method can be devised. Life in Wuhan has come to a stand-still. In due time, it has been discovered that CoronaVirus is not confined to China anymore as cases have started emerging in other parts of the world. Following the outbreak, the United States was the first country to send special flights to China to pull out its citizens. Next in line is European Governments and Canada that are rescuing their citizens from Wuhan and Mainland China. It remains to be seen whether these measures will be able to prevent a global epidemic.

Apart from the 7000 plus people infected in China, 14 cases have emerged in Thailand, 11 in Japan, 10 in Taiwan, 12 in Hong Kong, 7 in Australia, 5 in Canada, 4 in Germany and one case in Sri Lanka, confirmed of having a strain of CoronaVirus. The WHO is still trying to assess the gravity of the situation and it is possible that this virus outbreak will be declared a global health emergency prompting all governments to screen their incoming and outgoing populations from China and checking major cities for signs of flu like symptoms that resemble coronavirus. Containing the patients and preventing the spread of the infection is the only solution that is available at the time for anyone anywhere in the world.

Another facet of this crisis is that this is the third time a viral epidemic has been sourced in China. Before this, there were SARS and MERS virus which were also animal based infections that mutated to infect human beings. This is the third and the most deadly spread of such a virus, though the fatality rate of Coronavirus is less compared to SARS and MERS. This epidemic has also come at a social cost as people around the world have started fearing Chinese citizens as carrying the virus. Flights coming from China are being blocked and screened, and businesses owned by foreign companies are shutting down. Chinese nationals are being separated and targeted. Challenges like these point out that even when we, as human beings, are separated by cultures, borders and governments, yet we live in a shared world and nature does not recognize our petty differences, and that the common enemy of all men and women in the world is suffering, death and poverty. Perhaps, we are all one and times like these point out our common causes instead of our divisions. If mankind is to overcome such adverse diseases and the ensuing chaos, it can only be done by coming together and not by isolation, hopefully, time will bring glad tidings with fruits of unity and mutual humanity.

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

Source: <https://pakobserver.net/corona-virus-a-global-outbreak/>

## **Trump Impeachment | Editorial**

The US Senate's acquittal of President Donald Trump was widely expected. Think about it. A president accused of abuse of power and obstruction of Congress, with strong evidence to back up the charges, has been allowed to walk without witnesses even being allowed to speak at the trial. What does that say about a country that claims to be a bastion of democracy and justice? A conviction would have required 67 votes. While all 47 Democratic senators voted guilty, only one Republican joined them. The other 52 Republicans apparently see nothing wrong with a president using his office for personal political gain and failing to adhere by the checks and balances set up in the Constitution.

Trump once claimed that he could shoot a man in the middle of New York City's bustling Fifth Avenue and get away with it. Today we learnt how. He would have rigged the trial, just as his allies did today. Opinion polls suggested that a majority of Americans agreed on Trump's guilt. But the jurors, in this case, were not Americans appalled by the corruption of their president. They were senators, over half of whom have tied their political careers to Trump. They did not do this for Trump. They did this for themselves. As long as they are reelected, they couldn't care less about what becomes of American democracy.

In fact, given the anti-democratic actions of Republican senators, including Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, it can reasonably be claimed that the Republicans aren't interested in democracy. These actions include making it harder for Americans, especially people assumed to favour Democrats, to vote. Before and during the trial, it was McConnell who flatly said he didn't care about the evidence and would not allow witnesses, and no one batted an eye. This is the new normal. But why not? For four years now, McConnell's wife, a Trump cabinet member, has sent a disproportionate amount of money to his state. He was not a pawn, but a willing participant in the Trump kleptocracy.

Given this sorry state of affairs, it is high time for the US to invade itself to install democracy.

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Source: <https://tribune.com.pk/story/2151503/6-trump-impeachment/>

# **Drivers of Globalization and Kashmir Siege**

**By Dr Samra Naz**

Globalization is taken as phenomena of compression of space and time through interconnectivity and economic interdependence in the world. The issue of Indian occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IOJ&K) is still unresolved in this globalized world. The reasons behind this failure are displaying the real picture of globalization which is still not beyond restrictions of states.

According to Jens Bartelson, there are three prevailing concepts about globalization, first globalization as transference, second globalization as transformation and third globalization as transcendence. He explained globalization as transference means that it is due to an increased transference or exchange of things between states in the form of politics, economics or culture. Thus it can be comprehended that globalization occurs due to interaction between states or units. This makes globalization as inside-out approach. Whereas globalization as transformation asserts that it happens at the systems level and influence the identity of the states. This concept affirms that globalization appears above the units and within systemic variables in different dimensions. Thus, globalization by this description is a multidimensional outside-in approach. On the other hand, globalization as transcendence refers that globalization is neither inside-out nor outside-in but it's a channel which disintegrates the division between inside and outside. Globalization in terms of transcendence can bring conversion in units, system and the conditions of existence. Consequently, globalization despatializes and detemporalizes human actions by projecting their practices at a global level.

In course of India-occupied Jammu and Kashmir, globalization seems only as transference because a single state, India, is dominating and controlling every bit of Kashmir affairs in the world. Historically the situation in Jammu and Kashmir concerning global networks was not adequate. There is not a single major international industry or corporation having their offices or work-sites in disputed Kashmir due to security hazards created by the conflict between freedom fighters and Indian Army. The multinational companies never worked in Kashmir until McDonald's got opened in Srinagar in 2012, whereas no other major foreign direct investment has been seen in IOJ&K till now. The tourism industry also did

not flourish in IOJ&K due to massive use of brutal forces by Indian security forces. Since decades Kashmiri people were kept away from political, cultural and economic effects of globalization. Even many Kashmiris were abandoned to travel internationally. They were not given a voice at international forums to present their case and still, they are unable to get their right of self-determination.

The people of IOJ&K are facing major human rights deadlock since the abrogation of Articles 370 and 35-A in August 2019 by the Indian government. India changed the special status of IOJ&K and also split the state into two Union Territories. The Indian government has never let the paradise to become a part of globe but currently, it completely made IOJ&K a purgatory for its residence by imposing a curfew. Since then all the communication and transportation means are blocked by the Indian government. The mobile networks are jammed, the internet services are terminated, people are locked to their homes and there is no connection to the outer world. It is reported that over 20 lakh prepaid mobile SIMs and other internet services were deactivated. The government has executed an exceptional lockdown on the valley even there is lack of access for foreign envoys and media in the disputed region. The blackout of all communication lines and mobile phone connectivity has postured big problems in the daily life of Kashmiris for over 180 days.

Moreover, social media is now one of the major tools of global connectivity but Kashmiris are deliberately kept away from the social media under increasing pressure of Indian government. For example, Facebook has removed dozens of posts related to Kashmiri separatist militants killed by the Indian Army. It also deleted the accounts of academicians and journalists over posting about recent issues in the IOJ&K. Many Kashmiris also disappeared from WhatsApp and Twitter suspended many of pro-Kashmir accounts on demand of the Indian government. Pakistan took notice of this by complaining to Twitter, Facebook over the suspension of pro-Kashmir accounts and demanded the reopening of social media for the people of IOJ&K.

On the other hand, International government and non-governmental organizations, international civil society networks, neoliberal forces which are real proponents of globalization seem silent over the situation in IOJ&K. The only limited response seen from international institutions is on request of Pakistan. Since the beginning of the recent crisis in IOJ&K Pakistan tried to advocate the issue in front of global liberal forces like the United Nations for its solution. It also

raised voice for it at different forums but till now many states are not accepting it as a global issue which may affect the world in future.

The recent crisis in IOJ&K made it clear that the drivers of globalization are bounded by state orders and cannot work beyond the applied limitations by states. It is up to states whether they allow forces of globalization to affect them or they can stop these forces for their interests. The situation and solution of IOJ&K is a challenge and responsibility for interconnected liberal global world respectively, as the Pakistani Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi said that “Each additional second on the curfew clock is a burden on the world’s collective conscience.”

—The author is Assistant Professor of International Relations at NUML, Islamabad.

Source: <https://pakobserver.net/drivers-of-globalization-and-kashmir-siege/>

# **Arms Race, A Major Threat to World Peace**

## **By Rashid A Mughal**

ACCORDING to just concluded Munich Security Conference, the defence related budget of the big powers and other countries witnessed a rise of 4.2% in 2019 as compared to what it was in 2018. There has been a persistent rise in defence spending during the last ten years which is a cause of alarm. If one believes the major strands of thinking in the capitals of the world's great powers, the world is entering a new era of great power competition. Although some Western analysts warned of a comeback of authoritarian great powers as the most significant challenge for the West and the liberal world order more than a decade ago, this scenario has only recently become commonplace among policymakers and observers in Washington, replacing terrorism as the key security concern that has shaped US strategy for almost two decades.

Now, the core assumption of the most recent National Security Strategy and National Defense Strategy of the United States is: “we are heading into an era of sustained big power competition for which the West, collectively, is under prepared.” US strategic documents have singled out China and Russia as the two most important challengers, and many key administration officials have emphasized this threat perception in public speeches. In his resignation letter to President Trump, Secretary of Defense James Mattis reiterated his core concerns: “It is clear that China and Russia want to shape a world consistent with their authoritarian model – gaining veto authority over other nations’ economic, diplomatic and security decisions – to promote their own interests at the expense of their neighbours, America and our allies.” Having concluded that previous US policy underestimated the challenge posed by these authoritarian great powers, the Trump Administration has decided to adopt a more confrontational posture and approach them from a position of strength.

Since Trump took office, US-China relations have arguably “deteriorated further and faster than at any point since the establishment of official ties in 1979.” But the sense that China has defied US expectations and become “the most dynamic and formidable competitor in modern history” is now widely shared in Washington. In a landmark speech in October, Vice President Mike Pence spelled out the rationale behind the clear shift in US strategy toward China:

“America had hoped that economic liberalization would bring China into a greater partnership with us and with the world. Instead, China has chosen economic aggression, which has in turn emboldened its growing military.” Pence accused Beijing not only of “meddling in America’s democracy,” but of attempting “to erode America’s military advantage on land, at sea, in the air and in space.” He made clear that the United States would oppose Chinese assertiveness: “We will not be intimidated, and we will not stand down.” Many read Pence’s speech as the announcement of a new cold war. For sure, the Trump Administration argued in its National Security Strategy: “Competition does not always mean hostility, nor does it inevitably lead to conflict. But critics fear that the hostility will be the unavoidable consequence of a mindset shaped by competition. At the very least, the Trump Administration seems willing to accept that the result could be a cold war.

While China is certainly the more important long-term challenge for the United States, Russia is the more immediate security concern. In contrast to China, Moscow’s long term prospects as a geopolitical challenger to the United States do not look very promising. Its economy has suffered from a volatile currency, a drop in oil prices, and the sanctions imposed by the EU and the United States as a response to Russia’s actions against Ukraine. 2018 was the fifth year in a row that came with decreasing disposable personal incomes. Against this background, Vladimir Putin’s approval ratings have significantly declined. At the same time, the Russian government has aggressively used its limited but significant leverage as a disruptive force and scored some impressive short-term victories in recent years, taking the rest of the world by surprise in Ukraine and Syria. Other recent examples of Moscow’s increasing assertiveness under Vladimir Putin’s leadership, who was re-elected for a fourth term in May 2018, are an escalation of hostile cyber activities, attempts to interfere in democratic elections in various countries, or the most recent confrontation in the Kerch Strait. One may interpret Russian actions as an attempt to demonstrate that it is still more powerful than the West believes and that it will remain an indispensable power whose interests cannot be neglected. Putin’s Advisor, Vladislav Surkov recently noted in a remark, “war is a means of communication.” As another Russia expert Bobo Lo puts it: “Policymakers in Moscow condemn the ‘demonization’ of Russia, yet revel in the knowledge that it is back on the world stage, disliked by some but ignored by none. Given the deterioration in relations between Russia and the West, the coming months may decide the fate of crucial arms control treaties. As nuclear experts warn: “After almost three decades of

steady arms reductions between the two largest nuclear powers, both states shifted direction in 2019 and now find themselves in a renewed arms race.”

For some years now, the Russian government has invested in new military capabilities, including a new ground-launched cruise missile that, according to the United States and its NATO allies, violates the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty. In response, President Trump announced his intention to withdraw from the treaty, meaning that both the US and Russia would again be allowed to produce and deploy ground-launched intermediate-range nuclear missiles, reviving fears of a new Euro missile crisis. For the Kremlin, this is a comfortable situation: while the Trump Administration is blamed for renegeing on the treaty, Moscow seems to speculate that NATO would be unable to reach consensus on deploying new US missiles (that would still need to be developed) in Europe, putting Russia at an advantage: “an arms race in intermediate-range missiles may begin in Europe, but it will be one-sided: only Russia will be racing.”

Another element which limited dangerous competition between Russia and the United States is likewise imperilled: it appears unlikely that they can extend the New START Treaty covering strategic nuclear weapons beyond 2021, when it is set to expire. As some observers have argued, the remaining arms control treaties, still following a bipolar logic, are unravelling, while there is not yet a new multilateral framework for arms control that would be fit for the emerging international system, which is “more complex, less predictable, and potentially more dangerous.” Although President Trump has hinted at the possibility that he, along with President Xi and President Putin of Russia, will start talking about a meaningful halt to what has become a major and uncontrollable Arms Race, he and his counterparts are currently building up their arsenals.

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

Source: <https://pakobserver.net/arms-race-a-major-threat-to-world-peace/>

## **UN's Strong Stance | Editorial**

The United Nations Secretary General's four-day visit ended on Wednesday, and in simple terms, it can be termed a diplomatic win for Pakistan. Undoubtedly, UNSG Antonio Guterres and the Pakistani government discussed a lot in private, and it is hoped some of these discussions will be fruitful for Pakistan. But what was said and done publicly was perhaps even more significant.

Our strongest policy priority visit before the visit even started was to focus our efforts on highlighting the Kashmir issue, and we did this as effectively as possible. Mr Guterres referred to the definitive UN reports on rights abuses in Indian Occupied Kashmir (IOK) and admitted that Kashmiris deserve every human right every other individual is entitled to – which tells us that the UN understands who the aggressor is in this conflict. He even went as far as to admit that the Citizenship Amendment Act in India may leave Muslims in IOK stateless; all of the lies propagated by the Modi government are internationally recognised as fibs told to keep India's international image intact.

India's usual belligerent reaction to any criticism was issued after Mr Guterres words as well. Claiming that this is a bilateral issue and India will not accept any third-party mediation are old policy fallbacks for the government across the border. It is clear the eastern neighbour wants to keep the conflict alive, and this where the true test of the UN and its Secretary General lies.

The international body has already brought forward research reports detailing the rights abuses in IOK. The UNSG himself has admitted that Pakistan is on the path to interfaith harmony while India is busy making 200 million Muslims stateless. He also indicated the importance of following the Security Council's resolutions on this matter. But will we see any tangible action? This remains to be seen.

Source: <https://nation.com.pk/21-Feb-2020/un-s-strong-stance>

## **Afghan Peace Deal | Editorial**

America's longest national nightmare may be inching closer to a coup de théâtre. Last week, the United States and the Taliban, who for more than 18 years have fought a vicious battle in Afghanistan, announced that they plan to sign an agreement at the end of this month that will lead to the ultimate withdrawal of the US troops. The future of the possible peace deal between the two sides depends on the success of the temporary reduction of violence. While last week's announcement raises hopes for a resolution to the 18-year-long war, it also raises a long list of questions that remain unanswered. The first and most important question is: Will the peace deal eventually allow the US to disengage? The second most important question here is: Will Afghanistan find absolute peace after the deal is signed? The third question is: How amorphous will a future power-sharing regime, that is likely to be installed in Kabul after the deal is signed, be?

From what we see at the moment, the government's legitimacy, its cohesion, and command are all in doubt following the bitterly disputed presidential election, in which the opposition candidate claimed victory despite President Ashraf Ghani declared as the official winner. That leads to the fourth question: With the ongoing power struggle in Kabul, who will negotiate with the Taliban, and what mandate will they have to carry them out?

With all these questions unanswered, Afghanistan's long, winding road to peace might lead to a dead end. The most likely outcome is that at the end of the winding path, the Taliban will have much more power than the US or any other stakeholder in this equation would like them to have. And if the US eventually hands the baton of command to the Taliban, there is a very strong possibility that Afghanistan will witness an endless period of unstable internal power-sharing agreements that will easily collapse and plenty of infighting before establishing peace in the country.

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Source: <https://tribune.com.pk/story/2162875/6-afghan-peace-deal/>

# **How To Save The Failing World Order? –**

## **Analysis By Emil Avdaliani**

In other words, European diplomats had an acute understanding of post-French Revolution geopolitics and understood the need to build a long-lasting security architecture through balance of power.

But such approaches are unusual. Perhaps the shock of the bloody Napoleonic Wars, as well as the presence of such brilliant diplomats such as Metternich, Talleyrand, Castlereagh, and Alexander I, assured the success of the new order.

It is far more common that challenges to the world order lead to direct military confrontation. Failure to accommodate Germany in the early 20th century led in part to WWI, and the errant diplomacy of the Treaty of Versailles led in part to WWII. The list goes on.

China's rise to power is another case for study. The country is poised to become a powerful player in international politics thanks to its economic rise and concurrent military development. Beijing has strategic imperatives that clash with those of the US. It needs to secure procurement of oil and gas resources, which are currently most readily available through the Strait of Malacca. In an age of US naval dominance, the Chinese imperative is to redirect its economy's dependence—as well as its supply routes—elsewhere.

That is the central motivation behind the almost trillion-dollar Belt and Road Initiative, which is intended to reconnect the Asia-Pacific with Europe through Russia, the Middle East, and Central Asia. At the same time, Beijing has a growing ambition to thwart US naval dominance off Chinese shores.

In view of these factors, mutual suspicion between Beijing and Washington is bound to increase over the next years and decades.

Thus we are amid a changing world order. What is more interesting, however, is what the US (or the West collectively) can do to salvage the existing order.

From the US side, a strengthening of existing US-led alliance systems with Middle Eastern and Asia-Pacific states could help to retain American influence in Eurasia. Specifically, it would enable the US to limit Russia's, Iran's, and possibly China's actions in their respective neighborhoods.

Another powerful measure to solidify the existing the world order would be to increase Washington's economic footprint across Eurasia. This could be similar the Marshall Plan, with which the US saved Europe economically and attached it to the US economy. New economic measures could be even more efficient and long-lasting in terms of strengthening Western influence across Eurasia.

But no matter what economic and military moves the US makes with regard to allies such as South Korea, Japan, Israel, Saudi Arabia, and others, any attempt to uphold the existing world order without China's cooperation would be short-lived. It would echo the way Germany was cast out of the Versailles negotiations, which served only to create a grievance in Berlin and prompt clandestine preparations for a new conflict. In a way, the West's current problems with Russia can also be explained this way: Moscow was cast out of the post-Cold War order, which caused worry and a degree of revanchism among the Russian elites.

Without China's inclusion in the world order, no feasible security conditions can be laid out. To be preserved, the world order must be adjusted to rising challenges and new opportunities. Many Western diplomats are uncomfortable dealing with China, but casting Beijing in the role of direct competitor would not solve the problem. Nor would giving Beijing large concessions, which would be too risky.

What is required is a middle road—a means of allowing China to participate in an adjusted world order in which some of its interests are secured. Only that will increase the chances for long-lasting security in Eurasia.

Pulling this off will require an incredible effort from Western and Chinese diplomats. It remains to be seen whether they will be more successful than were their predecessors from the early 20th century and other periods of history.

Source: <https://www.eurasiareview.com/24022020-how-to-save-the-failing-world-order-analysis/>

## **Trump in India | Editorial**

DONALD Trump and Narendra Modi are alike in many ways.

Both are political outsiders who have managed to reach the top of their respective systems through a blend of right-wing populism and maverick ideas.

Both have pushed majoritarian agendas at the expense of minorities.

Perhaps this explains the bonhomie and back-slapping between them, which was on vivid display at a cricket stadium in the Indian city of Ahmedabad on Monday, where Prime Minister Modi pulled out all the stops for the ‘Namaste Trump’ event.

Gaudy and full of clichés — much like the politics of both men — the event was seen reciprocating the ‘Howdy Modi’ episode in Houston last year, where a crowd of non-resident Indians eagerly lapped up what Messrs Modi and Trump had to offer.

Mr Modi and company have taken other steps to ensure President Trump only gets to see ‘shining’ India, covering up the warts and all that make up the ‘real’ India.

For example, a wall has been built to hide an Ahmedabad slum from the US leader’s view, while monkeys in the Gujarat city have also been rounded up. A report says some 45 simians have been bundled off to parts unknown to ensure they don’t appear in front of Mr Trump’s aircraft.

On a more serious note, Mr Modi the politician has come a long way since he was barred in 2005 from entering the US for his role in the anti-Muslim Gujarat pogrom of 2002, when he was the state’s chief minister.

Today, the president of the US calls him a “tremendously successful leader”; never mind the fact that the demons of Gujarat have been summoned again by the Sangh Parivar to terrorise India’s Muslims, this time as Mr Modi sits in the prime ministerial chair.

The fact is that the anti-Muslim atmosphere in India — epitomised by the passage of divisive legislation, as well as the stifling situation in held Kashmir — will largely be ignored by the US as what matters the most is the market, in this case a market of over a billion people.

Moreover, despite all the glib talk of two ‘great democracies’, the fact is that Washington indulges New Delhi as an Asian bulwark against China, America’s rival for great power status.

Mr Trump also mentioned in his speech that he had a “very good” relationship with Pakistan, and that he hoped for peace in South Asia.

If Mr Trump really wishes to see stability in the subcontinent, he needs to tell his Indian friends that they must reduce their hostile posture where Pakistan is concerned.

This country has offered numerous times to open channels of dialogue with New Delhi, only to be rebuffed by the other side.

Also, the US leader should communicate that the situation in occupied Kashmir is unacceptable, and peace in South Asia will not be possible until a just solution to the issue has been found.

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Source: <https://www.dawn.com/news/1536556/trump-in-india>

# **Controlling Coronavirus Will Mean Keeping People Apart By Benjamin Cowling**

In Hollywood, movie sequels are often weaker than the originals. For viruses, that logic does not always apply. The virus now named the “severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2” by the International Committee on Taxonomy of Viruses will have an impact that far exceeds the death toll and economic damage caused by the original SARS.

In late January and early February 2020, China embarked on the most drastic social-distancing measures ever seen, confining hundreds of millions of people to their homes. This approach has been successful in reducing the transmission of the “SARS 2” coronavirus to the extent that daily case numbers have declined throughout China in February.

Outside of China, however, such sweeping social controls will not be possible. The virus is spreading. As of this writing, nearly 30 countries worldwide have reported cases, and local transmission has been reported in new areas almost every day. A brief window of time remains for health authorities around the world to consider what measures they can take to reduce the transmission of the virus and slow its spread—once they acknowledge that containment efforts are futile.

## **SARS, THE SEQUEL**

On February 21, 2003, a doctor from Guangzhou, China, traveled to Hong Kong for a family wedding, despite feeling ill. The doctor and his wife checked into room 911 of the Metropole Hotel in the bustling Mong Kok district. By the next morning, the doctor’s symptoms had worsened. He was admitted to a hospital and warned the staff there to put him in strict isolation. He had been treating SARS patients back in Guangzhou.

Twenty-three other Metropole guests developed SARS, transporting the infection to Canada, Ireland, Singapore, Taiwan, the United States, and Vietnam. A global outbreak began that would last almost six more months and ultimately infect more than 8,000 people worldwide, killing almost 800.

Some 17 years later, people around the world face the threat of a new coronavirus pandemic, again originating in China. The novel SARS 2 coronavirus was first identified, in December 2019, in a cluster of pneumonia patients in the city of Wuhan in central China. These cases were initially thought to have originated in a market where wild animals were sold for meat. In fact, community transmission had been occurring since early December, if not earlier. By the time Chinese authorities announced, on January 9, that a new virus had been detected, infections had already spread beyond Wuhan. A Chinese tourist who arrived in Bangkok, Thailand, on January 8, tested positive for the virus on January 13.

Current approaches to containing the infection may not be enough.

By the end of January, 106 infections had been reported in 19 countries, and by February 22, the number had increased to more than 1,400 cases in 28 countries outside of China. Travel reductions have delayed but have not prevented the virus from spreading around the world. Current approaches to containing the infection focus on preventing transmission by identifying and isolating infected people and quarantining their close contacts. But such measures may not be enough.

Effective isolation and quarantine did succeed in containing SARS in 2003 in all the countries it affected. But two key features of the infection made that possible. First, SARS almost always caused serious respiratory symptoms that required hospitalization. Second, SARS patients were not particularly infectious when their symptoms first appeared, but they became more infectious as their illness progressed.

In contrast, the SARS 2 coronavirus often causes mild symptoms, and infectiousness is highest around the time of the illness's onset. Experts also think that the infection can be passed on before symptoms appear. For these reasons, many infected people will not be identified before they have spread the infection onward, and many will never receive the laboratory test that could confirm they have been infected.

A LESSON FROM 1918

China has limited the transmission of SARS 2 by enforcing extreme social-distancing measures that are probably not possible anywhere else in the world. Major cities in China were ghost towns in early February, with residents required to stay inside as much as possible. In some cities, residents were allowed out of their homes only twice per week to buy groceries. Some municipalities required residents to wear facemasks when they went outside. Schools and workplaces remained closed long after the usual week-long Lunar New Year holiday.

The Chinese government loosened restrictions on movement in mid-February when it introduced a smartphone app to indicate each person's status: green for people who can leave their homes, yellow for people who need to quarantine themselves at home for seven days, and red for those who need to quarantine themselves at home for 14 days. The app tracks people's movements and feeds information back into a database of known risk factors. Having contact with people known to be infected or traveling to affected areas changes a person's status from green to yellow or red. Only those with a status of green are allowed to enter businesses or to use public transportation or public facilities. The restrictions are strictly enforced by local officials and neighborhood committees.

Similar constraints on people's movements are unlikely to be considered in most other countries, where citizens may be unwilling to accept government monitoring and control over their movements and behavior. Even if people outside of China reduced their social contacts out of fear of infection, such voluntary efforts might not be enough to prevent large outbreaks. Short of cutting off entire populations from the outside world, as some Pacific islands did during the 1918–19 influenza pandemic, preventing an outbreak is almost impossible. So what can be done?

Many countries have already taken measures to delay the importation of infections by reducing the number of travelers arriving from China and other affected countries. Scientists have estimated that screening inbound travelers will identify around one-third of those infected but will miss the other two-thirds. As a consequence, silent transmission has likely already begun in many countries, including the United States.

The priority, then, must be reducing community transmission. There are two ways to do this. The first involves isolating those with laboratory-confirmed cases in special hospital rooms with careful infection control and then identifying their

recent close contacts and placing those people under quarantine. If those contacts subsequently show symptoms of infection, quarantine should prevent them from transmitting the virus onward. Such an approach was effective for SARS in 2003 and can be effective for other infections in which the disease is almost always severe (think of the Ebola virus). Containment has largely been the protocol for SARS 2. But isolation, contact tracing, and quarantine will quickly become infeasible in this case, because most SARS 2 infections are mild, and hospitals will run out of space to isolate these mild cases. Contact tracing is labor-intensive. Moreover, the quarantine period has been set at 14 days, which is a long time to hold people who are well, and requires considerable resources. Home quarantine is an option, but it can be difficult to enforce.

The alternative—social distancing—is to reduce contact among people across the community as a whole. During the 1918–19 influenza pandemic, some U.S. cities canceled mass gatherings, closed schools, and prohibited gatherings in confined spaces such as sports stadiums, houses of worship, concert halls, and the like. Businesses found ways to operate with reduced workforces, and nearly everyone used cloth masks or other face coverings. Governments may adopt many of these measures again in 2020 but with potentially serious social and economic consequences. Nonetheless, the interventions may be essential to save lives, particularly if a surge in infections threatens to overwhelm health-care services.

## PLAN NOW, PLAN FAST

A brief window still remains within which to prepare for what will shortly be recognized as a global pandemic. In the United States, silent transmission is likely happening already, with slow but steady increases in infections supplemented now by infected travelers from affected parts of the world other than China. Once testing begins in earnest in hospitals across the United States, SARS 2 infections will likely be identified in patients having no link to China or other affected areas and no known source of infection.

Italian health authorities have just become aware that infections have likely been propagating in the north of their country for weeks, and other countries may soon find themselves in the same position. Health-care providers and health departments should anticipate and plan for surges in the demand for hospital services, particularly for intensive care. But state and municipal authorities must

also be prepared to undertake social-distancing measures where outbreaks occur.

Now is the time to plan for this eventuality and to consider which measures would be most feasible and effective in reducing transmission. Public health agencies should take advantage of the brief, remaining window to determine exactly what should prompt the most drastic measures (for example, school and workplace closures); how to know when the time is right to implement them; and how long they might need to be kept in place. The key to maintaining public compliance and support for social distancing will be to effectively communicate what the plan is and why it is necessary.

Right now, most countries are responding to SARS 2 with containment, which includes travel restrictions or bans and case-based isolation and quarantine. Such measures will not prevent the virus's spread, but they do buy time, at considerable economic cost. Countries that have not yet been affected, but which will not ultimately be able to prevent local epidemics, must use this time wisely to plan and prepare their communities for the social-distancing measures required to mitigate the impact of SARS 2.

Source: <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/china/2020-02-26/controlling-coronavirus-will-mean-keeping-people-apart>

# **Global Impacts Of Brexit: A Butterfly Effect**

## **– OpEd By Csaba Barnabas Horvath**

Butterfly effect – a butterfly flapping its' wings, triggering a tornado several miles away and weeks later by starting unpredictable chain reactions, as the theory says. Can Brexit play the role of such a butterfly, starting chain reactions that may impact politics on a global level to a degree that few would have believed when the Brexit referendum happened back in 2016? Even though Britain is merely a shadow of its former self, it still is a significant player in global politics. The strategic role and geopolitical position that the UK plays in the EU, NATO and Anglosphere, gives it more global influence than its' mere economic, military and demographic weight would suggest. We can already witness events triggered by Brexit, that could very likely represent the start of new trends that can have far-reaching impacts on the global level as well.

These impacts can be examined in two respects: How the UK outside the EU will change global politics, and how the EU without the UK will itself change.

Regarding the UK, what we can see right now is that it appears to be repositioning itself chiefly along the lines of drawing itself closer to the rest of the Anglosphere. What makes this shift peculiar is that it can greatly impact the internal structure of the US alliance system as well.

Negotiations are already underway right now between the United States and the United Kingdom to reach a free trade agreement between the two countries before the end of this year, as reaffirmed at a meeting between Steve Mnuchin and Sajid Javid in London in January 2020. The UK has little reason to refuse the US offer. Such a free trade agreement would replace food imports from the EU with food imports coming from the US, solving an issue often discussed surrounding Brexit. Alongside the US-UK free trade agreement already under negotiation, the other main prospect is apparently the CANZUK proposal that advocates the formation of some kind of economic alignment between Australia, Canada, New Zealand, and the UK, with the range of possible outcomes reaching from merely freedom of movement to a full economic community akin to the EU. At first glance, such an idea may seem anachronistic as it may resemble a revival of the British Empire. Also, besides relations between Australia and

New Zealand, all countries to be involved, maintain closer ties with the United States than with any of each other. On the other hand however, there are number of practical factors supporting the idea. It is the very 21st century's travel, transport, and communication conditions that make it much easier for citizens and goods from these four culturally closely related countries to move between them, much more so than during the 19th and 20th centuries. All of the countries being close allies of the US also means that such an arrangement would not collide with other major international commitments either. At the same time, some kind of policy coordination between the four could also somewhat reduce the risk of the US dominating them too much.

Unlike the ongoing free trade negotiations with the United States, the CANZUK proposal still exists only at a theoretical level, although support for it has already been expressed among the political elites of the four countries. In 2016, Australia's High Commissioner to the United Kingdom expressed support for freedom of movement between Australia and the UK, and at a 2018 convention, the Canadian Conservative Party voted to adopt the CANZUK proposal as an official policy. Boris Johnson has also already expressed his interest. The proposal also enjoys overwhelming public support among populations of the four countries. According to a 2018 poll, 82% of New Zealanders, 76% of Canadians, 73% of Australians, and 68% of Britons would support freedom of movement between the four countries. For Britain, its' EU membership was the main obstacle to the proposal up until now, as EU rules would not have allowed the UK to grant such privileges to non-EU countries. With Brexit however, this very obstacle has already been removed, and from here on the UK has little reason not to get engaged.

If CANZUK and the US-UK free trade agreement are both implemented, then even if there is no formal overall economic integration arrangement between the USA and CANZUK, the two combined will still form a de facto economic bloc, as on behalf of CANZUK, the UK will be linked to the US with their own free trade agreement, and Canada is already linked to the US by NAFTA. If both Canada and the UK, the two largest economies of CANZUK will already be linked to the US upon its' formation, then it will very likely be only a matter of time before Australia and New Zealand gets involved with the US in one way or the other as well. As in terms of military alliance, Australia and New Zealand are already linked to the US under ANZUS, while Canada and the UK are so under NATO, and intelligence services of the five also form an alliance under the Five Eyes

agreement, while their combined armed forces already work together under the ABCANZ, AUSCANNZUKUS, ASIC and TTCP agreements. In other words, we can say that the five countries already form a de facto military alliance. Thus, the Anglosphere already forms a de facto privileged inner circle within the US alliance system. However, upgrading this de facto military alliance with economic alignment as well, would make this, so far rather informal group a full international bloc, in many ways akin to the EU, even if not de jure, but de facto for sure. This would raise the role of the Anglosphere as a privileged inner circle of the US alliance system to a whole new level, linking the Anglosphere closer to the US than ever, but at the same time, also making the distinction between this privileged inner circle and the rest of the US' allies ever more apparent.

Such a de facto bloc would combine the strength of British and US navies and nuclear arsenals, food security granted by combined capacity of the Australian, Canadian and US agricultures, energy security granted by combined oil and natural gas reserves of Canada and the US as well as by combined uranium reserves of Australia, Canada and the US, military presence not only in Europe, North America and Australasia, but also through the network of US and UK military bases all over the world. The fact that North America, the British Isles, and Australasia all are de facto islands, would also provide a unique geographical defense potential.

Such an upgraded inner circle can very likely become top priority in US foreign policy on the long run, potentially overshadowing other US-lead alliances, such as NATO or the alliance with Japan, decreasing their importance for the US. Thus, consequences of the combined establishment of a US-UK free trade agreement and a CANZUK economic integration are likely to be far-reaching.

Even in the case of referendums in Scotland and Northern Ireland breaking away from the UK, this would change little of the big picture. First, the two combined make up little more than 10% of the population and GDP of the UK. Second, given the numerous Scottish diaspora in Australia, Canada, and New Zealand, even if Scottish independence is reached, but some kind of CANZUK economic community is meanwhile formed, then even the newly independent Scotland may find joining CANZUK a more attractive option than re-joining the EU. In fact, formation of a CANZUK community could even raise such a dilemma for Ireland (even for a united Ireland) given the numerous Irish diaspora in these countries.

How will Brexit impact the European Union itself? Regarding post-Brexit EU, the main question seems to be whether it can reach a new form of internal power balance. So far, the Franco-German tandem formed the core of the EU, and the UK was the main counterbalance to it. This balancing role of the UK was very important given disputes the Franco-German core had with the Eastern (V4-Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland and Slovakia) and Southern (PIGS-Greece, Italy, Portugal and Spain) peripheries of the EU. By moderating Franco-German hegemony, this also moderated counteractions on behalf of those countries of the eastern and southern peripheries. With Brexit however, this counterbalance is taken out from the system. Here the main risk for the EU is that if the Franco-German tandem doesn't show restraint, then without such a counterbalance, this can escalate tensions between them and countries of the southern and eastern peripheries to breaking point.

Whether such a scenario is a real threat for the EU or not mostly depends on France. Since the times of Conrad Adenauer and Charles de Gaulle, Franco-German balance has greatly shifted in favor of Germany, and this trend further accelerated following the financial crisis of 2008. If France continues its' close cooperation with Germany, it can itself one day become overwhelmed by German dominance. However, if France choses to somewhat distance itself from Germany, then it can take on the very same role of the main counterbalance that Britain played up until now. The somewhat unexpected recent rapprochement between France and the V4 countries that started at the end of 2019 (demonstrated by the summit between Emmanuel Macron and Viktor Orban in October 2019 and Macron's visit to Poland in February 2020), may signal such a change in attitude on behalf of France is already underway.

Brexit is likely to change not only internal dynamics of the EU, but also its' global role. To begin with, with Brexit, EU loses its' strongest navy, as well as one of the two UN Security Council permanent member nuclear powers among its' ranks. Brexit can also potentially change the global doctrine of the EU as well. So far, the UK has been the strongest and most committed US ally in the bloc, while both France and Germany, despite being NATO members, have repeatedly chosen to make such gestures to and cooperate in such ways with Russia that the US views as being against NATO doctrine. With the UK having left the EU, such Russia-leaning French and German aspirations are also left greatly unbalanced. Although Poland and some minor East European member states still follow strong pro-US doctrines, without the UK, their chances to

counterbalance such French and German moves are much decreased. Thus the EU can likely be expected to somewhat loosen its' alliance with the US, and somewhat improve its' relations with Russia.

Thus, Brexit seems to ignite chain reactions that will likely upgrade the status of the Anglosphere as a privileged inner circle of the US alliance system to a level where it can surpass the EU and NATO in internal cohesion and global significance. If the US then prioritizes this inner circle over the rest of its' allies, this could significantly weaken the internal cohesion and global significance of NATO, especially if a post-Brexit EU led by France and Germany choses to somewhat loosen its' ties with the US. In the Asia-Pacific, albeit to a lesser degree, such a trend could likely cause a similar distinction to emerge between the privileged Australia-New Zealand duo and the rest of US allies in the region, such as Japan, the Philippines or South Korea, possibly even boosting trends such as the re-militarization of Japan. These changes, if they do happen, will be of global significance. Of course, we cannot be sure yet, but what we do know is that US-UK free trade talks are already on their way, the CANZUK proposal has massive public support in the UK as well as in all the other three prospective member states.

The views expressed in this article are those of the authors alone and do not necessarily reflect those of Geopoliticalmonitor.com or any institutions with which the authors are associated.

Source: <https://www.eurasiareview.com/29022020-global-impacts-of-brexit-a-butterfly-effect-oped/>

# **Implications of Trump's Visit to India By**

## **Talat Masood**

The visit of President Donald Trump to India was closely watched by the world and more so by Pakistan and China. This even though the Democratic Party's presidential primary elections and the scourge of coronavirus spilling over the borders of China into more than 20 countries and threatening to be a pandemic had diverted the attention of the global media.

The BJP government had made extensive preparations, giving it a touch of a super royal visit. It was meant to feed the insatiable ego of President Trump and to demonstrate the "exceptional" relationship between the two leaders. Hundreds of artistes welcomed the President at the airport while projecting the ancient culture of India.

New Delhi wore a festive look and the ugly side of the city was camouflaged by cosmetic touches. All this was to convey the warmth of the government and people of India for America.

Later, PM Modi further inflated the ego of President Trump by assembling his promised "millions" in the Delhi stadium where the two leaders showered generous praise on each other. Modi gave a new dimension to their relationship by using vocabulary that meant that it had transcended partnership and was at a higher level. It did remind me of pre-Partition days when Indian aristocracy expressed their loyalty and affection for the British royalty.

President Trump was equally generous in his praise, calling Modi an exceptional leader. These were skilful optics as both leaders are reputed to be good marketers of their personal image. This mutual adoration was not new. President Trump has been equally generous in his remarks when it comes to India or Hinduism. He foregoes all the principles and ideals that once were the hallmark of the American Dream and which the world, and especially younger democracies considered as their ideal and benchmark.

In a recent Op-Ed in The New York Times, the writer, Pankaj Mishra, reminded us that Trump had remarked, "I love Hindu" during his presidential campaign in 2016. This shows the extent Trump could go to please India.

No doubt there are several commonalities between India and the US. There are parallels in their historical experience. Both have been former colonial powers and struggled for freedom. This experience of subjugation and earning independence through a protracted struggle is equally applicable to Pakistan.

Optics and cringe apart, for PM Modi it was an ideal opportunity to influence the Indian expatriate community by showcasing his standing with President Trump. This, apart from gaining political mileage, may yield dividends in bringing additional investment from them. President Trump, too, has a vested interest in cultivating the relatively large and influential Americans of Indian origin. He needs their votes and financial support during the election. The Indian community is only second to the Jews in terms of political influence and economic clout. At present, or until recently, the CEOs of Google, Microsoft and several other leading firms were Americans of Indian origin.

A more substantive reason for the emerging warmth is the burgeoning defence collaboration.

India is one of the leading buyers of American defence equipment and technology today. President Trump, during the visit announced the sealing of a \$3 billion defence deal. India's defence procurement from the US was nearly \$17 billion since 2007 and these new contracts would give a fresh impetus to its procurement. The list includes the purchase of 24 MH-60R Seahawk helicopters. India has allocated \$10 billion to be spent on purchases from the US in the next three to five years. It insists on the transfer of technology and manufacturing the weapon systems in India. The US will be willing to oblige to an extent that it does not entail any latest technologies or equipment. By leaning in favour of the US, India is gradually moving away from its traditional supplier, Russia.

Obviously, no one expected that President Trump would either publicly or privately mention India's gross mistreatment of Muslims and other minorities. Or of its dangerous slide toward transforming India into a Hindu nationalist state and imposing a draconian regime on Kashmir. India's brutal manifestation of human rights and religious bias also found no mention.

President Trump's own record reflects a strong bias against Muslims and other minorities, economic considerations aside.

Ironically, while the visit was in progress, clashes were taking place in Delhi between anti- and pro-Citizens Amendment Act groups.

These mutual gestures of goodwill and high-flying semantics between US and Indian leaders are important for domestic audience and the international community. For Pakistan and China, more critical are the span, depth and substance of the relationship and how it would impact their countries and the region.

There are several considerations — geo-strategic, political and economic on the basis of which American and Indian interests converge. At the strategic level, India is considered to possess the potential equal to China. It has the resources, talent, size and population equivalent to China but its economy, although until recently was one of the fastest growing, has slowed down and would need long-term support to catch up. Besides, due to the divisive policies of the BJP government, the national cohesion of India has been impaired. The Muslims, who constitute between 12-16% of India's population and other minorities such as Christians and Dalits, are a constant target of the government's discriminatory policies. These policies may win favour with the Hindu nationalists, but are going to be a major drag on national development in the long term. It is a different matter that President Trump would not comment on this issue in public or even during their personal interaction, as his own record of dealing with minorities is a subject of criticism.

PM Modi's policy to weaken Pakistan will never succeed. The more India unfairly puts pressure on Pakistan and the US maintains silence, it further justifies Pakistan's leaning on China, strengthens its bonds with Muslim countries, and cultivates better relations with Russia and the European Union.

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Source: <https://tribune.com.pk/story/2164178/6-implications-trumps-visit-india/>

## **Historic Peace Deal | Editorial**

SOMETHING impossible appears to be becoming possible. Peace finally appears to be in sight in the conflict-ridden Afghanistan with the signing of peace deal between Afghan Taliban and the United States on Saturday after months of negotiations in Qatar's capital Doha. Indeed both the sides deserve appreciation for showing the much needed flexibility to reach this accord which once again abundantly made it clear that it is only through negotiations that complex matters can be sorted out and that the war only brings sufferings to the civilians. Had this been realized much earlier, the people of Afghanistan had not suffered that much and the US would also not have to spend billions of dollars in its longest ever war.

The peace deal has basically four points: a timeline of 14 months for the withdrawal of all US and NATO troops from Afghanistan; a Taliban guarantee that Afghan soil will not be used as a launch-pad that would threaten the security of US; the launch of intra-Afghan negotiations by March 10 and a permanent and comprehensive ceasefire. One expects in the greater interest of the Afghan people that both the sides will stick to the points of the deal and avoid any sort of violence as doing so will lead to ground zero and amount to rubbing salt on the wounds of Afghan people. This deal has opened a window of opportunity and it is now up to the Afghan people especially its political leadership to seize this opportunity and take the country towards permanent peace which in fact will open doors of progress and prosperity for them. The history will never forgive them if they missed this opportunity that is now knocking at their door. There is an understanding that the intra-Afghan dialogue will be more complicated and that the path is not very easy one. What needs to be remembered by the Afghan government and the Taliban is that this war has not given anything to their people but miseries and backwardness. To reverse this, they will have to demonstrate greater maturity, farsightedness, compassion and elasticity whilst rising above their personal interests. It is only for the Afghans themselves which kind of future they map out for themselves but other countries especially the US, Pakistan, China, Iran, Russia and Qatar need to stay engaged with the Afghan government and the Taliban to make the intra-Afghan dialogue a success, especially their role will be more important in case of any impasse. They should use their influence in whatever way they could so that these negotiations do not hit any gridlock rather reach the conclusion at the earliest with a governance

structure and power sharing formula acceptable for all. Spoilers which up till now are using Afghanistan as a proxy especially against Pakistan will make all out efforts to disrupt this process.

It is a matter of satisfaction that there is a growing realization about the danger which exists to derail the peace process. Whilst welcoming the peace deal, Prime Minister Imran Khan, whose point stand vindicated on the Afghan situation, very rightly and emphatically said that the stakeholders must ensure that spoilers are kept at bay. Under any circumstances, no incident should be allowed to undermine the process as the enemy of peace will definitely make last ditch efforts by resorting to violence and terrorist acts to create confusion and uncertainty. In fact, it will be a test case for Afghan government and the Taliban as to how much commitment they show to the dialogue and successfully foil their nefarious designs for a better future of their people which will ultimately also see the return of Afghan refugees to their homeland especially from Pakistan. Without much international support, Pakistan has generously hosted these Afghan refugees over the last many decades. Hosting refugees is a responsibility that has not been equitably shared. These were also the sentiments expressed by the UN Secretary General during a moot of refugees in Islamabad. Anyhow if the things go as planned for peace, the international community will also have to come forward in a big manner and extend full support to the Afghan government in the reconstruction phase in order to create a pull factor for the return of these millions of refugees to their homeland.

Source: <https://pakobserver.net/historic-peace-deal/>

## **Indo-US Arms Deal | Editorial**

ONE of the more troubling outcomes of US President Donald Trump's just-concluded visit to India is a multibillion-dollar arms deal reached between Washington and New Delhi. According to media reports, the deal is said to involve attack helicopters and is reportedly valued at \$3bn. While the deal will no doubt be music to the ears of the American arms industry, for those who want peace in South Asia this is an unfortunate development. Pakistan has voiced concern over the deal, with the Foreign Office spokesperson commenting that "we have alerted the international community several times about India's aggressive designs. ..." Indeed, the Balakot misadventure last year — foiled due to the alertness of the PAF — was just one example of India's bellicose posture towards this country. As the military spokesman told the media on Thursday, India has violated the Line of Control nearly 400 times last year. Certainly these are not actions responsible states indulge in, and it is unfortunate that the US is pampering India as a counterweight to China, without considering New Delhi's bullying attitude in South Asia.

At the height of the Cold War, India was a firm Soviet client, buying Moscow's arms and following its geopolitical lead. However, with the fall of communism and with the US establishing itself as the world's sole superpower, India saw it fit to make inroads with the Americans. That development, coupled with Washington's intense rivalry with Beijing, has resulted in the US cultivating India as an Asian counterbalance to China. However, while both the US and India champion their status as 'great democracies', as the events over the past few days have shown, those who run India today are wedded to thoroughly undemocratic principles. Not only is the Hindutva-inspired administration bent upon demonising and oppressing India's minorities, particularly its Muslims, the fanatical elements in New Delhi have also threatened Pakistan numerous times in the recent past. Such threats have come from senior Indian military as well as civilian officials. Hence, in such a scenario, when the US chooses to empower the Indian war machine, Pakistan has very legitimate concerns. The deal will only further spur the arms race in South Asia and scuttle any chances for peace. The US should take a more responsible and balanced approach in this region, especially when two nuclear-armed states are involved, and India must not be allowed to bully and browbeat neighbouring states using American weapons.

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Source: <https://www.dawn.com/news/1537331/indo-us-arms-deal>

## **Can Russia and Turkey Step Back from the Brink in Syria? By Dimitri Alexander Simes**

What a difference two months can make. Presidents Vladimir Putin and Recep Tayyip Erdogan kicked off the new year by launching a new multi-billion-dollar gas pipeline between their countries. But now the two leaders are scrambling to pull their forces from the brink of conflict in Syria.

Following the death of thirty-three Turkish soldiers during an airstrike last week in northwest Syria's Idlib province, Turkey on Sunday launched a new military offensive, known as Operation Spring Shield, against Syrian government troops in the region. Over the past several days, the Turkish military has battered Syrian government forces in Idlib with drones and heavy artillery fire while Turkish-backed rebels have made gains against Damascus on the ground.

In response, the Russian Navy sent two missile-equipped frigates and a large landing ship to the coast of Syria. The Russian Ministry of Defense also warned that it could not guarantee the safety of Turkish planes flying over Syria.

On March 5, Putin and Erdogan will meet in Moscow in an attempt to defuse the situation in Idlib. The two presidents will be tasked with avoiding war and rescuing a rapprochement that has taken place between their two countries since 2016.

Mesut Hakki Caşın, a professor at Yeditepe University in Istanbul and a member of the security and foreign policy board that advises Erdogan, called the March 5 summit "one of the most vital, critical meetings in the history of the two countries." Although he expressed confidence that Putin and Erdogan would arrive at a mutual understanding, he described the current situation as fraught with danger.

"I think Russia and Turkey can find a new formula for the liquidation of radical terrorist groups in [Idlib] and the collection of heavy weapons. But in the event of failure, the conflict in Idlib could spread throughout Syria and the region," Caşın said. "As the most important life-threatening scenario, Russian and Turkish

soldiers could face off on the ground. This risk could open the gates of hell in Idlib.”

From a purely military standpoint, both Moscow and Ankara have the necessary mechanisms in place to keep the situation in Idlib from spiraling out of control, explained Viktor Murakhovsky, editor-in-chief of the Russian defense magazine Arsenal of the Fatherland.

“It's important to understand that the size of the zone where fighting is going on is quite small—it's about one hundred kilometers from north to south and about seventy kilometers from east to west,” he said. “Both sides have the surveillance technology and the methods for command and control to monitor the situation in real-time.”

But Murakhovsky cautioned that without a new political solution for Idlib, tensions there would remain dangerously high.

It will not be easy for Putin and Erdogan to reach a compromise, argued Alexey Malashenko, research director at the Moscow-based Dialogue of Civilizations think tank. Malashenko told the National Interest that the high stakes and emotions on both sides made it difficult for either leader to cede ground.

“Neither Turkey nor Russia can afford to lose in this situation,” he said. “If either Putin or Erdogan lose, they will look weak and have their authority undermined at home. How are they going to negotiate in this context?”

One of Turkey’s primary demands has been for Russia to leave it “one on one with Bashar al-Assad.” Russia could never agree to that, Malashenko explained, because for the Kremlin “abandoning Assad would be an admission of defeat in the Middle East.”

The source of this new standoff between Russia and Turkey is Idlib, a province in northwestern Syria that is the last remaining rebel-held stronghold in the country. In 2018, Russia and Turkey concluded a deal to establish a de-escalation zone in Idlib and clear it of “radical militants” such as Hayat Tahrir al-Sham, an Al Qaeda affiliate. Both sides have regularly accused each other of violating the agreement.

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The deal finally collapsed in December, when Bashar al-Assad launched a new offensive into Idlib with the help of Russian air support. As Syrian government forces recaptured territory in the province, a growing influx of refugees headed for the Turkish border. The United Nations estimates that nine hundred thousand people have fled Idlib since Assad's campaign began.

Turkey, which already houses 3.6 million Syrian refugees, responded by sending thousands of troops and military vehicles to Idlib. Over the past month, Turkish and Syrian forces have fought several times in Idlib, leaving fifty-four Turkish soldiers dead. The most dramatic clash occurred last Thursday when a Syrian or Russian airstrike killed thirty-three Turkish soldiers. It was this incident that prompted Turkey to launch its latest major military operation into Syria.

Erdogan's willingness to escalate over Assad's Idlib offensive caught many in the Russian political establishment by surprise, admitted Malashenko.

"In Moscow, they miscalculated Turkey's reaction," he said. "They thought that one way or another, there would be a certain number of battles, the whole thing would last several days, and then it would be possible to reach a deal. But instead, Erdogan decided to stand on principle."

Murakhovsky explained that Russia had hoped that Erdogan would show greater flexibility toward Russian objectives in Idlib after Moscow had sought to accommodate Ankara's concerns about Kurdish militias in northwestern Syria.

"When Turkey launched Operation Peace Spring into northwestern Syria against the Kurds [last October], Russia made significant concessions," he said. "Russia agreed to ensure that the Kurds would withdraw their forces from the region. It also agreed to conduct joint patrols with Turkey in this region even though doing so caused some problems with our Syrian partners. For this reason, such a Turkish reaction to the offensive in Idlib was quite unexpected."

Such grievances, however, are likely to be set aside when Putin and Erdogan meet on March 5. The Turkish and Russian experts interviewed by the National Interest unanimously contended that despite the tensions over Idlib, the

burgeoning partnership between Moscow and Ankara was too important for both countries to fail.

“Turkey and Russia, leaving aside historical fears and concerns, are close to economic-political-military cooperation that can be described as a golden age, while the burning of bridges squeezes against the future of the two communities,” Caşın said.

Even the challenges in Idlib were not insurmountable, he insisted. “As a lesson from this crisis, I think the Turkish-Russian friendship will be strengthened,” Caşın stated. “History has condemned the Russians and Turks, who have learned from wars, to remain friends in this geography.”

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## **The Dismal Kingdom By Paul Romer**

Over the past 60 years, the United States has run what amounts to a natural experiment designed to answer a simple question: What happens when a government starts conducting its business in the foreign language of economists? After 1960, anyone who wanted to discuss almost any aspect of U.S. public policy—from how to make cars safer to whether to abolish the draft, from how to support the housing market to whether to regulate the financial sector—had to speak economics. Economists, the thinking went, promised expertise and fact-based analysis. They would bring scientific precision and rigor to government interventions.

For a while, this approach seemed a sure bet for steady progress. But several decades on, the picture is less encouraging. Consider, for example, the most basic quantitative indicator of well-being: the average length of a life. For much of the last century, life expectancy in the United States increased roughly in tandem with that in western Europe. But over the last four decades, the United States has been falling further and further behind. In 1980, the average American life was a year longer than the average European one. Today, it is two years shorter. For a long time, U.S. life expectancy was still rising but more slowly than in Europe; in recent years, it has been falling. A society is hardly making progress when its people are dying younger.

Binyamin Appelbaum makes this point in his new book, *The Economists' Hour*. That book and another recent one—*Transaction Man*, by Nicholas Lemann—converge on the conclusion that the economists at the helm are doing more harm than good.

Both books are compelling and well reported, and both were written by journalists—outsiders who bring historical perspective to the changing role of economists in American society. Appelbaum tracks their influence across a wide range of policy questions since the 1960s. The language and the concepts of economics helped shape debates about unemployment and taxation, as one would expect. But they also influenced how the state handled military conscription, how it regulated airplane and railway travel, and how its courts interpreted laws limiting corporate power. Together, Appelbaum writes, economists' countless interventions in U.S. public policy have amounted to no

less than a “revolution”—well intentioned but with unanticipated consequences that were far from benign.

Lemann chronicles another, related revolution. In the first half of the twentieth century, especially after the calamity of the Great Depression, the conventional wisdom held that the power of corporations must be held in check by other comparably sized organizations—churches, unions, and, above all, a strong national government. But in the decades that followed, a new generation of economists argued that tweaks to how companies operated—more hostile takeovers, more reliance on corporate debt, bigger bonuses for executives when stock prices increased—would enable the market to regulate itself, obviating the need for stringent government oversight. Their suggestions soon became reality, especially in a newly deregulated financial sector, where they precipitated the emergence of junk bonds and other questionable innovations. Like Appelbaum, Lemann concludes that economists’ uncritical embrace of the market changed U.S. society for the worse.

Voters, too, have their doubts, in the United States and beyond. In the run-up to the 2016 Brexit vote, Michael Gove, then the British justice secretary, was asked to name economists who supported his position that the United Kingdom should leave the European Union. He refused. “People in this country have had enough of experts,” he snapped. “I’m not asking the public to trust me. I’m asking the public to trust themselves.” A majority of the British electorate followed his cue and voted to leave the EU, the warnings of countless economists be damned.

Economists should take that outcome as an admonition warranting a major course change. Writing in 2018, the economists David Colander and Craig Freedman proposed one such correction. Over the course of the twentieth century, they contended, economists had built more and more sophisticated models to guide public policy, and many succumbed to hubris in the process. To regain the public’s trust, economists should return to the humility of their nineteenth-century forebears, who emphasized the limits of their knowledge and welcomed others—experts, political leaders, and voters—to fill in the gaps. Economists today should recommit to that approach, even if it requires them to publicly expel from their ranks any member of the community who habitually overreaches.

## ESCAPE FROM THE BASEMENT

Appelbaum's book begins with a revealing anecdote from the 1950s about Paul Volcker, at the time a young economist working in the bowels of the Federal Reserve System and disillusioned about his career prospects. Among the Fed's national leadership were bankers, lawyers, and a hog farmer from Iowa—but no economists. In 1970, William McChesney Martin, Jr., then chair of the Federal Reserve's Board of Governors, could still explain to a visitor that although economists asked good questions, they worked from the basement because “they don't know their own limitations, and they have a far greater sense of confidence in their analyses than I have found to be warranted.”

The United States is going backward, and many economists have provided the intellectual cover for this retreat.

But Martin was on his way out, and as Appelbaum shows in the chapters that follow, economists were emerging from the basement—not just at the Fed but also across the government. To take just one example, consider the rapid spread of cost-benefit analysis as the tool of choice for assessing health and safety regulations. When the U.S. Congress created the Department of Transportation in 1966 and told it to make motor vehicles safer, lawmakers did not ask regulators to weigh the potential costs and benefits of proposed new rules: after all, no one could possibly determine the value of a human life. The economists Thomas Schelling and W. Kip Viscusi disagreed, arguing that people did in fact place a dollar value on human life, albeit implicitly, and that economists could calculate it.

Regulators initially rejected this approach, but as complaints about burdensome safety regulations grew louder, some began to waver. In 1974, the Department of Transportation used a cost-benefit analysis to reject a proposed requirement that trucks be fitted with so-called Mansfield bars, designed to prevent the type of accident that had killed the actress Jayne Mansfield in 1967. The cost of installing the bars on every truck, regulators calculated, would exceed the combined value of the lives that the bars would save. Soon, every participant in the conversation about safety regulations was expected to state and defend a specific dollar value for a life lost or saved.

Unfortunately, asking economists to set a value for human life obscured the fundamental distinction between the two questions that feed into every policy decision. One is empirical: What will happen if the government adopts this policy? The other is normative: Should the government adopt it? Economists can

use evidence and logic to answer the first question. But there is no factual or logical argument that can answer the second one. In truth, the answer lies in beliefs about right and wrong, which differ from one individual to the next and evolve over time, much like people's political views.

In principle, it is possible to maintain a clear separation between these two types of questions. Economists can answer such empirical questions as how much it would cost if the government required Mansfield bars. It is up to officials—and, by extension, up to the voters who put them in office—to answer the corresponding normative question: What cost should society bear to save a life in any particular context?

In practice, however, voters can provide only so much in the way of quantifiable directives. People may vote for an administration that promises safer cars, but that mandate alone is not specific enough to guide decisions such as whether to require Mansfield bars. Lacking clear guidance from voters, legislators, regulators, and judges turned to economists, who resolved the uncertainty by claiming to have found an empirical answer to the normative question at hand. In effect, by taking on the responsibility to determine for everyone the amount that society should spend to save a life, economists had agreed to play the role of the philosopher-king.

Jensen quickly realized that Goldman's behavior was cause for concern, and he inveighed against the cultural changes that had eroded the firm's erstwhile commitment to integrity in its long-term relationships with its clients. Banks were, Lemann quotes him as saying, "lying, cheating, stealing." It "sickened" Jensen that senior executives had avoided jail time in the wake of the financial crisis that followed.

It is not clear whether Jensen has ever considered the possibility that by promoting a system that relied on transactions instead of relationships, he himself may have contributed to the erosion of trust and integrity in the U.S. financial sector. He seems not to have lost his faith that one more adjustment to the system might restore the miracle of the market. But he has not found that adjustment. He ended his professional career preaching the gospel of corporate integrity to empty pews.

Lemann balances his account of Jensen's career with the story of people whose lives were damaged by a deregulated financial system that let a new breed of mortgage broker mimic the predatory practices of payday lenders with impunity. In the 1990s, so many of those brokers opened storefront offices on Pulaski Road, on Chicago's South Side, that residents came to refer to it as "Mortgage Row." Lemann describes the effect these lenders had on one nearby neighborhood, Chicago Lawn. Teaser rates kept mortgage payments low for the first 24 months of a loan, but then they increased dramatically to levels that many borrowers could not possibly afford. Like clockwork, two years after being purchased, houses went into foreclosure. Many were abandoned.

Neighborhood activists tried to stop the destruction of human capital caused by debt that overwhelmed the tenuous lives of the working poor, the destruction of physical capital caused by thieves who stripped water heaters and copper pipe from abandoned houses, and the destruction of social capital caused by abandoned houses that turned into crime hot spots. On top of these visible injuries, the people of Chicago Lawn had to bear the insult of official indifference. A decade before the collapse of the U.S. housing market rocked the global financial system, the damage done by subprime lending was already evident in their neighborhood. But in 1998, the Federal Reserve, under Greenspan, refused requests from alarmed consumer advocates that it examine the subprime-lending activities of the banks it regulated.

After more than a decade of damage to their neighborhood, the citizens of Chicago Lawn watched as the officials who would not even look into that damage saved the banks that had caused it. No amount of econosplaining could change the message this conveyed: everybody has to accept what the market gives them—except the people who work in the financial sector. Today's record-low unemployment rate shows that ten years on, the most direct harm from the financial crisis has healed. But deeper wounds remain. Wage growth for workers has been slow, and the crisis caused a massive and long-lasting reduction in incomes across the world—and perhaps an even longer-lasting populist backlash against the political institutions of many countries.

#### A NEW HUMILITY

In their attempt to answer normative questions that the science of economics could not address, economists opened the door to economic ideologues who lacked any commitment to scientific integrity. Among these pretend economists,

the ones who prized supposed freedom (especially freedom from regulation) over all other concerns proved most useful—not to society at large but to companies that wanted the leeway to generate a profit even if they did pervasive harm in the process. When the stakes were high, firms sought out these ideologues to act as their representatives and further their agenda. And just like their more reputable peers, these pretend economists used the unfamiliar language of economics to obscure the moral judgments that undergirded their advice.

Throughout his entire career, Greenspan worked to give financial institutions more leeway and in doing so helped create the conditions that led to the financial crisis. He did so in the name of economics—indeed, in the public consciousness, he came to personify the field. But his opposition to regulation was invulnerable to evidence. Until he took control at the Fed, he was a hired gun, ready to defend firms in the financial sector from regulators who tried to protect the public. In this role, he reportedly said that he had “never seen a constructive regulation yet.” If economists continue to let people like him define their discipline, the public will send them back to the basement, and for good reason.

The alternative is to make honesty and humility prerequisites for membership in the community of economists. The easy part is to challenge the pretenders. The hard part is to say no when government officials look to economists for an answer to a normative question. Scientific authority never conveys moral authority. No economist has a privileged insight into questions of right and wrong, and none deserves a special say in fundamental decisions about how society should operate. Economists who argue otherwise and exert undue influence in public debates about right and wrong should be exposed for what they are: frauds.