

Issues

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HR abuses

- Palestine; Kashmir; Rohingya Muslims; Uighur Muslims; Syrian; Yemen;
- “We must have the same level of accountability and justice for all victims of crimes against humanity. We have seen unthinkable atrocities committed by the U.S., Hamas, Israel, Afghanistan, and the Taliban.” Ilhan Omar
- At present, 1% of the world’s population is living in other countries after having been uprooted from their homeland as a result of conflict and persecution. Most of these displaced people have taken refuge in neighbouring countries and a sizable number are far from their ancestral lands where they reached after risking their lives. Even in the presence of the coronavirus pandemic, the exodus of people from their own countries continued in the previous year, with displacement increasing to more than 82 million, twice the figure 10 years before, the UN says in its latest report. This number went past last year’s highest-ever figure by nearly three million.
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- The report focuses on the large numbers of people forced to flee because of long drawn-out conflicts in Afghanistan, Syria, Yemen, and Somalia. The eruption of violence in the Tigray region of Ethiopia and Mozambique has further fuelled the surge in global displacement. The report laments that economies and many things, though, had slowed down because of the Covid-19 pandemic; war, conflicts and discriminations continued to rise, and pushed people to seek refuge in other countries.
- Five states — Syria, Afghanistan, Myanmar, South Sudan, and Venezuela — account for more than two-thirds of the world refugee population. Turkey hosts most of the displaced persons from neighboring countries numbering 3.7 million, followed by Pakistan and Uganda with 1.4 million each, and Germany with 1.2 million.
- The growing refugee problem can be tackled by encouraging social justice and cohesion in conflict-ridden countries, possibly with cooperation from the world community.

Populism

- FOR the past decade, the rise of reactionary and regressive forms of populism across the globe have remained a source of anxiety for progressive and liberal quarters. The paradigmatic cases of such populism include Modi in India, the Brexit movement in the UK, Trump and the Tea Party phenomenon, Bolsonaro in Brazil, Orbán in Hungary, and Duterte in the Philippines. These leaders and their movements have either led or enabled the rise of anti-minority (especially anti-Muslim) sentiment, centralisation of power, and the steamrolling of institutional norms.
- What is an underappreciated and less discussed point though is how the rise of populism and reactionary politics in the region and beyond has actually impacted Pakistan’s domestic situation. The most obvious spillover has come from the east, with Modi’s rise and Hindutva’s entrenchment in India recalibrating Pakistan’s domestic political dynamics in a number of ways. The first is the strengthening of the security state and a doubling down on the rationale for its existence in the face of Indian militarism on the border and in Kashmir.
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- A second spillover, though less obvious, has been the delegitimisation of what one can broadly call the liberal foreign and cultural policy segment in Pakistan, represented by groups and activists seeking greater normalisation of ties with India, and improved people-to-people contact. With increased communal violence against Muslims and other minority groups, and the chauvinism of the Hindu right wing becoming more abrasive online and in India's domestic politics, the narrative of normalisation and of revisiting statist discourse on India stands on considerably weaker grounds. This is in stark contrast to the previous decade, when these positions — usually well established in academic and intellectual discourse — were also more assertive in domestic politics.
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- Finally, a third spillover of global populism in Pakistan is its help in the revitalisation of what one could call Muslim modernism as cultural identity for the state and for large parts of urban middle-class society. While the roots of this lie in the attendant anxieties around the global war on terror, and the conflation of entire communities with fundamentalist violence, in recent years the populist assault on minority rights and cultures has made Islamophobia an even more pertinent question for diasporic and migrant populations. The adoption of those battles as Pakistan's foreign and cultural outlook by the state is an important happening linked deeply to these broader global issues.
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- At the same time, this adoption has strong domestic roots. There is a renewed orientation by political elites towards reviving statist identity around cultural questions of what it means to be Muslim and how that is linked to being Pakistani — whether that's through pan-Islamic cultural consumption in the shape of TV shows, or the heightened oversight being granted to religious leaders in the way that textbooks are developed, or even more simply, what types of religious-cultural endeavours that the leadership (including the prime minister) seek to patronise and promote. One should situate the announcement of an institute devoted to the study of Sufism and science at the intersection of personal beliefs and cultural assertion of Muslim identity being shaped by global conversations around Islam and its adherents.
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- In sum, it's not necessarily accurate to argue that Pakistan is experiencing its own populist moment in exactly the same way as right-wing populists in other parts of the world. The differences in sources of power and actions in government point to an important divergence that should be kept in mind. What should be acknowledged, however, is that the country's politics is not immune to being shaped by regional and global populisms in a myriad of ways, and that this influence will assert itself in a variety of possibly conservative (or even autocratic) tendencies.

BRICS

- The BRICS association comprises Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa, making up a composition of emerging economic powers and political influencers. Collectively, these nations constitute 40% of the world's population, along with encompassing 20% of its gross domestic product (GDP).
- Originally, the term 'BRIC' was meant to specifically denote their prospective economic capabilities and were highly regarded as the heirs to the global economy. 'BRICS' soon took the name we know of today following the incorporation of South Africa and would attempt to take

critical steps in projecting itself as the diplomatic and political representative of the non-Western, Global South bloc.

- A primary catalyst for the formal cooperation between the BRICS nations would be the 2008 Financial Crisis, which was instigated by American mismanagement of its domestic financial system and prompted discussions on the fragility of a 'dollar hegemony' monetary system and the unbalanced world order. This was substantiated with the weariness of America's foreign policy and primacy, alongside their resort to violence to protect the American-led world order, having undergone prolonged war campaigns in Afghanistan and Iraq. With the United States pursuing a policy of unilateralism through the advent of the Bush Doctrine in 2003, BRICS and fellow developing nations would have felt particularly threatened by America's willingness to use force against states who impeded their interests. Even if BRICS themselves were not directly subject to these threats that the Bush Administration expressed, it has cultivated a sense of mistrust towards American policies and ideals, with nations like the BRICS desiring strategies to protect their developmental interests. This was exemplified with Brazil's concern regarding America's Plan Colombia in 2009, which wanted a guarantee that the military bases established for their Columbian operations were not for potential regional military interventions.
- BRICS has its visionary roots in emphasizing in underlining economic issues from the perspective of the Global South, but the BRICS scheme has expanded to further discussions on pressing global issues such as security and peace. Arguably, the benchmark for BRICS being able to challenge the Western-dominated system is if BRICS can play a primary role in alleviating what Annan (2009) coined as "problem without passports", such as climate change and disarmament.
- Following the bankruptcy of Lehman Brothers in September 2008, BRICS financial ministers convened a month later, determining that it was an opportunity to alter the disproportions in international economic governance and call for the revision of multilateral institutions. All of this culminated in the Russian-based pioneer BRICS summit held in June 2009.
- Substantiating the consolidation of their union would be the creation of the New Development Bank (NDB), which provided an institutional basis for the relationship between BRICS nations. As per Schuman (2014), the primary objective of the NDB was to put forth institutions that would complement, and eventually supersede, the networks currently administered by America and Europe. An initial fund of USD 50 billion was established, with each BRICS member state having an equal stake. Additionally, BRICS also arranged for the creation of a currency reserve agreement (BRICS CRA), amounting to USD 100 billion for use in any potential financial crisis.
- Crucially, the initiation of new financial institutions has been a major step in a BRICS attempt to challenging the Western world, posing an explicit challenge to its financial institutions such as the World Bank and International Monetary Fund
- BRICS has presented an enticing alternative to developing nations through the provision of foreign direct investment, trade and development finance, cultivating a sense of self-reliance among the Global South, which is a critical step in the BRICS venture of restructuring the world order.
- What makes the BRICS' New Development Bank feasibly enticing to potential beneficiaries and developing nations is how they differentiate themselves from the IMF and World Bank. As mentioned before, the member nations had an equal stake, which amounted to 1/5 of the NDB itself, showcasing an image of true collaboration and equal decision-making. Because of this, BRICS has shown its willingness to be more inclusive than the West-led financial institutions, where the hierarchy arguably caters primarily to the developed world first. Additionally, the NDB

is known for practicing non-interference as an institution, unlike the Bretton Woods institutions, meaning they are not interested in the domestic functions of grantee nations, but rather the validity of what their grant funds would be used for. For instance, the NDB is willing to extend loans in the grantee nation's local currency, whereas other established MDBs look to provide loans in US dollars, which poses a significant exchange rate risk for these developing nations.

- In addition to the development of their financial institutions, international crude oil trading and its predominant exclusivity on the US dollar have been threatened by the adoption of the Chinese yuan in future oil contracts. This highlights the determination of China and BRICS to dethrone the West in international finance and diminish their dependence on the dollar. China's establishment of the 'petro-yuan', Asia's pioneer crude oil benchmark, looks set to challenge oil commodity markets that are currently dominated by the West. introduction of the 'petro-yuan' reduces the strain of U.S. sanctions on its fellow BRICS member, Russia, Russia has been making swift attempts to minimize its dependence on the petro-dollar and has turned to the yuan for its Chinese oil exports, following U.S. sanctions on Rosneft and other Russian oil groups.
- Interestingly, BRICS seems to have recognized the Western world's developmental neglect for Africa and looks to direct their developmental efforts there. The Belt and Road Initiative has placed significant investments towards strategically-positioned African nations, and China has sought to gain access to Djibouti's port facilities through the funding of vast infrastructure projects such as the Addis Ababa-Djibouti Railway.
- the establishment of key African relationships showcases a desire to delve into untapped and untended territory in a bid to close the gap between Western dominance. This was reflected by the action to bring South Africa into the 'BRIC' bloc, displaying their strong interests in Africa, and saw South Africa as the 'gateway' to Africa
- Primarily, a great deal of the BRICS bloc's obstacles lies internally due to the differences their member states possess, which outweighs their commonalities, evoking concerns of security and foreign policy cohesion. At the core of BRIC's inadequate foreign policy overlap, is political and ideological disunity, ranging from varying political and economic structures, to diverse cultural and religious practices. Arguably, this is not the case with the post-war liberal order, where Western economies and political systems are largely free and democratic, making foreign policy and values-sharing seamless. Politically, China and Russia are characterized by their authoritarian administrations, while South Africa, Brazil, and India are deemed as defective democracies, which partake in democratic elections but are hindered by limited transparency and weak stances on human rights (Stokke, 2018). Furthermore, while BRICS started from their united discontent in Western financial and economic global institutions, BRICS does not appear to have the makings of a unified economic bloc. China presents itself as a free-market socialist nation, identified by liberal economic trade practices fused with authoritarian state control over economic policies and resources. On the other end of the spectrum, Brazil, India, and South Africa have predominantly pursued liberal market policies, while Russia sits within the middle. Furthermore, it should be acknowledged that Brazil, South Africa, and Russia's economies are commodity-driven, meaning they are more vulnerable to instability within international commodity markets, as opposed to the industrialized nations of the G7 (Nuruzzaman, 2019). This makes BRIC potentially less economically resilient in the face of global downturns.
- Regarding divergent policies and interests, a major stumbling block that could impede the future growth of BRICS would be the rocky geopolitical relationship between India and China. With the

aforementioned Belt and Road Initiative, India has opted to keep itself away from the project, making it clear that India has joined BRICS to further its economic interests, rather than challenge the West through cooperation.

- Despite its waning hard power and needing to rebuild its political capital following the Trump era, the United States is still the undisputed global cultural superpower and will continue to be due to the worldwide adoption of its cultural and societal norms. Democracy and ideals of freedom are predominately viewed favorably, providing the West with the edge in ideological superiority. Western media, music, movies, pop culture, and literature permeate everyday life, and it would be hard to see Mandarin overtaking English as the de-facto global language of choice.
- The BRICS bloc lacks soft power. This is partially attributed to the authoritarian and untransparent administrations of its leading members, which limits their legitimacy on the world stage when compared to the West. However, this has been rapidly shifting due to policies and campaigns that aim to promote their cultural influence internationally. This is exemplified with the growing presence of Russia's state news agencies like Russia Today (RT) and the creation of Sputnik in 2014, a state-run news agency that produces Russian propaganda or dezinformatsiya in local languages to dominate the information war, as Hillary Clinton warns (Stuenkel, 2016). BRICS member nations have welcomed the prospect of hosting major sporting events such as the World Cup and the Olympics, which are often showcases of a nation's modernity. Amidst the COVID-19 pandemic, South Africa has emerged as a global leader in healthcare provision, exemplified by its frontline role in vaccine development and advocating for equitable access (Sheldrick, 2021). Furthermore, South Africa has made gains in being at the forefront of upholding human rights ideals, and pushing BRICS nations for prioritized discussions on the issue, highlighting its prowess on issues that cultivate soft power (Amnesty International, 2018). In short, BRICS needs to be more than an economic alliance to stand a chance at challenging the Western-centric world order.
- Supporting these initiatives would be an attempt to address their individual political disagreements establishment of a collective world vision, which would further BRICS' development from a financial institution substitute, to alternative world order. They should also continue to fill the gap in Western foreign policy, taking advantage of American decline in foreign aid and continue to expand their presence in the Global South. With that said, the collective power of BRICS and its member nations' regional influence could grow to challenge Western domination in the future and pave a path towards the democratization of the world order, but it would struggle to do so without further commitment and attuned cooperation between its member nations.

Arctic factor

- For most of human history, the very top of the world has remained out of play: too cold, too remote, and too hazardous for the intense exploitations that have reshaped other regions. However, today, the Arctic is warming faster than any other place, and its protective sea ice barrier, which had once kept economic and military activities in check, is melting away. The Arctic is open for business. And many want to participate in this 21st-century gold rush. Several circumpolar states are already struggling to access the region's rich stores of gas, oil, fish, and precious minerals. Even nations without Arctic borders are striving for their share.
- in the **Arctic**, where temperatures are rising twice as fast as the global average, Russia, China, and others are already trying to establish [a geopolitical foothold over territory and resources that](#)

were once under ice. While all of these powers have a strong interest in reducing tensions and “keeping the Arctic in the Arctic,” the current scramble for position is putting the entire region at risk.

- The Arctic is geologically complex, unexplored, and full of conflicting sovereignty claims. States with territorial borders are Canada, Denmark (via Greenland), Norway (via Svalbard), Russia, and the USA, known as the ‘Arctic Five’. While Finland, Iceland, and Sweden have no direct borders on the Arctic Ocean, they are usually considered Arctic states, too. However, as evidenced by the number of signatories to the Svalbard and Spitsbergen Treaties[2], countries on every continent have a longstanding interest in the region; among them, some that claim it should remain open to all nations as a ‘Common Heritage of Mankind’.
- The issue is exacerbated by the fact that the US has not yet ratified UNCLOS (cf. UN DOALS, 2020). As a non-signatory, it has little credibility in any discussion on Arctic sovereignty and cannot declare rights over resources beyond its EEZ off its Alaskan coast. While the US is determined to obtain significant territories through ratification, a handful of politicians are resistant to doing so, afraid of ceding too much power to an international regime (cf. Ebinger & Zambetakis 2009). Accordingly, the US relies on customary international law to regulate its Arctic operations, which, as codified in the Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties, derives from consistent general state practices out of a sense of legal obligation.
- Unlike the Arctic states, **China** has no territorial sovereignty and related rights to resource extraction in the Arctic. Nevertheless, to stress its growing Arctic interests, it has developed a self-defined Northern identity as a ‘near-Arctic state’. China’s first white paper on Arctic policy seeks to justify its ambitions through its history of Arctic research and the opportunities rapid climate change presents. Its interests are part of a new China-led cooperation initiative to build a ‘Polar Silk Road’ connecting it with Europe through the Arctic. While the US openly denies it the status of an Arctic state (cf. Pompeo 2019), Vladimir Putin, Russia’s president, even corrected an interviewer to stress that China belongs to the Arctic as well.
- Arctic shipping routes are another source of conflict with countries other than the Arctic states involved too.[10] As stated earlier, two alternative ways through the Arctic Ocean can be considered realistic abbreviations for future global trade: the NWP, through the Canadian Arctic Archipelago, and the NSR, along Russia’s northern coast.
- Although Canada is a strong ally of the US, there are disputes between the two countries over the Canadian Archipelago waters that Canada claims internal waters and not subject to the right of innocent passage. The US, however, regards them as an international strait through which ships should be able to pass without Canadian authorities’ intervention. Former US Secretary of State Pompeo (2019), speaking to the AC, recently stated that Canada’s sovereignty claims over the NWP are considered “illegitimate.” This position is based on the Corfu Channel case, which divides the coast of Albania from the Greek island of Corfu. The International Court of Justice ruled that because it was an “international highway”, Albania could not claim the channel as territorial waters (The International Court of Justice 1949, p. 29). There are similar conflicts between Iran and Oman over the Hormuz Strait, Yemen and Djibouti over the Bab al-Mandab Strait, and parts of the South China Sea (cf. The Economist 2019b).
- In 1988, Canada and the US settled their dissent with a political rather than legal solution (cf. Government of Canada 1988). America agreed to seek Canada’s consent for any transit through waters it has claimed. Yet, it did not grant Canada’s claims legitimacy, as this would set a

precedent for China to claim the South China Sea, Iran to claim the Hormuz Strait, and Russia to claim the NSR as internal waters

- **REALISM:** first, an opening Arctic would result in states pursuing the region's resources to boost their power by economic development. Second, this race will increase human action and security threats to the region, leading to higher military activity. Third, based on the regional structure, weaker Arctic states would then pursue security through an alliance with the US. Finally, states may ignore or break the rules set by international regimes (e.g., UNCLOS, AC) when it suits their interests.
- Of all states, **Russia** has by far the most significant intrinsic interests in the Arctic. The Russian North accounts for "20 percent of [its GDP] and 22 percent of the total Russian export [...]. The region's economic promise lies primarily in its rich natural resources and its potential as an attractive maritime transit passageway" (Zysk 2010, p. 105), making Arctic resources a matter of strategic importance. Its Arctic coastline is 24,140km long, stocked with several large cities, and inhabited by two million Russians.
- Russia, under Putin, aims to develop the Arctic to boost its economy, which, in the aftermath of Crimea's annexation, is feeling the brunt of Western sanctions and economic isolation. This has shown that Russia is also seeking to protect Arctic assets in ways that have begun to attract the US and Northern European attention (cf. Lanteigne 2019). While the Russian Federation postulates that its expansion into the Arctic is purely economic, the reality of military hardware in the region tells otherwise.
- Russian explorers dived deep below the North Pole in a submersible in 2007 and planted their national flag on the seabed to stake a symbolic claim to the energy riches of the Arctic. Although the event was considered a political gesture with no legal effect, it aroused the Arctic states' concern for regional security, causing anxiety over Russian behavior in particular. To restore its standing of great power, Moscow adopted an increasingly assertive posture through military presence in the region.
- Russia had by far the largest Arctic fleet. Today, it has a fleet of 61 commissioned ships, with a further ten under construction. It is also the only country to operate nuclear-powered icebreakers. Canada has 2, US 1 acc to the Associated Press.
- Furthermore, Moscow is rushing to reopen Soviet military, air, and radar bases on Arctic islands and to build new ones. Regularly releasing images of troop training in the High North (cf. Osborn 2017), Russia has constructed four new bases since the shock and reopened an additional thirteen. It had an astonishing 27 active bases above the Arctic Circle in 2017. Besides, it has invested more in building infrastructure and facilities that allow larger troops, more supplies, and advanced weapons systems to be stationed (cf. Markowitz 2020). By comparison, the US only maintains one military base above the Arctic Circle, on borrowed land in Greenland (cf. Cook 2020) and Canada has only three.
- Russia has, by most measures, become the dominant power in the Arctic. It has the world's largest fleet, capable of operating in extreme northern waters throughout the year and maintains dozens of military bases in the region. Moreover, it has stationed new troops, increased submarine activity, and returned warplanes to the Arctic skies, where NATO airspace is now routinely being buzzed.

- **Washington's** interest in the Arctic has declined since the end of the Cold War, leading to the US being called the 'reluctant Arctic power' (c.f. Huebert 2009). Its absence from UNCLOS, and therefore its lack of ability to use Article 76, is one frequently mentioned case in point.
- Given how militarily active it is virtually everywhere else, this lack of American presence in the Arctic is particularly striking. It is reasonable to conclude that if Washington did not project power in the Arctic, it was not because it lacked economic or military capabilities but because it did not want to do so (cf. Markowitz 2020). However, that may be about to change.
- In his 2019 speech, Mike Pompeo pointed to some Arctic actors as military threats, stressing that "the region has become an arena for power and for competition". America's rise in Arctic interest can be traced back to increased Russian (and Chinese) influence and power projections in the region.

Baloch militancy

- **IPRI**
- Balochistan has been subject to multifaceted traditional and non-traditional security questions accompanied with the issues of political marginalization, resource distribution, socio-cultural and ethnic traits which have contributed in shaping up a fragile security environment of the province. Despite an energy and mineral based resourceful region, having the largest geographical area and strategically located at the crossroads of the contemporary geopolitical realities of the Asian continent, Balochistan province has been unable to gain its due place within the policy circles of Centre since long. Even before partition, it was ruled by a separate political structure by British through the political agent.
- After the independence of Pakistan, Balochistan got the provincial status after twenty-three years in 1970. In addition to that, it has been a bedrock of violence and armed struggle between the federal government and indigenous groups who were initially formed on the lines of nationalism and later split into nationalistic separatist groups and ethno-national groups.
- Use of force by the state against such Baloch groups increased resentment and hostility against the federation and expanded the grounds for political and social instability in the region. Weak political and power structure usually provides a space to non-state actors to expand their domain in such vulnerable areas, as happened in Balochistan. Consequently, ethno-nationalist, separatist, sectarian, transnational and international militant outfits have gained strong foothold in Balochistan.
- **militancy** is a tendency in which an individual, or a group inflict violence, use force and does not comply with the constitutional sphere of the state. Challenging the writ of the government and proposing a change used on their own set agenda is a major feature of militant groups. The Oxford dictionary of Sociology defines militancy as 'willingness to engage in oppositional rhetoric and action.
- religious, ethnic, cultural, ideological and identity-based factors become the main drivers of militancy.
- the complicated formations of nationalist, separatist, sectarian and anti-state groups define the nature of militancy in Pakistan. Moreover, political ostracism, poor economic and infrastructural conditions and closed social structures all contributed in providing a suitable area for militant tendencies to prevail in the province. [The major centrifugal force of dissent within Balochistan seems to be the issue of resource distribution and economic deprivation](#) which invariably affects

all sectors of Baloch society. On the other hand, in terms of an identity orientation, there are **two main fault lines in Balochistan**, one is **ethnic** in nature and the other is **sectarian**. Population of the province is ethnically divided into Baloch, Brauhis and Pashtuns. Baloch population is predominately Sunni but a small fraction of Shia Hazara population resides in Quetta city which has been subject to target killing by the militants.

- Under the colonial rule, Britain used this area as a part of its imperial policy, as it comprised of four princely states i.e. Kalat, Lasbela, Kharan and Makran. Later, accession of Balochistan in Pakistan has not been smooth and peaceful rather an armed intrusion took place between the State of Kalat and armed forces of Pakistan.
- Therefore, it is evident that the seeds of dissent on identity, representation, ownership of resources and a friction towards federation remained there from the very start of independence. Furthermore, after the enactment of One Unit in Pakistan, another series of political and armed struggle started in Balochistan. Baloch representative had reservations over the political control of Punjab in particular, along with the representation of other provinces as well. The major concern sprouted from the fact that traditionally, Punjab, NWFP and Sindh had major chunk in bureaucracy, armed forces and politics respectively, which resulted in the lack of connectivity and mistrust between Balochistan and the Federal government of Pakistan. An armed rebellion of 1950s, which lasted for a couple of months, exposed the distrust which existed between certain factions within Balochistan and the Center.
- Dissent on the ownership of resources emerged in 1950s when in 1958, dispute on the royalties on gas emerged. Sardar Bugti was the main recipient of royalties. In order to pressurize the government to increase the royalties, supply of gas from Sui was disrupted. Consequently, friction increased between the government and the Bugti tribe and armed forces used force against the tribal armed resistance. The seeds of an uneasy relationship and discontentment between the Baloch leaders and the government of Pakistan continued, which marked another serious rebellion in 1960s, particularly from 1962- 1968.
- In 1962 elections, the big three of Balochistan, Attaullah Mengal, Ahmed Nawaz Bugti and Khair Bux Marri became members of the national assembly. They were critical of government's role in alienating Balochistan from the main-stream socio political and economic priorities of the federation. Response of the government was reactionary and aggressive as they not only removed the title of sardars but later sardar of Marri and Mengal tribe were assassinated. The title of sardar has a symbolic value in the tribal structure of the society. Sardar acts as a system in Balochistan as it not only provides economic and social facilities to their clan member but also acts as a source of conflict management and resolution. d people are under complete control of the tribal leader. Therefore, the act of government halted the prestige and tribal norms. Gradually, the roots of dissent transformed into a militant behavior and resulted in the intensification of armed struggle.
- After the general elections of 1970, National Awami Party (NAP) came into power in which Baloch got representation and authority to exercise within the domain of provincial government. It was however, dismissed after ten months by Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, mainly on account of the growing suspicion of federal government on the policies of provincial government, including their behaviour towards non-Baloch settlers, steps to glorify the Baloch ethnic identity and the alleged involvement in London conspiracy. Certain factions of Baloch wanted to start an armed struggle against the federation with external support. In addition to that, a security situation was built with

the support of the federal government in Lasbella and Pat Fedder to outlaw the provincial government. Moreover, the presence of Soviet weapons which were confiscated in Iraqi embassy in Islamabad, were linked with Baloch secessionist movement. Eventually, armed struggle started in Balochistan on nationalist and secessionist grounds in 1973 and it remained a high intensity conflict till 1977. This was the time when youth became radicalized and reactionary by taking up arms against the law enforcement agencies. It was a significant transformation of Baloch political and social order into conflict and chaos, thus strengthening the militant manifestations on ethnic lines.

- the timeline is very significant to understand the infiltration of religious identity which later engulfed Balochistan into identity-based fault line. After the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan in 1979, there was a major influx of Afghan refugees in Balochistan. Proportion of Pashtun population also increased during this time period. Moreover, it also gave rise to the growth of madaris developed on sectarian lines. The gradual Islamization of Balochistan resulted in the emergence of another strong competing identity in the shape of religiously driven groups and pockets. In this context, former chief minister of Balochistan, Dr. Abdul Malik stated that, "The last 30 years, the Afghan war and other ill-fated policies have affected Balochistan very negatively. As a result, religious extremism came to the province in the form of Shia-Sunni conflict. Extremism has been instilled in Balochistan since the time of Zia ul Haq in a very conscious and pre-planned way."
- The fifth phase of insurgency in Balochistan during the regime of General Musharraf was the most complex and multifaceted in nature. The death of Nawab Akbar Bugti on August 26, 2006, accelerated the pace of armed confrontation and call for separation in Balochistan. In addition to that, presence of religiously driven militant groups further complicated the security environment of the province. The bleak security situation that started around 2002, from Kohlu and Dera Bugti, drastically escalated across Balochistan in 2006.
- Another respondent shared that this phase of insurgency has been different from the previous ones as this time a certain section of literate class joined the movement. He shared that according to him, since 2006, Balochistan has lost many young minds including poet, artist, lawyers and teachers. In this context, it is observed that though people in Balochistan expounds the militant mapping on ethnic separatist and religious grounds, they also equally link the case of militancy with the weak functioning of the government and the role of federal government in using force in the province. Ethnic identity, reservation on the extraction of resources by outside powers with non-Baloch, mostly Punjabis, and demand of a separate Baloch state, are main drivers of Baloch nationalistic separatist groups. In this context, role of the federal government and use of armed forces in the province in different time period has triggered the scale of militancy in Balochistan.
- as far as religion based groups are concerned, it seems that they tend to recruit from the locals for strong footing and hideouts in the province. In comparison to the Baloch separatist groups, their Baloch recruitment is less, as religion is not a driving force for Baloch dissidents. Similarly, both sets of militancy differ in terms of modus operandi. For instance, it is observed that suicide bombing is usually a tactic used by religion based militant groups and ethno nationalistic militant groups use hit and run tactics, IEDs, remote control bombing etc. It was in 2011, that BLA formed a group called Majeed Fidayeen Brigade which acts as a suicide bombing squad for the organization. It was first such group created by the ethno nationalistic groups in Balochistan.
- two main militant manifestations in the province

- One is ethno-separatist, which is more indigenous, traditional, socially constructed and strong and the other one is religious, which is more contemporary, sectarian having external offshoots as well. In this context, the case of Balochistan can be well understood through its geography and spread of population. Quetta, Mastung, Kachhi district(Bolan), Jal Magsi, Sibi and Pashtun populated areas are dominated with religious tendencies whereas Dera Bugti, Kohlu, Nasirabad and Jaffarabad,²⁴ are highly tribal structured areas where ethnic separatist element is dominant. Along with this, Makran belt is non-tribal in nature with certain clusters of nationalist as well as sectarian pockets. From the past few years, Makran belt has faced some terrorist attacks which are linked with the energy corridor politics of CPEC. Therefore, the role of external forces is also evident in these areas.
- In case of Balochistan, the external stimuli for the militant groups is mainly driven by the use of force by the federal government, resource distribution and ethnic marginalization on the basis of which groups have taken a militant and separatist posture. Militants derive their strength within the local strata mainly ethnic and in certain cases from religious doctrine. In addition to that, identity based factors also facilitate the groups to maintain the valor and motivation within the group. These ideological traits act as a main incentive for the recruits of militant groups to take part in the organizational activities. Thus, ethnic and religious reasons provide a cause to a militant group on the basis of which their organizations sustain. Likewise, Rethemeyer explains the link between the ideology of the organization and its lethality. Ideology in this regard provides a framework under which a group operates and set its targets.²⁶ The ideological beliefs and values provide a benchmark to distinguish between themselves and others.²⁷ Othering separates their own group with all others on the basis of which militant groups legitimize their lethal actions against others.
- US approach towards this area has also been critical. In 2012, the way US Senate committee on foreign relations discussed the Balochistan issue, it was condemned by Pakistan at national level. Moreover, support for an independent Balochistan by few US senators provides an insight into the thinking pattern that prevails in the US policy circles.⁷⁹ Moreover, socio political and strategic realities of Afghanistan and Iran has a profound influence on overall security environment of the province. Besides this, federal government, spokesperson of armed forces and intelligence reports on India's role in destabilizing the area is yet another factor which supports militant manifestations in Balochistan. Arrest of Kulbhoshan Yadav is an example.
- political instability, systemic flaws, societal grievances and formation of ethnic and religious clusters illustrate the context of militancy in Balochistan.
- the geographical location of Balochistan which provides a safe haven for militants to operate and connect across the border as well. That is the reason that after military operation in the tribal belt of Pakistan, mostly religiously grounded and transnational militant groups shifted their activities in Balochistan. They are now being contained by the armed forces of Pakistan through different intelligence based operations and fencing of border.

Militant groups in Balochistan

Greater Balochistan and Separatist groups	Militant and sectarian groups	Transnational groups that function between Afghanistan and Pakistan	Militant groups that function between Iran and Pakistan
Baloch Republican Army (BRA)	Tehrik Taliban Pakistan (TTP)	Al Qaeda	Baloch Raaji Aajoi Sangar (BRAS)
Baloch Liberation Army (BLA)	Ghazi Force (splinter group of TTP)	Islamic State (IS)	Jaish al Adl (Army of Justice)
Balochistan Student Organization (BSO) – Azad	Lashkar e Jangvi Al Alami LeJ-AL	Hizbul Ahrar (HuA)	-
Lashkar e Balochistan	Difa-e-Balochistan		

Political culture of pak

- Pakistan's political system biggest failure? Inability to hold credible and transparent elections. Why? No consensus among political parties on the reforms required to safeguard against electoral malpractice. Why? Acute polarization, a hallmark of country's politics, possibly the biggest hurdle that stops political stakeholders from sitting across the table.
- Connection btw Polarized politics and fake news. How? in polarised society and politics people choose to believe what their partisan side transmits or what accords with their own views. They only listen to news media or follow online sites which echo their own bias.
- There are two ways one can make an effort to alter the behavior of a nation-state. One is to learn lessons from your own history; and two, learn pertinent lessons from the history of other nations.
- The story of betrayal is the folklore from our history of the young man Sirajud Daulah, the last independent Nawab of Bengal. The conqueror of Fort Williams, the Headquarters of East India Company in Calcutta, who was defeated in the Battle of Plassey by the British in 1757 because his general, Mir Jaffer, betrayed him. The end of the story of Sirajud Daula at the young age of 24 years in Bengal laid the foundation of the beginning of the story of East India Company's rule in Bengal and later in entire India. 'National betrayal' is a lesson that none of us should ever forget.
- the illiterate electorate is kept deliberately illiterate which is happy praising, admiring, clapping and voting a political elite to power which like the Mughals is very rich but is intellectually very ordinary and politically mediocre. Politics in Pakistan continues to stumble backwards because of Mir Jaffer-like intrigues.
- THE regulation of **political finance** (PF) offers one of the greatest challenges to democracies around the world. Political parties, elected legislators and governments can become hostage to powerful and extremely rich interest groups, if political finance is not effectively regulated and institutions entrusted with the task don't have robust capacity to enforce the regulations. It is true that political parties and election campaigns require funds for political participation and representation, but ineffective regulation of the flow of money in politics can corrupt political institutions and lead to political corruption and damage public trust in democratic institutions and processes.
- Members of parliament have a responsibility to the people who elected them; to do the job for which their constituents have sent them to the legislature. They have a responsibility to the

country's taxpayers too. After all it is taxpayers' money that pays for their salaries and the many perks they enjoy. Therefore, they also have a responsibility to the country, not just to their political constituency.

- Of course, it is the deepening political polarisation in the country which often drives unparliamentary conduct. The unrestrained and intemperate language used by many MPs is a reflection of this as well as the dominant political culture that sees the ethic of war — to subdue the 'enemy' — rather than the ethic of competition as their guiding 'principle'. This rules out efforts to engage rivals or show them any respect.
- What gets lost in this deeply polarised environment is the obligation to work parliament in the public interest. If parliament's role is to legislate, debate and inform, then disorderly behaviour is tantamount to a dereliction of duty and responsibility. Political leaders and members of the assemblies never cease to declare their commitment to parliament's supremacy, but these claims sound hollow coming from those who engage in rowdy behaviour on the floor of the House.
- If the ruling party treats parliament as a means only to maintain the government in power rather than as an instrument of governance this has a bearing on parliament's functioning. Its role as a forum to initiate and shape laws, articulate and debate policy is left diminished. When the leader of the House barely comes to parliament this not only signals lack of interest but also sets an example for senior ministers to routinely skip attending the Assembly.
- Lawmaking by executive fiat also marginalises parliament's role. The PTI government has relied more on promulgating ordinances for its legislative agenda than legislating by parliament. It may be following an inglorious tradition but it has now beaten the record of two predecessor governments in issuing ordinances, according to an assessment by Pildat. The great value of parliamentary debate is that it mobilises consensus, builds legitimacy for government measures and galvanises support for its policies. Lawmaking by ordinance denudes the government of these benefits and prevents wider ownership of laws that are decreed in this manner or rushed through parliament without discussion.
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- The opposition too has an obligation to participate with earnestness in parliamentary proceedings. But the major opposition parties have not engaged in a sustained or consistent way in the Assembly. They have often swung between boycotts, walkouts, disruptive actions and even threats to resign from membership. The opposition should use parliament as a forum to articulate policy alternatives and present solutions to national problems in addition to subjecting government measures to critical scrutiny. Irrespective of how treasury benches act, opposition members can seize the initiative by proposing legislation, initiate debate on key issues and vigorously perform the function of oversight of executive actions.
- There is another reason for the diminished role of parliament as a debating chamber. 24/7 television news channels with their proliferation of talk shows have increasingly become the main platform for political debate. Appearing on television gives instant, high visibility, and is therefore prioritised over Assembly attendance by most political leaders. This affects parliament's deliberative role. Media engagement is of course essential in politics today but that should not mean lawmakers treat television appearances as a substitute for parliamentary duties.

AI/Tech/digitalization

- During the Cold War, summit meetings between the United States and the Soviet Union were often dominated by agreements to set limits on nuclear weapons and the systems built to deliver them. The US and Russia still discuss these topics, but at their recent meeting in Geneva, US President Joe Biden and Russian President Vladimir Putin focused in no small part on how to regulate behavior in a different realm: cyberspace. The stakes are every bit as great.
- It's not hard to see why. Cyberspace and the internet are central to the workings of modern economies, societies, political systems, militaries, and just about everything else, which makes digital infrastructure a tempting target for those seeking to cause extraordinary disruption and damage at minimal cost.
- Moreover, states and nonstate actors can carry out cyberattacks with a high degree of deniability, which adds to the temptation to develop and use these capabilities. We know when and from where a missile is launched, but it can take a long time to discover that a cyberattack has occurred, and figuring out who is responsible can take even longer. Such a slow and uncertain attribution process can render the threat of retaliation, which is at the heart of deterrence, beyond reach.
- China reportedly gained access in 2015 to 22 million US government personnel files – which include information that could help determine who was or is working for the US intelligence community.
- Likewise, North Korea attacked Sony (and compromised all sorts of private communications) in an effort to block distribution of a satirical film that depicted the assassination of the country's leader.
- Russian interference in US elections
- One promising idea would be to follow up on what Biden and Putin discussed, namely, to ban the targeting of critical infrastructure, including but not limited to dams, oil and gas production facilities, electrical grids, health-care facilities, nuclear power plants and nuclear weapon command and control systems, airports, and major factories. Cyber capability can become a weapon of mass destruction when such important sites are compromised.
- Even with such an agreement, verifying compliance could prove impossible, so the US would also want to introduce a degree of deterrence to ensure that parties to such a pledge honor it. Deterrence could involve the declared willingness to carry out symmetrical responses: if you target or attack our critical infrastructure, we will do the same to yours. Deterrence could also be asymmetrical: if you target or attack our facilities, we will sanction you or target your interests elsewhere.
- Over time, a US-Russia pact could serve as a model that could be joined by China, Europe, and others. If it were extended to China, prohibitions on the theft of intellectual property (and penalties for violating the ban) could be added. None of this adds up to disarmament, but it is the cyber equivalent of arms control, which is as good a place to start as any.
- Bitcoin mining used more elec than whole of the Netherlands. The Economist
- According to recent GSMA report on mobile money, globally cross-border remittances processed via mobile money increased by 65% in 2020 (to \$12 billion), reaching over \$1 billion in transactions sent and received each month.
- Regulation of cyberspace also should be a high priority. The world's leading powers have remarkable offensive capabilities in this realm, but their high degree of digital connectivity makes them vulnerable, as the recent cyberattack on the largest US oil pipeline has shown. These powers

must urgently agree on a set of ground rules that promote security in cyberspace and address the potentially harmful effects of artificial intelligence. Some progress is already being made in this regard within the UN.

- **Democracy**

- The “Stop the Steal” campaign that took root after Trump’s electoral loss last November, and fueled the Capitol insurrection, was based on no evidence. But, aided by social media, it spread rapidly among his supporters, where it found fertile ground and remains entrenched.
- While populism is hardly new, the internet – especially social media – has enabled misinformation and reckless promises to be disseminated more efficiently than ever before.
- Traditional conflicts and wars saw confronting states or their proxies strategizing to overpower their adversary in the domains of air, sea, land, and space. Now cyberspace has quickly become the fifth domain of warfare, with the keyboard and mouse appearing to be the modern arms of choice. In 2010, the US acknowledged cyberspace as an operational domain stating that “cybersecurity threats represent one of the most serious national security, public safety, and economic challenges we face as a nation.”[1] Former CIA Director Leon Panetta, in 2011, even warned that “the next Pearl Harbour could very well be a cyberattack.”
- Owing to its virtual nature, the threat landscape has expanded immeasurably, where security concerns engender from faceless and indistinguishable adversaries. Digital technologies have also accelerated the rise of non-state actors as significant entities in world politics. According to Sun Tzu, victory can be accomplished by subduing the enemy without even fighting.[12] Such a pursuit of triumph without sending a soldier across the border happens the best in cyberspace.
- Cyberattacks, without causing direct injury to humans, have ensured harm to physical infrastructure worth billions, which eventually affect human lives. The notorious Shamoon attack on Saudi Aramco[15] and the 2015 cyber-attack targeting Ukrainian power distribution[16] are few instances of adversaries exploiting cyber fragility around the world. Besides the damage to physical infrastructure, cyber-attacks have resulted in enormous data breaches at MNCs and government agencies causing financial loss and leaking confidential information and intellectual property. Much below this institutional level of destruction, the lives of individuals have been afflicted due to cybercrimes. Millions of LinkedIn log-in details were up for grab on the dark web courtesy of a massive cyber-attack, costing many their privacy and virtual lives.
- Cyberspace has not only subverted political boundaries but also shaken the roots of the Westphalian system that gave precedence to states. The absence of geographical borders and the apparent opacity in this fifth domain of warfare have allowed a surfeit of malicious non-state actors to come up as security threats. Georgian cyber-attacks before the 2008 Georgia-Russia War started and Anonymous group’s Operation Israel demonstrate the fervid rise of cyber non-state actors.
- Joseph Nye suggests deterrence by denial in cyberspace; deterring an attack by fortifying own defensive capabilities to make the cost of the adversary’s gains prohibitive.[26] It means. He says building good cyber-defences will ensure “chewing up attacker’s resources and time” and “disrupts the cost-benefit model that creates an incentive for attack.”
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- How states would rise and decline by 2040 would immensely depend on how they adapt to new technologies especially Artificial Intelligence (AI), automation and biotechnology. The uses of

technology would have economic, social and international impacts in positioning Pakistan to remain relevant in the global arena. This is what the US Global Trends 2040 report prophesises.

- AI is to get done by machines what we, humans, do at the moment. The next elevation will be Artificial General Intelligence (AGI), which will enable machines to exceed the known limits of human understanding and capacities.
- AI shall be replacing jobs and transforming the working force while at the same time, it shall be creating even more than the jobs it will be replacing. This means there will be more jobs available in 2040 than now but these will orient around the principles and capabilities of the discipline of AI.
- Pakistan is estimated to reach the median age of 30 years by 2040 which is as much of good news as much as it rings alarms. Having a huge youth population by 2040 would mean tapping more opportunities but would require strategic planning from now. Time game allows us 20 years as a formative period, in which a child admitted in grade one today will be able to meet our demands and address our needs in the fields of AI and perhaps AGI, by 2040.
- This will create global markets for our youth as developed economies are fast aging. The median age in Japan, South Korea and Europe will pass the threshold of 45 years which means more elderly people and this would weigh in on their economies.
- What makes the field of AI even more appealing and dangerous would be its application to geopolitics changing the structures of global power. Militaries would be compelled to admixture AI in their arsenal philosophies. AI is already on the way to space as scripted in the report and this would enhance and transform how space diplomacy has been carried out since Neil Armstrong.
- We must at least do two things as of this moment.
- Firstly, the present curriculum must incorporate the knowledge of AI and thus far-related contours especially biotechnology.
- Second, we need a dedicated AI national curriculum. This would be exclusively looking at educating those who are not yet in schools. This could give us the upper hand that we must have in 2040. With such a curriculum, a whole new AI infrastructure including human and material resource would be required and that must be initiated from now. If we could acquire some headway in the discipline of technology, this would affect us in the trio arenas of society, state and the international world. This is how we will still be relevant in 2040 otherwise irrelevance then would be more consequential than our irrelevance before at the juncture of globalisation.
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- Intellectual Property must serve the global good, rather than humanity serving the interests of a few private companies. And in the case of COVID-19, the global good is not in doubt: rapid worldwide immunization, in order to save lives, prevent the emergence of new variants, and end the pandemic.
- The pharmaceutical industry and the governments of several vaccine-producing countries, including the United States and the United Kingdom, as well as the European Commission, have been resisting the IP waiver, while 150 public leaders and experts have sent an open letter to US President Joe Biden in support of it. There is no longer any question about who is right.
- The companies are even trying to turn their opposition to an IP waiver into a geopolitical issue, arguing that China and Russia must be prevented from gaining the knowhow to produce mRNA vaccines. This argument is immoral, indeed potentially homicidal. If opposition to IP waivers slows

the production of effective vaccines in China and Russia, it would directly endanger Americans, Europeans, and everyone else. Financial Times

- The relevant international law, known as the TRIPS (Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights) Agreement, already recognizes the right and occasional need of governments to override IP in the case of public health emergencies by invoking a compulsory license. A compulsory license gives local companies the right to use patent-protected IP.
- It is likely that Brazil, China, India, Russia, and South Africa could develop the capacity for increasing the global supply of COVID-19 vaccines. Yet these countries are reluctant to invoke compulsory licenses for fear of retaliation by the US Government or other governments where patent-holders are based. The proposed general waiver of IP would overcome the fear of each country in invoking a compulsory license, and would solve other heavy bureaucratic obstacles in using compulsory licenses. A waiver would also be helpful for non-vaccine technologies (solvents and reagents, vaccine vials, test kits, and so forth).
- The prime minister recently kicked off the distribution of Kissan Cards, one of the government's most significant efforts to digitise the economy. The Kissan Card scheme aims to streamline the administration of various government programmes that support farmers while also making them more transparent. The cards consolidate recipients' information on a digital platform accessible by all district administrations. The platform contains information such as demographics, contact details, crops and landholding patterns, livestock, details on the local irrigation system, and levels of mechanisation. This helps with the appropriate allocation of schemes — the right scheme for the right farmers — and also helps quickly and reliably send information such as weather reports or emergency warnings to farmers.
- the cards would also help reduce graft by making it harder to pay or ask for bribes as subsidy payments would be based on data that is already in the government's network, thus reducing the role of local administration officials in approving or denying access to assistance.
- The card will also eventually be used as the basis for affordable loans, which are a necessity for subsistence farmers and lack of which is a major reason for rural poverty — farmers lacking access to loans will often end up borrowing at astronomical rates.
- As a knock-on effect, improved farming efficiency and reduced production costs through cheaper financing may also help lower open market prices for many food items, which would be hugely beneficial for the rest of the population.
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- IN a meeting on the President's Initiative for Cyber Efficient Parliament on Wednesday, President Arif Alvi expressed his desire to see parliamentary operations completely digitised by January 2023. In the first phase of this initiative, the minister for information technology and telecommunication has said, agendas of sessions of both houses of parliament and their committees, motions, proceedings, etc would be presented through a computerised system. Though there are not enough details at present to scrutinise the plan in depth, and there are likely to be implementation challenges (such as cybersecurity, data protection and technology literacy among parliamentarians) the drive to automate operations is in general a welcome move towards modernising and streamlining parliamentary procedures and records management.
- this effort can lay the groundwork for increasing transparency and public participation with their elected representatives. A fully digitised information management system can provide interesting opportunities to expand and improve the way that open data is made available to citizens. An

accessible, searchable public dashboard that is updated in real time, for example, and which eventually includes digitised archives of past sessions of the National Assembly and Senate and members' voting records, can prove to be a much greater resource for journalists, researchers and the general voting public than government websites in their current state. Several studies have found that a key barrier in greater citizen engagement is knowledge of how parliament works.

- Used strategically, technology can bridge the gap between constituents and parliamentarians, enhancing decision-making and promoting civic education. Both governmental and non-governmental initiatives (such as the UK's TheyWorkForYou) have shown promising results in this regard. But an increasing reliance on technology can also widen inequalities between online and offline populations unless also supplemented with a holistic strategy to improve digital literacy and internet access. There is plenty of potential in digitising parliament, provided that the key aims of building transparency, trust and participation remain in the foreground.
- Under an ongoing research project, the **Population Council** has developed a mobile app that identifies beneficiaries of the **Benazir Income Support Program** (BISP) who may be eligible for family planning services. The app allows providers to store client data and counsel clients in selecting a method of their choice using a decision-making algorithm. The app also generates a voucher for reimbursing service provider fees and travel costs to the client.
- At the start of the pandemic, the Society of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists of Pakistan (SOGP), Aman Foundation, and the Population Council, with the support of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), initiated telemedicine services by launching a helpline for women and men to consult qualified healthcare providers on a range of reproductive health issues. The helpline enabled callers from all over Pakistan, including some from remote locations, to seek free medical advice. With UNFPA support, the Population Council also tapped digital and social media to spread messages recorded by obstetricians and gynaecologists in regional languages on how women could protect themselves during the pandemic and what pregnant women should do to deliver safely.
- The pandemic also brought to the fore the utility of the National Database and Registration Authority (NADRA), particularly for Covid vaccination. The NADRA database is helping to stratify the population by age; identify the nearest vaccination centres; issue codes to identify eligible citizens; calculate dates for second doses; and convey this information efficiently via mobile.
- Strengthening NADRA's current Civil Registration Management system by encouraging registration of vital events such as births, deaths, marriages, and annulments — either by making such registration mandatory or by incentivising it — would help in various health promotion activities. For instance, the database of registered births could be linked to calculate the immunisation schedule of every new-born and accordingly send text messages to parents informing them of vaccination due dates.
- ON Friday, Pakistan blocked all popular social media and internet messaging applications including Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, TikTok, and WhatsApp for four hours across the country to “maintain public order” in anticipation of protests by the recently banned TLP. Such blocking undermines fundamental rights, impacts an already fragile economy, defies logic of security, and punishes citizens for the state's mistakes.
- This should be a cause of alarm and concern. Such a disproportionate measure in the name of maintaining ‘public order’ is a gross violation of the basic rights of Pakistani citizens, as the

Constitution protects the right to freedom of speech, right to information, right to education, right to livelihood and freedom of association. Whereas constitutional rights are “subject to law”, even the draconian Section 37 of the Prevention of Electronic Crimes Act, 2016, stipulates blocking or removal of unlawful online content, but nowhere does it allow a pre-emptive blanket blocking of all social media applications and websites.

- Attempts by the government to criminalise criticism, block access to platforms and grant the authorities sweeping powers of surveillance are a normalised reality. Digital rights activists have repeatedly criticised the social media rules framed under the Prevention of Electronic Crimes Act, 2016, through which the government can block and remove content it deems unlawful.

Global Cyber-security governance

- During the 14th annual meeting of the Internet Governance Forum (IGF) in November 2019, UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres posted a ‘Tweet’ of encouragement: “Access to a free and open Internet is at risk. We aren’t working together across siloed social, economic and political divides. But that can change”.
- According to Greiman, “cyberspace includes, but is not coextensive with, the Internet” (Greiman 2018, 149). Cyberspace is often described as borderless (Mihir 2014, 24), but this assumption should not be accepted without critical consideration.
- the politics of cyberspace depends on cooperation between a diverse set of stakeholders. Rather than relying on a strictly state-centred approach, state and non-state actors must be considered to helpfully develop governing structures (DeNardis 2014, 14). This idea of multistakeholderism is reflected in discussions from the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) in 2003 and 2005. Sponsored by the United Nations, the two-part summit produced a coherent definition of internet governance: “Internet governance is the development and application by governments, the private sector and civil society, in their respective roles, of shared principles, norms, rules, decision-making procedures and programmes that shape the evolution and use of the Internet”.
- this approach has many benefits: it recognises the uneven landscape of actors in cyberspace and encourages participation from a multitude of actors in policy making and enforcement (Carr 2015, 549). However, as Carr points out, the approach does have significant weaknesses. Multistakeholderism, as it stands, risks reinforcing and reproducing existing power dynamics where the US, and her western allies, dominate the playing field (Carr 2015, 658). Cattaruzza et al. (2016) expand this, pointing to a dynamic with the United States and her allies celebrating multi-stakeholder governance and others, most notably Russia and China, defending ‘cyber sovereignty’ with a state-focused approach. the core principles of current understandings of internet governance are in themselves a manifestation of broader power dynamics.
- Sabillon et al. (2016) find that though many countries have developed national cybersecurity strategies, there is little effort spent on the international standardization of cybersecurity policies. The topic of international consideration is largely neglected in national cybersecurity strategies.
- there have been many important developments since then. Using the EU to illustrate this point, the Union implemented the standardised European Data Protection Regulation in May 2018 (Laybats and Davies 2018, 81). There has also been an increased focus on the development of

national cybersecurity strategies within the EU in general over the last decade, with emphasis on knowledge sharing and collaboration (ENISA 2020). There does seem to be tendencies for states with well-established political and economic relationships to work together to coordinate cybersecurity practices. However, the tendencies still point to an overemphasis on national considerations in a domain which is often considered “borderless.” Furthermore, the issue becomes even more complicated when considering states with weaker cooperative traditions, as was previously discussed with reference how the Western and American approaches to cybersecurity governance differ from Chinese and Russian strategies.

- there is indeed a great deal of fragmentation, and that the fragmentation can be traced back to the very basic understanding of what cyber governance is. Accepting that the fragmentation is present in global cybersecurity governance, considerations should turn to how the fragmentation can best be managed to avoid significant disruptions. What should global cybersecurity governance look like? Is fragmentation really such a bad thing? Identifying the fragmentation in global cybersecurity governance, some scholars suggest value-based remedies. Anja Mihr (2014) calls for more unity in cyber governance and advocates for a human rights-based approach. She argues that more accountability, transparency and stakeholder participation is needed and looks to universal human rights norms as benchmark guidance for establishing norms in cyberspace, thus creating a foundation for good cyber governance (ibid. 25). In a similar vein, Mark Fliegauf (2016) urges the international community to establish norms and shared codes of conduct in cyberspace to avoid a downward spiral of militarisation and distrust which ultimately compromises the foundational integrity of cyberspace. He highlights the conflicting behaviour of states working to protect national infrastructures while at the same time seeking to exploit vulnerabilities abroad (ibid. 79). Fliegauf acknowledges that establishing global cyber governance structures will be difficult and even goes to the extent of calling the task “Herculean” (ibid. 80). However, he stresses that the success of the project will depend on the credible commitment of all relevant parties, and proposes that the project should be overseen by “smart American leadership” (ibid. 81), arguing that the US already has a leading role by pointing to their efforts within the UN Group of Governmental Experts (GGE).
- For Mihr and Fliegauf, the absence of coherent values is a hindrance to cyber governance. They reason that more coherent values would therefore lead to greater unity in global cyber governance. There are certainly many examples of institutions and countries who vow to govern cyberspace with certain values in mind. For example, the 2018 US National Cyber Strategy is “anchored by enduring American values, such as the belief in the power of individual liberty, free expression, free markets, and privacy” (White House 2018, 12). However, the idea that the fragmentation of global cyber governance can be remedied through a common adherence to certain norms and values fails to acknowledge how larger power dynamics are reflected in cyber security considerations. This can be exemplified with reference to the GGE.
- The GGE was a group of governmental experts set up by the UN Secretary-General to study security and cyber technology (Henriksen 2018, 2). Determining the application of international law to cybersecurity sets out the legitimate scope of state activity in cyberspace. These debates are therefore strategically significant. In 2017, one year after Fliegauf’s article was published, negotiations broke down during the GGE’s fifth session. Discussions broke down when Cuban, Russian, and Chinese representatives objected to the application of international humanitarian law to cybersecurity due to fundamental differences in ideology and political interests (ibid. 3).

For China in particular, the term “cyber sovereignty” is key and is often used in contrast to the western focus on a free and open internet (Cuihong 2018, 65). The key Chinese concern was centred around the potential for national cyber sovereignty to be compromised in order to protect the integrity of international humanitarian law in cyberspace. Grigsby contextualises this discussion by pointing out that Russia and China on the one hand and the US on the other have fundamentally different understandings of cyber conflict. While the US understands cybersecurity as “the protection of bits,” meaning software and hardware, from unauthorised access, China and Russia focus on information security, with emphasis on state control and sovereignty (Grigsby 2017, 114). The fragmentation of cybersecurity governance relies on differences in deeply held political beliefs and practices. Therefore, the hypothetical success of a values-based approach to global cyber governance would necessarily rely on fundamental ideological shifts in international politics overall. This is unlikely to happen in the foreseeable future.

- fragmentation does not necessarily mean that any attempt at global cybersecurity governance will be dead on arrival. Brechbühl et al. (2010) insist that productive cybersecurity depends on a network of cooperation. Therefore, local or regional policy development does not exclude international efforts to develop cybersecurity policy. The authors find that a robust global cybersecurity approach will depend on a network of shared responsibility between and among all relevant stakeholders. It is challenging to assign responsibilities and rights within a diverse and evolving group of stakeholders, which again complicates the creation of public policies on the matter (ibid. 84). To counteract this, the authors suggest that stakeholders must communicate with each other regarding shared responsibilities and interests, thus forming networks of ties from which a structure of governance can emerge (ibid. 85). Cybersecurity is not an individual endeavour but relies on a sense of collective responsibility (ibid. 87). In this sense, seemingly fragmented approaches to organise cyberspace can indeed contribute to a network of global governance.
- Moving away from value-based aspirations of unity in cybersecurity governance, then, it is helpful to look briefly to alternative, low threshold strategies which encourage cooperation among relevant actors. Raymond acknowledges that “Even the most optimistic projection for the nascent cyber-regime complex must acknowledge that, for the foreseeable future, most governance will remain decentralized” (Raymond 2016, 124). Raymond actually echoes Mihr and Fliegauf in identifying that the main obstacle to united cyber policy is the difference in values and interests. Crucially however, he turns to pragmatics to remedy this challenge, with the Responsibility to Troubleshoot (R2T) as an alternative or supplement to more substantial international legal norms on cybersecurity. Raymond points out that the negative consequences of cyber activity are rarely intentional and determining intention can often be tricky. Furthermore, the diversity of actors in cyberspace further complicates the security landscape (ibid. 134). With this in mind the R2T, inspired by the Responsibility to Protect (R2P), would be a responsibility for relevant actors to troubleshoot when something does go wrong in an effort to mitigate undesirable disruptions in cyberspace. This, Raymond reasons, is more likely to gather broad support than more substantive laws or norms. Likewise, Grigsby (2017) also encourages his readers to move away from expectations of unifying cybersecurity governance. In lieu of international norms, Grigsby turns to confidence-building measures (CBMs). Though he does not completely rule out the establishment of broader norms, he sees CBMs as a feasible temporary fix which could help to establish a certain level of trust between actors in cyberspace.

Pakistan

Long-term vision

Distribution of grants and creation of fancy incubation spaces (by a debt-ridden government) for entrepreneurs won't help grow the start-up ecosystem unless it is accompanied by bold reforms by the State Bank, the Securities & Exchange Commission of Pakistan and the Federal Board of Revenue. Investors must be able to repatriate their funds. Entrepreneurs should neither have to spend three months setting up a company and getting it registered, nor an additional few months trying to open a corporate bank account and setting up payroll. The distribution of laptops and internet dongles to students, while noble, does not solve the core problem around access. Making access to the internet (both devices and data) more affordable can have a multiplier effect on connectivity, which has been globally proven to be the single biggest democratising force.

five streams need to be running in parallel and complementing each other: 1) access and connectivity, 2) digital infrastructure (which is the most underrated), 3) e-governance, 4) digital skills and literacy, and 5) innovation and entrepreneurship. We need crystal-clear short-, medium- and long-term key performance indicators for each stream and, most importantly, we need to ensure that the relevant stakeholders take ownership so that they can be held accountable against those goals.

Strong digital identity and digital infrastructure

A critical piece of any type of digital transformation is digital identity, which is why it's unsettling that our mainstream discourse and understanding of the subject hardly ever brings up Nadra.

Success in bringing about reform in any sector depends a lot on your ability to leverage digital identity. This is true for land, education, health, tax — you name it. Are you giving out benefits to the right people? Are you vaccinating the right people? Are you collecting tax from the right people? The list goes on and on.

In Pakistan we needed to invest in five interconnected areas that can drive true digital transformation:

- Digital identity: A universal biometric digital identity, in line with inter-governmental standards.
- Digital data: A digital repository of personal data and records for every citizen and business, including domicile, property, employment, education, health, taxes, etc.
- Digital signatures: Digital signatures, like wet signatures, that allow digital signoff on documents. The citizen or business is in control of who can access their personal data.
- Digital payments: A real time, low-cost digital payments system that facilitates faster, cheaper and easier commerce between citizens, businesses, and the government.
- Digital services: Infrastructure that allows each citizen and business to approve sharing their data with government and private-sector systems, to receive a variety of personalised, seamless services (eg grants, loans, insurance, taxes, voting etc.)

In particular, the digital services sector offers unique and untapped potential that can help Pakistan accelerate and leapfrog past other countries to become a global leader in digital government and digital citizenship. With this digital infrastructure in place, developers, start-ups, businesses and government departments can innovate on unique use cases to make citizens' lives easier. So the bottom line is that unless we have an independent Nadra with a visionary leader who understands exactly how important

digital identity is for unlocking nationwide cross-sector reform, we will continue being incremental in our approach.

Right people for the right role

We need the right people for the right job not just at Nadra but any institution that's meant to play a crucial role in our digital journey. We need people who are doers and want to get stuff done — people who don't bring politics into delivery and don't chase clout. It is critical to understand that the wrong person leading an organisation with money at their disposal is more dangerous than not having a leader. We need to champion both meritocracy and open-mindedness in our approach to human resourcing to make a real dent in any sector. Information technology is no exception. In fact, considering that it's a particularly specialised field with constant innovation across the globe, excellent human resource is perhaps all the more important in this industry.

New concert of powers

- As Asia continues its economic ascent, two centuries of Western domination of the world, first under Pax Britannica and then under Pax Americana, are coming to an end. The West is losing not only its material dominance but also its ideological sway. Around the world, democracies are falling prey to illiberalism and populist dissension while a rising China, assisted by a pugnacious Russia, seeks to challenge the West's authority and republican approaches to both domestic and international governance.
- even if Western democracies overcome polarization, beat back illiberalism, and pull off an economic rebound, they will not forestall the arrival of a world that is both multipolar and ideologically diverse. The best vehicle for promoting stability in the twenty-first century is a global concert of major powers. As the history of the nineteenth-century Concert of Europe demonstrated—its members were the United Kingdom, France, Russia, Prussia, and Austria—a steering group of leading countries can curb the geopolitical and ideological competition that usually accompanies multipolarity.
- Concerts have two characteristics that make them well suited to the emerging global landscape: political inclusivity and procedural informality. A concert's inclusivity means that it puts at the table the geopolitically influential and powerful states that need to be there, regardless of their regime type. In so doing, it largely separates ideological differences over domestic governance from matters of international cooperation. A concert's informality means that it eschews binding and enforceable procedures and agreements, clearly distinguishing it from the UN Security Council. The UNSC serves too often as a public forum for grandstanding and is regularly paralyzed by disputes among its veto-wielding permanent members. In contrast, a concert offers a private venue that combines consensus building with cajoling and jockeying—a must since major powers will have both common and competing interests.
- A global concert would be a consultative, not a decision-making, body. It would address emerging crises yet ensure that urgent issues would not crowd out important ones. This steering group would help fashion new rules of the road and build support for collective initiatives but leave operational matters, such as deploying peacekeeping missions, delivering pandemic relief, and concluding new climate deals, to the UN and other existing bodies. It would sit atop and backstop,

not supplant, the current international architecture by maintaining a dialogue that does not now exist. The UN is too big, too bureaucratic, and too formalistic.

- Fashioning major-power consensus on the international norms that guide statecraft, accepting both liberal and illiberal governments as legitimate and authoritative, advancing shared approaches to crises—the Concert of Europe relied on these important innovations to preserve peace in a multipolar world. By drawing on lessons from its nineteenth-century forbearer, a twenty-first-century global concert can do the same. Concerts do lack the certitude, predictability, and enforceability of alliances and other formalized pacts. But in designing mechanisms to preserve peace amid geopolitical flux, policymakers should strive for the workable and the attainable, not the desirable but impossible.
- A global concert, like the Concert of Europe, is well suited to promoting stability amid multipolarity. Concerts limit their membership to a manageable size. Their informality allows them to adapt to changing circumstances and prevents them from scaring off powers averse to binding commitments. Under conditions of rising populism and nationalism, widespread during the nineteenth century and again today, powerful countries prefer looser groupings and diplomatic flexibility to fixed formats and obligations. It is no accident that major states have already been turning to concert-like groupings or so-called contact groups to tackle tough challenges; examples include the six-party talks that addressed North Korea's nuclear program, the P5+1 coalition that negotiated the 2015 Iran nuclear deal, and the Normandy grouping that has been seeking a diplomatic resolution to the conflict in eastern Ukraine.
- The international order that comes next must make room for ideological diversity. A concert has the necessary informality and flexibility to do so; it separates issues of domestic rule from those of international teamwork. During the nineteenth century, it was precisely this hands-off approach to regime type that enabled two liberalizing powers—the United Kingdom and France—to work with Russia, Prussia, and Austria, three countries determined to defend absolute monarchy.

Alternatives

- Globalization unfolded during Pax Britannica, with London overseeing it until World War I. After a dark interwar hiatus, the United States took up the mantle of global leadership from World War II into the twenty-first century.
- But Pax Americana is now running on fumes. The United States and its traditional democratic partners have neither the capability nor the will to anchor an interdependent international system and universalize the liberal order that they erected after World War II. The absence of U.S. leadership during the COVID-19 crisis was striking; each country was on its own. President Biden is guiding the United States back to being a team player, but the nation's pressing domestic priorities and the onset of multipolarity will deny Washington the outsize influence it once enjoyed. Allowing the world to slide toward regional blocs or a two-bloc structure similar to that of the Cold War is a nonstarter. The United States, China, and the rest of the globe cannot fully uncouple when national economies, financial markets, and supply chains are irreversibly tethered together. A great-power steering group is the best option for managing an integrated world no longer overseen by a hegemon. A global concert fits the bill.
- The **alternatives** to a global concert all have disqualifying weaknesses. Although the UN will remain an essential global forum, its track record illuminates the body's limitations. Veto-

producing disagreements often render the Security Council helpless. Its permanent members reflect the world of 1945, not the world today. Expanding the membership of the UNSC might succeed in adapting it to a new distribution of power, but doing so would also make the body even more unwieldy and less effective than it already is. The UN should continue to fulfill its many useful functions, including providing humanitarian relief and peacekeeping, but it cannot and will not anchor global stability in the twenty-first century.

- It is no longer realistic to aim for the **globalization of the Western order** and the emergence of a world populated primarily by democracies committed to upholding a liberal, rules-based international system. The unipolar moment is over, and in hindsight, talk of the “end of history” was triumphalist, even if sophisticated, nonsense. Indeed, the political coherence of the West can by no means be taken for granted. Even if Western democracies reclaim their commitments to republican ideals and to one another, they simply will not have the material strength or political wherewithal to universalize the liberal international order.
- A **U.S.-Chinese condominium**—in effect a G-2 in which Washington and Beijing would together oversee a mutually acceptable international order—offers a similarly flawed alternative. Even if these two peer competitors could find a way to dampen their intensifying rivalry, much of the world will remain outside of their direct purview. Moreover, predicated global stability on cooperation between Washington and Beijing is hardly a safe bet. They will have enough trouble managing their relationship in the Asia-Pacific region. Farther afield, they will need considerable buy-in and support from others. A U.S.-Chinese condominium also smacks of a world of spheres of influence—one in which Washington and Beijing agree to divide their sway along geographic lines, perhaps apportioning rights and responsibilities to second-tier powers in their respective regions. To give China, Russia, or other powers a free hand in their neighbourhoods, however, is to encourage expansionist tendencies and to either reduce nearby countries’ autonomy or prompt them to push back, resulting in more arms proliferation and regional conflict. Indeed, the precise purpose of thinking through how to provide order in the twenty-first century is to avoid a world more prone to coercion, rivalry, and economic division.
- **Pax Sinica** is also a nonstarter. For the foreseeable future, China will have neither the capability nor the ambition to anchor a global order. At least for now, its primary geopolitical ambitions are confined to the Asia-Pacific. China is markedly expanding its commercial reach, in particular through the Belt and Road Initiative, a move that will significantly enhance its economic and political clout. But Beijing has not yet demonstrated a robust willingness to provide global public goods, instead taking a largely mercantilist approach to engagement in most quarters of the globe. Nor has it sought to export its views on domestic governance to others or to push out a new set of norms to anchor global stability. In addition, the United States, even if it continues down a path of strategic retrenchment, will remain a power of the first rank for decades to come. An illiberal and mercantilist Pax Sinica would hardly be acceptable to Americans or to many other peoples around the world still aspiring to uphold liberal principles.
- When it comes to improving the current international architecture, a global concert wins not because of its perfection but rather by default; it is the most promising alternative. Other options are ineffective, unworkable, or unattainable. Should a great-power steering group fail to materialize, an unruly world managed by no one would lie ahead.

Working

- global concert would promote international stability through sustained consultation and negotiation. Concert members' permanent representatives would meet regularly, supported by their staffs and a small but highly qualified secretariat. Members would dispatch their most accomplished diplomats as permanent representatives, who would be equal in rank, if not senior, to UN ambassadors. The concert would encourage the African Union, Arab League, ASEAN, and OAS to send equally authoritative figures. Concert summits would occur on a regular schedule. They would also take place as needed to address crises; one of the Concert of Europe's most effective practices was to gather leaders on short notice to manage emerging disputes. When relevant issues are under discussion, the heads of the African Union, Arab League, ASEAN, and OAS, along with the leaders of states involved in the matter, would attend concert summits. The global concert's chair would rotate annually among its six members. The body's headquarters would not be located in any of its member states. Possible venues include Geneva and Singapore.
- In contrast with the UNSC, where showboating often crowds out substantive initiative, the permanent members of the concert would not wield vetoes, take formal votes, or commit to binding agreements or obligations. Diplomacy would take place behind closed doors and aim to forge consensus. Members who break rank and act unilaterally would do so only after exploring alternative courses of action. If a member were to defect from consensus, other concert members would then coordinate their response.
- **Issue:** This proposal presumes that none of the concert's members would be a revisionist power bent on aggression and conquest. The Concert of Europe functioned effectively in no small part because its members were, broadly speaking, satisfied powers seeking to preserve, not overturn, the territorial status quo. In today's world, Russian land grabs in Georgia and Ukraine are worrying developments, revealing the Kremlin's readiness to violate the territorial integrity of its neighbors. So are China's ongoing efforts to lay claim to and build military facilities on disputed islands in the South China Sea and Beijing's violation of its pledges to respect Hong Kong's autonomy. Nonetheless, neither Russia nor China has yet to become an implacably aggressive state committed to wholesale territorial expansion. A global concert also makes that outcome less likely by establishing a forum in which its members can make transparent their core security interests and strategic "redlines." Nonetheless, if an aggressor state that routinely threatened other members' interests were to emerge, it would be expelled from the group, and the remaining members of the concert would rally against it.
- To advance great-power solidarity, the concert should focus on **two priorities**. One would be to encourage respect for existing borders and resist territorial changes through coercion or force. It would be prejudiced against claims of self-determination—but concert members would retain the option of recognizing new countries as they see fit. Although it would give all nations broad latitude on issues of domestic governance, the concert would deal on a case-by-case basis with failing states or those that systematically violate basic human rights and broadly accepted provisions of international law.
- The concert's **second priority** would be to generate collective responses to global challenges. At times of crisis, the concert would advance diplomacy and galvanize joint initiative, then hand off implementation to the appropriate body—such as the UN for peacekeeping, the International Monetary Fund for emergency credit, or the World Health Organization (WHO) for public health.

When national policies have negative international consequences, those policies become the concert's business.

- In this regard, the concert could help counter the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and address nuclear programs in North Korea and Iran. When it comes to diplomacy with Pyongyang and Tehran, enforcing sanctions against both regimes, and responding to potential provocations, the concert would have the right parties in the room. Indeed, as a standing body, the concert would significantly improve on the six-party and P5+1 formats that have historically handled negotiations with North Korea and Iran.
- The concert could also serve as a venue for addressing climate change. The top greenhouse gas emitters are China, the United States, the EU, India, Russia, and Japan. Together, they produce roughly 65 percent of global emissions. With the world's leading emitters all around the table, the concert could help set new targets for reducing greenhouse gases and new standards for green development, before handing off implementation to other forums. Forging rules of the road for managing technological innovation—digital regulation and taxation, cybersecurity, 5G networks, social media, virtual currencies, artificial intelligence—would also be on the concert's agenda.
- Drawing on its nineteenth-century forbearer's experiences, a global concert should also recognize that great-power solidarity often entails inaction, neutrality, and restraint rather than intervention. The Concert of Europe relied on buffer zones, demilitarized areas, and neutral zones to dampen rivalries and head off potential conflicts. Concert members objecting to initiatives backed by others simply opted out of participation rather than breaking rank and blocking the undertaking. The United Kingdom, for instance, opposed interventions to put down liberal rebellions in Naples and Spain in the 1820s but decided to sit out rather than prevent military action by other members. France did the same in 1839 and 1840 when other members intervened in Egypt to suppress a challenge to Ottoman rule.
- How might a global concert usefully implement such measures today? In Syria, for example, a concert could have either coordinated a joint intervention to stop the civil war that erupted there in 2011 or worked to keep all the major powers out. More recently, it could have provided a venue for the diplomacy needed to introduce a buffer zone or demilitarized zone in Syria's north, averting the fighting and humanitarian suffering that followed the abrupt U.S. withdrawal and the regime's increasingly intense attacks on Idlib Province. Proxy wars in places such as Yemen, Libya, and Darfur might become less frequent and violent if a global concert were to succeed in fashioning a common stance among the major powers.

Objections

- **Why EU not Europe's most powerful countries?** Europe's geopolitical weight comes from its aggregate strength, not that of its individual member states. Germany's GDP is around \$4 trillion, and its defence budget is around \$40 billion, while the EU's collective GDP is roughly \$19 trillion and its aggregate defence spending is close to \$300 billion. And even though the United Kingdom has quit the EU, it is still working out its future relationship with the union. EU membership in a global concert would give both the United Kingdom and the EU a strong incentive to stay lashed together when it comes to foreign and security policies.
- Some might question the inclusion of **Russia**, whose GDP is not even in the top ten and is behind those of Brazil and Canada. But Russia is a major nuclear power and punches well above its weight on the global stage. Russia's relationships with China, its EU neighbours, and the United States

will have a major impact on twenty-first-century geopolitics. Moscow has also begun reasserting its influence in the Middle East and Africa. The Kremlin deserves a seat at the table.

- Major portions of the world—Africa, the Middle East, Southeast Asia, and Latin America—would be represented by their main regional organizations. This format admittedly reinforces hierarchy and inequity in the international system. But the concert aims to facilitate cooperation by restricting membership to the most important and influential actors; it deliberately sacrifices broad representation in favour of efficacy. Other institutions provide wider access that the concert would not. Countries not included in the concert would still be able to wield their influence in the UN and other existing international forums. And the concert would have the flexibility to change its membership over time if there was a consensus to do so.
- Another potential objection is that the global concert would effectively produce a world of great-power spheres of influence. After all, the Concert of Europe did grant its members a *droit de regard*—a right of oversight—in their respective neighbourhoods. A concert for the twenty-first century, however, would not encourage or sanction spheres of influence. On the contrary, it would promote regional integration and look to existing regional bodies to encourage restraint. Across regions, the body would foster great-power consultation on and joint management of contentious regional issues. The goal would be to facilitate global coordination while recognizing the authority and responsibility of regional bodies.
- Critics might claim that the concert is too state-centric for today's world. The Concert of Europe may have been a good fit for the sovereign and authoritative nation-states of the nineteenth century. But social movements, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), corporations, cities, and other nonstate actors now have considerable political power and need to have seats at the table; empowering these social agents makes good sense. Indeed, globalization and the populist backlash it has triggered, along with the COVID-19 pandemic, are strengthening sovereignty and compelling national governments to claw back power. Moreover, the concert could and should bring NGOs, corporations, and other nonstate actors into its deliberations when appropriate—for example, including the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and big pharmaceutical firms when discussing global health or Google when addressing digital governance.
- Establishing a global concert would not be a panacea. Bringing the world's heavyweights to the table hardly ensures a consensus among them. Indeed, although the Concert of Europe preserved peace for decades after it was formed, France and the United Kingdom ultimately faced off with Russia in the Crimean War. Russia is again at loggerheads with its European neighbours over the Crimean region, underscoring the elusive nature of great-power solidarity. A concert-like format—the Normandy grouping of France, Germany, Russia, and Ukraine—has so far failed to resolve the standoff over Crimea and the Donbas.
- Nonetheless, a global concert offers the best and most realistic way to advance great-power coordination, maintain international stability, and promote a rules-based order.

Synthesis

- The authors are convinced of two things. The rise of illiberal democracy and the birth of the post-American world. Therefore, they offer a remarkable suggestion. To abandon the liberal institutions created three quarters of a century ago because they have gone stale and instead go back further in time to imitate the Concert of Europe but on a global scale. And who should be

the members of this concert? The US, Russia, China, Europe, Japan and... wait for it... India. It is significant that the list leaves out two of America's closest allies: the UK and Israel.

- While the piece bemoans the UN's bureaucracy but includes the world's second largest international bureaucracy, the EU, replacing France and the UK and overlooking Germany.
- May I humbly submit that India is frustrated because it's bid to join the UNSC as a permanent veto power has been failing. So why not create a supra structure above the UN?

RCEP

- On November 15, 2020, 15 countries — 10 ASEAN members as well as Japan, New Zealand, Australia, South Korea and China — signed the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) agreement. RCEP encompasses 29% of world's GDP, 27% of global trade and one-third of world population. This mega-regional partnership is expected to bring East Asia together in terms of trade and economic cooperation like never before.
- In particular, the unified rule of origin under RCEP would mean that products manufactured as per the RCEP-originating criteria will be able to move freely within the bloc, with only a single certificate of origin, significantly reducing time, complications and costs of managing regional value chains (RVC). This will make these countries more integrated and competitive, in turn attracting more investment.
- But as East Asia will reap the benefits of this deep trade integration, what will be its implications for Pakistan?
- With RCEP countries becoming more competitive, Pakistan's relative market access to these countries, especially China, could suffer, leading to loss of exports to regional competitors. Considering that almost one-sixth of our exports are destined for RCEP countries, such erosion could be significant.
- Moreover, as RCEP members become more attractive for investment on the back of improved competitiveness, Pakistan will become relatively less attractive for FDI. Pakistan's FDI inflows have been declining after CPEC infrastructure investments have dried up and this could take a further toll over the next few years.
- Most importantly, in the longer run, as the world is organising itself into new trade blocs, Pakistan could be isolated and lose out on the longer-term benefits of trade integration.
- But with new challenges also come new opportunities. The RVC under RCEP will still have opportunities for other countries to plug in. The threshold for regional value content under RCEP is 40%, which means that there would be space to have 60% content from elsewhere and still qualify for duty-free treatment within the bloc, which could provide a gateway for Pakistan to plug into these strengthened RVC.
- Furthermore, RCEP will be open for accession by any country and will therefore provide an opportunity to Pakistan to join, especially with China's support.
- If Pakistan chooses to join RCEP, it could be a new start for the country towards embracing trade integration and putting an end to inward looking protectionist policies. But in order to benefit from RCEP, first we have to become more competitive, which is easier said than done.
- RCEP offers both a glass half full and a glass half empty for Pakistan. It depends on us how we choose to look at it. But closing our eyes to these transformational changes around us are no more an option.

- Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced India would not join RCEP, primarily over reservations over cheap Chinese imports would overwhelm Indian firms and markets. Continuing China's aggression at India's border and tense relations have reinforced India's stance. For now, India is putting its effort into bilateral trade agreements.

Bangladesh

Bangladesh's remarkable performance during the past decade could be gauged from the fact that it is no more among the least developing countries. The volume of Bangladeshi exports is twice as much as Pakistan's and same is the case with its currency, taka, whose value has nearly doubled than that of Pakistan's rupee. Bangladesh's GDP growth rate is 7.9% unlike Pakistan's 1.5%. The foreign exchange reserves held by Bangladesh are to the tune of \$41 billion as against Pakistan's \$20 billion. Only on remittances, Pakistan is ahead of Bangladesh. Bangladesh has a population of 164 million as compared to Pakistan's 220 million. Whereas, in 1971, the population of the then East Pakistan was 70 million and that of West Pakistan was 60 million. Bangladesh is also ahead of Pakistan when ranked in terms of passport index, literacy ratio, micro-credit financing and women empowerment.

With these facts in mind, four factors that contributed to transforming Bangladesh from an "international beggar" to an "economically vibrant country" are: leadership, innovation, planning, and ownership. Since Bangladesh doesn't consider India as an enemy state, its defence expenditures are only 1.9% of its GDP as compared to Pakistan's 4%. Furthermore, unlike Pakistan, Bangladesh is a homogenous state and is not vulnerable to ethnic and lingual discords.

FATF

- <https://www.dawn.com/news/1629107/fatf-compliance>
- The FATF sword hung perilously over our heads for a good part of three years. Pakistan was accused of having a lax approach towards cracking down on terror financing and money laundering, and as a result faced the threat of being blacklisted by the organisation. This could have had devastating consequences for the economy. However, since this February, the blacklisting blade has inched away. Officials say we may still remain in the grey list in the upcoming June FATF meeting, but we will most likely be off the critical terror-financing watch list. The white listing will follow perhaps another six months down the line.
- In these three years, Pakistan has made significant headway in streamlining various processes to curtail terror financing, building the capacity of numerous financial and law-enforcement institutions and legislating laws necessary for enabling the government to crack down on terror financing and money laundering. The state got its act together, forced the creaky governmental systems and unresponsive departments to get moving, and achieved results.
- The balance sheet of these results, according to FATF officials, is that Pakistan has fulfilled 24 out of the 27 specific requirements asked of it. The bulk of these relate to tightening the noose around those organisations designated as terrorist groups by the UN. The individuals from these proscribed organisations are placed on the Fourth Schedule.
- In the initial days there was a lot of mistrust about the effectiveness of the action against these groups but now, after the acknowledgement by FATF, there is a grudging acceptance that Pakistan has indeed made these proscribed entities dysfunctional. This means their financial back is broken and all funds available are monitored, their offices are sealed shut, charities and other sub-organisations run by them have been taken over by the state, and their overall operations

degraded and for all practical purposes disbanded. Even their social media presence is said to have been curtailed.

- Fulfilling FATF requirements has forced Pakistan to do a system upgrade aimed at dismantling a structure that it had at one point either helped create, or looked the other way while others built it up brick by brick. However, it is interesting that senior officials say the strategic change in policy towards militant organisations had begun before the FATF issue surfaced. FATF in essence provided a framework for the policy that had begun to take shape in response to changing dynamics.
- The recent thaw between Pakistan and India is also seen as part of this larger policy umbrella. India's 'cross-border terrorism' mantra has also become subdued, even though New Delhi launched a concerted effort against Pakistan at the FATF. The backchannel between the two neighbours has led to a ceasefire at the LoC which is seen as a major step forward in reducing tensions and fears of a wider conflagration.
- For a state that has always been a brittle entity, often displaying weakness when needing to show strength and resolve, implementing this mega transformation in outlook, complemented with a capacity to implement and enforce such transformation, is a steep challenge.
- Systemic reform to combat terror financing, and strategic reorientation to jettison 'jihadi' organisations and curtail the prospects of their fresh resurgence have already begun to pay dividends. The state just needs to hold its nerve and institutionalise this transformation for the long term.

Updates

- The FATF has cleared Pakistan on all but one of the 27 points on the action plan assigned in June 2018. But that has not proven enough for Pakistan to get an all-clear from the anti-money laundering taskforce. And now while Pakistan is expected to address the single remaining item on the original action plan, it has also been told to come good on a parallel six-point action plan which was handed out by the watchdog's regional partner, the Asia Pacific Group, in 2019.
- While the FATF acknowledges Pakistan's "efforts to raise awareness in the private sector to money laundering risks and to develop and use financial intelligence to build cases", it believes the country is still "failing to effectively implement the global FATF standards" across a number of areas which "means risks of money laundering remain high which in turn can fuel corruption and organised crime".
- Pakistan is now required to increase "the number of investigations and prosecutions" and ensure that its law enforcement agencies cooperate with international organisations "to trace, freeze and confiscate assets" of organised criminals from profiting from their crimes by undermining the financial system and legitimate economy in the country.

Political tool?

- Indeed, the FATF is used by global powers as a political tool to put pressure on countries like Pakistan. There are examples where the global watchdog delisted other jurisdictions under its enhanced monitoring even though they had done far less than Islamabad to tighten their controls over flows of illicit money. Thus, the feeling that India is misusing the FATF platform against Pakistan, as voiced by the foreign minister, is not entirely misplaced. Also, there are many who are calling for the FATF to first take action against the European countries believed to be major

hubs of illicit money before forcing Pakistan to meet its standards. These are legitimate concerns and Pakistan should ask for the fair application of the AML/CFT regime everywhere.

Blessing in disguise?

- So, while the gruelling quest for a much sought-after FATF white-list continues, it is doubtlessly a blessing in disguise. In fact, in the process of satisfying the Paris-based task force in order to avoid its blacklist, Pakistan has fast-tracked its efforts to curb money laundering and terror financing and made significant progress to a huge benefit to its national economy.
- After all, the primary beneficiary of the exercise to stop money laundering and combat terrorism financing would be the national economy and the Pakistani people. The actions implemented so far to meet the 27-point FATF action plan have already resulted in remittances bonanza for the economy, providing more room to grow it.

Persian Gulf/Middle East and North Africa

As in ex-Yugoslavia in the 1990s, America is the only global or regional power capable of guaranteeing regional peace – or at least of suppressing all-out war. Russia would like to assume this role, but it cannot. (It was able to intervene in Syria to the extent that it did only because the US refused to do so.)

As for China, it has no interest in assuming America's Middle East role, nor could it do so if it wanted to. The Chinese regime simply does not have the mindset to become a guarantor of a global order far beyond its borders.

What about Europe? Although it would be one of the main victims of regional destabilization, it is no longer a force to be reckoned with, and thus has reduced its involvement to that of providing financial resources in response to the latest crisis. Still, Europe plays an important supporting role.

Finally, among regional players, Turkey would like to step up, but it is hampered by its own weaknesses and the fraught history of the Ottoman Empire's role in the Middle East. Iran and Saudi Arabia are confined to pursuing their own claims to hegemony within the Islamic world. And Israel is and will remain focused on its own defense.

That leaves only the US. Despite its past foreign-policy blunders, it is the only country with both the necessary political mindset and the technological, economic, and military power to exert a moderating influence in the region. The worst outcome for the international order would be a continuing US inclination toward self-isolation. Trump's presidency already proved how dangerous that can be.

Horn of Africa

- <https://tribune.com.pk/story/2301986/geopolitics-around-somalia>
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Orientalism

- The fall of the Ottoman Empire in the early 20th century marked the beginning of Western influence in the region and consequently created the 'Middle East' that we know today. By examining the role the British and French had in shaping state boundaries and state formations,

along with the social and geopolitical aspects, it can be argued that the imperial rule of the British and French essentially invented the Middle East. Even the name coined for the region can be an indication of how the Middle East can be understood as an invention. The term Middle East is a Eurocentric term and was coined by the British in accordance with the proximity of the region to Europe.

- **Orientalism** is essential in understanding British and French actions regarding the Middle East region and in understanding how the region came to be 'invented' by foreign influences. Edward W. Said, establishes the eponymous term "Orientalism" as a critical concept to describe the West's common, contemptuous depiction and portrayal of "The East," i.e., the Orient. Common Orientalist attitudes included the belief that the Middle East was backward and in desperate need of civilising. It was this prejudice which justified the British and French colonial powers to implement Orientalist policies, 'reiterating European superiority over Oriental backwardness'.
- However, the notion that the Middle East requires civilising is not a thing of the past, and we can still see it in the 21st century, ranging from US intervention in Afghanistan in 2001, in which the United States claimed it would save Afghan women from the Taliban to Macron's recent visits to Lebanon following the Beirut explosion, which many viewed as a 'new colonial push'.
- The 1916 **Sykes-Picot Agreement**, drawn up by the British and French, is a clear indication of how the Middle East can be viewed as an 'invention'. Following the collapse of the Ottoman Empire, Britain and France carved up the region between the two imperial powers, creating their own spheres of influence within the region. The British sphere of influence included Iraq, Transjordan, and Palestine. The French sphere of influence included Lebanon and Syria.
- One should also remember that the arbitrary borders were imposed upon the people of the region and that they were not consulted in the creation of the Sykes-Picot Agreement. The drawing up of arbitrary borders can be understood as an Orientalist act as the colonial powers failed to acknowledge that the Middle East region was comprised of various ethnic, linguistic and religious groups. Instead, they blurred the various identities of the region into one homogenous entity, which was better suited to their interests. The impacts of the Sykes-Picot Agreement can still be felt in the region today. For example, the Kurdish people can be considered to be victims of the Sykes-Picot Agreement, with many arguing that the formation of a Kurdish state in the early 20th century may have 'saved millions of lives and helped mitigate the risk of violence visible today in the nation states that formed as by-products of Sykes-Picot agreement'. Today, the Kurdistan region is divided between Turkey, Iraq and Syria, where the ethnic group has become oppressed minorities, struggling for cultural and political rights within the states they live in. Therefore, the Sykes-Picot Agreement, which epitomised Orientalist attitudes, illustrates how the British and French imperial powers not only invented the modern-day boundaries of the Middle East but also many of its social and political issues.
- Similarly, the **Balfour Declaration** of 1917 was another example of a policy that was imposed on the people of the region. It also can be understood as the cause of the Palestine-Israel conflict which has come to characterise the region; emphasising the notion that the many issues of the regions, along with state formation, can be directly tied to the colonial powers of Britain and France. The Declaration called for a 'national home for Jewish people' in Palestine and claimed that 'nothing shall be done which will prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine'. The British and the Zionists, both involved in the formation and implementation of the Declaration, used 'Orientalist ideologies to justify their claims to the land'.

Furthermore, they used the Orientalist narrative that the 'Orient' is in need of civilising, claiming that the Palestinians were 'primitive and backwards, requiring modernisation'. Over time, the Israeli state created a narrative claiming that the land prior to the Balfour Declaration lacked in trade and infrastructure, and its people were undemocratic and uncivilised. Through this narrative, Israel was able to build its credibility as a state, claiming that the Zionists and Jews who came from Europe made the land 'prosperous, democratic and most importantly civilised'. The sudden creation of the contemporary state of Israel, backed by Orientalist attitudes, led to social and political turmoil in the region which is still prevalent to this day.

- The **mandate system**, which followed the Sykes-Picot Agreement, further emphasises how the Middle East was 'invented' by European powers and can be understood as an 'instrument of political control'. Whilst the Sykes-Picot Agreement created new internationally recognised state boundaries, the mandate system ensured the creation of the nation-states, helping to shape the region politically and economically. The British and French pushed to implement political and economic systems that would complement their own vested interests in the region. For example, the British implemented constitutional monarchies within their sphere of influence.
- The British believed by establishing the **Hashemite Kingdom** in Iraq and Transjordan, it would ensure support for the British and for British influence in the new nation-states. According to the British, a monarch created an element of stability and continuity as well as being an important political actor, with some veto power and the ability to suppress any nationalist uprisings or challenges to the political system under British mandate power. Similarly, governance in Lebanon can be considered to be a legacy of French 'colonial' rule. Unlike the British, the French opted to implement a republic style of government. In contrast to how the Sykes-Picot overlooked the very diverse region, the French designed the Lebanese government to provide political representation for all Lebanese religious groups, with the president always being Christian Maronite, the prime minister a Sunni and the speaker of parliament a Shia. Thus, through the nation-states that exist within the Middle East today and their existing institutions that were implemented by the imperial powers, it is indicated that the region can be understood as an 'invention'.
- However, the argument that the Middle East is solely an 'invention' of European powers can be deemed as problematic, as it reinforces Orientalist attitudes of the 'Orient' being unable to produce its own identity and having to rely on the 'Occident' for its knowledge and power.
- Instead, following the creation of the Sykes-Picot Agreement and the implementation of the mandate system, we begin to see the emergence of nationalist movements. For example, following the creation of the 'national home for Jewish people', Palestinians and Arabs violently opposed the Declaration and the same struggle for Palestinian sovereignty is still prevalent today. The emergence of pan-Islamist groups such as the Muslim Brotherhood aimed to unite the Muslim world for the Palestinian cause and the destruction of Israel. By claiming that the Middle East is solely an imperial 'invention', we discredit the role nationalist movements played in shaping the region's identity. It can be argued that pan-Arabism and pan-Islamism played a significant role in shaping the identity of the Middle East. These movements called for a sense of unity, whether it was religious or cultural, in order to challenge Western influence in the region by acting 'in concert in world politics' to defend their interests. For example, **Nasserism** and the **Suez Crisis** of 1956 marked the height of pan-Arabism before its quick demise following the **Six Day War** in 1967. Nasser's decision to nationalise the Suez Canal Company directly challenged British interests in the Middle East and to some extent the Western capitalist order that they had established in the

region. The success of the nationalisation demonstrated to the Arab world that 'enhanced influence in international politics' and 'improvement in living standards and economic opportunities' can be achieved through 'cooperation and solidarity among Arabs'. Therefore, it can be argued that transnational nationalist movements did play a role in the 'invention' of the Middle East and how it is understood today, as the movements created a shared Muslim and Arabic regional identity that transcends the borders invented by the British and French.

- Orientalist views still serve as a foundation for reasoning and justification of Western intervention in the region today. For example, Orientalist perceptions often depict Islam as 'anti-rational and anti-scientific', incapable of progressing with social changes and that its leaders are tyrants. the US 'War on Terror' was justified by the claim that 'the fight against terrorism is also a fight for the rights and dignity of women'. The Middle East is constantly being reinvented by Western interference in the region, whether it is through direct military intervention or Western neo-colonialism.
- the recent US-brokered deals that have seen four Arab states normalising ties with Israel reinforces the Orientalist notion that the region relies on Western knowledge and power in its affairs. Furthermore, the role the US has played in the normalisation of relations underscores the Orientalist notion of the West 'authorizing' policies and 'teaching' the states in the region how they should interact, thus 'settling' any disputes and tension. It is for this reason that it can be argued that Western hegemony in the region still exists and consequently, the Middle East continues to be (re)invented or 'restructured'.

Developments

- In 2017, Saudi Arabia, under the leadership of Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman (MBS), the UAE, Bahrain and Egypt imposed the blockade and severed diplomatic ties, accusing the tiny Gulf country of supporting terrorism. They also issued 13 demands for it to be lifted, which included shutting down the Qatar-funded TV network, Al Jazeera, closing a Turkish military base and reducing diplomatic relations with Iran. Qatar did not budge despite the heavy economic cost. When the Saudi and Emirati airspaces were closed, Iran offered Qatar global connectivity. Al Jazeera is still live. And, Qatar has invited more Turkish troops, bolstering its ties with Ankara, which is eager to play a bigger role in West Asia. Moreover, it played an important role in the U.S.-Taliban deal and continued to host talks between Taliban representatives and the Afghan government. If the original Saudi plan was to isolate Qatar and make it kneel, it has backfired. And in the last weeks of the Trump administration, MBS and his allies seem to have realised their strategic folly.
- In practice, the Saudi side stepped down from its demands and made amends with an unshaken Qatar as a new President is going to assume power in the U.S. The Saudi U-turn could be the result of a genuine tactical rethink. The rift in the Gulf helped Iran and Turkey, Riyadh's main rivals, while it failed to scuttle Qatar's standing. Iran, reeling under U.S. sanctions, also got some financial relief from Qatari pay-outs for using its airspace. By lifting the air and sea blockades, the Saudis and the Emiratis could deny Iran of those funds and also try to put up a united Arab regional front as Joe Biden is preparing to renegotiate the Iran nuclear deal. The Saudis may also be hoping that bridging the Gulf between two American allies would help them warm up to the Biden administration.

Yemen Conflict

Intro

- Yemen, a small country on the Arabian Peninsula, has become the site of grievous civilian suffering amid an intractable civil war. Many analysts say the fighting, now seven years old, has turned into a proxy war: Iran-backed Houthi rebels, who overthrew the Yemeni government, are pitted against a multinational coalition led by Saudi Arabia.
- The conflict has displaced more than one million people and given rise to cholera outbreaks, medicine shortages, and threats of famine. The United Nations calls the humanitarian crisis in Yemen “the worst in the world.” The chaos has also allowed the al-Qaeda affiliate in the region to expand its foothold.

Yemen’s divisions

- Yemen has long struggled with religious and cultural differences between its north and south and the legacy of European colonialism. The modern Yemeni state was formed in 1990 with the unification of the U.S.- and Saudi-backed Yemeni Arab Republic, in the north, and the USSR-backed People’s Democratic Republic of Yemen (PDRY), in the south. Ali Abdullah Saleh, a military officer who had ruled North Yemen since 1978, assumed leadership of the new country.
- However, just four years after unification, southern separatists seceded for several months and re-emerged in 2007 as the Southern Movement, which has continued to press for greater autonomy within Yemen. Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP), an Islamist militant group, and the related Ansar al-Sharia insurgent group have captured territory in the south and east. The Houthi movement, whose base is among the Zaydi Shiites of northern Yemen, rose up against Saleh’s government six times between 2004 and 2010.
- Rights groups persistently charged [PDF] that Saleh ran a corrupt and autocratic government. As the popular protests of the 2011 Arab Spring spread to Yemen, the president’s political and military rivals jockeyed to oust him. While Yemeni security forces focused on putting down protests in urban areas, AQAP made gains in outlying regions.
- Under escalating domestic and international pressure [PDF], Saleh stepped aside in 2012 after receiving assurances of immunity from prosecution. His vice president, Abd Rabbu Mansour Hadi, assumed office as interim president in a transition brokered by the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), a regional organization based in Saudi Arabia, and backed by the United States. As part of the GCC’s timetable for a transition, the UN-sponsored National Dialogue Conference (NDC) convened 565 delegates in 2013 to formulate a new constitution agreeable to Yemen’s many factions. But the NDC ended with delegates unable to resolve disputes over the distribution of power.

Causes behind current crisis

- Several factors widened these political divisions and led to full-scale military conflict.
- **Subsidy backlash.** Under pressure from the International Monetary Fund, which had extended to Yemen a \$550 million loan premised on promises of economic reforms, Hadi’s government lifted fuel subsidies in 2014. The Houthi movement, which had attracted support beyond its base with its criticisms of the UN transition, organized mass protests demanding lower fuel prices and a new government. Hadi’s supporters and the Muslim Brotherhood–affiliated party, al-Islah, held counterrallies.

- **Houthi takeover.** The Houthis captured much of Sanaa by late 2014. Reneging on a UN peace deal, they consolidated control of the capital and continued their southward advance. Hadi's government resigned under pressure in January 2015 and Hadi later fled to Saudi Arabia.
- **Military division.** Military units loyal to Saleh aligned themselves with the Houthis, contributing to their battlefield success. Other militias mobilized against the Houthi-Saleh forces, aligning with those in the military who had remained loyal to the Hadi government. Southern separatists ramped up their calls for secession.
- **Saudi intervention.** In 2015, with Hadi in exile, Riyadh launched a military campaign—primarily fought from the air—to roll back the Houthis and restore the Hadi administration to Sanaa.

Parties involved

- The Houthi movement, named for a religious leader from the Houthi clan and officially known as Ansar Allah, emerged in the late 1980s as a vehicle for religious and cultural revivalism among Zaydi Shiites in northern Yemen. The Zaydis are a minority in the Sunni Muslim–majority country but predominant in the northern highlands along the Saudi border.
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- The Houthis became politically active after 2003, opposing Saleh for backing the U.S.-led invasion of Iraq but later allying with him after his resignation as president. This alliance was a tactical one: Saleh's loyalists opposed Hadi's UN-backed government and, feeling marginalized in the transition process, sought to regain a leading role in Yemen. Saleh won the allegiance of some members of Yemen's security forces, tribal networks, and political establishment. But in 2017, after Saleh shifted his support to the Saudi-led coalition, he was killed by Houthi forces.
- Iran is the Houthis' primary international backer and has reportedly provided them with military support, including weapons. Hadi's government has also accused Hezbollah, Iran's Lebanese ally, of aiding the Houthis. Saudi Arabia's perception that the Houthis are an Iranian proxy rather than an indigenous movement has driven Riyadh's military intervention. But many regional specialists say that Tehran's influence is likely limited, especially since Iranians and Houthis adhere to different schools of Shiite Islam. Still, Iran and the Houthis share geopolitical interests: Tehran seeks to challenge Saudi and U.S. dominance in the region, and the Houthis oppose Hadi's U.S.- and Saudi-backed government.
- At Hadi's behest in 2015, Saudi Arabia cobbled together a coalition of Sunni-majority Arab states: Bahrain, Egypt, Jordan, Kuwait, Morocco, Qatar, Sudan, and the United Arab Emirates (UAE). By 2018, the coalition had expanded to include soldiers from Eritrea and Pakistan. They launched an air campaign against the Houthis with the aim of reinstating Hadi's government. For Riyadh, accepting Houthi control of Yemen would mean allowing a hostile neighbor to reside on its southern border, and it would mark a setback in its long-standing contest with Tehran.
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- After Saudi Arabia, the UAE has played the most significant military role in the coalition, contributing some ten thousand ground troops, mostly in Yemen's south. However, the UAE came into conflict with its allies in 2019, when it backed the separatist Southern Transitional Government (STC), which captured Aden. That November, Hadi and the STC president signed the Riyadh Agreement, which affirms that the factions will share power equally in a postwar Yemeni government. The separatists reneged on the deal for several months in 2020, but eventually they joined a unity government with equal representation of northerners and southerners. The

formation of a government signalled some progress in bridging Yemen's internal divisions, but its authority was immediately challenged when a plane carrying the cabinet was targeted in a drone attack blamed on the Houthis; all of the ministers were unscathed.

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- Although the U.S. Congress has been divided on the matter [PDF], the United States has backed the Saudi-led coalition, as have France, Germany, and the United Kingdom. U.S. interests include security of Saudi borders; free passage in the Bab al-Mandeb strait, the choke point between the Arabian and Red Seas and a vital artery for the global transport of oil; and a government in Sanaa that will cooperate with U.S. counterterrorism programs. But uproar over civilian deaths in coalition air campaigns, which often use U.S.-made weapons, and Saudi Arabia's role in the 2018 killing of Washington Post journalist Jamal Khashoggi led the United States and other Western powers to limit some weapons sales and refueling of coalition aircraft. Lawmakers have also raised concerns that U.S.-made weapons are falling into the hands of AQAP and Houthi fighters. Still, the United States is Saudi Arabia's largest arms supplier, and President Donald J. Trump thrice vetoed bills that would have halted arms sales to Saudi Arabia.
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- U.S. backing for the coalition appears to be waning under President Joe Biden, who said he will end support for its military offensive, including the sale of weapons, and signaled a shift to diplomacy by appointing a special envoy to Yemen. However, the policy change is not expected to affect U.S. counterterrorism efforts in Yemen, and Biden said Washington will still bolster Riyadh's defensive capabilities.

Humanitarian impact

- With a poverty rate of more than 50 percent, Yemen was the Arab world's poorest country even prior to the conflict. A recent UN report found that over half of Yemen's thirty million people will experience crisis-level food insecurity by mid-2021. Disease has run rampant; suspected cholera cases reached some seven hundred thousand [PDF] in 2019. The country has also been hit by the new coronavirus disease, COVID-19, though it is difficult to assess the virus's impact, since there is no comprehensive caseload data. Moreover, as the pandemic has hit the world's economies and disrupted supply chains, many countries have cut back on critical aid to Yemen. The United Nations received less than half the donations requested for Yemen in 2020, raising fears of famine in a country where 80 percent of the population relies on humanitarian assistance.
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- In November 2020, the UN refugee agency reported [PDF] that, since 2015, the war had displaced more than three million people. (More than one million are internally displaced.) The situation has worsened under the four-year-long land, sea, and air blockade imposed by coalition forces, obstructing vital supplies of food and medicine. The U.S.-based Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project (ACLED) has recorded more than one hundred thousand deaths due to lack of food, health services, and infrastructure since 2015.
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- In addition, the United Nations has found [PDF] that both Houthi and coalition forces have violated international humanitarian law by attacking civilian targets. This includes the coalition's destruction of a hospital run by the international relief organization Doctors Without Borders in

2015. Torture, arbitrary arrests, and forced disappearances are among the other violations perpetrated by both sides.

Iran is the winner

- two things seem clear: first, that Iran saw the conflict from the start as a low-cost, high-reward opportunity to bog down and bleed its Saudi rival, and second, that as the war has persisted, ties between the rebels and Tehran have deepened, with the Houthis becoming progressively more willing to turn to Iran for succour, whether in the form of training or material assistance. Thanks in part to this support, the Houthis upped their drone and missile attacks against Saudi territory. Iran itself seemed to jump into the fray. In September 2019, a complex drone attack was carried out against oil facilities in eastern Saudi Arabia. Although the Houthis claimed responsibility, the sophistication of the strikes and the flight paths of the drones suggested an Iranian hand. In part, the attack was Iran's way of responding to Washington's maximum pressure campaign and discouraging Gulf countries from participating in it. The war in Yemen has given Iran both the motivation and the opportunity to flex its muscles, and it has obliged.

Prospects for Solution

- UN-backed peace negotiations have made limited progress. The 2018 Stockholm Agreement averted a battle in the vital port city of Hodeidah, but there has been little success in implementing the accord's provisions, which includes the exchange of more than fifteen thousand prisoners and the creation of a joint committee to de-escalate violence in the city of Taiz.
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- Observers worry that friction among regional actors, including Iran, Saudi Arabia, and the UAE, could prolong the war. Conditions deteriorated in late 2019, when the Houthis claimed responsibility for a missile attack on Saudi oil facilities. UN monitors concluded that the Houthis did not carry out the attack but did not say who was behind it; the Saudi-led coalition blamed Iran. Some experts see the Houthis' willingness to claim the attack as a sign of their increasing alignment with the Iranian regime. However, many analysts say viewing Yemen's conflict as an Iran-Saudi Arabia proxy war rather than a civil war overlooks local dynamics that ultimately caused the fighting, and that Yemen's long-term stability hinges on resolving those domestic tensions.
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- Some experts say that viewing the war as a two-party conflict, as exemplified by UN Security Council Resolution 2216, is unproductive given the fragmentation of anti-Houthi forces and the involvement of foreign powers. And though the Riyadh Agreement showed renewed unity among the anti-Houthi camp, Hadi's government has little leverage with the Houthis. Involving more political parties and civil society groups to back the government in peace talks could level the playing field.
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- The Trump administration's January 2021 decision to designate the Houthis a foreign terrorist organization, which criminalized interactions with the group, could deter governments from pursuing peace talks with it and impede deliveries of much-needed humanitarian aid. However, shortly after taking office, Biden initiated a review of the designation and temporarily allowed transactions with the rebels. The details of Biden's policy changes are not yet clear: For example, the United States could continue to provide the coalition with intelligence and training and allow weapons sales for defensive purposes.

Syrian Conflict

<https://www.e-ir.info/2021/02/18/the-limitations-and-consequences-of-remote-warfare-in-syria/>

Wary of the economic situation and regime repression, people started protesting in the city of Deraa in March 2011, eventually triggering countrywide demonstrations which escalated into an uprising, aimed at toppling the regime and eventually leading to a full-blown civil war that has, as of this writing, not yet ended. To further complicate the situation in Syria, the civil war soon became sectarianized and gave way to a rise of militant Salafism and groups such as the Islamic State. Syria is a highly heterogeneous country; as of 2010, its population consisted of Sunni Arabs (65%), Kurds (15%), Alawites (10%), Christians (5%), Druze (3%), Ismailis (1%), and Shia (1%) (Balanche, 2018). In addition, the country is led by a minority Alawi regime represented by President Bashar al-Assad.

- IF the US is serious about mending fences with Iran, then firing missiles at fighters allied with Tehran in Syria may not be the best way to go about it. In President Joe Biden's first major offensive overseas action, over 20 fighters belonging to militias loyal to Iran were killed when American missiles struck facilities in eastern Syria. While the Pentagon has termed the attack "a message", Damascus has called it "American aggression". The strikes came as an apparent reaction to the targeting of a base in Iraq hosting American forces on Feb 15, reportedly by pro-Iran militias.
- Even refugee hosting countries are beginning to show signs of retracting initial sympathies. In recent days, Denmark has become the first European nation to rescind residency permits of its Syrian refugees, stating that some parts of the war-ravaged country were now safe to return to. Ahead of the fifth Brussels Conference on Syria, international donors fell short by \$6 billion of the United Nation's requested \$10 billion for this year. Here it is important to emphasise that humanitarian assistance is the only means of sustenance for millions of Syrians.
- Half a million dead. That is the latest estimate of the death toll from the decade-long Syrian civil war from the Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights.

Sectarian tension

the regime stroked fears of the alternative to Alawi rule, playing on pre-existing insecurities stemming from the French mandate period and institutionalised by Hafez al-Assad. This thesis cited fears of minority survival in the face of Sunni rule as a key reason underpinning minority acceptance, also acknowledging the secondary role of socio-economic conditions in contributing to the regime's successful securitisation. By tying minority survival to the regime's survival, this thesis argued that Assad was able to secure a support base that prevented the development of a cross-sectarian opposition movement challenging his rule. Yet the regime's securitisation and the violent crackdown of security forces, ultimately led to 'counter-sectarianisation' in the Sunni opposition, accelerating Syria's descent into a civil war along sectarian lines. Further, this thesis examined the pivotal role Iran and Hezbollah played in cementing Assad's securitisation, turning the domestic conflict into a region wide struggle for Syria with a heavy sectarian dimension. Hence the mobilisation of sectarian identities ultimately poured fuel on an already raging fire, exacerbating and complicating the Syrian uprising and contributing to the creation of a civil war.

The sectarian nature of the Syrian civil war has not only complicated the trajectory of the conflict, but will complicate the future peace and stability of Syria in the eventual aftermath of the conflict. As Slugget (2016: 40) argued, once the “sectarian genie has been released, it is extremely difficult to force back into the bottle”, speaking to the difficulty of pacifying sectarian identity divides magnified by the horrors of war. Yet, only through an understanding of Syria’s complex fault lines can reconciliation efforts be furthered (Salamandra, 2013: 306). Securitisation theory evidently offers a fruitful framework to understand the development of conflict in Syria and the Middle East more broadly, helping to illustrate the process through which sectarian identities can become security threats. Whilst more work is required in order to successfully apply this framework to cases outside the Western world, this thesis has contributed to the development of securitisation theory beyond its Western lens, adapting and developing concepts to understand the securitisation of sectarian identities in the Syrian civil war. As the regions rivalries, conflicts, alliances and wars become increasingly connected on sectarian terms, further examination into the region’s security practices can help defuse the trend of sectarianism engulfing the region today.

Why should US leave?

- Martin Indyk, a veteran Middle East hand and former ambassador to Israel, explaining why as the headline read, “The Middle East Isn’t Worth it Anymore”.
- 20 years after 9/11 spent 6.4 trillion on wars; The Iraq invasion set off a cascade of turmoil and conflict in the region amid a still damaged Arab Muslim civilization, with few tangible benefits.
- two longstanding core concerns—oil flows and Israel’s security
- Since the 1973–74 oil crisis, hydrocarbons have been a core driver of U.S. policy in the Middle East—the 1980 Carter Doctrine, declaring the flow of Gulf oil a vital interest. Yet U.S. oil dependence on the region is no more.
- The shale revolution, which has led to the United States’ new status as the world’s top producer of oil and gas, has fundamentally altered the geopolitics of energy.
- the center of gravity of global hydrocarbon production has already shifted from the Persian Gulf to the Western Hemisphere. Canadian oil sands, a partially reforming Mexico, and Brazil’s ultra-deepwater reserves all point to a new post-OPEC reality.
- Seventy-five percent of Mideast oil is exported to Asia: China, Japan, South Korea, and India have a growing stake in the Middle East.
- Given the dependency of the Gulf states on exporting oil and the robust strategic petroleum reserves of the United States and other International Energy Association members, the odds of a protracted disruption by military conflict are low and manageable.
- Middle East oil is important, but not necessarily a vital interest. The body language of Trump’s non-response to the Iranian attack on Saudi oil facilities points in this direction.
- the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is not only no longer the centre of the region’s turmoil—it has become a second-order issue.
- This is the case not just because of forty plus years of failed diplomacy, but also new realities in a changed geostrategic landscape. A far more self-reliant Israel has peace treaties with Egypt and Jordan, neutralizing two frontline states. Israel is a leading global tech innovator, has a world-class high-technology military sector, and maintains a nuclear arsenal. The Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states are planning for a post-petroleum world and investing heavily in technology. They

look to Israel as a key economic and technology partner, an under-appreciated motive behind their recent diplomatic moves. This reflects an undercurrent in the region of generational change, a mindset of shedding legacy conflicts and pursuing entrepreneurialism and a twenty-first-century knowledge economy. This is captured in the bold UAE effort to launch a satellite to orbit Mars and Saudi efforts to compete with Dubai as the regional financial hub and create NEOM, a carbon-emissions free city.

- Abraham Accords, indicates that a major if not central conflict in the GME is now the regional power struggle between the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) and Iran (aka Sunni-Shia proxy war), with Sunni Arab states quietly, and increasingly more visibly, working with Israel to focus to manage a common adversary: Iran.
- The third big change is the dramatic increase in tensions in the Eastern Mediterranean and Levant prompted by the massive natural gas finds off the coast of Israel and Egypt. Natural gas has become the global hydrocarbon of choice, a fact flowing from its lower green-house gas profile than petroleum and coal. Turkey is now asserting itself as a major regional power and has intervened in the Libyan civil war.
- By aligning with the GNA, Turkey has been able to make undersea claims in the Eastern Mediterranean to block the construction of natural gas pipelines between Greece and the massive sources of supply that will originate off the coast of Israel, Egypt, and the Greek portion of Cyprus. Because of the corporate interests of oil giant ENI, Italy appears to have aligned itself with Turkish interests.
- In direct opposition to Turkey's ambitions is the no longer unusual coalition of Egypt, Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Israel, Russia, and France. The latter's alignment is prompted in part by the corporate interest of French oil giant TOTAL SE.
- Finally, Turkey and Israel provided Azerbaijan with substantial military assistance that included unmanned combat aerial vehicles, attack drones, precision-guided short-range ballistic missiles, and conventional force training to win a short regional war with Armenia over the disputed Nagorno-Karabakh region. This has set the stage for a regional entente between Turkey, Georgia, Azerbaijan, and Ukraine. In the latter case, Kiev and Ankara have signed a series of military industry agreements that greatly benefit both countries' defense establishments. Noteworthy in this regard is the completion of the Trans-Anatolian Natural Gas Pipeline that opens up the gas resources of Azerbaijan to all of the Balkan region of Europe.
- Countering terrorism, sustaining the free flow of commerce, and preventing domination by hegemonic forces are legitimate U.S. interests, though a one-dimensional, over-militarized policy has been of limited utility, at best, in advancing them.
- In the larger hierarchy of U.S. strategic interests, however, the focus of these interests has shifted to the Pacific, the centre of gravity of the global economy, while the Middle East accounts for a mere 3.2 percent of global GDP. This strategic re-orientation was signalled by the national military strategy of the Trump administration, with its focus on an enduring great power competition with the People's Republic of China and the Russian Federation.
- Unlike the case for the United Kingdom in the 1960s, there is no equivalent of a strategically benign United States to pass the baton to; rather, the United States will have to further its interests through pursuing a balance of power, manoeuvring an array of regional powers and the actual and potential support from a resurgent Russia, China, and possibly India on an issue-specific basis. This requires understanding the limits of both U.S. power and interests, as well as adopting

a new *primus inter pares* mode of diplomacy with allies and partners sharing both burdens and power. In a more perfect world, Washington could hope that the European Union, if only in the form of a concert of medium-sized powers such as Germany and France, could act in a more robust fashion. This strategy would rely much less on the threat of military force and more on the instruments of state power that include diplomacy, intelligence, and economics/finance. Not to be forgotten is the prospect that the United States and Israel could take the lead in helping various GME nations to transition away from their dependence upon the buying and/or selling of petroleum to support modernizing economies. As noted above, the Saudis and GCC states have already begun positioning themselves for a post-petroleum economy with large investments in renewable energy and not least, in technology innovation.

KSA-Iran

- Financial times reported in April that both regional rivals held secret meeting in Baghdad. The Saudis flatly denied the reports, and Iraq did not comment, but the Iranian response was more measured — neither confirming nor denying, but only ‘welcoming dialogue’.
- Among the primary factors behind the change in approach are domestic concerns amid the Covid-19 pandemic and the new US administration. The pandemic has taken a toll on the economies of both countries. Policymakers would undoubtedly want to focus their energies on recovery rather than the threat of war. Meanwhile, American President Joe Biden has renewed the Obama-era rapprochement policy towards Iran, shifting from the hostility harboured and demonstrated by Donald Trump. Conflict went well with the Trump approach, but not so much with Biden’s.
- a thaw between Riyadh and Tehran will also bring warm feelings in **Islamabad** — ties with both countries are of high importance. Pakistan has been in the unenviable position of being a ‘man-in-the-middle’ for far too long, shuttling diplomats between both countries to avoid offending one when dealing with the other. Better ties between Saudi Arabia and Iran would be a win-win for Pakistan.
- Indeed, recent reports suggest that these geopolitical changes influenced the increasing desire to settle the war in Yemen and other issues, such as the instability in Lebanon, where Tehran and Riyadh both wield massive amounts of power behind the scenes.
- In a recent TV interview, the crown prince said Saudi Arabia wants Iran to help push the Middle East towards prosperity. He said that he wants “good relations” with Iran, striking a much softer tone than has been seen in recent years between the two regional rivals.
- Saudi Arabia accuses Iran of ‘negative behaviour’ such as running a nuclear programme and supporting ‘outlaw militias’. Both nations are also involved in several proxy wars, most notably in Yemen. However, it wasn’t always this way. Despite problems dating back to at least the time of the revolution in Iran, the threat of direct war was not a major concern for observers until the mob attack on the Saudi Embassy in Tehran five years back — an incident that was blamed on the execution of prominent Saudi Shia cleric Nimr al-Nimr. The Saudis broke off diplomatic relations soon after the incident, and there have been few prospects of a thaw since then.
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Arab Uprisings

- In 2021, there may be few beliefs more universally shared than that the Arab uprisings failed
- Early hopes for revolutionary change crashed into the blunt force of “military coups, civil wars, and fractured states
- Return to Business as usual (Obama focus tilted towards JCPOA; trump’s toward normalizing arab relations with Israel)
- Successful revolutions in Tunisia, Egypt, Yemen, Libya; (end of autocratic rule?) hopes were crushed in few years
- A military coup in Egypt ended its nascent democratic experiment. Fragile transitions in Libya and Yemen collapsed into civil war.
- Syria descended into a nightmarish mixture of insurgency and international proxy warfare. Eventually, autocrats across the region clawed back most of the power they had lost
- The effects of the uprisings should not be measured in regimes overthrown or democratic elections held
- Democracy was only one part of the protesters’ demands: corruption, disastrous governance, and economic failure.

What really happened

- the new sense of community crafted in the chaos of Cairo’s Tahrir Square, Bahrain’s Pearl Roundabout, Tunisia’s Avenue Habib Bourguiba, and Yemen’s Change Square.
- Everything seemed possible. Change seemed inevitable. Autocrats were running scared, and nothing—not U.S. military support, not the seemingly omnipotent security services, not protesters’ own fears and divisions—could stop the movement.
- Regional powers backed old regimes in their efforts to destroy the uprisings, and the West did nothing to stop them.
- Poor governments such as Jordan and Morocco drew on financial and political support from Gulf monarchies to weather their own smaller protest movements, while passing modest constitutional reforms to placate their citizens.
- Bahrain’s monarchy violently crushed its nascent antigovernment popular uprising, unleashing a wave of sectarian repression.
- Libya’s Qaddafi turned the full force of his military on the protesters, triggering a rapid escalation that culminated in civil war and international intervention.
- Yemen fell into a long and bloody stalemate as its military splintered after months of protests.
- The surviving governments then sought revenge, punishing the activists who had dared challenge their rule
- When Egypt’s military overthrew the elected president Mohamed Morsi and massacred hundreds of protesters in the center of Cairo, the Obama administration refused to even call the event a coup
- By 2013, in large part due to Syria’s descent into chaos and Egypt’s military coup against Morsi, a new consensus had taken hold. The autocrats had won, the uprisings had failed, and the Arab Spring was turning into an Arab Winter.

The Islamists

- Mainstream Islamists groups (Muslim Brotherhood Egypt; Tunisia Ennahda Party; Moroccan Justice & Development Party; Syrian MB played crucial role in uprising against Assad) gained popularity
- By 2012, Islamists seemed to be ascendant.
- The post-2011 antidemocratic backlash was marketed in the West by the regimes partly as a response to an alleged Islamist takeover. (Coups against Morsi)
- jihadis suffered grievous setbacks but are still a viable political and ideological force

Changes in Region

- American disengagement has many causes, including the fiasco of the 2003 invasion of Iraq, shifts in energy dependence, the strategic need to pivot toward Asia, and domestic distaste for far-flung wars.
- But the uprisings profoundly undermined the United States' core alliances, encouraging local powers to pursue policies at odds with Washington's and inviting global competitors such as China and Russia into the once unipolar region.
- As the U.S. presence in the region has faded, Middle Eastern powers have been forging an incipient new order of their own
- The death of an Israeli-Palestinian two-state solution has been a long time coming
- The struggle between Iran and its Sunni Arab rivals Sunni aspirants to Arab leadership, such as Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, and the UAE, fought proxy conflicts across the regional map
- Resulting in fractured Egyptian and Tunisian politics, the collapse of Libya's post-Qaddafi transition, and a divided Syrian opposition.
- MBS (war in Yemen; Khashoggi); 2017 Saudi-UAE blockade of Qatar
- The diplomatic spat tore apart the Gulf Cooperation Council, once the region's most effective multilateral body, and hobbled U.S. efforts to build a united anti-Iranian front
- The United States' inability to compel its allies to resolve their differences and cooperate against Iran shows just how far its influence has fallen since 2011.
- This intra-Gulf squabble, moreover, invited an aggressive Turkish bid for regional leadership.
- Intervention in Libya for GNA (UN recognized govt) against Khalifa Haftar (UAE, Egypt); in northern Syria redrew region's de facto borders.
- In Mark Twain's words, history tends to 'rhyme' we can find a historical precedent to the Arab Spring in **the European revolutions of 1848**. More importantly, we may also find a hint of what is yet to come.
- The revolutions of 1848 were called the springtime of the peoples: a year in which a series of revolutions spread through Europe demanding greater freedom and democracy. There was no single organized leadership to be seen; the revolutions and protests were led by motley groups of reformers, nationalists and members of the middle class with the composition varying from country to country. The sparks for these protests ranged from lack of freedom to economic inequality to the rapaciousness of the ruling classes, and the speed with which they spread stunned the rulers. For a moment, it seemed like the sun had set on the ancient, autocratic regimes and monarchies but soon enough, the reactionaries swung into action and, one by one, the flames of revolution were stamped out. Nothing, it seemed, had been gained. Such was the despair that French socialist Pierre-Joseph Proudhon said: "We have been beaten and humiliated

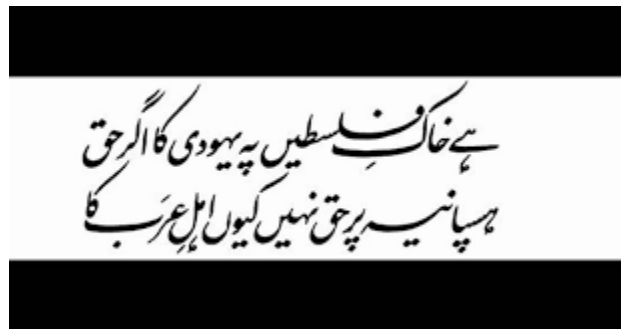
... scattered, imprisoned, disarmed and gagged. The fate of European democracy has slipped from our hands.”

- Yet just a few decades later, the very same forces that crushed this rebellion ended up granting the people many of the very freedoms that the revolutionaries had demanded. Granted, many of the reforms fell short of the mark and were also in many countries eclipsed by increased repression but the seeds had been sown, and the rulers were forced, out of fear of another round of revolt, to listen to the voice of the people.

What is to come?

- the region’s autocratic façade is cracking once again. Major uprisings recently blocked the re-election of Algeria’s infirm president, led to the overthrow of Sudan’s long-ruling leader, and challenged sectarian political orders in Iraq and Lebanon.
- The tense U.S. standoff with Iran could escalate suddenly into a hot war, or the collapse of the Palestinian Authority could spark another intifada.
- If no other lesson is learned from 2011, it should be that the Middle East is far beyond the ability of any outside power to control.

Israel-Palestine Conflict



Updates

Start reading updates from last bullet

- Israel launches new airstrikes on Gaza in response to incendiary balloons; Knesset’s vote in Israel, new PM Naftali Bennett, major advocate of illegal settlements; the UK’s interference to obstruct ICC’s investigation into Israel’s war crimes; in a recent vote at the UN Human Rights Council calling for a probe into Israel’s recent atrocities, India chose to abstain; Yasser Arafat calling Indira Gandhi his ‘sister’; Israel bombing building stationing AP, Al-jazeera
- Wang Yi, accused the US of undermining the UNSC’s attempt to produce a unified response to the situation; Chinese state media criticized Israel; bilateral trade btw china and Israel increased from 50m\$ 1992(diplomatic ties established) to around 11b\$ today; biased media ad campaigns in NYT against bella Hadid, dua lipa; whatsapp blocking Palestinian journalists account; fb insta limiting posts; Palestinians died israelis killed; epitome of hypocrisy; Gallup poll over half of Democrats felt US should lean on Israel to make concessions rather than the Palestinians; progressive democrats; Sanders; ceasefire was brokered by Egypt; UNSC and OIC Arab League failure to retain Israel from unleashing violence; Since April 2019, Israel has had four elections and each time Benjamin Netanyahu has failed to form a stable government; the current flare-up in

the violence between Hamas and the Israeli military. It reads like a chapter from Balakot or Muzaffarnagar; needless police assault on Muslim worshippers at Al Aqsa mosque together with a stepped-up drive to evict Arab residents from their abodes in East Jerusalem; Israeli court ordered the eviction of dozens of Palestinians thanks to a law that allows Jews to claim property, they say they have owned before the creation of Israel in 1948. Palestinians have no such rights; Those facing eviction in Sheikh Jarrah cannot recover the homes in Jaffa and Haifa that they once owned; the observance of so-called Jerusalem Day, which is supposed to 'celebrate' the Israeli occupation of the divided city in 1967, next to the walls of Haram as-Sharif, also did much to fan the flames.

- Palestinian citizens faced off against Israeli security forces over access to the Al Aqsa mosque; far-right Jewish group staged a provocative march in the disputed city in which extremists chanted "death to Arabs".
- Human Rights Watch (HRW) asserts that the Israeli government is enforcing a systemic policy to maintain the "domination by Jewish Israelis over Palestinians." The nearly seven million Palestinians in the occupied territories and within Israel itself face collective persecution under an apartheid system; Even more ominous are Israel's emerging population-control measures; HRW is echoing similar findings by Israeli human-rights organizations. B'Tselem, for example, released a report in January titled: "A Regime of Jewish Supremacy from the Jordan River to the Mediterranean Sea: This Is Apartheid."

Background

- Territorial dispute; religious and historical significance to all Abrahamic religions; Book (The Jewish State by Theodor Herzl 1896); homeland for Jews to escape anti-Semitism in Europe; migration accelerated after the Holocaust; 1947 UNGA voted for 2 states and special intl regime for Jerusalem; Palestinian Arabs-> Jews usurped their homeland with the help of UK & US, defeat of allied arab armies-> Nakba 'catastrophe' uprooted 700,000 Palestinians;
- Six-Day War 1967->Israel's occupation of East Jerusalem, the West Bank, and Gaza; UNSC resolution 242 and 338 to withdraw from occupied lands
- Current Population: Israel 9.2 mil (around 2 mil arab); 2 mil Palestinians in Gaza and 3 in West Bank
- **Borders:** pre-1967 borders but issue about Palestinians and Jews now living across
- **Jerusalem:** Israel has annexed whole city as its capital; Palestinians claim East for the capital of their state; **Refugees:** wars in 1948 and 67-> 1 mil Pal refugees, survivors and descendants now living in Jordan, Lebanon and Syria claim the right to return to Israel as supported by 1948 UNGA resolution; Israel sees them as a threat to its existence and believes they should go to future Palestinian state; **Security:** Israel wants Hamas to disarm and Palestinian state to be demilitarized, Palestinians seek full control of their own security, Israel wants to maintain the ability to act in Palestinian territory against threats to its security; **Mutual recognition:** Israel wants to be recognized as a Jewish state and Palestinians want Israel to acknowledge their forced displacement under the Nakba.

The One-State or two Reality

One-state

- a single country made up of pre-1967 Israel, the Gaza Strip, and the West Bank. As a placeholder name, let's call this one, sovereign state "the Holy Land."

- Every person who lives between the Jordan River and the Mediterranean Sea would have equal individual rights, regardless of their ethnic or religious identity. They could live anywhere they want in the Holy Land, and they would have the right to vote in national elections. The capital would be in Jerusalem, and the government would include Jews and Palestinians.
- The central obstacle to this one-state vision is about **Israel's self-definition** today and how, if at all, that would transition to a single state with full equality for Palestinians and Israelis. Israel as the Jewish State is not compatible with the Holy Land because the latter assumes symbols, laws, and government policies do not favor Jews over Palestinians. Yet Israel today privileges Jews in many ways, e.g. in migration, housing, employment, political rights, and treatment by security organs of the state. Why would Israeli Jews willingly forfeit those advantages?
- Moreover, could the Holy Land serve as the fulfilment of Zionism and as a refuge for world Jewry if it was no longer defined as the Jewish State? What, for example, would happen to the **Law of Return**, which gives a Jew from anywhere in the world the right to become a citizen of Israel? The law is a key pillar of the Jewish superiority built into the State of Israel, the very kind of differentiation that undergirds the conception of Israel as an apartheid state (Human Rights Watch, 2021). But the law is also tied to the idea of Israel as a safe haven for Jews, somewhere they may automatically seek protection if things go badly in their home country (think violent anti-Semitism).
- A parallel problem would arise with the **Palestinian right of return**. Palestinians, with backing from international law and UN resolutions, claim a right to return to their homes and land from pre-1948, the years before the establishment of the State of Israel. Over 5 million Palestinians are registered as refugees with the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA).
- A majority of Jews would oppose the influx. But many Palestinians would object to any resolution that does not acknowledge and address the right of return. After all, Palestinian collective trauma is rooted in forced displacement, especially 1948 and the Nakba, the catastrophe of Israeli expulsion and lack of return. A strong sense of Palestinian identity and security may depend upon directly addressing that initial displacement and its consequences.
- In concrete terms, it is difficult to imagine how the shift would take place in the state's armed forces and **security** and intelligence community. Would Palestinians be integrated into the Israeli military and police to bring the numbers closer to 50/50 and to put Palestinians in key leadership roles? Would Palestinian leaders be given access to Israel's nuclear secrets? That seems hard to imagine and yet that is what equality mandates.
- What would equality mean in **socioeconomic terms**? In the status quo, Israeli Jews have many times the income and wealth of Palestinians. Would equality involve significant economic redistribution, something that itself could lead to further Israeli Jewish opposition to one state with equality? For comparison, the unification of East and West Germany faced such economic challenges with gaps that were not as stark.
- In a one-state solution, **Israeli settlers** would have gains and losses. Israeli settlements are towns and outposts built in the West Bank since Israel occupied the land in the 1967 War. First, most countries consider settlements illegal under international law. With an agreed-upon Israeli-Palestinian resolution and the end of the Israeli occupation, that would no longer be an issue. Second, at first glance, it appears Israeli settlers could stay where they are now. Israel would not

need to withdraw settlers or close down any settlements since everyone would already be living in the same state, the Holy Land.

- That said, **Israeli settlements in the West Bank** have often been built on Palestinian land and that could open the door to legal wrangling. In the State of Israel to this point, the government, the judiciary, and the military have aided and abetted the illegal expropriation of Palestinian land for establishing or expanding settlements. But as the law and courts changed in this new one state, the Holy Land, presumably that favoritism toward Israeli Jewish claims would fade. Could the legal or political system start to un-do the questionable legal-territorial basis of many Israeli settlements? Settlements might not be as stable as they are in the status quo of Israeli occupation.
- In addition, **Jewish-only settlements** would no longer be able to exclude Palestinians from living in them since the basis of the Holy Land is equality for all. In fact, even in what is today pre-1967 Israel, the use of social suitability as a criteria for who is allowed to live in a town – and the way it is often applied to exclude Palestinians – would have to end for equality to take hold. Settlements in the status quo are largely reflective of housing segregation, not equality. Many Jewish settlers might oppose such a shift.
- The deepest challenge to the success of one state should it come into being is whether Jews and Palestinians as co-citizens could form working partnerships, or at least co-exist, in a way that would allow the single state and society to function without frequent ethnic tension and violence. May 2021 Jew-on-Palestinian violence inside pre-1967 Israel does not bode well for such a possibility.
- There are organizations that illustrate successful Arab-Jewish partnerships and the values that could help one state function amicably such as the Hand-in-Hand schools, the Oasis of Peace, the Palestine-Israel Journal, the Parents' Circle, and Combatants for Peace. It might be difficult to prevail in the face of hyper-nationalism, but there are kernels of a mutual and stable future.
- Some political parties and leaders will make hypernationalist, ethnoreligious, or supremacist appeals that stoke inter-group animosity and conflict. Even if such forces could be contained or marginalized enough to push through to a one-state resolution, they would not disappear. Spoilers might continually seek to undermine and unravel the agreed-upon resolution. In short, defending the new status quo would be a continuing project rather than a static obstacle to overcome.
- One state would embody several other advantages not already mentioned. It would have all the attributes of a sovereign state. There would be no debate about its borders. The state and its borders would receive wide international recognition. The Palestinian drive for self-determination would be addressed and, arguably, achieved. Palestinians could again freely enjoy Jerusalem.
- Rashida Tlaib (Palestinian descent Congresswoman) advocated one-state sol, her rationale: soon Arab will be more numerous than Jews so it will eventually become Palestinian state. Instead Jews will push them out into Jordan where they believe Palestinians belong; apartheid state; while vaccinating it was apparent how Arabs were treated as second class citizens; Israel has now settled approx. 400000 jews in West Bank, plus another two in East Jerusalem since 1967;

Two-State

- A two-state solution means there would be two states, a State of Israel and a State of Palestine located alongside each other (Beauchamp 2021). The State of Israel already exists as an independent country; its borders would largely revert to what they were from 1949-1967. The

State of Palestine would be located in the Gaza Strip and a contiguous section of the West Bank that encompasses 95% or more of the West Bank territory. Jerusalem would serve as the capital of both states, with Israel's sovereign capital in West Jerusalem and Palestine's sovereign capital in East Jerusalem, though an exact division is complicated by the Israeli settlements (neighborhoods) that ring the core of East Jerusalem. The Old City of Jerusalem, and perhaps some adjacent holy sites, would be 1) shared 2) overseen by an international committee 3) or somehow divided between the two states. (A common two-state variant is a confederal plan, but I do not discuss it here. See Avishai and Bahour 2021 and Scheindlin and Waxman 2016.)

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- Israeli settlements that are located along the Green Line, the dividing line between Israel and the West Bank prior to the 1967 War, would be annexed to Israel. Israel would compensate Palestine with other land adjacent to the West Bank or Gaza at a 1:1 ratio. Israeli settlements in the midst of the State of Palestine would be closed and the Israeli Jewish settlers withdrawn, though a small number of Jewish settlers might seek permission to stay on in the new State of Palestine. A token number of Palestinian refugees would be admitted to Israel. All Palestinian refugees would be eligible for compensation and could move to the new State of Palestine. Palestine's armed forces very likely would have certain additional constraints, at least for an initial time period. The states would have to come to agreements on dividing many other resources such as airspace and water. Israel would remain self-defined as the Jewish state. It could continue to promote the idea of Israel as a safe haven for Jews; it could continue the Law of Return allowing Jews from anywhere access to Israeli citizenship.
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- In contrast, the Palestinian Right of Return would be fulfilled only in a narrow sense. The vast majority of Palestinian refugees would not have the ability to return to their family's home and land inside that were located in what is today the State of Israel. Rather, they could get financial compensation, maybe some symbolic acknowledgment of their plight, and access to the new State of Palestine (comprising about 22% of historic Palestine). Whether this would satisfy most Palestinian refugees is an open question.
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- Most Israeli settlers would stay in place, but a sizable minority would be removed from their homes. Perhaps half a million settlers would stay in place in East Jerusalem and in settlements along the Green Line. But 100,000 or more (or fewer?) would move; implementation would be challenging (Krieger 2012; Sasley and Sucharov 2011). This could well spark strong opposition from the Israeli settler movement. From the Israeli government's perspective, the whole point of keeping most settlers in place would be to try to minimize political opposition to a two-state solution. I don't know what would happen to settlers who had inserted themselves in the midst of large Palestinian populations in East Jerusalem in places like Silwan, Sheikh Jarrah, or the Mount of Olives.
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- The status of Jews in Palestine and Palestinians in Israel would remain challenging to handle for exclusionary ethnonational definitions of statehood. Israeli irredentist organizations could come into being to protest the removal of Jewish settlers from parts of the West Bank. Palestinian irredentist organizations could come into being to protest the incomplete resolution of the right of return and the small share of the territory that constitutes the new State of Palestine.

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- The same risk of inter-ethnic tension that I discussed in relation to one state would apply to a shared city of Jerusalem. In that city, Palestinians and Israelis would need to work together as partners on multiple issues, or at least find ways to co-exist. Palestine would incorporate the Palestinians in East Jerusalem who mostly are currently residents, but not citizens, of Israel. Furthermore, the Israeli citizenry would still be 20% Palestinian so internal Jewish-Palestinian relations would remain a related issue. Some Israeli Jews might call for the revocation of Israeli citizenship for Palestinians and their expulsion to the new State of Palestine.
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- While Israel would have all the attributes of a sovereign state, Palestine would likely have some limits on its sovereignty, especially in terms of what would be allowed in its military and police forces. A peace agreement might detail monitoring and supervision provisions involving third-parties or an Israeli military presence on Palestine's borders with Egypt and Jordan. There would need to be an extensive negotiation about the border between the states as well as how Palestinians would transit between the two parts of the state, what are today called Gaza and the West Bank. Once that was agreed upon, the states and their borders would receive wide international recognition. The Palestinian drive for self-determination would be achieved.
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- Many members of the international community support the two-state solution, including the European Union, the League of Arab States, Russia, the United Nations, and the United States. But Israeli-Palestinian negotiators, especially in 2000-2001 (Oslo/Camp David/Taba) and 2007-2008 (Annapolis), have failed to reach agreement on a two-state solution (Pressman 2003; Avishai 2011).
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- One point of note is that the outline I have presented here of a two-state solution reflects both Israel's bargaining advantage as the more powerful party and the changes on the ground wrought by Israeli settlements. Absent such leverage, for example, the logical dividing line would be the Green Line, and all Israeli settlers would have to move. Or, how to share Jerusalem as a capital is much more complex because of Israeli Jewish settlers in and around East Jerusalem.

Weighing the options

On four criteria for comparing the two options, a two-state solution probably does better on these four metrics, but neither option looks especially promising or easier to achieve.

- **clarity of blueprint**
- *One state*: the main question is whether Jewish privilege would be fully eliminated or transformed into Jewish communal rights.
- *Two-state*: where exactly would the border be drawn? How many, if any, Palestinian refugees would be allowed to move into Israel? What would be the status of Jerusalem's Old City? What restrictions would be placed on Palestinian military and police forces?
- **Popular support among Israelis and Palestinians**: *Two-state* acc to surveys like *PCPSR 2021*; *Palestinian-Israeli Pulse 2020*
- **Political feasibility**: *neither option*; Likud and Israeli right; Hamas oppose two state; Israeli settlers; Palestinian refugees too oppose it; A *one-state* solution has to overcome widespread

Israeli Jewish opposition why? Don't want arab majority; why Palestinian oppose? It would be an apartheid regime

- **International support:** [Two state](#)

Role Of US

Involvement

- Shortly after ww2, joined UK that recommended 100000 Holocaust survivors relocate to Palestine; first country to recognize Israel as a sovereign nation 1948; attempted to mediate Arab-Israeli conflict after 6 day war; 73 oil crisis and Kissinger shuttle diplomacy among ME capitals in 74 and 75 helped de-escalate the war; 78 Camp David Accord-> round 1 talks about Palestinians self rule in Gaza and West-Bank round 2 peace treaty btw Egypt and Israel 79; 93 Oslo peace accords signed in White house, Palestinians recognized Israel's right to exist and Israel recognized Pal autonomy in Gaza and the West Bank; Israel-Jordan Peace treaty 94; Clinton Parameters to Trump's Peace to Prosperity; Since 1980, US has only onmce allowed UNSC to condemn Israel for its settlement construction, in late 2016, when the outgoing Obama administration abstained from a vote on the matter; Abraham Accords
- emergency UN Security Council meeting was delayed for days, because of Washington ; when met, the US repeatedly blocked a statement that all other 14 members of the Council agreed on, which called for de-escalation, an end to evictions of Palestinian families and respect for international humanitarian law; book '**The Israel Lobby and U.S. Foreign Policy**' by Mearsheimer and Stephen Walt; Failure to act would call into question all of Biden's recent criticism of Saudi Arabia, Turkey, Russia, China, and others for human-rights and rule-of-law violations

Interest in the region

- energy resources, first soviet then Iranian influence, protection of arab allies and Israel, American jewish community, Christian evangelicals like Mike Pompeo real interest in Zionism is not Jews' security, but Armageddon, the end of the world, which they believe will come only when all Jews are in Israel, both strong supporters of Israel; interest in resolving waned in recent years; more prominent issues like Iran; pivot to asia

Position on Palestinian statehood

- Biden says he supports 2-state; Bush became first to publicly endorse a Palestinian state represented in the 2003 Road Map for Peace; Obama tried but talks failed in 2014; trump's plan dubbed Peace to Prosperity would have given Israel sovereignty an essentially undivided Jerusalem, including the Old City and the holy sites, relegating the Palestinian capital to a sliver of East Jerusalem; no right to return for refugees; 50b\$ investment in developing future Palestinian state; His plan would shrink Palestinian territory in WB to 70 % as Israel annexed the Jordan valley and all its settlements there; Palestinian Authority rejected it.
- Not supported 2-state sol in UN; say decide through negotiations with Israel; standing in its way of becoming full member.

On Jerusalem

- Oslo Accords-> claims to Jerusalem would only be decided in final status negotiations; Presently, Israel views whole city as its capital; Palestine->East Jerusalem; for decades Us and other states having relations with Israel kept their embassies in Tel Aviv; 1995 US law requires its relocation to

Jerusalem; but waived the requirement to protect national security interests of US; Trump didn't. Biden reopen Palestinian mission in DC and US consulate in East Jerusalem closed by Trump

Israeli settlements

- Began under Labour party govt to strengthen defence in West Bank, grew on religious, historical grounds and found economic incentives to live there; by 2019 600000 settlers in WB and EJ; US condemned but never called them illegal; Reagan in an interview said ill-advised but not illegal; Bush in 2004 wrote a letter to Israeli PM that settlements, would make it impossible for Israel to revert to pre-1967 borders in any peace agreement; Obama admin abstaining from UNSC delivered a rebuke of settlements; after Trump's plan Israel was expected to move forward with annexation in July 2020 but Abraham Accords halted it temporarily

Aid to Israel and Palestine

- US foreign aid to Israel a report by CRS; Israel largest cumulative recipient of US foreign assistance since WWII; To date, the US has provided Israel \$146 billion in bilateral assistance and missile defence funding; although from 1971 to 2007, Israel also received significant economic assistance; first intl operation of F-35, 5th gen stealth aircraft; has purchased 50 F-35s funded with US assistance; US military aid for Israel has been designed to maintain Israel's "qualitative military edge (QME)" over neighbouring militaries
- Blinken announced nearly 40m\$ aid to Palestine; 360m\$ after Trump had cut off

International Law

- international law has not been a dependable friend to the Palestinians (from the Balfour Declaration in 1917 to the UN Partition Plan in 1947 to UN Security Council Resolution 242 in 1967, the cornerstone of the peace process). While it has lent the Palestinians a hand by recognizing their claim to territories occupied by Israel after the 1967 war and their right to statehood
- international law has made a difference only when the outside forces that purport to uphold it—especially the permanent members of the UN Security Council—are prepared to in fact do so. the absorption of Arab East Jerusalem into Israel, U.S. recognition of Israeli sovereignty in the Golan Heights, and now de facto annexation of much of what remains of Palestinian lands
- International law has not helped solve conflicts in Crimea, Cyprus, Kashmir, Kosovo, or Nagorno-Karabakh. It was not international law that compelled Israel to withdraw from the Sinai Peninsula, southern Lebanon, or Gaza; it was a combination of power politics and diplomacy
- There are 88 Security Council resolutions on the Palestine question. The answer to the dispute, the oldest on the UN agenda, has long been spelt out in several resolutions — a two-state solution that ensures a viable and independent State of Palestine

Abraham Accords

- Investment, tourism, airspace, security
- Egypt (1979), Jordan (1994), Oman Bahrain welcomed this agreement
- Turkey (considering disbanding diplomatic relations with UAE; hypocritical action) 2010 10 turkey protestants killed by israel forces; Hamas (UAE stabbed knife on our back); Iran Foreign Minister (dagger on ummah) Palestinian President spokesman termed it as Treason; Malaysia condemned this pact

- Israel will not proceed to annex parts of West bank

Why Arab countries recognized Israel?

- The one-time pan-Arab call for a united front against Israel “from the Atlantic Ocean to the Arabian Gulf” has given way to normalization across that same expanse.
- Rather than insisting on “land for peace” and offering normalized ties only in return for a full Israeli withdrawal to the 1967 lines, Arab governments have given precedence to self-interest.
- UAE in August 2020 Bahrain in Sep (shia majority country with sunni royal family) both recognize for their own gains not for US;
- Morocco (U.S. offer to legally recognize its de facto annexation of the Western Sahara)
- Sudan (removed from the list of states sponsors terrorism, been on that list since 1993 when Omar al-Bashir’s govt gave shelter OBL, who later plotted the bombing of US embassies in Kenya and Tanzania; will have to pay \$335 million in compensation to the victims of the 1998 embassy bombings) Sudan recognition is termed by scholars as blackmailing.
- Israeli Defence Minister Benny Gantz said that while it would not be right to term it a “defence pact”, there is a process under way of “setting up [a] special security arrangement” between Israel and its friends in the Gulf.
- Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Faisal bin Farhan recently told CNN that normalisation with Israel would bring “tremendous benefit to the region”. In the same breath he added that Saudi-Israeli ties depended on the establishment of a Palestinian state — Riyadh’s standard line.
- from 2000-2019 armaments supplied to Israel by the Western powers (US, UK, France, Spain, Germany) are documented at a hefty \$9.6 billion. But within that 20-year period the same document shows this amount is dwarfed by arms sold by the same suppliers to Saudi Arabia (\$29.3bn), UAE (\$20.1bn), Egypt (\$17.5bn), Iraq (\$9.1bn), and Qatar (\$6bn). – Congressional Research Service Report

Historical Muslim-Jews Ties

- from Madina to Umayyad Caliphate in peace; Caliphate didn’t have coinage on Jews’ advice; Abdul Malik ibn Marwan minted first dinar which had Jewish symbols like menorah; shift of power from Arab to Turks didn’t affect Jews; during the **Reconquista** (reconquest of Christian territory from Muslims in Iberian Peninsula) Jews were also killed; Sultan Bayezid II offered them asylum in his empire; today’s Bulgarian Jews are descendant of those Spanish Jews; during Crusades they were murdered and expelled, Saladin let them return; Czarist Russia, Hitler

Solutions

- Hamas & PA reconciliation; the Palestinian-led Boycott, Divest, Sanctions (BDS) movement; Norway’s sovereign wealth fund has said it will divest from two firms linked to Israel’s illegal settlements in occupied Palestinian territories in the West Bank; Maldives suspends ties; UK activists shut down a factory of a subsidiary of Israeli arms manufacturer Elbit which produces drones for use by the Israeli army. In Italy, dockworkers as part of a union refused to load ships with weapons when they learnt they were being exported to Israel. And in South Africa, dockworkers refused to unload a ship that had arrived from Israel, with a worker’s union vowing to make South Africa an ‘apartheid-free zone’ in line with requests by the BDS movement. The boycott of South Africa ultimately forced an end of the apartheid regime that had existed for 35 years, and similar calls are being made against Israel for its apartheid policies to end. Americans

must force their government to cut the annual \$3.8 billion aid. The US shifting its embassy to Jerusalem has emboldened Israeli efforts to violently evict Palestinians from their homes in East Jerusalem as seen in Sheikh Jarrah; and the continuation of parallel military courts for Palestinians as opposed to civil courts reserved for Jewish citizens of Israel, a typical apartheid policy. the blockade must end. This policy has destroyed Gaza's economy. With foreign trade all but impossible, the territory has become dependent on smuggling; the viability of a long-term solution requires affirming the future State of Palestine's use of Gaza for access to the Mediterranean, which will be its primary gateway to the world. Accordingly, Gaza will need its own port and airport, as well as a connection to the West Bank (arranged in such a way as not to threaten Israeli security). HRW has called upon the world community to impose sanctions on the Israeli state institutions and officials promoting persecution and apartheid.

Neo-Ottomanism

- Turkish court's decision to turn Hagia Sophia museum into a mosque
- Ankara is on the side of the UN-recognised Government of National Accord headed by Prime Minister Fayez Sarraj, and against Gen Khalifa Haftar, who is backed by Saudi Arabia, Russia and Egypt. Riyadh has often accused Ankara of interfering in Libya's internal affairs and termed its military presence a threat to "Arab and regional security".
- Turkey also enjoys the quiet blessings of Qatar and of Muslim Brotherhood, thus adding to Cairo's unease because it does not want Muslim Brotherhood extremists enter Egypt from Libya.
- Ankara's main interest lies in gas in eastern Mediterranean. With the Haftar militia losing militarily, the Sarraj government agreed to Turkey's claims that the gas field in question was within Turkey's maritime rights, prompting Erdogan to declare that drilling would soon begin.
- Erdogan's stance on the gas-rich area near Crete to which Greece has claims. Tension peaked in August when the two countries began war drills, with Erdogan declaring Turkey would not give up what belonged to it. The Macron regime seemed to be hopping mad and said Paris didn't believe eastern Mediterranean should become "a playground for the ambitions of some". Italy sided with Turkey, France with Greece.
- On the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, the Erdogan regime played a positive role, helping Azerbaijan diplomatically, and calling Turkey and the Caucasian republic "two countries and one nation"; a reference to the religious, cultural and linguistic ties between them.
- A transitional government in Libya has taken power in the capital, Tripoli, officially beginning a process designed to end 10 years of chaos and lead elections late this year. Fayez al-Sarraj, head of the outgoing United Nations-recognised Government of National Accord (GNA), transferred power on Tuesday to Prime Minister Abdelhamid Dbeibah who is known to be supportive of Muslim Brotherhood and is also close to Turkey.
- The Ottoman Empire was known as the 'sick man of Europe'; its successor –Turkey – has now become Europe's boogeyman. In clearly realpolitik actions, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan has established the Mediterranean region as a stage to showcase his geopolitical prowess. The immediate involved actors, Greece, Cyprus, Israel, and Egypt, are strengthening their bilateral and multilateral relations to minimize the casualties and mitigate further conundrums caused by Erdoğan's 'bully' tactics.
- In bringing Turkey back its former glory, this neo-Ottoman outlook on politics is becoming all the more geopolitical; an aggressive and provocative stance in the Mediterranean region has been a

constant in Turkish foreign policy. Earth, water, air and gas are thus the four elements that Turkey is trying to master at bending to assume its power and glory. Due to the multipolarity of the Mediterranean with a conglomerate of “regional states and superpowers [...] non-state actors” and oil corporations, clashes arise.

- The Mediterranean has gradually become a hybrid warzone. By controlling the Mediterranean, the ruling regional power receives a package of “economic and political benefits” due to the energy prospects.
- Turkey capitalizes on the E.U. and Greece’s fears in “[unleashing] on the bloc through Greece more refugees and migrants”.^[25] Although initially there was trust between Turkey and the E.U., the latter’s growing “solidarity with Greece”, “Ankara’s refusal to readmit people”, Erdoğan’s dubiety and the Evros incident in March 2020, have shattered the already vulnerable trust.^[26] More specifically, a mass of refugees and migrants aided by the Turkish forces entered Greece when Turkey opened the Evros border, pushed people to Greece and then re-locked it.^[27] Erdoğan’s, inherently realpolitik, power-move allowed him to assume power over Greece and the E.U. His threat of opening the gates was materialised, with the possibility of repetition. The mayhem caused accompanied by the “soft sanctions” of the E.U. rang victory bells for Erdoğan, who is portrayed, by his government’s media, as the general who tirelessly defeats everything.
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Islamophobia

- a 2020 report on Islamophobia in Canada submitted to the UN revealed that 46 per cent of Canadians have an ‘unfavourable’ view of Islam — more than for any other group. The report also points out the role of the media in creating this environment, noting that while negative stories about Muslims abound in Canadian media, attacks on Muslims receive relatively less coverage; the Quebec mosque shooting for “five minutes of airtime” on CBC the night it occurred while the 2017 London Borough attacks in the UK were covered for hours with live commentary.
- Four members of the Afzaal family lost their lives in this clearly Islamophobic attack, while a child survivor is receiving treatment. (Ontario, Canada); Trudeau termed it as a terrorist attack and showed compassion like Jacinda Ardern in Christchurch attack 2019; earlier in 2017 a white supremacist attacked Quebec city mosque
- Rationale? There are different reasons for the growth of white extremism and terrorism. Much of this has been fuelled by conspiracy theories such as the ‘great replacement’ idea which roughly states that immigrants, particularly Muslims and people of colour, will ‘replace’ native Caucasians and Europeans.
- Of course, one cannot agree more with the prime minister that hate literature and anti-Muslim websites should be banned but his call would receive a greater response if he too made some efforts to curb the continuing rise of extremist faith-based ideology in the country. A policy of appeasement has given greater space to the groups openly preaching violence in the name of faith.
- The international community constantly censures Pakistan for victimisation of religious minorities. The growing misuse of blasphemy laws targeting both Muslims and non-Muslims are also cited as a manifestation of the extremist ideology gaining ground in the country. The PTI government’s overdose of religiosity has imparted a sense of impunity to extremist religious

groups. Will the international community heed the prime minister's appeal given this situation at home?

- PM Khan summoned OIC ambassadors to his office on 3rd May, he assigned their countries a new mission. So far Muslim countries have failed, he said, to convince the West — France particularly — that blasphemy against the Prophet (PBUH) was hurting sentiments of the world's 1.5 billion Muslims.
- Muslim doctors, Muslim asylum-seekers, Muslim lawyers, Muslim business-owners and entire Muslim neighbourhoods have faced the brunt of being a minority that faces widespread hatred. Sadly, this list now also includes the Muslim dead.
- Even Muslims who have tested negative for Covid-19 have been impacted, as demonstrated by the forced cremation of Fathima Rinsa, a 44-year-old Muslim woman who eventually tested negative.
- President Gotabaya Rajapaksa said he was concerned that burying Covid-19 victims would "contaminate the groundwater". The World Health Organisation holds that there is no evidence that the virus can spread from a dead body, and so does not take this position.
- A Muslim doctor was arrested after false rumours spread that he had sterilised 4,000 Buddhist women. The Muslim lawyer who represented him is still in jail, without charge.
- foreigners and those declared the 'other' are easy scapegoats for society's failures, with all ills blamed on 'outsiders'. This conundrum has been succinctly summed up by Mesut Ozil, the star German footballer of Turkish descent: "I am German when we win, an immigrant when we lose."
- Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi, while virtually addressing a session of the UN's Economic and Social Council, highlighted the issue of Islamophobia.
- Islamist militancy is thoroughly a modern construct, a reactionary phenomenon born out of the injustice and repressiveness found in most Muslim states, and the colonial interventions of non-Muslim powers in places such as Palestine and Kashmir. The world community must therefore address both issues: the profound anti-Muslim prejudice evident in many societies, as well as the repressive systems in most Muslim states that help create the foot soldiers for religiously inspired militancy.
- voters have narrowly backed a ban on face coverings, widely seen as a vehicle to prohibit burqas and full-face veils that some Muslim women wear. While the proposal did not mention the face coverings by name, ominous posters with a fully veiled woman, plastered with slogans to 'stop extremism' sent a clear, disturbing message.
- Unfortunately, Switzerland has taken such regressive steps before, such as the ban on minarets in 2009, also backed by a referendum. Amnesty International has called the burqa ban "a dangerous policy that violates women's rights".
- It is not just Switzerland which has banned veil, niqab, burqa or full face cover, other countries in Europe like Austria, Bulgaria, Denmark, France and the Netherlands have taken similar measures.
- Sri Lanka has also banned burqa and closed 1000 Islamic schools citing security reasons.

Hindutva and India

- As countries scramble to secure supplies in the face of "vaccine apartheid," India has enhanced its global standing by making vaccines that are readily available in the world's poorest countries. This effort may one day help India secure recognition as a global power – with a permanent UN Security Council seat to go with it.

- quietly pursuing “vaccine diplomacy.” Its “Vaccine Maitri” (Vaccine Friendship) campaign has shipped hundreds of thousands of Indian-made Covishield vaccines, manufactured under license from Oxford-AstraZeneca to some 60 countries. Vaccines have helped mend strained relations with Bangladesh and cement friendly ties with the Maldives.
- India can leverage its scientific and medical skills to enhance its geopolitical standing. At a time when most richer countries are criticized for hoarding vaccine doses, India stands out for having sent 33 million to poorer countries, with millions more in the pipeline. There is also an unspoken subtext: rivalry with China.
- Not only has India overshadowed China as a provider of cheap and accessible vaccines to the Global South; it has been quicker and more effective. For example, China has announced 300,000 doses for Myanmar but is yet to deliver any, while India quickly supplied 1.7 million. Similarly, Indian vaccines beat China’s into Cambodia and Afghanistan.
- (Bolsonaro credibility crisis with sinovac vaccine) Indian vaccines are also arriving in richer countries (UK Canada).
- India, ranked as a free country until now, was demoted to 111th place among 162 countries and was now only “partly free”. (Freedom House)
- The Sweden-based V-Dem Institute’s latest report on democracy has called India an “electoral autocracy”. The Economist Intelligence Unit has referred to India as a “flawed democracy”.
- Yet, it is worth noting here that Pakistan continues faring worse than India on all the indices mentioned above.
- AIM: Hindu hegemony in India and Hindustan’s (India’s) hegemony in South Asia
- The Hindu identity according to Hindu nationalists is constituted by three characterizations, i.e., **Jaati**, **Rashtra** and **Sanskriti**. Jaati is a common race where Rashtra denotes a collective nation and Sanskriti is the culture of a common civilization.
- Headquartered at Nagpur, RSS was established in 1925 in southern India by Keshav Baliram Hedgewar (1889–1940) to foster unity amongst the Hindu nation in reaction to pan-Islamic Khilafat Movement in Subcontinent in the 1920s.
- In 1923, V. D. Savarkar coined the term ‘Hindutva’ in an essay titled “Hindutva: Who is a Hindu?”
- He crafted the motto, **Hindu-Hindi-Hindustan** – which refers to religion, language, and country while restricting and prohibiting minorities.
- RSS claims to be a unified party with members from all Hindu castes, but it is dominated by upper-caste Brahmins.
- **Objectives:** to penetrate the society at grass-root level to accentuate Hindu nationalism and impose its pre-modern social hierarchies, progressively weaken and subjugate of Muslim population with apparent aim to compel them either reconvert to Hindu religion or marginalize them as non-entity or to leave India, assert and establish influence over the entire subcontinent as historical right, get rid of foreign dependence and assert Indian role at the regional and global levels.
- identical to Hitler and Mussolini’s concept of Nazism and Fascism. However, it appears to be much closer to Hitler’s Nazi ideology which emphasized nation-building as compared to Mussolini’s Fascism that focused on the state-building.
- **Shakha** (branch) is the basic unit of RSS organization which enrolls volunteers with a balanced mix of age groups. The Shakhas are responsible for recruiting, training, and propagating of Hindutva philosophy. First, overseas Shakhas of RSS was established in Kenya in 1947.

- The largest network comprised of over 40 chapters and 150 Shakhas in the US alone, which is playing a pivotal role in generating funds, influencing the Hindu Diaspora besides promoting Indian/RSS interests abroad.
- Such foreign donations enable RSS to finance its operational activities including communal violence against minorities, such as demolition of **Babri Masjid** and lynching passengers of **Samjhauta Express**.
- The BJP's origin lies in the **Bharatiya Jana Sangh**, formed in 1951 by **Hindu Mahasabha leader** Shyama Prasad Mukherjee to channelize RSS's societal influence into a mainstream political force. After the State of Emergency in 1977, the Jana Sangh merged with several other parties to form the Janata Party; it defeated the incumbent Congress party in the 1977 general election. After three years in power, the Janata party dissolved in 1980 with the members of the erstwhile Jana Sangh reconvening to form the BJP.
- **The New York Times correspondent**, who covered 2014-elections, reported an extensive RSS mobilization campaign using its organizational presence in each village and urban locality to garner support for BJP.
- The most devout RSS prachariks (workers) have been rewarded with appointments as ministers and public office holders; an apt example is Prime Minister Modi who rose from a waiter at a tea stall.
- RSS-BJP duo used violence to coerce and pressurize minorities for votes. According to the **Huffington Post** (2017), India was declared the fourth most insecure country on religious grounds in 2015 behind Syria, Nigeria, and Iraq. Most recent communal violence happened on the eve of President Trump's visit to India in late February 2020, in which more than 50 innocent Muslims were killed and over 400 injured.
- Wilkinson theorized that minorities are protected only if the government relies on minority vote for its survival and political advantage. **Uttar Pradesh** is one of the most populous multi-religious states of India with 31 percent Muslims, a significant swing factor in elections. Of all the incidents of communal violence in the state of Uttar Pradesh, 57 percent of the riots and 67 percent casualties (295 killed) took place between 1989 and 1991 during state elections. More than half of these communal riots had taken place in two constituencies aimed at increasing Hindu votes where BJP had lost narrowly in previous elections. Resultantly, BJP's vote bank increased by 24 percent. **Ayodhya Violence**: At least 1000 people were killed; most of whom were Muslims across India.⁴⁹ The charged religious emotions were shrewdly exploited by RSS-BJP leadership to increase its vote bank in the next election. Resultantly, BJP's Lok Sabha (House of People) seats tally rose from 119 seats in 1991-elections to 161 seats in 1996-elections.
- Had there been no riots Modi would not have won the 2003-elections in Gujarat with thumping majority. In the domestic pretext, it made Modi a leader and ardent hardliner in the ranks of Hindu nationalists and also brought him in the first line of leaders of BJP. This was the reason that when **Atal Bihari Vajpayee** tried to remove Modi from his seat, the BJP leadership including L.K. Advani supported Modi and he was not removed. Modi stayed as the Chief Minister of Gujarat from 2001 to 2014.
- Appointing devout RSS workers on government jobs is the main method of influencing India's policies. **Modi, Yogi Adityanath** – a staunch RSS religious leader was nominated as Chief Minister. Yogi has become a symbol of hate and communal violence in UP, and **Amit Shah** to name few.

- Indian public service officeholders can associate themselves with RSS, undermining the principle of neutrality in the public service. The Government of India had imposed a ban on this in 1986 after the murder of Prime Minister Indira Gandhi but later, most of the states lifted the ban under BJP's political pressure. The biased conduct of police and other state institutions in myriad cases of violence against minorities in recent years substantiate the argument. In the recent anti-Muslim riots in Delhi, Police not only supported the violent mob but also torched the Muslims and their properties.
- Under Vajpayee, former Prime Minister, the Delhi Chapter of RSS launched a network of schools indoctrinating RSS philosophy. BJP has also altered and reproduced public school textbooks to indoctrinate Hindutva ideology in the Hindu youth.
- Wilkinson observed the phenomenon of Hindus' economic gains as an outcome of communal violence in India. He asserted that communal violence was employed by the slum-lords and the real-estate tycoons to grab the valuable lands and then selling it at inflated rates. Some of the Hindu businessmen endeavoured to get hold of Muslims' cloth business in Meerut and cigarette business in Jabalpur, Moradabad, and Kanpur. This resulted in the eruption of anti-Muslims violence and their forcible eviction.
- **National Register of Citizens (NRC) and Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA)** bills aiming at reducing Muslims to the status of illegal immigrants, It has also proven that Jinnah's "Two Nation Theory" was realistic.
- Following the strategy of **fait accompli**, the BJP-led Indian government revoked Articles 370 and 35A of the Indian Constitution to assimilate IOK as Indian Union territory. RSS-BJP is set to roll out a land-grabbing scheme to allot 6000 Acres Kashmiri Muslims' land at a paltry rate of just one Indian Rupee per Kanal (600 square yards). 77 It plans to offer 50 percent GST waiver and cheap loans to Hindu investors in the garb of promoting industrial, IT, and tourism development in IOK.⁷⁸ Such a plan implies serious diplomatic, economic, and security consequences for India. With engineered policies of providing domicile and employment, Indian intent of converting Kashmiris from majority to minority is evident.
- India has rendered **SAARC** dysfunctional and desires to make it an exclusive Indian domain through bilateral engagements, excluding Pakistan. Following the **Chanakya's** teachings, India has been deepening its relations with Iran and Afghanistan to use their soil for fomenting instability in Pakistan. This was admitted by Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh at the Sharam-al-Sheikh Summit and later confessed by Indian intelligence spy captured in Pakistan – Kulbhoshan Jadhav.
- As the Indian hard power is increasing, it is becoming increasingly belligerent (manifested by killing of innocent civilians along LOC), a proclamation of military doctrine (Cold Start Doctrine which projects its perilous over-confidence to wage a limited conventional war⁹¹), and post-Pulwama events (losing two fighter aircraft).
- purchase of S-400 anti-aircraft missile systems worth \$800 million with Russia. It is now pushing the case for building a third aircraft carrier to realize its dream of a blue water navy and establish its hegemony on the Indian Ocean and beyond before China could dominate the Indian Ocean.
- the debate on the revision of 'no first use' nuclear policy has been triggered by BJP leaders, which may prove perilous for the entire region. Pakistan has been experiencing a hybrid threat, mainly emanating from India. Having understood the viability of the deterrence regime, India had switched to the policy of indirect strategy to bleed Pakistan instead of destroying.

- to isolate Pakistan diplomatically, targeting Pakistan by manipulated information warfare (exposed by EU Disinfo Lab¹⁰¹), launching a so-called surgical strike by India in Azad Jammu and Kashmir area along the line of control (LoC) to undermine Pakistan's security forces ¹⁰² (an unsubstantiated Indian claim), using Afghan and Iranian soil to foment instability in Pakistan and targeting CPEC projects evidenced by Kulbhushan Jadhav's arrest on Pakistan's territory and confession of perpetrating terrorism.
- Volatility, distrust, and uncertainty best define the strategic environment of South Asia.
- The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) acts as the political wing of radical Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) – **the Saffron Bridge** – which is providing an overarching ideological and structural base.
- William Barker explains that “even if the threat is not truly religious in nature, religion will still play a key role in nationalism because religion provides the easiest, most identifiable, and most useful tool of rallying opposition to the threat.
- RSS downplays division of India on religious identity grounds, therefore, stress regaining the control over the entire Indian Subcontinent as the pre-ordained seat of Hindu rule after British Raj – an expansionist notion in the modern concept of nation-state. RSS external relations thinking under various BJP regimes can be explained by the Mearsheimer's theory of offensive realism, which buttresses survival through hegemony.
- RSS-BJP duo follows the Chanakya's philosophy of statecraft, however, lacks his shrewdness and skill as evident from its overt aggression.
- Congress mukt Bharat (wiping out opposition)
- Ban on cow slaughter was followed by a campaign against inter-faith marriages in the name of 'love jihad'.
- The most menacing of all the devices for the suppression of dissent is prosecution for sedition. His technique is not to debate with his political opponents. It is to vilify them and denounce them as persons lacking in patriotism. This is the standard technique employed by the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS). But it is also a recognised symbol of fascism.
- As per US-based rights watchdog Freedom House, India under Narendra Modi's watch has dropped from 'free' to 'partly free' status. The Hindutva-infused dispensation in New Delhi is “driving India itself towards authoritarianism” says the watchdog's report, while adding that “the ruling Hindu nationalist movement also encouraged the scapegoating of Muslims” with reference to the spread of Covid-19 in the country last year, which was blamed on Muslims.

Indo Pacific

Europe

- The geopolitics of the Indo-Pacific is at its highest developed stage in history, contributing to nearly 60% of the global GDP and being home to three of the four largest economies outside of the EU (India, China, Japan). Owing to its geographical reality, the region is central to global value chains, international trade and investment flows and is also at the forefront of digital economy. The Strategy launched in April 2021 recommits the EU politically to the region with the aim of “contributing to its stability, security, prosperity and sustainable development, based on the promotion of democracy, rule of law, human rights and international law”. Through its said commitments, the EU realizes the need to build upon its existing relationships with multiple regional players, India, Japan and South Korea, given the international air of mutual distrust and competition.

- Given that the region has been ignored by the supranational Union for decades, there are several factors as to why the EU chose to act on constructively associating itself with the Indo-Pacific now. The reasons for this move include pressures from its Member States namely France, Germany and Netherlands. Further, the need to counter China's revisionist challenge and its politico-economic rise along with the quest of the EU to establish itself as a relevant geopolitical actor to realize its global power aspirations remain primary triggers.
- It is important to note that the Strategy comes at a time of unprecedented rise of China at the global scale. It puts the Union at loggerheads with China as Beijing continues to threaten the security of the area by claiming indisputable sovereignty over the Nine-Dash Line in the South China Sea. Historically viewing Europe-China relations indicate numerous instances when the EU and China have found themselves at loggerheads. Moreover, in recent years in particular, the EU has not only been apprehensive of the Chinese provocation of European countries pushing them towards adopting a 'One-China' Policy with no exception, but also of China's assault on Hong Kong's independence as well as China's assertion of a wolf warrior diplomacy across its foreign policy.

Maldives

Maldives has been one of India's closest regional maritime partners, and the bilateral relationship between the two is built of mutual trust and neighbourly bonds. However, the way in which the Maldives has formed regional alliances with extra-territorial powers, such as China, have had a significant impact on India's capacity to fully manage regional security within the Indo-Pacific security space. Since the launch of the BRI, the Maldives has strengthened its relationship with China to support its development efforts. However, China's economic engagement has also brought it closer to India's sphere of influence and created geostrategic competition between the two, challenging India's capacity to sustain traditional security norms and customs followed by its Indo-Pacific partners.

the Maldives can influence regional power dynamics concerning India and China. Former Maldivian president and political strongman Abdulla Yameen Abdul Gayoom in 2013 adopted pro-China policies and drew Chinese interests into the regional periphery (Rasheed, 2018, 2020). It became necessary for India to engage with the Maldives to curb China's increasing influence over maritime boundaries of South Asia. However, India was able to influence Maldives-China policy only after pro-Western President Mohammed Solih came to power in November 2018. Solih's new government reiterated the 'India First' policy and withdrew China as a priority development partner (Rasheed, 2020) which led to enhanced defence and strategic cooperation between India and the Maldives.

This created an opportunity for India to enhance bilateral ties especially maritime defence cooperation with the Maldives. This has also made the Maldives important player in the Indo-Pacific security space as far as India is concerned. The Maldives can act as a significant influencer in shifting geopolitical competition between regional powers.

This viewpoint aligns with constructivism in international relations where shared ideas have a capacity to shape and re-shape inter-state relationships despite pre-existing norms and practices (Flockhart, 2016; Wendt, 1992). As constructivists would argue, despite the traditional Maldives-India regional partnerships, India's ability to strengthen its closer ties with the Maldives has been shaped by the political choices and ideas of President Solih's government to enhance defence and security cooperation with India as part of its regional foreign policy agenda.

Types of Assertiveness

← greater escalatory potential	Declarative verbal assertions via non-coercive statements, diplomatic notes, domestic legislation and administrative measures, international legal cases
	Demonstrative unilateral administration of disputed possession: patrols, surveys, resource development, construction of infrastructure, state-sanctioned tourism or activism, domestic judicial proceedings, and cooperative agreements with third parties
	Coercive threat or imposition of punishment: may be verbal, diplomatic or administrative, economic punishment, warning shots, physical interference with foreign activities in disputed area
	Use of force application of military force or direct seizure and occupation of disputed possession

In 'PRC Assertiveness in the South China Sea: Measuring Continuity and Change, 1970–2015' (2021 International Security) writer explained China's assertiveness has been increasing near-constantly from 1970 onwards. The most recent year in which China's assertive behaviour did not intensify in some form was in 1990, in the wake of the Tiananmen crackdown. But he saw a surge in 2007.

harassment of Vietnamese and Philippine seismic survey activities, forcing Indonesia to release Chinese fisherfolk detained for fishing in its EEZ, threatening foreign oil companies cooperating with Vietnamese energy development in the disputed area. The new coercive behaviours have been accompanied by a rapid administrative buildup comprising increasing numbers of patrols, and then, from late 2013, construction of massive artificial islands on six reefs in the Spratly Archipelago. Those two basic distinguishing features of China's policy – regular coercive acts and a rapid buildup of administrative presence – have persisted to the present. But they began in 2007, before the Global Financial Crisis called US's long-term power into question, and long before Xi Jinping takes power. These two commonly-cited drivers of China's maritime policy at most entrenched or exacerbated a policy that was already in motion. It's also well before the Chinese Internet start to lighted up with nationalist sentiments about the issue. Based on search activity data from Baidu, China's dominant search engine, the online public's demand for information on the South China Sea was flat until mid-2009.

the major policy change observed from 2007 traces back to decisions in the late 1990s to build long-range maritime law enforcement fleets. It was the maturation of these specific capabilities, rather than China's military and economic hard power per se, that produced the change in 2007.

Until 1973, the PRC's stated interest in the South China Sea had been limited to small disputed islands. It was only after it joined negotiations for a UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) – a unique international treaty governing state jurisdiction over maritime spaces – that year that the PRC began asserting wide-ranging administrative rights over the waters in the area. After the ratification of the UNCLOS in 1982, the PRC launched major efforts to survey the energy resources, hydrological conditions and marine life across the nine-dash line area. In 1987 it finally established a foothold in the Spratly Islands – the furthest flung archipelago in the South China Sea. In 1992, as the treaty neared the 60 ratifications required to come into force, the PRC's assertiveness surged once again. It was the enshrining of the UNCLOS provisions into the PRC's legal-administrative system in 1998 that prompted it to create a new maritime law enforcement agency – China Marine Surveillance – tasked with realizing China's claims to sovereign jurisdiction around its maritime periphery. It took several years for the new agency to acquire the equipment, know-how and confidence to effectively assert maritime jurisdiction in remote, tropical waters thousands of miles from the Chinese mainland, and in many cases close to the coasts of rival claimant states in Southeast Asia. By 2007 it was ready, and on the orders of the State Council, rolled out regular patrols across the nine-dash line area.

For analysts of foreign policy and international relations, a key takeaway is that the changes we observe in states' dispute behaviour at one time are often lagged effects of decisions taken much earlier.

Food security

- PM's Special Assistant on Food Security Jamshed Iqbal Cheema has launched a project in Gilgit-Baltistan, whereby the wool from **Angora rabbits** will be used to make high-quality products like shawls and scarves, by the local population. The project includes the distribution of Angora rabbits to households interested in breeding and harvesting the fur for wool.
- According to the Pakistan Social and Living Standards Measurement, 16.4 out of every 100 households surveyed during the fiscal year 2019-2020 reported moderate to severe food insecurity.
- Pakistan is a food-insecure country? To answer this query, let us look into the Punjab Food Department's definition of food security. It says that a country is food-secure if it makes available nutritionally adequate food in terms of quantity, quality, and variety to all persons at all times. Are we doing that? No. According to Pakistan's Planning Commission report, Vision 2030, our population is not getting enough nutritious food because of which it is suffering from absolute to moderate malnutrition. That explains the stunting rate in Pakistani children of 40.02%, which is already the highest in South Asia and nearly twice as much as the globally prevalent rate. With every additional mouth to feed, a corresponding growth in resources to meet the challenges of undernourishment, malnutrition, and stunted human development is required.
- THE PTI government has an ambitious plan to develop agriculture over the next three years. It intends to invest Rs110bn — with equal contributions from the federal and provincial governments — and boost agriculture credit by 80pc to Rs2.7tr for almost doubling the grain harvest, increasing fruit and vegetable production five times, and trebling milk output. The

government also suggests importing semen for free distribution among farmers to boost livestock productivity, supplying subsidised fertilisers, increasing the number of crops grown and encouraging fruit and vegetable production. The authors of the strategy expect the interventions will help alleviate rural poverty and enhance household incomes. The government is also hopeful that the interventions under this project will bring about a fundamental change in the agriculture sector by persuading farmers to venture into the commercial domain by growing more value-added crops and enhancing milk yields not only for the local market but also for exports.

- But will the government succeed in achieving its targets and make agriculture competitive through these interventions? Not really. To begin with, the suggested plan focuses mostly on subsidies without any mention of the required changes in an official policy that discourages growers from shifting from low- to high-value crops. The details released show that the government is still not addressing the root causes of the decline in agriculture, including but not limited to the lack of research in development of high-yield seeds, fighting disease and shifting weather patterns as well as slow adoption of modern technology, obsolete farm practices and decreasing soil fertility because of excessive chemical use. Neither does the plan spell out measures for supporting smallholder, subsistence farmers who are forced to take out a mortgage to purchase inputs like seed and fertilisers. Past experience shows that subsidies rarely help. Instead, the government should allocate maximum resources to promote agriculture research, set up initiatives to speed up adoption of modern farm technology and practices to increase productivity and reduce costs, encourage private investment in the supply chain to minimise wastages, increase growers' access to cheaper formal credit, and link them directly to the markets to put more money in their pockets.
- Moreover, Pakistan should also develop international linkages to progress in the agricultural sector. In this realm, Pakistan can emulate the Saudi model which includes the Saudi Agriculture and Livestock Company (SALIC). Similarly, the Pakistan Mercantile Exchange platform can be productively used to increase Pakistan's reliability as a country concerned with food security. As for raising funds to procure resources, the Islamic financial instrument Sukuk can be capitalised on. Together, these options can ensure a successful trajectory towards food security, leading to human development and poverty alleviation.

Water Crisis

Facts

- A tracking of **water conflicts** maintained by the Pacific Institute for Studies in Development, Environment and Security reports 466 conflicts since 2010.
- The water crisis is a **health crisis**. Nearly 1 million people die each year from water, sanitation and hygiene-related diseases which could be reduced with access to safe water or sanitation. Every 2 minutes a child dies from a water-related disease. Time spent gathering water or seeking safe sanitation accounts for billions in **lost economic opportunities**. \$260 billion is lost globally each year due to lack of basic water and sanitation. **Water.org**
- Over 260 river basins are shared by two or more countries. In the absence of strong institutions and agreements, changes within a basin can lead to **transboundary tensions**. When major projects proceed without regional collaboration, they can become a point of conflicts, heightening regional instability. The Parana La Plata, the Aral Sea, the Jordan and the Danube may serve as examples. **World water Council**

- The UN estimates that water demand in Pakistan is growing at an annual rate of 10 per cent. **UNESCO**
- According to the World Health Organizations (WHO), the requirement of water for a good human health is approximately 100 litres per person per day, which is the basic right of every individual.
- **By 2050**, up to 5 bil, more than half the world's people will be water-insecure; in dry regions, climate change will aggravate scarcity. The UN
- According to **Indus River System Authority IRSA**, Pakistan loses \$29 billion per annum on unutilised water falling into the Arabian Sea.
- Pakistan remains one of the top three water-intensive countries in the world. **The Tribune**
- A new report of the Pakistan Council of Research in Water Resources (PCRWR) says that the country will approach absolute water scarcity **by 2025**.
- Pakistan's live **water storage capacity** that used to be 16.26-million-acre feet (MAF) in 1976 has reduced to 13.68MAF, which equals to only 30 days carryover capacity. The international standard is 120 days. **WAPDA**
- Pakistan's **productivity per unit of water and land** is one of the lowest in the world. India and China have reduced substantial amount of water usage in the agricultural sector and enhanced productivity manifold. Economic Survey
- Pakistan that is recurrently affected by catastrophes continuously rank among the most affected countries both in the long-term index and in the index for the respective year. **Global Climate Risk Index 2021**

IWT

- India and Pakistan are locked in an adversarial relationship. They habitually take positions that are zero sum, focusing on the win-lose rather than win-win proposition. Both sides often end up defending their positions, rather than their interests. Not surprisingly, the issues get politicised and the negotiating space shrinks further. For comparison, the design of the Great Ethiopian Renaissance Dam over the Nile was revised several times, sometimes on the suggestion of Egypt, the lower riparian. In fact, Ethiopia negotiated filling of the dam to be phased over several years to avoid any downstream scarcity. India and Pakistan can interpret and operationalise some IWT clauses progressively for EBS from such international experiences.
- Transboundary waters by nature require cooperation. The Turkish-Armenian case offers a pertinent example whereby a dam was jointly constructed on the Arpaçay/Akhuryan River. The two co-riparians do not even have diplomatic relations but share transboundary waters equitably through a permanent water commission and its working groups. It works successfully because they have firewalled the technical work of the commission from political highs and lows. The IWT commissioners have not attempted, or even envisioned, this autonomy.

Strategic weapon

- Under British India, Punjab became the largest canal based irrigation state and fruit basket, providing food to entire Subcontinent. During the British era, the areas forming part of west Punjab (Pakistani Punjab) had extensive and well-built canal network, thus used to produce maximum agricultural products. These canals were fed by the river water, channelled through several water head works. As a result of manipulated division of Punjab by Boundary Commission under Radcliff Award, all these water head works came under Indian control.

- Immediately after independence of Pakistan, India stopped water from flowing into the canals which were irrigating the vast land of Punjab. It created a crises situation in Pakistan and for some time, Pakistan had to pay for the water, it received from Indian controlled water head works. This was the first strategic usage of water by India as a weapon against Pakistan.
- Later on as a result of bilateral meetings between Prime Minister Liaquat Ali Khan and Indian Premier Nehru, temporary arrangements were made to resume water supply to Pakistan. Nevertheless, the control of head works remained under India for years until World Bank brokered the Indus Water Treaty (IWT) in 1960. Thereafter, Pakistan delinked its canals from eastern rivers and devised a new water feeding system from western rivers. IWT-1960 gave exclusive rights over water of western rivers to Pakistan, which apparently was the best arrangement in the era of cold war.
- It was a unique agreement over water distribution, since world-wide there have been precedence of division of water, rather division of rivers between upper and lower riparian states. In order to manage the IWT, both states established Indus Commission which worked well till 1980s. Nevertheless, since India is the upper riparian state and also an illegal occupant of the state of Jammu and Kashmir, who inhabitants wanted to join Pakistan. In the late 1980s, India started manipulated with the water of western rivers, whose water was dedicated exclusively for Pakistan. It started planning and constructing dams, water storages and hydroelectric projects over these rivers.
- In a way, India started manipulating with the water of Indus, Jhelum and Chenab against the essence of IWT-1960. It constructed over a dozen large and small dams on all three rivers and water diversion of twenty kilometres on Neelum River a tributary of Jhelum River. It constructed two major dams and hydroelectric projects; Bagliar dam on Chenab River and Kishanganga at Neelum River. Construction of dams, hydroelectric projects and water storages, reduced the down-stream flow of water, which is a serious violation of IWT-1960. This all is being done by India through a well-planned strategy, which aims to exploit Pakistan, desertification of its huge agricultural land. The strategy will constrain and starve the agrarian economy of Pakistan. As an upper riparian, India is using the water as a strategic weapon to coerce its agrarian economy. Since last few years, there is change in framing the water issue by New Delhi. In 2016, Indian Prime Minister Modi said "Blood and Water cannot flow at the same time". This statement came immediately after the Uri terror attack, which Indian RAW planned to defame Pakistan.
- All-together India has formulated an offensive strategy over the water of western rivers. India is using the IWT treaty as a bargaining chip against Pakistan for the consolidation of its illegal occupation of the state of Jammu and Kashmir. Indian leadership has threatened many a times to abrogate the Indus Water Treaty. In summary, the Indian strategy is to use water as a strategic weapon against Pakistan. There is an immediate need to counter this Indian hegemonic design against Pakistan. Pakistan must formulate a long-term strategy to secure the water of three western rivers.
- As per IWT the complete Irrigation system of Indus Basin is based on run-of-the-river supplies and India being upper riparian was not allowed to stop or divert the waters of western Rivers. Taking the open interpretation of IWT provisions on the use of run of river water of western rivers, India has gradually embarked upon construction of controversial dams in Indian Occupied Kashmir in a phased manner. This has caused escalation of tension in South Asia as India has been manipulating IWT and using it as a political tool to undermine Pakistan's sovereign rights of western rivers.

- Pakistan asks for a telemetry system (automatic recording and transmission of data from remote or inaccessible sources to an IT system in a different location for monitoring and analysis) for truth to prevail; India fast-tracks hydro-power projects worth 15b\$ in occupied Kashmir where all the western rivers flow through

Importance of Indus

- It is estimated that about 90 per cent of Pakistan's land area is arid or semi-arid, and is totally dependent on irrigation for its food production. This makes Pakistan a country with the highest irrigated and rain-fed land ratio in the world. Irrigation, in turn, is dependent on one major river system – the Indus – as the country's other rivers are seasonal in nature. It feeds more than 40 million acres of irrigated land in Pakistan*. It is the largest contiguous irrigation system in the world. *PILDAT
- The problem is that the water demand is 60 per cent in summer and 40 per cent in winter. This necessitates sufficient water storage during the short surplus period for use during the longer water stress period. 13 Without storage, much of the water in the Indus must inevitably run to the sea. However, the Indus's massive irrigation system has a storage capacity of only a month's supply.
- heavy reliance on Indus Basin and its tributaries has made it a vulnerable and persistent source of friction with India
- The water of Indus, which is discharged to the sea, keeps the seawater at bay. Due to decrease in waters of Indus River salt water of Arabian Sea has been observed till 100 kilometres. Deforestation shall continue due to loss of moisture on surface, soil degradation, salinity and erosion. This trend is converting fertile lands to desolate deserts. Rare species of Blind Dolphin used to be in abundance in complete Indus water systems but now it has reduced to a number of hardly 200. Another fish species Shad, Barramundi, Dangri, and numerous other valuable species are threatened of their existence. Mangrove forests, spread in an area of 263,000 hectares are the sixth largest forests in the world. Lowering in the water discharge by Indus River is seriously damaging these Mangroves Forests.

Treaty

- In 1950 Pak proposed arbitration, India refused; 52 WB offered its good office which both accepted; negotiations took 8 years; signed on 19 sep 1960; allocated water of 3 eastern rivers (Ravi, Beas and Sutlej) in their entirety for use by Ind and the western (Indus, Jhelum & Chenab) for Pak while India retained rights of irrigation and power generation with certain limitations on these rivers; Settlement of differences and disputes coming under the Article IX of IWT; Permanent Indus Commission, comprising high level technical representatives, responsible to resolve differences and smooth implementation; the matter can be taken upto govt level; then neutral expert by parties or if failed then WB will appoint; decision of expert would be binding; if expert rules that conflict should be treated as a dispute then it has to be submitted to a court of arbitration whose award is final.

ILAW perspective

- IWT has been criticized for failing to give a mechanism for the redressal of Pakistan's grievances. In the two disputes that did reach conclusion in case of the Baglihar Decision³³ and the Kishenganga Arbitration,³⁴ Pakistan was not able to succeed in its claim fully. This, compared to

similar claims that India makes against China with respect to China's undue construction of dams, 35 raises a question that if Pakistan's concerns are so legitimate so as to be echoed by India itself, why is the IWT insufficient in addressing them? It must not be forgotten that IWT does not waive the rights of Pakistan beyond the IWT. 7

- Regarding the relationship between the IWT and CIL, the IWT can be, and has been, interpreted in light of CIL.³⁸ However, CIL can only be used to interpret the IWT before a neutral expert or an arbitrator, and not to supersede the IWT. Particularly, where a direct conflict arises in CIL and IWT, the IWT will ultimately prevail.³⁹ Pakistan's concerns regarding the IWT and its consistent frustration with respect to unresolved water disputes,⁴⁰ coupled with limitations inherent to the treaty and India's uncooperative response that has now escalated to threats of breaching the IWT, calls for an analysis of whether India can act as such. Did IWT not bind the parties? Would India be obligated under CIL more than it is already under the IWT to cooperate and ensure equitable sharing with Pakistan?
- In light of these political developments creating uncertainty between Pakistan and India, and legal developments in CIL, the need to analyse the transboundary water rights of Pakistan beyond the IWT becomes imminent. For brevity, the rights of Pakistan under the IWT and its relationship with CIL must be mentioned, before undertaking a detailed analysis of CIL applicable to the Indus basin independent of the IWT. Under the treaty, Pakistan has a right to the unrestricted use of western rivers; and unrestricted use of eastern rivers, once they cross the boundary delimiting India from Pakistan.²⁵ The right of India to western rivers exercised for the construction of hydropower projects cannot be claimed absolutely, and is subject to the right of Pakistan to a minimum flow of water.²⁶ This minimum flow may vary for Pakistan in light of factors beyond the control of India and Pakistan, e.g. climate change. The IWT further gives Pakistan the right to exchange of data,²⁷ to be notified when the works by India may materially affect or interfere with the flow of water in Pakistan, and to be provided relevant data in this regard as well.²⁸ Pakistan is also entitled to peaceful means of dispute settlement, if any question, difference or dispute between the two states arises.²⁹ Furthermore, the IWT cannot be revoked unilaterally, either by, or against Pakistan.³⁰
- **State practice:** Every principle elucidated in CIL is also binding on India, by virtue of its own state practice as well as its claims against other states that rely on the same principles, such as China, Nepal and Bhutan, the upper riparian states to a lower riparian India. Although CIL is applicable on India even without their acceptance of the same, the active application of said principles gives Pakistan the right to bring up the principle of estoppel in their cases. Applying the principle of estoppel,⁴⁹ whatever stance is taken by India against the lower riparian states, such as Pakistan and Bangladesh, would contribute to its implied acceptance of the same treatment by China, Bhutan and Nepal.⁵⁰ It is interesting to note that the claims India makes against China, regarding the construction of dams and diversion of waters that can cause appreciable harm, are both arguments that Pakistan has, time and again, propounded against India.
- **Right to share Indus basin:** The first and foremost right of Pakistan vis a vis the Indus basin under CIL is the entitlement to share the basin with India as an equal, with or without the IWT, or any other agreement. This is evidenced through Article 3 of the Watercourses Convention which states that, watercourse states⁵² who are not parties to a water-sharing agreement would, nonetheless, be entitled to the rights under the convention. 6 The ICJ also held that the principle of community of interests,⁵⁷ which gave equality to all riparian states (Hungary V. Slovakia)

Therefore, just by virtue of being a lower riparian state, even in the absence of an agreement, Pakistan has certain rights against India in the Indus basin, and vice versa; and these rights may not be curtailed at the whim of either state.

- **State Practice:** India, as a lower riparian state against Nepal, has acknowledged the rights of both states to 'equal entitlement' of the Mahakali river in Article 3 of the Mahakali Treaty btw Nepal and India
- **The Right to be Protected from Significant Harm:** It has been discussed that India's extensive plans for the development of hydropower projects is a cause of concern for Pakistan as they impact the flow of water of the Indus basin.⁹⁴ These projects also have negative implications for the environment and ecology of the Indus basin, and especially for the water that flows into Pakistan.⁹⁵ Under CIL, there is an obligation upon states to undertake all appropriate measures, and exercise due diligence, to prevent the causing of significant harm upon other states, while utilizing international watercourses (also referred to as the no harm rule or the prevention rule).⁹⁶ If significant harm is caused, then the state whose use causes such harm, must take all appropriate measures to eliminate or mitigate the harm. If appropriate, compensation may also be made for the harm caused.⁹⁷ The obligation not to cause significant harm is well imbedded in CIL. It has also been incorporated in the Declaration of the United Nations (UN) Conference on the Human Environment, 1972 (hereinafter the Stockholm Declaration),⁹⁸ the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development, 1992 (hereinafter the Rio Declaration)⁹⁹ and the UN General Assembly (UNGA) Resolution on Cooperation between States in the Field of Environment, 1972.¹⁰⁰ Hence, Pakistan and India have reciprocal obligations to one another to avoid causing harm to each other's waters knowingly or negligently.
- In the Trail Smelter arbitration, the duty upon states to prevent transboundary harm under CIL was acknowledged. Canada, being responsible for causing harm to the US, was held liable for damages. This principle of *sic utere tuo ut alienum non laedas* can be found in inter-state relationships in international law, whereby a state 'must not permit the use of its territory for purposes injurious to the interest of other states in a manner contrary to international law.'
- **State Practice:** India has voiced concerns against China with respect to the artificial dam that collapsed in Tibet, causing damage along river Siang.¹¹⁶ India also had reservations against China for the lack of sharing of data regarding flooding, which had a major impact on India in 2000. Due to a landslide on a tributary of the Brahmaputra, thirty Indian nationals died and fifty thousand were left homeless
- **Right to Regular Exchange of Data and Information:** The obligation upon states to exchange data and information is also a part of CIL. As per Article 8 of the Watercourses Convention, the watercourse states are obliged to exchange data and information on a regular basis on the conditions of the watercourse, the quality of the water, related forecasts and other hydrogeological,¹⁴⁶ ecological,¹⁴⁷ hydrological¹⁴⁸ and meteorological¹⁴⁹ factors.¹⁵⁰ It is also inculcated in the Helsinki Rules,¹⁵¹ the Berlin Rules
- The duty to share information with co-riparian states is reflected in the **Indian state practice** vis a vis its relationship with Bhutan. India is a downstream state as against an upstream Bhutan.¹⁵⁸ India has devised with Bhutan a Comprehensive Scheme for the Establishment of Hydrometeorological and Flood Forecasting Network on rivers Common to India and Bhutan.¹⁵⁹ Several hydro-meteorological stations are located in Bhutan, funded by India that share data with India for the purpose of flood forecasting.

- **Right to Peaceful Settlement of Disputes:** The Watercourses Convention,¹⁹⁸ the Helsinki Rules¹⁹⁹ and the Berlin Rules²⁰⁰ lay down mechanisms for peaceful settlement of disputes. As per the ICJ, in the North Sea Continental Shelf cases, there is an obligation upon the parties negotiating to conduct themselves in a manner that makes the negotiations 'meaningful.'²⁰⁴ If either party insists upon their own positions without contemplating any modification of it, the negotiations are not meaningful, the court elaborated.²⁰⁵ This makes it obligatory upon India and Pakistan, under CIL, to not only conduct negotiations and consultations, but to do so in a meaningful manner when a dispute arises.
- **Conclusion:** even though international law provides a strong set of rights to the states sharing a basin, its weakness lies in its implementation mechanisms. This absence of mandatory dispute resolution mechanism owes partly to the reluctance of India and Pakistan to ratify the UNECE Water Convention and the Watercourses Convention, both of which entail dispute resolution mechanisms.²¹¹ At most, Customary International Law imposes an obligation upon states to enter into negotiations, which must be "meaningful."²¹² However, there is no mechanism for ensuring the compliance of international law *strictu sensu* in such cases in the absence of actual consent of states. Jurisdiction of judicial forums such as, the International Court of Justice²¹³ and other judicial and quasi-judicial forums, are subject to the consent of the States agreeing to approach or establish the same.²¹⁴ Therefore, if any dispute arises in the absence of IWT, then Pakistan and India would have no recourse but to rely on their diplomatic skillset to negotiate a truce or refer the matter to an impartial forum with mutual consent.

Way forward

- Transboundary water-sharing in South Asia has always been fraught with contentious relationships with bilateral water treaties focusing on national interest, characterised by lack of trust leading to fragmented management of transboundary resources keeping water availability, use and governance in the HKH region in a constant state of flux.
- However, the increasing gap between demand and supply, impacts of climate change and scientific consensus on the need for limiting warming to within 1.5 degrees Celsius by 2030 makes it imperative to elevate climate diplomacy in South Asia to a higher level of engagement, taking it beyond the pale of other political disputes to redirect water management from conflict between riparian states towards productive cooperation for building trust, sharing knowledge and devising mechanisms for achieving mutually beneficial goals.
- Leveraging cooperation at all levels between science, society and policy for a climate security nexus in South Asia is very important to adapt to uncertain global changes for a regional climate of peace and political stability.
- Taking a regional approach to water security is a big ask but not an impossible one. There is a need for redefining the contours of regional water security in ways that are politically acceptable, technically viable and legally correct to counter the formidable and immediate threats posed by climate change.
- both the countries have found themselves in water conflict due to common factors of population growth, urbanization and unproductive policies to tackle the crises. Additionally, enormous impacts of climate change have also resulted in speedy melting of Himalayan glaciers, which has added to the woes of existing water stresses. The abrogation of IWT cannot give security to existing water crisis, therefore, comprehensive plan of action is suggested.

Issues

- Electricity supply this summer is better than what it had been for the past many years. However, it has deteriorated in June, and this trend began in the middle of May, the two hottest months when temperature soars above 45 degrees Celsius in most parts of the country. The major reason given by the authorities is a shortfall of 6,000 megawatts in hydropower production due to silting of Tarbela Dam.
- **Climate change** is only one threat. **Pollution** is also exacerbating the water crisis. Unsafe drinking water is a potentially fatal reality for people around the world. Virtually all freshwater sources are now contaminated to some extent; not even Mount Everest's snow-caps have been spared.
- Water pollution comes from many sources including pesticides and fertilizers that wash away from farms, untreated human wastewater, and industrial waste. Even groundwater is not safe from pollution, as many pollutants can leach into underground aquifers. Some effects are immediate, as when harmful bacteria from human waste contaminate water and make it unfit to drink or swim in. In other instances—such as toxic substances from industrial processes—it may take years to build up in the environment and food chain before their effects are fully recognized.
- The debate surrounding the water scarcity has recently started taking into account two main factors heavily influencing the issue – climate change and environmental degradation. **Climate change** is affecting the available water resources through rise in temperature, which will increase demand for water in future. Increasing seawater intrusion in coastal areas is threatening cities located in the low-lying region. Changes in monsoon rainfall patterns, which is influenced by climate changes, resulted in the emergence of two distinct weather pattern - heavy rainfall in shorter period of time (causing floods) and no rainfall for longer period of time (causing droughts). Increasing temperature in future will result in more intense droughts which are already impacting several regions in Sindh and Balochistan.
- Long-term impacts of water scarcity issue will result in **loss of employment opportunities** for people employed in the agricultural sector (especially those associated with cotton production) and industrial sector with the textile industry facing the most severe brunt. The issue is increasing the already widened gap between rich and poor regarding accessibility to drinking water.
- For years, local and international water experts, including the World Bank, have been warning Pakistan that the unusually fast depletion of the Himalayan glaciers, low storage capacity, unwise use and other related uncertainties would lead to acute water shortage and crisis – flood and drought – in the next 10–40 years. {intro}
- Presently, several parts of the Indus Delta face dire water shortages, which has led to the **intrusion of saline seawater onto the land, wreaking havoc on the soil, ecology and economy** of the region. In a cruel irony, **residents are deprived of water, and simultaneously threatened by it** — caught between the devil and the deep blue sea, between scarcity and excess.
- Furthermore, **mangrove forests are depleting** due to the lack of freshwater flow to the delta region. Not only do the trees sustain a diverse ecosystem and support the fishing community, they have also protected the coast from natural disasters and soil erosion for centuries. Now, in a span of a few decades, thousands of acres of land have been lost to the sea, particularly in Badin and Thatta districts. According to researchers, it will take just another few years before other parts of the region are submerged under water, unless the present, self-destructive patterns are reversed.

- The **IMF** has warned that since water is a key input in agriculture, water shortages and variability can lead to food insecurity, raise production costs and constrain productivity growth.
- Due to availability of bottled water and home filtration systems, the decision makers have clean water and an abundance of it. Those who do not, are not in a position to influence the policymakers.
- Water is a key prerequisite for attaining many of the Sustainable Development Goals. In the face of the current challenges (fresh) water should be conceptualised as a global common good and global water governance should contribute to its protection. Within South Asia the Hindu Kush Himalayas (HKH) is not just a vast complex of mountains, it is also one of the most vibrant, distinct and intricate mountain systems in the world that produces one of the world's largest freshwater supplies and holds the biggest reserves of water in the form of ice and snow outside the polar region.
- The HKH region extends to about 3,500 kilometres over eight countries — Afghanistan, Bhutan, Bangladesh, China, India, Myanmar, Nepal and Pakistan. It is the source of 10 major river systems, including the Indus, Ganges and the Brahmaputra.
- According to a recent independent report commissioned by members of the G7, the mounting pressures on available water for Pakistan could translate into political instability and security risk. water stress has the potential of being the tipping point and accelerating Pakistan's trajectory towards the abyss.
- serious threat to its food security and rural livelihoods because of [escalating water shortages](#); Punjab, more than half of the province's share of water in agriculture is lost in canals and watercourses, while [inefficient conventional irrigation method of flooding the fields](#) also result in wastage. The [water scarcity for agriculture](#) is projected to increase manifold in the years to come as [droughts](#) become a norm in different regions — especially Balochistan — because of the [changing climate](#), which calls for the [adoption of efficient irrigation systems](#) and [better farm technology](#) to reduce water losses and [enhance water productivity](#) for improved crop quality and higher yields. This is exactly the area where the **World Bank** has been supporting the Punjab government since 2013 to provide farmers with [high-efficiency irrigation systems](#), including [drip irrigation](#) and [sprinkler systems](#), and [improving watercourses](#). Besides, it is helping the government in [laser land levelling for minimising crop losses](#) because of uneven fields and creating jobs in villages.
- One kilogram of [cotton](#), which is enough to produce one T-shirt and a pair of jeans, consumes 13,000 litres of fresh water. [Sugar cane](#) is another [water-intensive crop](#) that is grown all the year round. The average water requirement of sugar cane is more than the combined average water requirement of wheat, maize and cotton. 32 In times to come, with static water supply but growing demand, Pakistan will have to find alternative crops for export that are not water-intensive.
- Pakistan and Afghanistan share nine rivers with annual flows of about 18.3MAF of which the Kabul river accounts for an average flow of 16.5 MAF. At present [there is no institutionalized framework of cooperation for sharing of water from the Kabul river between Pakistan and Afghanistan](#). Attempts to draft a water treaty failed in 2003 and 2006. This has assumed importance because Afghanistan plans to build twelve dams on this river with the help of the World Bank and the international community including India to generate 1,177 MW of electricity. When constructed, there will be a total water storage capacity of 4.7 MAF. Since the entire flow of the Kabul river has

been factored in by Pakistan as part of its own water resources, its fear is that these dams could lead to a 16–17 per cent drop in water supply from Afghanistan, which would seriously affect its own water availability. 18 Pakistan will be especially vulnerable because this drop will occur during the winter when the flow of the Indus is already low.

- The irrigation department of Punjab has stated that while in the 1990s, water could be extracted in the province at a depth of 20–40 feet below ground, in the 2010s, drilling has to take place at close to 800 feet below ground. Additionally, this indiscriminate pumping and heavy use of pesticides are contaminating the aquifer, where tube-well [salinity](#) is increasing. It is estimated that 14 per cent of the [groundwater reserves are highly saline](#), unfit for drinking purposes as well as irrigation, and there is now saline water intrusion into mined aquifers. [Groundwater](#) is akin to the family gold – to be used as a last resort when there are problems with surface supplies. In Pakistan, however, groundwater has been used indiscriminately leading to falling water tables. New NASA satellite data indicates that the Indus basin aquifer is now the second most stressed in the world. This rapid depletion of the aquifer means that Pakistan does not have much groundwater in reserve that can be used as the river system becomes more stressed.
- The underground water level in Pakistan's second largest city, **Lahore**, is depleting fast and is a forecast to [meet ground zero situation](#) by 2025 like Cape Town.
- Water withdrawal for municipal use is estimated at 5.2 per cent and industrial use 0.76 per cent. This is unlikely to change in the next few years as agriculture plays a pivotal role in Pakistan. First, about 60 per cent of Pakistan's population lives in rural areas and is dependent on agriculture directly or indirectly. Second, the agriculture sector accounts for about 20 per cent of the GDP. Third, it absorbs 43.7 per cent of the labour force. Fourth, over 70 per cent of Pakistan's exports depend on agriculture-based products. {[economy](#)}
- Over the years, the [water mafias](#) in Karachi and other urban cities of Sindh have earned billions by [creating artificial water shortages](#) for households, who were then compelled to buy water from water tank suppliers. The same psyche has been at work in stealing irrigation water.
- Another kind of water theft is when members of the ruling elite, top military and civil officials as well as law enforcement agencies, [do not pay their water bills](#). It was reported that the Karachi Water and Sewerage Board (KWSB) was owed as much as Rs 40 million for the water tanker service such 'influential' had availed. **Dawn**
- The irrigation department of Punjab province claims that it has reduced irrigation water losses by 10% by implementing the latest scientific techniques and better management practices. Several projects to cut water losses are underway, including one in the Potohar region that depends mostly on rains for irrigation. Several other water conservation projects are at different stages of completion.
- Sindh have also been classified as being at risk of [increasing soil infertility](#) as a result of salinity due to sea water intrusion. This is the accumulated '[environmental debt](#)' (a term used by the World Bank) that Pakistan's future generations will have to pay. Rapid urbanization in Pakistan is likely to create additional problems when it comes to the availability of water as the example of Karachi shows.
- It is unfortunate that no government has had the vision to [prioritise water governance as part of its national security strategy](#). According to **Indus River System Authority IRSA**, Pakistan loses \$29 billion per annum on unutilised water falling into the Arabian Sea. The authority believes that "we and our coming generations would die of hunger if we do not build dams."

- **Sedimentation** is also adding to the existing problem. According to a Dawn report on Pakistan's irrigation problems, Tarbela dam has lost nearly 30 per cent of its storage capacity since the late 1970s, and now retains so little water that irrigation supplies are threatened. The Tarbela Dam, which used to serve the agricultural needs up to mid-June, when the next filling cycle starts, now regularly hits dead level by early or mid-March.
- **Pakistan's water stress is projected to increase in the next few years.** Climate change resulting in prolonged droughts in some regions like Balochistan, **erratic weather patterns**, **frequent flooding**, **a shrinking winter season** and **heatwaves in cities like Karachi** is aggravating the situation. **Dams** may be important **to trap floodwaters** for future use in years of scarcity. But they are not the solution to our stressed water economy. Pakistan remains **one of the top three water-intensive countries** in the world. This means we can overcome water shortages significantly by conserving this depleting resource through **reduction in its wasteful use**, especially by farmers, who are the largest users of water. Additionally, the **water accord needs to be renegotiated** to secure the independent buy-in of all provinces.
- **Balochistan** is already dry and its capital, Quetta, is facing a dangerous situation in view of the **reduction of snowfall on the mountains** and an **alarming depleting level of underground water resources**. As a result, Balochistan — like other provinces of Pakistan — is also facing severe water shortage.

Inter-Provincial discords

- The conflict between Pakistan's provinces regarding water, especially between Sindh and Punjab, dates back to the 1870s, when Punjab started constructing irrigation infrastructure on Indus river. Several commissions were appointed during British rule and subsequently, and several reports have been issued on this complex issue. The latest has been the Water Apportionment Accord (WAA) signed by the chief ministers of all four provinces of Pakistan on 16 March 1991. This accord replaced previous agreements to distribute the Indus waters among the provinces and command areas. The Indus River System Authority (IRSA) was created as the regulatory authority for monitoring and distribution of the water resources of the Indus in accordance with the WAA.
- Punjab and K-P are upper riparian provinces whereas Sindh is downstream or lower riparian and often complains about the shortage of water from the Indus system. The two major water conflicts that exist within Pakistan over the division of water and sharing of water shortages are between Punjab and Sindh, and between Sindh and Balochistan. Sindh as a lower riparian is in discord with Punjab, and Balochistan as a lower riparian of Sindh clashes with it over availability of water.
- The total amount of water available for distribution in the Indus river system as per the WAA of 1991 was 104 MAF. An extra 10 MAF was added as anticipated flows after building additional storages. The accord thus divides a total of 114 MAF but currently 114 MAF is not available, and this has led to the dispute between the provinces. Punjab has argued that allocations should be made according to average percentages of historical use. On the other hand, Sindh argues that divisions must be made according to the same percentages as the accord allocations, with all provinces sharing an equal percentage of the shortfall.
- However, it is not only Sindh that has a problem. IN Recent past, the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KPK) government claimed from the Centre Rs 120 billion as compensation for use of its share of water for two decades (1992–93 to 2012–13) by Punjab and Sindh because of lack of infrastructure

(Centre rejected). Not to be left out, Balochistan has also complained that it has been using only 3.05 MAF out of its water share of 3.87 MAF since 1992 due to infrastructure constraints and, therefore, it should be immediately paid a compensation of Rs 2 billion to complete rehabilitation and improvement of its existing canals and drainage system.

- The inter-provincial discord over water is best represented by the controversy over the construction of the Kalabagh dam. While Punjab wants the dam, the other three provinces have serious reservations about its impact on them. In fact, the three provincial assemblies have passed resolutions opposing its construction. Several leaders from these provinces have even warned that moves to construct the dam will lead to the breakup of Pakistan.
- The [national shortages for the summer crops](#) are now estimated to have jumped from earlier projections of 10pc to nearly 30pc with the [drop in temperature in the catchment areas](#). This is forcing Irsa, the sole arbiter of water disputes under the 1991 Water Apportionment Accord WAA, to release water from Mangla for Sindh's cotton crop as the provincial government accused Irsa and Punjab of cutting its water share. Punjab is unhappy with Irsa's move, arguing that the failure to fill the reservoir could augment water scarcity for both Kharif and Rabi crops in the province. It says Irsa should adjust water distribution among the provinces in accordance with the new estimates of shortages and available river inflows.
- During the last 80 years, water flow to the lower Indus Basin has declined by over 80pc, resulting in a permanent crisis in agriculture and steadily increasing seawater intrusion. Sindh cries for more equitable water sharing. The demands from mainstream political parties like the PPP now include the permanent closure of the Chashma-Jhelum link canal, abandoning the construction of the Taunsa-Panjnad link canal, and revisiting Irsa's mandate to curtail the irrigation authority's role. The annual filling and release of waters from Mangla Dam has become politicised and needs an agreement on transparent mechanisms. Mismanagement in Mangla, it is claimed, has created severe water shortage downstream from the Sukkur and Kotri barrages.
- Furthermore, the Council of Common Interest (CCI) under the Constitution of Pakistan was designated to hear any complaints about water interference. The CCI and the 1991 accord were meant to create a foundation for collective inter-provincial action on water. However, due to various factors including the wide gap between Punjab and the other provinces, the same was not successful.

Solutions

- Accordingly, there is a strong need for collective inter-provincial action to prevent water scarcity. This requires an integrated approach beyond the mere construction of more dams such as fully implementing the 1991 accord, reconstituting the CCI or establishing an oversight committee with the authority to settle water disputes, greater allocation of resources for improved water infrastructure and capacity building of water management institutions such as IRSA.
- Furthermore, the Operating Rules formulated by IRSA lack clarity and seem to be inconsistent with the 1991 accord. The 1991 accord is inflexible in the sense that it uses the average flow of water during the 1977-1982 period to set the water allocation formula. Furthermore, it also fails to specify the rules for control structures. Hence, it would be useful to improve the operating rules within the framework of the accord.
- Inter-provincial disputes on water can be resolved by amending the 1991 accord to ensure that the provinces receive their share of water entitlement, maintain transparency and prevent

wastage of water. Furthermore, it is important that a meticulously calibrated system is put in place for measuring water inflows, storage and outflow. In addition to this, the measurement system must be audited by an impartial and independent party, and all reports should be made transparent for the public and relevant stakeholders to scrutinise. With respect to dams, the government should explore alternative options to the construction of dams on the Indus River such as water storages both on the Indus basin and outside the Indus basin. In case of constructing a dam on the Indus River, it is pertinent that the government seeks consensus from all relevant stakeholders through policy dialogue.

- The rapid sedimentation is the factor which keeps dams unable to store water for more than 30 days. As the sedimentation issue can't be resolved out rightly, Pakistan should focus on the construction of multiple smaller dams. Although these dams might not address the water scarcity issue in the long run, it will instead contribute as alternative sources of water storage.
- It is the need of the hour to manage the looming water crisis in Pakistan. following measures need to be considered here, as follows.
- the [dispute over the construction of Kalabagh Dam](#) on Indus River at Mianwali also needs to be resolved. Balochistan, K-P and Sindh have raised objections over the construction of that Dam for a variety of reasons. Technical experts say that if Kalabagh Dam had been constructed, bulk of water shortage should have been overcome. But the [project was politicised](#) and thus shelved. The **Dianmar-Basha Dam** located in K-P and Gilgit-Baltistan is [vulnerable to natural disasters](#), including earthquake. The last mega dam constructed in Pakistan was Tarbela Dam in 1974. Since then the [population of Pakistan has quadrupled and water resources are diminishing](#).
- In September 2020, Prime Minister Imran Khan had announced Rs1.1 trillion worth of Karachi Transformation Plan which also included the completion of **Karachi Bulk Water Supply called K-IV**. Even though K-IV, which is [estimated to provide 300 million gallons of water to Karachi from Haleji Lake](#), will not be enough to meet the growing water needs of the city, it will certainly help fill in the gap in demand and supply of water. [Karachi is the only city, after Los Angeles, which gets water from at least 100 kilometres away](#). Los Angeles gets water from Colorado River and Karachi from Indus and Hub rivers. It is feared that if the government fails to manage water crisis in Karachi, it [may lead to large-scale urban violence](#).
- if [India and Afghanistan construct dams](#) — as feared — on rivers entering Pakistan, it will lead to severe water crisis in the country. Water management in Pakistan also needs to [consider water conflicts](#) particularly with India and Afghanistan so that the double jeopardy of inter- and intra-state water conflicts is managed.
- The Ministry of Climate Change, in collaboration with the Federal Floodwater Commission, under the Ministry of Water Resources, and WWF-P, is responsible for implementing the Recharge Pakistan project launched earlier. The programme is related to floodwater management and building climate-change resilience. Comprising three phases, each spanning a decade, interventions aim to directly benefit over 10m people, and indirectly improve the capacities of a further 20m people across 50 vulnerable districts in the country, envisioning improved water- and food-security, and sustainable livelihoods by 2050.
- However, as with many of the good intentions announced by the state, everything will depend on official capacity and resolve. The creation of small dams and water-storage reservoirs have been on the agenda for years, particularly in Sindh, but little action has been seen on the ground. Apart from the infrastructure-building challenges, there is the problematic societal misassumption

about water being a plentiful resource. Then, the efficient use of water will necessarily encompass an adaptive farming sector. It is to be hoped that this well-meaning initiative is underpinned by serious thought on associated issues. Without a holistic approach, Pakistan's water woes stand little chance of being addressed in a sustainable fashion. The consequences, as water becomes even scarcer, will be devastating.

- Water scarcity need not entail water insecurity. An important key to enhance water security lies in ensuring equitable benefit sharing (EBS) among water stakeholders. This can help Pakistan i) pursue sustainable agriculture with less water, ii) improve interprovincial water distribution, and iii) strengthen the Indus Waters Treaty (IWT) that is otherwise based on the division of rivers, instead of sharing rivers, waters and ecosystems.
- Agriculture: If you want to solve Pakistan's water problems, focus on agriculture. Pakistan's agriculture is very thirsty. No amount of direct and indirect subsidies have helped quench this thirst — it doesn't wish to pay any taxes on water use or agricultural income. While 85m (44 pc) of the people await access to clean drinking water, planners in Islamabad keep envisioning expensive ways of subsidising irrigation water to mostly rich farmers at nominal costs. As pointed out in a recent World Bank report, only four crops (rice, wheat, sugarcane and cotton) consume 80pc water but contribute a pittance to GDP — 5pc. This poor management costs about 4pc of GDP, or around \$12 billion a year. It is a damning story of elite capture.
- In return, the agriculture sector offers one of the poorest 'crop per drop' ratios. Comparison shows that the new Istanbul airport that has cost less than the Diamer-Basha dam, for example, will provide 225, 000 skilled jobs serving 40m passengers daily on 1,250 domestic and international flights. The return on investment on agricultural infrastructure is seldom presented in cost-benefit terms.

Questions

- Why Pak and Ind cannot resolve their water disputes? What can they learn from Egypt and Ethiopia? Discuss Turkish-Armenian case too.
- How was Punjab irrigation system under British? First use of water as a strategic weapon by India? Formation of IWT, how it was unique? What are adv to Ind and its current activities? What Pakistan wants from Ind?
- Why Indus river is so imp?
- Salient features of IWT?
- In the absence of IWT what are pak's options using intl law?
- Propose solutions regarding IWT functioning.
- How are CC and pollution exacerbating the water crisis? Water crisis and effect on economy?
- Effects of water shortages on Indus delta? What is IMF and G7 warning?
- Difference btw haves and have-nots. Discuss importance of Hindu Kush Himalayas (HKH) for South Asia.
- How water scarcity is a serious threat to food security and rural livelihoods?
- Discuss Pak-Afghan water woes. Discuss Situation of groundwater in the country.
- Role of water mafias and other kinds of water theft? What Punjab has done for irrigation losses?
- What Is environmental debt and how it is related to Pak? Effects of Sedimentation?
- Explain Sindh-Punjab water feud. Why kp govt asked for 120 billion and Bal 2 billion? Kalabagh dam controversy?

- Give solutions

Democracy

- The Muslim Brotherhood and Hamas were elected by every possible definition of democracy, in Egypt and Gaza respectively. Before that Muslim nationalists were elected in Algeria. Their victories were annulled, not very different from the Anglo-American coup staged in the 1950s against Iran's elected former prime minister Mohammad Mosaddegh. He had nationalised the oil industry.
- To crush the Muslim Brotherhood and keep its leaders in jail, the Saudis have bankrolled Gen Sisi of Egypt. Earlier, Riyadh helped destroy Kuwait but used Saddam Hussein to do the hatchet job. Kuwait was resented (like Qatar today) by the Saudis for its liberal ethos in which Palestinian migrants played a role in setting up a nascent parliament. The parliament was seen as a threat to Riyadh and other feudal heads. Margaret Thatcher had her own reasons to frown at Kuwait. She forced the emir to return 26 per cent of shares Kuwait had bought in British Petroleum.
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- Authoritarianism remains a persistent problem across much of our region, even if authoritarian tendencies exhibit themselves in different forms. In **Bangladesh**, for example, the political sphere has been dominated by two ruling dynasties with intermittent periods of military rule, and now the near chokehold of the Awami League on domestic politics since 2009.
- **India**, the largest democracy in the world, has shaken off the dynastic rule of the Congress but the country's socio-economic and political imagination has increasingly been dominated by Hindu majoritarianism.
- In **Sri Lanka**, on the heels of the Easter bombing of 2019, we saw the return to power of the Rajapaksa brothers who had crushed the LTTE in 2009. Their comeback has given wind to ethno-nationalist Sinhalese Buddhists, whose disdain has widened from Tamil Hindus and Christians to the Muslim minority in the country.
- While colonialism ended many decades ago, vested geopolitical interests, perpetuated by local political elites, continue to hinder representative democracy to flourish in this most populous region of the world. Defence spending and debt servicing take an inordinate share of our national incomes while much of the citizenry remains deprived of the social investments needed to ensure a decent quality of life.
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- Another challenge is to address dysfunctional political polarization. There is a big difference between political opposition and political sabotage. Responsible politicians represent their constituents' interests and demands. But they also work with (willing) opponents to govern effectively. Attempting to destroy those who disagree is an affront to democracy. But even trying to thwart all initiatives or legislative proposals by opponents is a recipe for democratic erosion.
- clarifying limits to freedom of expression. Virtually everyone recognizes that some forms of expression are dangerous enough to merit imposition of some constraints. But without clear lines based on broad consensus, there will be inevitable conflicts that can weaken desired outcomes.
- In 2020, the Democracy Index, published by the Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU) since 2006, fell to its lowest-ever global level.
- Biden reaffirmed his intent, which he announced during his campaign, to organize a Summit for Democracy early in his presidency. In Biden's own words, this summit "will bring together the

world's democracies to strengthen our democratic institutions, honestly confront countries that are backsliding, and forge a common agenda.”

- The United Kingdom has embraced the idea by proposing the establishment of a D10, to be formed with the members of the G7 along with Australia, India, and South Korea.
- When John McCain ran for president against Barack Obama in 2008, he advocated the creation of a League of Democracies that would encompass more than a hundred states. In fact, when McCain floated the idea, a similar (but more modest) coalition had already existed since 2000, when the United States and Poland spearheaded the foundation of the Community of Democracies (CoD). That initiative still operates, but it is almost completely forgotten, demonstrating the difficulty of sustaining such efforts.
- the CoD was hampered by incongruities and tactical dissention, as well as by doubts about its purpose. Unfortunately, the countries that joined the project were not successfully encouraged to perfect their respective democratic systems. One revealing fact is that the organization's seat is in Poland, currently at number 50 in the EIU rankings, after marked democratic deterioration in recent years.
- although a Summit for Democracy could be packaged positively, not punitively, it would surely be interpreted as an effort to draw a sharp dividing line between democracies and autocracies. To situate this dividing line at the centre of international relations is to risk precipitating what we can still avoid: another cold war, this time between the US and China.

Economy

The basic reason for the inconsistent performance of the economy is the structural weaknesses that have not been rectified over the decades and will not be rectified by ad hoc, Band-Aid type of solutions. The key among these are poor governance; the high dependence upon external factors like foreign assistance, exports and workers' remittances instead of internal drivers of growth; high burden of debt repayment; inadequate measures to raise the rate of savings and investment; low investment as a percentage of GDP in the social sectors such as health and education; a very high defence burden; a skewed land policy; revenue shortages and so on. The result of these structural flaws have been low rates of growth, poor infrastructure, unscientific agricultural practices, lack of industrialization, a widening trade gap, high incidence of poverty, low social development indicators, a low standard of living, a low literacy rate and an unskilled workforce.

IMF

- went to IMF 22 times over the last 50 years; All preceding governments have followed the same course: they come into power, find the foreign exchange reserves depleted, approach the IMF for emergency support, implement a painful adjustment for one or two years (sometimes even three), build up the reserves and fiscal space, then switch to election mode and spend heavily to try and shore up their electoral prospects, a move that again depletes the reserves and runs up the deficits.
- THERE are signs of the IMF moving away from Pakistan as the PTI government ditches contractionary fiscal policy to fuel growth ahead of the 2023 elections. The Fund has already pushed the sixth review of its \$6bn facility to September when it will likely be clubbed together

with the next one. Obviously, the delay in the review emphasises the lender's reservations regarding Islamabad's expansionary fiscal plan for the next year.

- Islamabad's decision to change course midway, with the lender underscoring the importance of accelerating the "implementation of policies and reforms needed to address ... long-standing challenges facing the economy".
- Whether or not the two sides can bridge their differences, Pakistan would want to buy some more time without leaving the programme. The government has already ruled out the option of exiting the programme since it may send a wrong signal to other multilateral lenders and global financial markets from where it plans to raise billions of dollars in new debt to boost its forex reserves and meet its financing requirements of \$25bn during the next fiscal year.
- Apparently, the IMF is prepared to wait for a few months to see the results of the new pro-growth fiscal policies listed in the budget. If the government succeeds in boosting tax revenues, enhancing social spending and reducing the power sector debt, the IMF may show some flexibility. But what if the plan does not deliver? Will the lender of last resort be prepared to give Pakistan more leeway and dollars? Much depends on the regional geopolitical situation after the US pulls out from war-ravaged Afghanistan.

Budget 2021-22

- started with massive current account deficit, over-valued currency; IMF tough conditions; FATF blacklisting threat; covid-19;
- Two years of stabilisation and recovery efforts, and then some experimentation, finally paid off. forex reserves recouped, devaluation undertaken, CAD under control, primary balance achieved as a result of belt tightening, the third wave of Covid-19 receding and the vaccinations well underway, the next challenge for the government is to change gears, sustain the growth momentum and rev up the economy to get PTI ready for the next elections. And that's precisely what the budget 2021-22 aims to deliver
- it's a business-friendly budget, has a significant pro-poor and pro-citizen focus, and promises to bring a fundamental shift in some areas.
- For businesses, investors and industry, the budget brings a number of good news for construction, automobile, information technology, electronics, pharmaceutical, textiles, and a number of other sectors, in the form of reduction or exemption of duties and taxes. It has various SME-focused provisions that will provide breathing space to small businesses that suffered immensely during the pandemic. There is something for stock market investors too (reduction in capital gains tax) to restore the market confidence, while a number of generous incentives have also been offered to lure investors to the planned special technology zones.
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- Perhaps the most significant achievement of this budget is a major shift in our taxation approach. With a promise of self-assessments, third party audits, electronic processing and issuance of refunds, reduction in arbitrary discretionary powers of the tax officials and an end to taxpayers' harassment, what else could a businessman ask for?
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- For citizens, the budget brings a massive 38% increase in the public sector development programme (PSDP) and targets a whopping 61% growth in the national PSDP. With increased

public spending will come the much-needed growth. For the poorest of the poor, there is continued focus on the Ehsaas programme, along with a proposal to give interest-free loans to four to six million families at the bottom of the pyramid. The power sector subsidies have also been increased to dilute the pressure for tariff increase in near future. And then there is enough money for vaccinating the masses.

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- Now let's come to the critique.
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- First the reality check. The revenue target for next year is indeed ambitious but not impossible. The targeted 5% GDP growth and inflation will help. The increased development spending will also play a role. The Rs100 billion gap, however, is already there on account of dropping the tax on internet and cellular calls. But the most challenging part are the administrative measures that are targeted to contribute nearly Rs240 billion. There is a clear strategy in place, with increased POS penetration and incentives for retailers and citizens. But to what extent it will be successful remains to be seen. Then comes the target of Rs610 billion for Petroleum Development Levy, which means that soon the government will need to increase the rate of petroleum products, barring any drop in the international prices. Furthermore, on the development side, it would be hard to push the rusting government machinery to jack up development spending quickly.
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- On the IMF programme, reportedly the Fund believes that if Pakistan's growth trajectory is already better than expected, why push it harder. They are also concerned about a number of unmet programme conditions, such as taxation measures, tariff increase, SBP autonomy, etc. While political undercurrents will play a definite role in deciding the fate of the programme, there is a significant likelihood that the programme may get suspended for the time being. If it happens, there could be implications. For now, the CAD remains in control and forex reserves are healthy. But suspension can put the planned \$3.1 billion inflow from IMF in jeopardy and can also have bearing on the \$2.7 billion programme loans that are part of the budget. It can even affect the market response to Pakistan's efforts to raise \$3.5 billion through Eurobond/International Sukuks and increase its cost.
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- With growth in sight, the risk of facing yet another boom-and-bust cycle is also real. But with a market-determined exchange rate, there is an inherent check against higher imports, whereby any pressure will lead to devaluation, rationalising demand. Pro-industrial policies targeting import substitution may help too. Lastly but most importantly, inflationary pressure will remain high. Both supply side measures, as well as interest rate adjustment, would be needed. This means that SBP's autonomy and delinking the exchange rate and monetary policy from the fiscal concerns would be the key.
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- Notwithstanding these challenges however, the budget will help in restoring business confidence. What the government must realise though is that besides the budget, the political narrative now also needs to change gears and shift from accountability to prosperity, development, growth and reforms.

Facts

- The **World Bank** projected that Pakistan's economy would grow by 1.3% in 2020-21. The IMF predicted 1.5% growth, whereas the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) estimated 3%. But official (provisional) estimate of nearly 4% GDP growth exceeded all expectations. Pakistan's economy has indeed made a comeback from the pandemic, with a bang!
- The services sector grew by 4.4%, industrial sector by 3.5% and agriculture 2.7%. Within services, the highest growth came from wholesale and retail trade, whereas within the industrial sector, it was the large-scale manufacturing that grew by 9%. Other major contributors to the growth include bumper crops of wheat, rice, sugarcane and maize, construction, finance & insurance and housing services.
- NCOC-coordinated lockdowns and restrictions aided in quick recovery; massive covid-stimulus package worth 1.27 trillion (2.9% of gdp) provided relief to businesses and support to poor; govt construction package also played role shows 8.3% growth by sector and massive increase of 25% in the cement sector; drastic reduction in the interest rate by SBP; measures like Long-term Financing Facility (LTFF) and Temporary Economic Refinance Facility (TERF) for the businesses also contributed in stimulating growth.
- Tax to GDP ratio

Overview

- first 20 years highest growth rate in South Asia. World Bank (2002) Pakistan exported more manufactures than Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Thailand and Turkey combined in 1965. By the 1990s, slowest growing country in South Asia.
- The main explanatory factor for this reversal is the paradigm shift in the basic model of development brought about by **Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto** soon after assuming power in 1971. The Bhutto regime nationalization caused major disruption to the economy, an erosion of private investor confidence that persisted for the next 20 years. experiment with socialism had a negative impact on industrial development, export expansion, the quality of education and gave an overarching role to the bureaucracy in economic decision-making. The substitution of a culture of entrepreneurship, risk taking and innovation by rent seeking and patronage suppressed the dynamism of the private sector. The emergence of bureaucrats as business leaders reinforced the new culture. Bureaucratic harassment, problems of law and order, unreliable and expensive power and inadequate infrastructure also discouraged investment. This partly explains why the private sector was reluctant to make long-term commitments. The disintegration of the unified economy of East and West Pakistan and the resultant formation of Bangladesh as an independent country severed from Pakistan also caused tremors in this period.
- Instead of taking proactive measures to reverse the state-owned dominated economy, the **Zia regime** maintained the status quo. Although the path pursued by Bhutto was not followed and the process of nationalization was abandoned, the preferential orientation towards public sector did not diminish in any perceptible way. The economic performance was impressive in this period not due to any fundamental policy or institutional reforms. The regime benefited from the output that came on stream from large public sector investments made in the 1970s, the most significant among them being the Tarbela Dam that added considerably to irrigation water availability and hydel power capacity as well as to the fertilizer, steel and cement factories.

- Although the **Nawaz Sharif regime** introduced major economic liberalization reforms in 1991, both private investment and exports tended to stagnate or decline through the 1990s. Macroeconomic sustainability was a serious problem. The financial sector was dominated by inefficient state-owned banks and access to capital was limited. The policy environment in relation to rules, taxes and import tariffs was unstable. The arbitrary use of statutory regulatory orders (SROs) negatively affected the level playing field.
- The frequent changes in government throughout the 1990s and consequential political instability played havoc with the economy. Uncertainty and discontinuity of economic policies, patronage-based economic governance benefitting a small elite to the exclusion of the majority of the population and exogenous shocks derailed the economy from its tracks. Investment ratio dived south and persistent fiscal and current account deficits led to accumulation of large unsustainable domestic and external debt throughout the decade.
- The freezing of foreign currency accounts of residents and non-residents in the aftermath of the **1998 nuclear tests** eroded investor and business confidence in the economy. Sanctions by leading bilateral donors dried up the flows of official aid to the country. International capital was hesitant as the risk profile had heightened significantly. Incidence of poverty doubled from 18 to 34 per cent during this decade. The withdrawal of US aid after the end of the Afghan war and the imposition of sanctions by the Western governments following the nuclear tests in 1998 further accentuated economic difficulties.
- The **alliance of Pakistan with the USA** and North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) forces in the war against terrorism not only restored international financial aid but also increased the volume of flows.
- The USA cancelled its bilateral debt by US\$1 billion. Investment picked up to 24 per cent of GDP and foreign direct investment (FDI) touched US\$5 billion in 2007. As a result of economic reforms, investment boost, external assistance and debt relief, the economy bounced back and recorded high GDP average growth rate of 6.3 per cent a year. Devolution to local governments and empowerment of elected officials at district level improved the delivery of basic public services. Poverty was reduced by 10 percentage points. Unemployment rate fell from 8.4 to 6.5 per cent and about 11.8 million new jobs were created in the 1999–2008 period.
- It has been conveniently forgotten that thousands of innocent lives of Pakistani soldiers and civilians have been lost, a deep sense of insecurity prevails in the country, foreign travel advisories have discouraged visits of businessmen, tourists and buyers, higher war risk premiums are charged, shipping freights have gone up, insurance premiums on Pakistani goods have escalated and export orders have been diverted. Suicide bombs;
- A careful calculation of costs and benefits of Pakistan's participation in the war against terror would reveal that the benefits received via foreign assistance pale into insignificance compared to costs incurred since 2001. This does not include the huge social and psychic costs borne by the entire population, particularly the internal displacement and involuntary migration of millions of inhabitants of the erstwhile Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province. Those who attribute the economic turnaround to foreign assistance should look at both the costs and benefits of the calculation.
- all official transfers, debt relief and all foreign loans/credits represent the 'gift' of 9/11 to Pakistan, this combined amount represents at its peak only 10 per cent of total foreign exchange earnings of the country in FY 2006. Pakistan's own foreign exchange earning capacity expanded from

US\$15 billion annually to US\$46 billion in these six years or from 20 to 33 per cent of GDP. It was Pakistani exporters and workers overseas who provided the bulk of foreign exchange supplemented by private foreign investment.

- The reasons for build-up of foreign exchange reserves were not only the debt relief and external capital flows but also **macroeconomic policies**. The Central Bank pursued a [stable exchange rate](#) at a realistic level for several years that helped maintain predictability and competitiveness of Pakistani exports. There was a major and perceptible [liberalization of the foreign exchange regime](#). Foreign investors were allowed to bring in capital without any restrictions in any sector of the economy and repatriate their capital, remit profits, dividends, royalties and fees without any prior approvals. Foreign companies were allowed to raise funds from domestic banks and capital markets.
- The [Central Bank was granted autonomy](#) and the control of the Ministry of Finance over banking institutions was diluted. The [privatization of Habib Bank, United Bank and Allied Bank](#), three large nationalized commercial banks of Pakistan, has transformed the banking sector into an efficient, privately owned and managed sector but regulated by a strong and vigilant Central Bank.
- The question naturally arises: **If these structural reforms were implemented then why has economic growth faltered and stagnated since 2008 and what can be done to get back on the trajectory of high growth rates?**
- there was high political uncertainty caused due to the conflict between President Musharraf and the Judiciary in 2007; assassination of BB; the caretaker government did not take timely and appropriate decisions in 2007 to respond to the global price hike including those for food-products, oil, electricity and gas. These price adjustments were avoided because of the impending elections. However, they caused serious damage to the economic balances.
- electricity and gas load shedding due to shortfall in generation and poor distribution had adverse impact on manufacturing and export sectors. Large scale manufacturing growth slowed down to 4.8 per cent, almost half of the rate recorded in 2007–2008. Since then, the performance of the sector has been unimpressive. Fourth, a worsening trade imbalance fuelled external current account deficit to exceed 8.4 per cent of GDP. Foreign capital inflows that were required to finance this deficit dried up due to political uncertainty leading to depletion of foreign exchange reserves. The drawdown of reserves created panic in the foreign exchange market, leading to a depreciation of the rupee by about 25 per cent vis-à-vis the US\$ in 2009, further intensifying inflationary pressures.
- Finally, but most importantly, when the economy was in such turbulent waters, it needed firm hands on the steering wheel. This was not the case as Pakistan saw five finance ministers and five governors of the Central Bank during the 2008– 2014 period. Economic management played second fiddle to political management and coalition politics. The neglect of the economy by the incoming government and backtracking from the reform path were the main factors for low investment and therefore stagnant growth rates. Tax reforms were either reversed or not pursued in right earnestness
- The privatization process of public sector enterprises was brought to a halt and those laid off from service in 1997 and 1998 were rehired with full benefits for the past 15 years, thus causing further financial stress. Excess employment over and above the already high manpower ratios created financial gaps that had to be met by the government. Chief executives were appointed on the basis of loyalty and affiliation rather than competence and suitability for the job.

New jobs

- E-residency policy (facilitation, registration, hiring employees from Pak, virtual presence); freelancing (pak ranks 4th high-performing freelancers; develop products which can be used by local industry and exported too); increase in tech unicorns (Estonia makes 1b\$ yearly, investment in start-ups, reduce unemployment); Expanding e-commerce market (Amazon seller list inclusion benefit especially for women, in india some 100k sellers exporting products worth more than 2b\$ a year, local like Daraz); Embracing fintech (solve informal economy issue, online banking, digital payment); capacity building (vocational and technical training Digiskills, govt launched NAVTTC programme with objective to train 50k individuals with marketable skills, free of cost courses); linking academy and industry (making internships mandatory after finishing uni)

FDI

- Mainly by china under cpec
- The trends in flow of FDI can also be evaluated by looking into the foreign companies' decision in out-sourcing their production base to other countries. This provides growth opportunity to the host country through integration into the supply chains of these firms. Example: A US-based footwear company, Nike offshores most of its footwear production to the world market. Initially, Nike was more reliant on the Chinese producers but, with rising wages in China, it has shifted its production centres to the developing countries like Vietnam, Bangladesh and Cambodia. It is pertinent to note that Nike's annual report shows that 40 per cent of the company's global footwear production is currently produced in Vietnam.²⁰ This case study suggests that Pakistan could also attract large multinational firms like Nike if it brings reforms in the industrial sector while addressing the constraints which have hampered the growth of Pakistan's manufacturing sector. This will help in getting integrated to the global supply chains, by supplying low-cost, labour-intensive manufacturing especially in garment, footwear and food product sectors while competing with the other South Asian countries for its fair share of FDI in the given sectors.
- To summarise, Pakistan must enhance the productivity levels of its industrial firms while formulating and implementing an effective industrial policy. It is important to reduce the trade cost and other barriers to trade, this includes, lowering tariffs, reducing quotas along with providing the right business environment to attract investments from foreign firms in the country. This could be done by tools like SEZs which comprehensively reduces all trade cost for operating firms in particular geographical areas in the country

SEZs

- Pakistan has been focusing on developing SEZs to facilitate industrialisation in the country. Initially, the focus was directed towards cluster-based industrial development²¹ in which the clusters like industrial estates were formed. In 1973, small industrial units were established around various locations in Pakistan but, unfortunately, the pace of industrialisation was lost due to poor management, weak infrastructure development and inability to provide attractive incentives to private entrepreneurs. ²² Similarly, the industrial clusters were formed to encourage the social and economic development of related community. The few successful industrial clusters include: Sialkot Surgical Goods Cluster, Gujarat Ceramic/pottery Industrial Cluster, Faisalabad Readymade Garments Manufacturing Cluster, KPK Marble Cluster, Tannery/Leather Industrial Cluster and Gujranwala Cluster.

- Lately, Khairpur Special Economic Zone (KSEZ) was the first designated SEZ which was developed by the Government of Sindh in Tando Nazar Ali. It was designated as a hub of agro-processing and other related industries spreading over 140 acres.²⁴ Unfortunately, this SEZ is still non-functional as electricity and gas approvals are pending partly because the Sindh Building Control Authority has not yet approved rezoning agricultural land to industrial land.²⁵ Without such approvals, the responsible bodies are unable to lay the transmission lines within required legalities, thus, stagnating development of this zone.
- In Pakistan, SEZs have once again acquired prominence in the policy circles since the inception of CPEC. Under this framework, the Chinese and Pakistani governments have agreed to enhance trade and industrial cooperation while developing infrastructures and establishing SEZs along CPEC route.
- Considering the prospective opportunities under CPEC, Pakistan's Board of Investment (BOI) proposed amendments to the Special Economic Zone Act, 2012 which was later promulgated as Special Economic (amendment) Ordinance 2015.²⁷ The board has given fiscal benefits to the prospective investors and developers at the zones. This includes one-time exemption from custom duties and taxes for all capital goods imported into Pakistan for the development, operations and maintenance of a SEZ and exemption from all taxes on income for a period of ten years.
- At present, for early execution of SEZs, the government has chosen four SEZs for immediate groundbreaking, these include Allama Iqbal Industrial City (M3) in Faisalabad, Rashakai Economic Zone on M-1 in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP), China Special Economic Zone at Dhabeji (Thatta, Sindh) and model ICT zone in Islamabad.
- Over the years, SEZs have been successfully implemented by many countries around the world which include Republic of Korea, Taiwan, China, Vietnam, Bangladesh, Mauritius, the Dominican Republic and El Salvador. These SEZs have paved their way towards industrialisation, economic development and growth.³ SEZs have also brought Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) to the host country resulting in foreign exchange earnings, enhancing exports and government revenues for the country. Moreover, SEZs have also helped in technology transfers, adoption of modern management practices along with skills up-gradation in most of the emerging economies. While in many countries SEZs have succeeded in transforming their economies, however, it costs the governments in terms of fiscal incentives which are provided to attract investors at the zones. Thus, success does not come without a cost.
- Pakistan needs to create supporting business climate for foreign and domestic firms to invest at the specified zone. The state of Khairpur SEZ, as discussed in the previous section, is an example of non-functional zone due to poor business climate. While looking at the work structures of zones in other countries, it is observed that the governments have given authority to local governments to pass laws at the SEZs. However, in Pakistan, higher bureaucratic interventions with multiple interests of different stakeholders have made the existing (i.e., the Khairpur SEZ) zones redundant. This can be the case with the other SEZs prioritised under CPEC, if Pakistan fails to enhance the required infrastructure and ease the trade facilitation at the zone. It is also important to note that Pakistan has a weak legal regime, which is also a major hurdle to attract foreign investment in the country. Thus, Pakistan needs to offer strong arbitration rules in case of contract disputes. In this case, Pakistan could look at China's experience which has drawn the arbitration rules from the West and currently experimenting them at the Shanghai Free Trade Zone.

Agriculture

- Modernisation of the agriculture sector, then, requires an immediate shift from the current subsidy-based strategy to the adoption of new approaches and heavy public investments. It also demands that the government give tax and other incentives to the private sector to set up agro-based industries and invest in cold chains to minimise wastage and supply disruption from farm to consumers. Thus, it is not without reason that lawmakers on both sides are asking the government to come up with a comprehensive plan to transform the sector.
- It was sobering to learn that Pakistan had imported \$6.12 billion worth of foodstuff in the first nine months of the current financial year, up 54 per cent from last year. This includes (in rounded figures) \$1bn of wheat, \$2bn of palm oil, \$0.5bn each of pulses, tea and milk products and \$127 million of sugar.
- For a country where 70pc of the population is engaged in agriculture is it not shameful we spend almost 40pc of what we earn in importing agricultural produce, supposedly our area of strength?
- The Federal Committee on Agriculture says that despite an unprecedented, good wheat harvest (28.75 million tons), exceeding the target by 2m, we will still need to import 1m ton for strategic reserves. We have the Ministry of National Food Security and Research at the centre, with agriculture departments in each province and an equal number of irrigation departments, plus provincial food departments, research institutes, the Zaria Taraqiati Bank etc. Yet we spend 40pc of our export income on importing food and agricultural products.
- Reason: the complete lack of priority for agriculture, only paying it lip service.
- I heard the speech of an MNA in parliament where he informed the house that the Punjab government wants to convert the Bahawalpur Research Institute into the provincial secretariat of the proposed government of South Punjab. The Multan Cotton Research Institute has been closed and large swathes of land of the Cotton and Textile Institute Karachi were handed over to the US Embassy.
- The contempt and low esteem that the government holds agriculture research institutions in is evident in these actions. This contempt for research is seen across the board. Rather than improve research in the country the solution seems to be to close down such institutions and leave everything to either the private sector or imports.
- PM's Agriculture Transformation Plan-> proposed interventions of 100bn 3years to reduce farm input cost to encourage crop value-addition, enhance milk production, provide fertiliser subsidy, the construction of grain storage, and so on; effective for short-term for long-term heavy investments in research & development to develop new, high-yield, drought- and disease-resistant seed varieties, help farmers adopt modern technologies, improve soil fertility and water efficiency, etc
- Although share in economy dropped below 20% of GDP; rural populace (2-3rd of total pop) livelihood depends on it; provides employment to 39% of entire national labour force; Pak's food security, 75% exports dependent on this sector's performance; to increase farm productivity, govt needs to support small farmers by increasing their access to credit, encouraging them to partner with one another through the formation of cooperatives to improve their terms of trade and capacity to bargain and to enhance their market linkages. These actions will help motivate them to diversify, become competitive and move towards more profitable, value-added crops for better profits. Putting end to reliance on middlemen and mortgaging a bigger part of their crops.

- Pakistan, once one of the largest producers of cotton in the world, has now become a major importer of the commodity. The main reasons for this are lack of interest on the part of authorities to invest in research and to introduce innovations to increase the yield of the commodity, and reluctance on the part of textile manufacturers to pay the cotton cess, which was to be invested in research and development to increase the production of the commodity.
- Over the long term, the share of agriculture in the GDP has been dropping largely due to inefficient practices, low productivity, skewed landowning patterns and declining water availability. With a growing population and declining water availability, food security can become a major issue in Pakistan in the days to come.

Energy Crises

- Manufacturing output has been affected due to acute energy shortages, lack of skilled workers and a narrow production base focused on textiles. It is the services sector that has really provided the impetus to growth, especially in transport, storage and communication, wholesale and retail trade and social services. Not surprisingly, it has replaced agriculture as the dominant sector of the economy.
- Energy is an area of critical shortages with swathes of the country suffering up to twelve hours of power cuts. The energy deficit has reduced production – including in the vital textile sector – curtailed economic growth and discouraged foreign investment. According to an estimate, due to power shortages a large number of factories (including more than 500 in the industrial city of Faisalabad alone) have been forced to close. Some Western companies, citing electricity deficits, have suspended operations in Pakistan. In January 2015, the Moody's warned that energy shortages will damage Pakistan's creditworthiness. It has been estimated that power shortages have cost the country up to 4 per cent of gross domestic product in recent years.
- According to the State Bank of Pakistan's Annual Report 2014, the more binding bottleneck in the energy sector was not generation (most generation units were working well below capacity), but distribution. Apart from theft and leakages estimated at about 20 per cent, 'the prevailing transmission and distribution (T&D) system can reliably handle loads of only 11,500– 12,500 MW during a given period. Any load beyond this increases the likelihood of a breakdown in the distribution network, which is becoming more common.' In effect, even if generating units were geared up to increase capacity utilization or additional generation capacity was created, the country simply did not have the capacity to distribute this power to where it was needed (i.e., from the main grid to actual users). 'Thus, the existing T&D network was a more binding constraint than generation capacity. Without upgrading the existing distribution network, any addition to generation capacity (and even the settlement of the circular debt) could not ease load management on a sustainable basis. Unfortunately, despite this hard constraint, policy has mostly focused on generation.'

New Electricity Policy 2021

- THE Council of Common Interests has unanimously approved the National Electricity Policy 2021 that will focus on long-term reforms in the power sector for providing reliable, secure, environment-friendly and affordable electricity to consumers.
- the initiative will support the effort to move towards a competitive power market in the country and introduce transparency in the sector. Most importantly, the new document promises to focus on increasing transmission capacity as the system currently can transport 24,000 MW against a

generation capacity of 35,000 MW. This is the area where the government needs to drastically boost investment since the dearth of it is one of the major reasons that surplus power remains unutilised in spite of growing demand.

- Although the policy does state the intent of the authorities, it does not carry specific targets. For example, it is silent on privatisation of inefficient, loss-making distribution companies. Likewise, it does not clearly mention what local fuels will be preferred and how it plans to bring in modern technologies. Perhaps the national action plan that would be 'chalked out under the initiative' will clearly define the targets for renewable energy, long-term hydel schemes, development of local fuels, improvement in power distribution, etc that the government aims to achieve over the next 10 years. However, the biggest challenge for the government will be the implementation of the policy and alignment of its intent with the targets of the other entities such as NTDC, as well as the availability of finances to execute reforms in the power market.

Issues and Solutions

- we have to keep fiscal deficit in a manageable limit, which can be assessed by comparing economic growth with the cost of borrowing. It is shown in a recent knowledge brief of Pakistan Institute of Development Economics (PIDE) that as long as the cost of borrowing is less than economic growth, the debt-burden will not rise. Thus, we can ensure the sustainability of the current debt by higher economic growth and reduction in reliance on future borrowing.
- When Henry Ford introduced motorcars in the US, there were no proper roads in the country. Good roads were built from the money raised through taxes on vehicles and fuel. So first came the innovation and the infrastructure later.
- **Low Tax-to-GDP ratio:** about 65 per cent of the total tax revenue is derived from indirect taxes that are regressive in their impact and have a direct bearing on the rate of inflation. Second, 65 per cent of the members of parliament and more than half of the federal cabinet do not pay income tax (Tribune). Third, none of Pakistan's top 100 frequent international flyers pay any tax and only five among them file a tax return, with none of them claiming to fall within the bracket of taxable income (The News). Fourth, there is lack of accountability in the corporate sector with only 37,130 out of 87,622 registered companies with SECP filing tax returns (The Taxpayers' Directory by FBR). Finally, lack of documentation has ensured that a large chunk of the economy remains beyond the pale of the government, retarding the efforts to provide services. An interesting World Values Survey held that tax-to-GDP ratio in those countries was healthy where people trusted the government, bureaucracy and judiciary.
- **Tax revenue losses:** Tax revenue losses are taxes that would have been collected had normal tax rates been applied but that are, instead, exempted with the objective of increasing growth and investment.
- The IMF/World Bank had been pressing Pakistan for years to include an estimate of 'tax revenue loss' in the budget to enhance the transparency of such giveaways, but more importantly, to enable parliament to discuss and question this at the time of the budget discussion. Since last year, the Federal Board of Revenue has been providing in budget documents the estimated revenue loss from tax incentives. Alas, our parliament of the rich has so far not shown any interest in such stuff. In fact this year, parliamentarians found an ingenious and fun way to avoid reading the budget documents — they threw them at each other.

- In FY20, 'tax giveaways' (identified as 'tax expenditures' in the Finance Bill) amounted to a whopping Rs1.3 trillion, or almost one-third of the taxes collected that year and three per cent of GDP. Had these taxes been collected, Pakistan could have doubled its annual health and education expenditures. Even if half of these had been collected, the Ehsaas programme could have been increased three times. If two years of exempted taxes were collected, we could build the Bhasha dam from our own resources.
- So who benefits from these tax exemptions? Mostly, politically well-connected businesses producing for the domestic market. According to the details in the Finance Bill, the main beneficiaries in FY20 were general industry (Rs110 billion), poultry (Rs100bn), textiles (Rs80bn), pharmaceuticals (Rs70bn) edible oils (Rs80bn), dairy (Rs50bn), fertiliser (Rs70bn), the petroleum sector (Rs50bn), independent power producers (Rs30bn), agriculture (Rs70bn) and the auto industry (Rs80bn).
- Global experience indicates the limited benefits of tax incentives. Because of special-interest lobbying and corruption, the incentives tend to be overly generous and persist because they succeed as a political tool instead of being an effective economic tool. There is little credible evidence that the trillion-rupee tax giveaways, year after year, are having any significant impact on employment, growth, investment, consumer prices or workers' incomes in Pakistan.
- Given Pakistan's grim fiscal situation, we can no longer afford to provide generous giveaways without robust evidence that they are good for the economy, and are not just for the owners of businesses. It is imperative that parliament reviews the proposed tax incentives and obligates the government to conduct a cost-benefit evaluation before the next budget. The findings of such evaluation would inform decision-makers whether to continue or withdraw individual tax incentives. A credible evaluation would also draw attention to, and publicise, revenues forgone from wasteful tax incentives that could free up resources for development.
- Even if parliament does not take the initiative, the prime minister must require the Ministry of Finance to conduct prior to the next budget an independent cost-benefit evaluation of tax giveaways. The evaluation must determine whether the tax giveaways yield the stated objectives and deliver on the promises made by businesses when lobbying for the tax breaks.
- **Loan waivers:** One reason for such financial chaos is the lack of governance demonstrated by frequent loan waivers. For example, an estimated Rs 20 billion in loans were waived off by more than thirty banks between 2012 and 2014 to facilitate about 2,000 privileged customers among the previous and incumbent governments, causing a massive loss to the public exchequer. This came on top of Rs 403 billion that were written off by various governments between 1997 and 2009. (tribune)
- **Debt Trap:** failure to reform the tax system and increase revenue collection is a major factor behind heavy domestic and foreign borrowings by the government; The fact that Pakistan's external debt continues to accumulate, and it has to borrow more dollars to repay its old loans suggests that the country has actually been caught in a debt trap; government will continue to borrow more money to repay its old loans while accumulating more debt. This is not sustainable for any economy, least of all a fragile one. The government should put its house in order to attract FDI, boost exports, increase tax revenues and incentivise domestic savings to get out of this trap.
- Take **Scandinavian countries** as an example. Widely held up as role models of development, they carry a heavy debt burden. But it's used to further the quality of life rather than extend an inefficient leviathan in the form of the public sector. And that investment pays off in the form of

the public's trust, which then happily pays a large percentage of their income to the government as tax.

- In conclusion, debt acquisition does not perpetuate worries if it can spur economic growth and enhance the quality of citizens' lives. For that to happen, a country needs to have an excellent growth plan, required incentives that align with the plan and a proficient administrative set-up that can carry out growth-related work efficiently. Pakistan has none of these attributes. Hence, we are caught in a vicious debt spiral, which might prove to be a death spiral.
- **Political will:** Charter of economy (consensus of major parties regarding economic policies) is required
- **China-US trade war:** On Jan 13, the US Customs and Border Protection department forbade the entry of cotton "produced in China's Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region". Exporters are now finding out that their buyers are asking for detailed certifications of their entire supply chain to first determine eligibility before placing orders.
- **Policy inconsistency** biggest reason for country's abysmal dev record; other SA countries focused on human dev, building better institutions, we obsessed with illusion of growth; our growth is without deeper groundwork or an ecosystem to carry the momentum; in 60s 80s 200s aim was to legitimise the regime on the basis of growth, helped by foreign aid, earlier partner in cold war then war on terror. 5-year term for democracy, short term projects preferred over long-term reforms, no rational politician would choose latter, even if some did next govt would sabotage it to prevent initiator from gaining political mileage.
- **Economic inequality:** unequal access to wealth or income; economic consequences; on economic front, rising no. of poor people causes less investment in edu and health, negative impact on future productivity and economic prosperity, poverty reduces demand for goods and services, leads to economic stagnation; on socio sphere: economic inequality is associated with high crime rate, mental illnesses, suicides, social unrest or class conflict between the haves and the have-nots
- country has been unable to attract adequate non-debt-creating, long-term inflows like FDI or increase its exports,
- **Low FDI:** Foreign private investors are a much bigger source of global capital flows than these once-mighty multilateral institutions ever were; in 2019 the commitments of the World Bank Group to partner countries and private businesses amounted to around \$62.3bn in contrast to total foreign direct investments flows of an estimated \$695bn to developing economies; Pak has to attract FDI which depends on peace prospects in the region and better gains and ease for the investor; FDI solves balance-of-payment problem
- **Low exports:** lagged behind its South Asian counterparts since early 90s, despite economic liberalisation and privatization; despite a sustained period of exchange rate stability with no energy shortage between 2001 and 2005 (explained by Atif Mian in his research paper) Reason: twin deficits: current account and fiscal, low investments rate and savings compared to its GDP; **Solution:** an export-led growth model; lifted millions out of poverty in China South Korea, Taiwan and Singapore; China invested heavily in education, particularly science and technology, as well as in heavy engineering and other capital-intensive industries. Foreign investors looking for trained and low-cost workers found no shortage of human talent as the 'communist' China had invested heavily in basic education and its Special Economic Zones (SEZs) jump-started the labour-intensive exports-led industrial revolution that has transformed China.
- **Low private investment:** Tax concessions and government-guaranteed yields may have succeeded in attracting investments in the energy sector, an unsustainable model; instead 3D

strategy required: Deregulate (end bureaucratic hurdles and rent-seeking), devolve (without it impossible to provide basic services) & digitise (without it cannot compete in a world defined by digital divide);

- **Elite Capture:** World Bank report titled Pakistan@100 points to elite capture and jobless growth as key impediments to realising the nation's true potential.
- **Importance of SMEs:** SMEs contribute to development in multiple ways: create employment for an expanding labour force, provide much-needed flexibility and innovation in the economy, and contribute to value addition in GDP. In Pakistan, around 99% of economic establishments are SMEs that collectively contribute 40% to GDP and 26% to the exports from manufacturing sector. Unfortunately, the flow of financial resources in the past remained stuck up with large industry. The financial institutions will have to understand that they must be receptive to the SMEs in extending formal credits. For instance, if a Rs1 billion loan to a large industry provides jobs to about 1,000 people, the same amount of credit can create ten times more jobs in the SME sector. Across all countries, SMEs do more than create employment: they are also engines of economic growth and social development. (ILO)
- Prime Minister Imran constituted National Coordination Committee (NCC) on SME Development with the objective to facilitate development and promotion of SMEs in the country
- The National SME Policy Action Plan: Key recommendations proposed under the Action Plan include simplification of rules, regulations and taxation regime, programmes for SME access to credit, SME quota in public procurement, simplification of SECP procedures, facilitation to participate in international fairs and exhibitions on subsidised rates and developing SME data bank to bridge information gap.
- **PIDE Reform Agenda for Accelerated and Sustained Growth:** since 60s development model pak followed emphasizes investment in hardware- infrastructure etc, model developed by Dr. Mahbubul Haq and the Harvard Advisory Group served immediate needs of the economy at the time; with changing dynamics our development model needs to undergo a paradigm shift; focus on growth-conducive software for society; Why Nations Fail authors argue diff of income btw haves and have-nots stems from the difference in their institutions ie laws, rules and processes; nature of these institutions constrain and fast-paced the eco activity in a country; for instance, to import 3d printer 9 gov agencies are involved; land developers must obtain 22 NOCs from diff agencies; for pak youth bulge to be absorbed by employment and to pay off our debt, GDP should grow at an annual rate of 7 to 9 for coming decades; gdp is not nothing but the sum of economic transactions. Frictions mentioned above adversely affect productivity, increase transaction costs, and thus discourage doing business — fewer transactions mean lesser GDP. Productivity and investment, the two key drivers of economic growth, are not only low in Pakistan they are declining as well. Bad laws and cumbersome procedures keep productivity and investment low in Pakistan.
- To follow a high-growth trajectory then, the country will have to be **transformed into a well-functioning state** — starting from 'which' organ of the state does 'what', and concluding with 'how' this must change. The entire public service including the civil service, judiciary, regulatory bodies, and local governments, etc. must be reformed to serve as 'enablers' of the economy. Regulatory bodies — Nepra, Ogra, Pemra, CCP, etc — must be staffed with professionals who are allowed to take decisions without bureaucratic interference.

- Using **tech and AI**; Selling spectrum at low cost, cutting taxation on the internet, lowering duties on mobile phones and giving subsidised access to the poor would facilitate ‘internet for all’ — the pay-offs are likely to be greater than the celebrated signal-free corridors, motorways and BRTs. The report laments the lack of interest in research, and recommends that policymaking be informed by research undertaken at the local universities
- **Digitization**: A SIGNIFICANT number of Pakistanis have shifted to internet and mobile banking to transfer money, pay bills and shop online. Covid-19 forced people to use online banking services; the waiver of transactional fees on all online interbank and intra-bank fund transfer encouraged many to start accessing internet and mobile banking services; the incentives offered by the provinces to taxpayers using mobile banking for payment of government taxes or restaurant bills also contributed to an uptake in digital transactions.
- **CPEC** has so far not proved a game changer that we keep on glorifying. We need to have a dispassionate look at the projects conceived under this project. There can be hardly any doubt that subsidy propelled schemes like the Orange Train and Metro Bus Services are apt examples of setting wrong priorities. These projects will haunt the economy of Pakistan in the years ahead.
- The **state-owned enterprises** like Wapda, railways, Steel Mills, PIA and others have succumbed to political interference of PPP and PML-N governments in the past. Corruption and overemployment have turned them into parasitic entities. The present government will do well to privatise them despite the political saber rattling from all directions.

Trade

- Pakistan is located strategically as a bridge between South Asia and Central Asia, China and South Asia and West Asia. Before 1947, the Indian subcontinent historically had high intra-regional trade. As much as one-fifth of the trade took place within the region.
- Common historical and cultural heritage would—in other parts of the world—have eased the movement of the people, educational exchanges, access to each other’s media and cultural resources, the sharing of scientific and technological knowledge and other forms of cooperation, but none of this has happened in South Asia. Trade facilitation across borders within the region is hampered by all kind of hurdles. Issues of phytosanitary, health and environmental standards, quality testing and adherence to specifications are raised, causing considerable delays, lengthened travel times and higher transaction costs. Truck crossings, where allowed, take several days and allegations of harassment by the border officials are rampant. Non-tariff barriers on India–Pakistan trade have therefore diverted normal trade flows to informal networks or border trade, or are routed through third parties such as Dubai and Singapore which raise costs for end-users.
- Pakistan’s **trade with regional economies**, with the exception of China, has historically remained far below its potential; multiple factors which have long prevented economic connectivity of the Saarc countries that also include Afghanistan. Long-standing political and territorial disputes between individual states, terrorism and poor security conditions in other countries, non-tariff barriers created by some to protect their local businesses, higher cost of trading within the region etc; certain ‘exogenous’ issues such as the international sanctions against Iran, which keep Pakistan and others from developing commercial ties with the affected country.
- Powerful trading lobbies have resisted successive governments who have tried and failed to document their sales, which causes billions of dollars in lost revenues. As highlighted in the recent

wheat and oil inquiry reports, smuggling to and from Iran and Afghanistan is a profitable enterprise. Instead of importing cotton from across the border, cotton is routed into Pakistan from other countries to Karachi, and then transported to Punjab. Importing this cotton from India would be a cheaper alternative.

- On the Afghanistan front, wheat is regularly smuggled out of Pakistan to meet demand in Kabul; there is a glut in India which could be exported across the Durand Line. While Pakistani farmers and consumers lose out, smugglers and hoarders benefit, leading to billions of dollars in losses — Pakistan's food imports have increased by 75 per cent in the last two years due to lower output and increased smuggling.
- There are three reasons to promote regional trade in South Asia: strategic, demographic and consumer benefit.
- On the **strategic** front, climate change and water security pose an existential threat to the breadbasket in India and Pakistan. Increased trade ties in the agricultural and energy sector can build linkages that can allow long-term research and innovation that benefits both countries.
- The northern subcontinent's **demographic** dividend is turning into a ticking time bomb. Increased trade flows can foster economic development on an east-west axis that has historically been the driver of income and wealth generation in the region for millennia.
- Improved trade ties will also bring more innovative and better-quality goods and services to population centres at lower prices, creating savings for **consumers** economically hard hit by the pandemic.
- The **Kartarpur Corridor** is the natural place for fostering greater trade flow. It is important that increased people-to-people ties in Punjab be amplified through localised trade flows. If China and Taiwan can have trade ties, there is no reason for India and Pakistan to not trade.

Circular Debt

What it is?

- The menacing source of this burden is the relentless I OWE YOU (IOUs) that keep piling up among the players in the energy sector supply chain. This includes power distributors, power producers, as well as oil and gas companies, such as PEPCO (Pakistan Electric Power Company), IPPs (Independent Power Producers), K-Electric, Pakistan State Oil and Southern Sui Gas. The origin of debt seems simple: When you cannot afford to pay back what you owe, you incur a debt. But what if it wasn't your fault in the first place? What if you couldn't pay what you owed, because someone else couldn't pay you? This is the chain of IOUs that has dominated discussions on energy financing in Pakistan since 2007, which was around the time international oil prices went up. As importing oil became more expensive, the government at the time did not pass on the price increase to the customers, leading to an imbalance between actual money owed to fuel companies, and money available to collect from the end consumers. The fact that a lot of energy was wasted during transmission (and still is), and a lot of people didn't pay their bills (and still don't), only compounded the problem. Hence began the vicious cycle where the government and consumers didn't pay the power-distribution companies, who couldn't pay the power-generation companies, who couldn't pay the fuel companies, who couldn't buy more oil, leaving the government no choice but to borrow even more money, only for the cycle to repeat itself, with even greater numbers. **This vicious cycle is the circular debt.**

Problems

- The contracts signed with numerous power producers with preposterous capacity charges by the last government is a glaring example of ineptitude and corruption. It was far better to have braved scarcity of electricity than to have produced it at a stupendous cost that none could afford to pay, hence the monumental figure of the recurrent circular debt that is ravaging the economy.
- Looking through a political economy lens, there are four problems at the root of circular debt challenge: the hangover of past contracts, artificial sweeteners to appease political constituencies, white elephants at the tail end of electricity network, and pigeonholing to avoid difficult decisions.
- The **hangover problem** includes high returns on equity for power producers, dollar indexation and capacity payments, all stemming from past contracts translating into high power generation costs. These contracts were signed by various governments during the last 25 years, since 1994. The government's recent attempt to address this problem through renegotiating the contracts with independent power producers (under 1994-2006 policies); reducing rate of return on government's own power plants; and shutting old inefficient plants address only a fraction of the problem. The rest of IPPs under the 2015 policy, including CPEC investments, will be adding the bulk of capacity payment in the next few years. But any renegotiation there hinges on underlying diplomatic relations.
- The **artificial sweeteners** are delays in tariff adjustments and excessive subsidies without the requisite budgetary resources. Political compulsions sometimes prevent governments from passing on tariff increase to consumers, such as during Covid. But without check, it can also create a perverse incentive to pass on the hot potato to the next government. Any changes in tariff adjustment mechanism (through proposed NEPRA Act amendments) or withdrawal of subsidies, however, can be politically contentious, especially in a charged political environment.
- Thirdly, the **white elephants** refer to power distribution companies (DISCOs) with excessive technical and commercial losses, on the back of poor infrastructure, thefts and non-recoveries from private and government consumers. Almost half of the circular debt build-up is because of transmission and distribution losses over and above NEPRA's allowed limit, and non-recoveries. The DISCOs, however, operate with impunity without penalty for poor performance and are marred with powerful labour unions and vested interests. The perks, privileges and retirement benefits of staff cost billions, yet even the slightest change is met with stiff resistance, protests and strikes, as has been recently witnessed on issues of proposed outsourcing and appointment of CEOs from private sector.
- Lastly, the **pigeonholing problem** is about previous governments' continued avoidance to find a solution for circular debt, which results in huge interest cost accrued on debt parked at PHPL and late payment charges by CPPA-G to power producers, further adding to the mounting burden. Almost 30% of circular debt stock has been caused by such financing charges and any further pigeonholing will further contribute to it.
- Any management solution without addressing these intricate political dimensions is not going to work. Approval of circular debt management plan is an IMF condition, but its effective implementation would depend upon political will for taking tough decisions on these deep-rooted problems.

State Bank Bill

- **State Bank of Pakistan (Amendment) Bill, 2021:** once the bill becomes law, the bank will not be under any compulsion to support the government's economic policies. As such, the new bill seeks to formally empower SBP so that it will only focus on price stability. Where the bank's independence can arguably assist with price stability and low inflation, the initiative appears to be in line with IMF's austerity and fiscal consolidation agenda that the Fund imposes on borrower nations.
- **Implications:** First, SBP's intention to not support the government's economic policies will invariably slow down post-Covid-19 economic recovery, thereby negatively impacting the most vulnerable segments of society. Second, SBP's plan to only focus on maintaining price stability when the lack of employment is a social crisis in this country has serious political implications. Third, IMF-SBP forcing austerity and fiscal consolidation on the Pakistani government, in a time of crisis no less, will also impede the government's ability to pay for public services like health, education and clean drinking water now and in the future. Finally, and perhaps somewhat alarmingly, the autonomous SBP bill all but does away with accountability for the central bank as the SBP leadership would not be answerable to even the prime minister.

Projects

- late December 2020, Uzbekistan, Afghanistan, and Pakistan jointly appealed to international financial institutions to support the project "**Kabul Corridor**" railway from Termez in Uzbekistan to the Pakistani city of Peshawar via Mazar-i-Sharif and Kabul in Afghanistan. The railway could transport up to 20 million tons of cargo per year, and the section from Termez to Mazar-i-Sharif, built by Uzbekistan, is already operational. In Peshawar, the railway will connect arriving trains with the Pakistani transport system, thereby linking the Central Asian and Eurasian railway networks to those of South Asia and providing access to the Pakistani ports of Karachi, Qasim, and Gwadar. It is estimated that the new railway will reduce goods transportation times from Central Asia to Pakistan from 30 days to 15 and cut transportation costs by 30-35%. Today, the main transport route from Central Asia to the southern seas, through the Iranian port of Bandar Abbas, is no longer considered the most attractive. Economists calculate that transporting a container from Tashkent, the Uzbek capital, to Karachi would cost approximately \$1,400-1,600, about half the price of transporting it from Tashkent to Bandar Abbas (\$2,600-3,000).
- **TAPI gas pipeline:** At the end of 2020, construction began on the Afghan section of another mega-project linking Central and South Asia: the TAPI gas pipeline. The 1,814-kilometer pipeline will run from the Galkynysh gas field in Turkmenistan to the Indian city of Fazilka via Herat and Kandahar in Afghanistan and the Pakistani cities of Quetta and Multan. It will have a capacity of 33 billion cubic meters of gas per year and cost an estimated \$8-10 billion.
- Although security concerns have long cast doubt on the TAPI pipeline's viability, completion is now scheduled for December 2023. Crucially, a high-ranking Taliban delegation visited Turkmenistan on February 6, promising to support the project. There are indications that the US, which has long backed the pipeline, may have facilitated the trip.
- Central Asia has always been a politically sensitive region, part of what former US National Security Adviser Zbigniew Brzezinski called the "grand chessboard." When implementing such large projects, therefore, one should consider the geopolitical positions of major regional players

such as America, Russia, and China. But for now at least, it appears that everyone has an interest in Central Asia and Afghanistan being economically dynamic and politically stable, rather than poor and a source of conflict.

- For all the importance of new landmark projects, further Central Asian cooperation is essential. Historically, the region has prospered most when it acts as a “crossroads civilization,” channeling and transforming Eurasian trade, and economic and cultural forces. In fact, Central Asia became a world leader in economic development, trade, technology, manufacturing, and intellectual life during the period referred to as its golden age, when it was open, dynamic, and willing and able to learn and adapt from others.
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Climate Change

- Geography, coupled with high levels of poverty and population density, has rendered South Asia especially vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. High population levels translate into increased resource demands on an already stressed and largely degraded natural resource base.
- The Himalayas is a vital life-sustaining resource for South Asia, supporting the approximately 1.5 billion people who live directly in the floodplains of its many rivers: the Indus, Ganges, Brahmaputra and Meghna. With rising temperatures, the ice mass of the Himalayas and Hindu Kush is retreating more rapidly than the global average, posing an unprecedented threat to water supplies, lives and economies in the region.
- With melting glaciers, flood risks would increase in the near future. The floods in Pakistan in August 2010 that caused a major devastation to human lives and property are a preview of the damage that extreme climatic events can bring about. In the long term, and in the absence of replacement for the water provided by glaciers, water shortages could result at an unparalleled scale. Reduction of yields for major crops by as much as 20 per cent and an even sharper decline in agricultural incomes are part of the worst-case climate scenarios for the region as well as a growing scarcity of water. Avoiding this future will necessitate balancing more variable water supplies with the accelerating demand for water and would require significant adjustment to the region’s agriculture.

Inter-Provincial disparities

- Despite significant institutional developments in NFC award, inter-provincial disparities are widening. For instance, the per capita income of K-P is 21.3% lower than Pakistan’s national average. Likewise, Balochistan per capita income, which was once second highest among all the provinces, has fallen by 7% from 1999-2000 to 2017-2018. Furthermore, Sindh’s per capita income is 22.2% higher than the national average in 2017-2018 while Punjab remains close to the national average.
- Human development: Sindh, Punjab, KP, Bal respectively; Sindh highest because of high GDP per capita, better progress on life expectancy; Punjab leads on edu, highest net enrol ratio and literacy rate; KP showing improv; Bal deteriorating in the past decade; appears decentralization initiated by 18th amend and 7th NFC Award failed to mitigate inequities across provinces. **HDI**
- Solution: 18th amend apply fullest extent to be effective in eliminating inequities; article 140A, a viable solution: devolution of political, admin and financial responsibility and authority to the elected representatives of the LG; will pacify grievances; to make provincial autonomy effectual, avoid elite-capture at inter-provincial level; for that effective inter-district decentralization;

making LG functional, make Provincial Finance Commissions efficient; ensure social cohesion in our societal structure; shape our behavioural structure such to eliminate biases against social identities like ethnicity, race, gender, etc

Questions

- What was the paradigm shift in Pak's eco policy in 70s? Give an overview of Pak's eco policy from Ayub to Imran.
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Governance

- <https://tribune.com.pk/story/2292296/time-to-put-our-own-house-in-order>
- Prime Minister Imran Khan on Monday praised the Ehsaas programme for securing the fourth spot in a World Bank list for looking after the more vulnerable segments of the society in a transparent manner during the current pandemic.
- Reconciling individual interest with national interest ~Tariq Banuri

Electoral reforms

- The government's package of electoral reforms is not all controversy. Several proposed amendments are meant to enhance the protection of the rights of women, minorities and transpeople. Several other provisions of the bill further reinforce the transparency of such documents as legislators' statements of assets and liability. In all likelihood, such provisions would have received bipartisan support had the bitterness in political relations not precluded this possibility.
- Four key areas of reforms are extremely contentious and there is a dire need for dialogue on these: the multimillion-dollar EVM project; the reportedly insecure system of voting for overseas Pakistanis; the indirect dilution of ECP authority to prepare electoral rolls by transferring some of its constitutionally mandated functions to Nadra; the delimitation of constituencies based on the number of voters rather than total population. These are some of the key areas of divergence between the ruling party and the opposition on one hand and between the government and the ECP on the other.
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- The electoral reforms suggested by the PTI government encompass 49 amendments and deletions from the Elections Act 2017. Some significant amendments/deletions are: introduction of the Electronic Voting Machine; extending the right of vote to overseas Pakistanis; political parties with a minimum of 10,000 members would be eligible to get registered; political parties would be liable to hold annual conventions where people would be free to remark on the performance of the party; the right to challenge the appointment of the polling agent; electoral roll would be prepared based on NADRA data; elimination of the provision to delimit constituencies based on population and conducting Senate election through the open ballot.
- Generally, election reforms have always aimed at institutional improvement of ECP and its functional autonomy. Some parts of the reforms have focused on fairness in election and evaluation/counting processes. Efforts have been made to improve voter turnout as well.

- The current debate on electoral reforms also revolves around similar patterns. As indicated by the PM's aide on parliamentary affairs, election reforms are going to focus on fairness of election by introducing automated mechanisms of vote counting. This is fair but not enough.
- One area to be considered, in order to make elections fair, is addressing factors that adversely affect voters' behaviour. Shandana Khan in her book, *Crafty Oligarchs and Savvy Voters*, has detailed how kinship shapes voters' behaviour and subsequently their choice. Clientelism being at the epicentre of Pakistani political system, reinforced by kinship and feudal lordship, does not allow voters to break off relations with their patron, even though this client-patron relationship has been instrumental in people's underdevelopment. This very clientelism has been the cause of persistent undermining of merit on different occasions.
- With the rise of social media, such videos have gone viral recently where political lords, who happen to be feudal lords as well, openly threaten people to vote for them. In this case, it becomes evident that it is not always the voters' choice, rather it is the fear of being perished that voters tend to vote for certain people who appear in parliament consistently every five years. Alongside fearful feudal lords, it is sometimes the fear of religiously sacred personalities that possibly compels people to vote against their will.
- As the current government intends to bring about reforms to the election system, it is the need of the time to question whether machines will help people in going against their kinship? Or will machines be able to dilute the fear caused by contextual factors?
- The answer, in my opinion, is no. In India, it has been long since electronic voting machines (EVMs) have been introduced. Have people in India been able to elect a fair government which is not corrupt? In some ways yes, but majorly, no! Because rural voters vote under fear. Whereas, in the UK, the voting system is manual, but elections are fair.
- In Pakistan, as the government plans to bring about reforms, thinking about rural communities living under different patronages is necessary. It is true that using modern means of voting, to some extent, ensure fairness and transparency in elections. But it is not sufficient to ensure people's willing choice as opposed to their fear. One might ask: can a reform truly influence voters' behaviour? It is indeed a hard question to answer. But one thing the government can do is minimise influence of lordships over voters.
- In sum, no electoral reform can ensure people's choice in the context of Pakistan where feudal and religious lords prevail, unless the government curtails the control of fearful over voters. But how? This is the question the government should concern itself with while thinking about electoral reforms.

General

- K-P is now spending more on education and health per capita than Punjab or Sindh
- K-P has allocated the highest share (Rs34 out of every Rs100) for development spending in the budget, followed by Punjab (Rs28) and Sindh (Rs23). More importantly, as Hasaan Khawar shared in his column for this paper earlier in the week, K-P has announced 100% release of Annual Development Program funds at the start of the year, which will increase the development spending without bureaucratic delays, as opposed to historically when a significant percentage was spent sub-optimally in the last month of the fiscal.

- On social sector spending, K-P has an allocation of Rs5,797 per capita for education, compared to Rs5,658 for Sindh and Rs4,018 for Punjab. On health sector, K-P's per capita allocation for next year is Rs3,997, compared to Rs3,654 and Rs3,354 for Sindh and Punjab respectively.
- Perhaps the most radical effort included in K-P's budget is reforming the pension system. To explain how complex and entrenched the pension system is, let me give you an example by sharing the 13 layers of pensioners receiving family pension. It goes from the pensioner to the widow to son or unmarried daughter followed by wife of diseased son all the way to widowed daughter of diseased son and unmarried sister. Reforming this isn't easy, but a multi-layered approach is being taken to bring the ballooning bill into control structurally.
- Some moves are particularly smart. For example, for PAS and PMS officers, it was jointly agreed that 20% of their pay raise would be contributed towards annual pension payments, creating the first pay-as-you-go pension mechanism for existing employees in Pakistan.
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- The pursuit of the **Sustainable Development Goals** could be a good start towards the journey of good governance.
- Status quo is the ugliest expression of oppression in the life of nations. In this process, the oppressors resist change because it directly hurts their interests and causes ripples in the decades-old state of stagnancy. In fact, the public interest should be superior to institutional and individual interests. A few colonial-era government organisations are damaging the public interest by ignoring the ideals of modern governance and limiting the role of specialists in state affairs. They consistently oppose the devolution of powers to the elected representatives of far-off small regions for their short-term interests.

Judicial reform

- THE wheels of justice turn slowly but they grind exceedingly fine, goes the proverbial expression. It is, however, the first part that best describes Pakistan's judicial system, while we are far from achieving the second half of that reassuring dictum.
- Around two million cases are lying pending in our courts — from the district judiciary to the Supreme Court. Every day, hundreds of thousands of people are 'plundered' on court premises due to poor control and coordination between the bar and bench, and inefficient executing agencies, especially the police. These entities delay the dispensation of justice. Then, we have a very influential non-state institution called the clergy, which exploits the religious sentiments of the ignorant youth for political and economic gains and reinforces polarisation and extremism in society.
- There have been efforts now and then to clear the backlog, at least in the superior courts. Justice Iftikhar Chaudhry during his tenure as the country's top judge instituted double shifts for judges to hear cases. The last chief justice, Asif Saeed Khosa, focused on streamlining court procedures and setting up model courts in every district to expedite the hearing of criminal cases. Due to his efforts, the 25-year backlog of criminal appeals has almost been cleared. However, civil cases still drag on interminably, sometimes outlasting the lifetime of the litigants themselves and thereby causing terrible injustice. In May 2019, Pakistan's apex court for the first time began hearing cases through video link connectivity. This enabled lawyers to argue cases without being physically present in court; the fact their caseload often requires them to appear in different courts, sometimes in different cities, is one of the reasons that adjournments are sought so frequently.

- Incompetent and/or overworked public prosecutors, individuals prepared to bear false witness for a price, shoddy police investigations, etc — the problems are many and serious.
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- When it comes to human development in Pakistan, all those in power who were supposed to bring reformatory change to society are not ready to accept their strategic miscalculations and faults which they have committed; instead, they blame each other for the perpetual tragedy that is the lot of the masses.
- One of the first steps towards **judicial reform** is to stop influencing high-profile cases, followed by stopping the judiciary from intervening in civilian matters. Another crucial step is to stop the judges from giving excess statements. Judges speak through their judgments and not statements. Not to forget the urgent need of police reform.
- the European parliament adopted a resolution severely criticising Pakistan's blasphemy laws and showed its intent to review the country's GSP-plus status in the light of the alarming increase of blasphemy cases, mostly directed against human rights promoters, artists, intellectuals, journalists and marginalised people.
- THE acquittal of Shafqat Emmanuel and Shagufta by the Lahore High Court this week has once again underscored the deeply problematic and growing misuse of the blasphemy law. After spending seven years in jail, following the handing down of a death sentence to them by an additional district and sessions judge, the Christian couple has been acquitted of charges of sending a blasphemous text message to the complainant, a shopkeeper identified in some news reports as a mosque cleric.
- in many chilling cases, an accusation of blasphemy alone — with no evidence or formal legal process — can result in violence and death. The cases of university student Mashal Khan and Christian couple Shama and Shahzad are just two examples of how such accusations lead ignorant people to take the law into their own hands. This trend must come to an end, and our lawmakers must unite to find a solution so that more innocent citizens do not suffer.
- A recent World Bank study has warned that tourism in Pakistan's ecologically-fragile areas has significantly increased the stress on the environment. As these areas become more and more polluted, the surreal and enchanting glory of nature is slowly being diminished and destroyed. As a result, the natural habitat of the diverse species of animals, birds and marine life present in the country may become endangered, or even worse, be driven to the brink of extinction. What sets Pakistan apart from other tourist countries is the "spellbinding grandeur and sheer simplicity" that nature presents, almost elevating it to a spiritual level. However, the rich mountain landscape, the scintillating glaciers and the exquisite valleys are being marred with filth. The mountain areas in particular have witnessed sudden spikes in the quantity and quantity of waste generated during tourist season — which is mostly plastic or solid waste. This glaring revelation points to the lack of recycling and disposal system in these areas. It is astounding that the concerned authorities have overlooked the most important factor that helps sustain the tourism industry.
- While a simple and efficient waste disposal system can help fix half of the problem, the other half of lies in trying to figure out the most sustainable method of disposal. In this regard, solid waste can be either be used as fertilisers in the agriculture sector or burnt to produce electricity in these areas. Plastic waste, on the other hand, will pose a huge problem as most of it isn't biodegradable and cannot be simply dumped in landfills — since it takes anywhere between 20 to 500 years for

it to decompose. For this, the government needs to restrict the use of plastic and provide other suitable alternatives.

- Such solutions have multifarious benefits. They will not only help in developing local industries, protect tourism, and generate foreign exchange, but also aid in the fight against the all-encompassing problem of climate change and global warming.
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- Despite the enactment of new laws prescribing deterrent punishments to the perpetrators of child abuse, these heinous crimes have increased in the country. In 2019, at least 2,846 incidents had been reported, but in 2020 the figure rose to 2,949. The annual report 2021 by Sahil, an NGO engaged in the protection of children's rights, says that of the 2,949 victims, 1,510 were girls and 1,450 boys. On an average, eight children are subjected to sexual abuse daily in the country. The increase in the number of child abuse cases last year over the previous year indicates that the relevant laws have not been enforced in a strict manner. Had they been implemented properly, this would have acted as a deterrent and the number of cases would not have gone up.
- **Bilateral Investment Treaties** BITs are treaties between two countries that accord protections to investments of an investor belonging to one signatory country, investing in the other. Pakistan, which entered into its first BIT with Germany in 1959 — which also was the first BIT ever entered — has concluded 53 BITs with 48 countries. This is a massive portfolio for a Third World country.
- The treaties that Pakistan has entered into allow the investors of signatory countries investing in Pakistan, to invoke the jurisdiction of foreign arbitral forums, such as ICSID, in case of a purported breach of any of the terms of the treaty. Since the language of these treaties is overly broad — often interpreted in favour of investors as opposed to states — the investors, in many cases, end up obtaining favourable results.
- This has proved to be costly for Pakistan. ICSID, for instance, announced a massive \$1.2 billion judgement against Pakistan in the Karkey case, and an even higher \$5.6bn in the Reko Diq case. The investors, in both these cases, had invoked the BITs that Pakistan had entered into with their respective governments. Apart from humongous costs, these decisions also undermine Pakistan's **sovereignty**. The actions of the country's executive branch and decisions of its courts are adjudicated in foreign jurisdictions, unsympathetic to local conditions, translating into massive awards against an already cash-strapped country.
- there are lessons in how India handled its BIT conundrum. The first major claim against India, under a BIT, was instituted in 2011. On receiving other similar dispute notices, India immediately, in 2013, withdrew from signing any BITs, and engaged in an inter-ministerial deliberation, churning out a Draft Model BIT in 2015 which was circulated to the public at large for feedback. Thereafter, India began to terminate various BITs, to renegotiate on the basis of its draft. The latter, importantly, required the exhaustion of administrative and judicial remedies in the host state for at least five years, before instituting an international arbitration proceeding.
- Pakistan seems to be toying with the same idea. The Board of Investment has recently suggested that a model text is to be developed, on the basis of which all the existing BITs will be terminated and/or renegotiated. But more needs to be done, and sooner. Pakistan needs to regain its sovereignty, that in the words of Prof Poulsen, it sacrificed by chance.
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- Federal Minister for Science and Technology Chaudhry Fawad Hussain laid the foundation stone of Islamabad Space Observatory (ISO) at Shakarparian, Islamabad on April 12, 2021. An

astronomical observatory is a set up containing telescopes together with supplementary accessories and is used to observe heavenly objects in a specific band of electromagnetic spectrum (EM). The purpose of building astronomical observatories is to unlock the mysteries of the universe and understand the natural laws that govern it by observing objects from the solar system to the farthest reaches of the universe.

- From the Public Representatives Offices (Disqualification) Act, 1949, to the National Accountability Ordinance of 1999, there are almost a dozen laws (and amendments) on accountability. But none have effectively established anyone accountable. The judgment also describes these laws to be politically motivated and instrumental in victimising the opposition.
- reforms are needed in the whole accountability process to make it effective. One way to do so is by adding an aspect of civil society in the process, and by empowering and involving citizen-led civil society organisations. A step in the right direction will make reforms in accountability legislations and create space for civil society to act for accountability. Another is that the right to information (RTI) laws be made effective and functional for civil society organisations to access accurate information to campaign for accountability. Similar systems in certain developing countries have worked well and are likely to do so in Pakistan as well. Adding the aspect of civil society to the process of accountability is crucial in today's governance paradigm.
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- considering the razor-thin majority in legislature, creation of a new province could mean losing Lahore. The next best option was to carve out an administrative region with sufficient autonomy. The secretariat was announced with a lot of fanfare, marking a new beginning. An additional chief secretary (ACS) and an additional IG Police were posted. Sixteen departments, including the powerful finance, planning and development, home, law and services, were created, which were promised full powers. The budget for the region was ringfenced.
- what would make the new South Punjab region a close alternative to a full-fledged province? The answer is administrative decision-making close to home so that citizens don't have to commute to Lahore; due share in resources; and improved employment prospects in public sector. Delegation of maximum powers is the only way to make the new secretariat meaningful, especially for all public-interfacing departments. The government has also deliberated on a negative list approach, where everything would be delegated, except what's explicitly excluded. This would be a good way to circumvent the bureaucratic resistance to transfer of power.
- Ringfencing the budget alone is not enough. Historically, South Punjab has suffered on two counts: getting lesser budgetary allocations than what's due and getting much less than what was promised. From 2011 to 2018, the region was allocated 28% of the development funds, against 32% population share. But what ultimately got released was a mere 17%. This robbed the region of Rs265 billion over seven years, in addition to the 4% below-population share in the annual development program (ADP). The cabinet committee is considering developing a separate ADP for the region. But what will actually make a difference is to create a nonlapsable account for the region, so that any unutilised amount can be carried over to the next year.
- On employment prospects, the government is considering allocating a job quota for South Punjab which, if done appropriately, would be commendable. Other provinces have followed a similar approach for their disadvantaged regions.
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- A parliamentary government system cannot be dynastic — it is a moral hazard that Pakistan needs to get rid of if we are genuinely looking at a corruption-free political milieu.
- This long walk to freedom would require a clean and nationalist leadership — a breed not confined to temporary benefits for themselves or their party.
- The National Assembly speaker has set up a council of senior parliamentarians to get members of the house to adhere to democratic and parliamentary norms. The effort must be praised. All too often, the National Assembly descends into chaos, with language and actions that are embarrassing, to say the least. Uncouth behaviour also goes across party lines. While some may misbehave more than others, any amount of bad behaviour should be intolerable. The floor has, over the years, been used to deliver various “sexist, religious or ethnic slogans” that the council has been instructed to help avoid.
- According to a report published in DAWN newspaper, the Islamabad police can only spend Rs400 on average per case — around 8,750 cases were investigated last year. For the current fiscal, the capital’s police must work with a meagre sum of Rs3.5m.
- 63 clauses of Magna Carta boil down to a single commandment: No ruler stands above the law.
- Agriculture represents 21pc of Pakistan’s GDP and around 68pc of the population is engaged in farming directly or indirectly through production, processing, or distribution of major agricultural commodities. Given its role in employment, food security and the economy, it is a strategic sector for pro-poor growth and rural development.
- This was the impetus behind the launch of our project ‘Growth for Rural Advancement and Sustainable Progress’, known as GRASP. Together, the Pakistan government, European Union and the International Trade Centre are working to reduce poverty and promote sustainable and inclusive growth through development of rural micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) in the provinces of Sindh and Balochistan.
- why is there judicial tolerance for repeated, grave violations of citizens’ fundamental rights by state officials (missing persons, severe restrictions on freedom of speech, press and media etc)?
- Is such judicial tolerance due to the fact that the judiciary is dependent on the state for its financial functioning and even dependent on it for the enforcement of its judgements? Or is it because of the brutal historical fact that power flows from the barrel of a gun and the Constitution is no match for the coercive power of the state? Both these reasons, ie the judiciary’s dependence on the state and the threat of state coercion are important factors that explain judicial silence.

UN

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1627825/unfulfilled-mandate>

Population

- The first industrial revolution, in the mid-18th century, harnessed the power of steam to mechanise production; the second used electric power for mass production; and the third leveraged information technology to automate manufacturing. The current — fourth — industrial revolution is characterised by a fusion of technologies, bringing together the physical, digital, and biological worlds. Compared to previous revolutions, the fourth is heavily knowledge-based, requiring new competencies and a highly technologically skilled labor force that is well versed in advancements such as robotics, artificial intelligence, nanotechnology, genetic engineering,

virtual reality, block chains, and quantum computing. This raises the question: To what extent are we prepared to meet the challenges and requirements of the fourth industrial revolution?

- Pakistan has the second youngest population in the region after Afghanistan. Sixty-four per cent of our people are below the age of 30. Sadly, a high proportion of this young population has never been enrolled in a school. Currently, we have the second highest number of out-of-school children in the world. According to Population Council estimates, nearly 28 per cent of children of ages 10-14 are out of school — they have either never attended school or dropped out. Only a third of the boys and a quarter of girls who are enrolled in primary school will go on to complete lower secondary education. Most of the young people entering the labor force do not have secondary education.
- It is no wonder that Pakistan is on the lowest rung of the Human Development Index in South Asia. We rank 154th out of 189 countries. The global Youth Development Index, an aggregate indicator that measures progress on youth development in 183 countries, including 49 Commonwealth countries, places Pakistan among the 10 lowest ranked Commonwealth countries.
- Building human capital through skill-based education will be an uphill task for Pakistan unless we do something drastic now. Our population is growing so fast that we will not be able to achieve universal primary education until 2075. At the current rate of growth, by 2050, there will be 224 million people looking for work.
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- Total fertility rate (TFR) is “the average number of children a woman would have throughout her childbearing years.” This number often plays a decisive role in determining if a nation will achieve progress and prosperity or remain embroiled in poverty, disease, illiteracy and hunger. Pakistan with a TFR of 3.6 is surely, rapidly and uncontrollably headed for the latter.
- It is no coincidence that the United States, Canada and Europe, the world’s most prosperous regions have a TFR below 2. On the contrary, Niger, Congo, Mali, Chad, Nigeria, Angola and Gambia have a TFR over 5. It is also no coincidence that China, Thailand, Singapore, South Korea and Hong Kong who achieved revolutionary progress and prosperity have a TFR that is significantly less than 2. Bangladesh’s phenomenal success in reducing its TFR from 6.9 to 1.99 in the last 50 years, enables it to be miles ahead of Pakistan in meeting Sustainable Development Goals.
- Pakistan could learn much from Iran and Bangladesh on how they engaged clergy to give fatwas and used mosques for advocating population control. Pakistan too needs to act resolutely to engage its religious leaders to advocate and endorse the national narrative on family planning (FP). Likewise, political leaders, the corporate sector, academia, media, civil society and youth can be galvanised in organising FP campaigns.
- The **Early Child Marriage Restraint Act**, defining 18 years as the minimum age for marriage, ought to be legislated and enforced in all provinces. women must receive access to modern methods of contraception at the time of childbirth. Couples should be incentivised to have small families and to delay the first pregnancy until the age of 20 or beyond. Easy and inexpensive access to contraceptives should be ensured at all service delivery points to raise the contraceptive prevalence rate.
- The census is mandated by the Constitution and is to be held every 10 years. Its results form the basis of the number of seats in the national and provincial assemblies and also how the federal divisible pool is distributed among the provinces. It is only these considerations that interest our

lawmakers and politicians as they could potentially affect their political fortunes. That also explains why our censuses have not been without controversy. Only six censuses have been held in Pakistan since its inception 74 years ago. The head count has been politicised as a result of which our planning has been lopsided since correct data is not available.

- According to the Sindh chief minister, the populations of Sindh and Balochistan have been undercounted. To back this claim, he has cited a Unicef survey which lists average members of a household at 7.2 for Sindh, while the census results put the number of the average household at 5.64. If these numbers are considered, based on the Unicef survey Sindh's population should be over 61m, while the official headcount says the province is home to just under 48m people. This is no small difference and will have a major impact on the division of resources. (2017 census)
- What should really be worrying the politicians and leaders, but is not, is our population growth rate and its impact on the country's governance and pace of development as well as its human dimension. With 18,000 children being born every day and the total fertility rate 3.3 (according to UN sources) one can imagine what an average woman's life would be like.
- For the country, a high population growth rate (2pc) has a disastrous impact on the national economy and planning in the social sectors. In 2017, Pakistan's population stood at 208 million. In 2021, it has shot up to 225m. At this rate, the rapid rise in numbers will neutralise all progress made over the years.
- the political and military establishment is responsible for fanning the fires of religiosity and fundamentalism that create a patriarchal mindset and an environment that opposes family planning. Many religious orators publicly advocate large families to enhance the strength of their followers.
- It is well known that uplifting the status of women by empowering them through education and inducting them into the labour force and giving them a role in decision-making brings down fertility rates.
- Doctors in public hospitals often complain of contraceptives not being available on many occasions when the government is obliged to supply them free of charge. The biggest evidence of mismanagement are the statistics. The low contraceptive prevalence rate in Pakistan (a stagnating 26pc) and worse still, the huge unmet need (17pc) speak volumes for the government's inability to enforce accountability.
- In matters of reproductive health at least women should be given a free choice in the matter of birth control rather than be treated as chattel. 'Mera jism meri marzi' is, after all, not an unreasonable demand.
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- In 2021, Pakistan's population is estimated at about 221 million which makes the country the fifth largest in the world. China, India, the United States and Indonesia have larger populations. However, the rate of growth of Pakistan's population now is estimated at 2.04% a year. It is much higher than that of the four largest countries. The Chinese population is growing at the rate of 0.71%; that of India at 1.09%; that of the Indonesia at 0.77%; and that of the US at 0.71%. If the Pakistani growth does not slow down, it is likely to overtake both Indonesia and the US and go on to become the world's third largest country. A large population can be both an asset or it can also be a burden. Developing the human resource increases worker productivity which pushes up the rate of economic growth. Neglecting the development of the human resource works as a burden on the economy. The second of these two propositions is currently true for Pakistan.

- What can be done to slow down the rate of population growth? The answer lies in both government action as well as people's attitude towards family formation. China and Bangladesh offer two interesting examples of the demographic roles played by governments. During the time of Mao Zedong, China forced the "one child" policy on its people. The rate of growth of population slowed down dramatically and did not recover even when the policy was changed.
- Bangladesh has also gone through a remarkable demographic transition. This happened because of the change in the status of women in society. After the country gained independence from Pakistan, the new country was given one-half of the textiles export quota that was prescribed for Islamabad under the Multifiber Agreement, the MFA. This agreement allowed duty-free access to various forms of cotton products, including finished garments. In order to take advantage of the access the country had to the markets in North America and Europe, private investment flowed in from East Asia. This led to the rapid development of the garment industry in the country which employed mostly women. Women's employment took them out of their homes and protected them from frequent pregnancies. Consequently, the rate of growth of the Bangladeshi population declined to less than 1% a year. The current estimate is 0.97%.
- For Pakistan to bring down the growth rate of its population, it must invest in developing its large human resource.
- According to Zahid Hussain, a journalist and a book author, writing recently "around 14,850 kidnapping cases involving women had been reported in Punjab in one year. Figures for three years from 2014 to 2017 also showed that a number of women had been kidnapped with a vast majority being raped. Some were also killed. The countrywide numbers were similarly atrocious." Research has shown that low status of women results in high population growth rates. Bangladesh and Pakistan have treated their women differently. At the time Pakistan was born and Bangladesh was the country's eastern wing, its population at 40 million, was 25% more than West Pakistan's 32 million. Now more than 70 years later, Pakistan at 221 million is 34% larger than Bangladesh's 165 million.
- China's recently published census, showing that its population has almost stopped growing, brought warnings of severe problems for the country. "Such numbers make grim reading for the party," reported The Economist. This "could have a disastrous impact on the country," wrote Huang Wenzheng, a fellow at the Center for China and Globalization in Beijing, in the Financial Times.
- China Says It Will Allow Couples to Have 3 Children, Up From 2; The move is the Communist Party's latest attempt to reverse declining birth-rates and avert a population crisis, but experts say it is woefully inadequate. NYT

Health

- According to the data, Pakistan lags behind its neighbours, even war-torn Afghanistan, in the most basic health indicators. The country has the lowest life expectancy in the region — 67.3 years. On the other hand, it has the highest infant mortality rate — 55.7 out of 1,000 live births in the region, as compared to 46 in Afghanistan, 28 in India, 25 in Bangladesh and only six in Sri Lanka. Similarly, the under-five mortality rate remains the highest in the region. In Pakistan, 69 children (per 1,000) die before their fifth birthday, as compared to 60 in Afghanistan, 34 in India, 30 in Bangladesh, 28 in Bhutan and seven each in China and Sri Lanka. And yet, public health spending remains far below international standards. According to the **Economic Survey**, health expenditure in 2018-19

was 1.1pc and 1.2pc in 2019-20. The WHO recommends that governments spend at least 6pc of their GDP on health.

- Take the recent chilling incident reported from Lahore's Mayo Hospital. An 80-year-old woman died after a former security guard posing as a doctor performed surgery on her back wound.
- AFTER the launch of the Sehat Sahulat Programme last November in KP, and its extension in February enabling free medical treatment for all 6.7m families in the province, the PTI administration in Punjab has formally introduced the service in Sahiwal and Dera Ghazi Khan divisions. Residents can avail free medical treatment of up to Rs720,000 at all public and private hospitals in the province, with the possibility of families obtaining additional treatment worth Rs300,000 if required.
- There is a small difference though — in KP, families can avail treatment of up to Rs1m every year, more than in Punjab.
- LIKE every crisis, the Covid-19 pandemic has also brought some opportunities, two in particular. First, it has spurred innovation. In relatively no time, experimental vaccines started queuing up. The mRNA-based vaccine was developed which is a watershed innovation.
- Under development for decades, the RNA and DNA vaccines take a different approach to inducing immunity. Instead of injecting an antigen (whole or part of a virus inactivated) into the body, the DNA and RNA vaccines introduce a gene (in DNA vaccines) and a protein precursor (in mRNA vaccines) to produce an antigen that is found on the surface of the virus.
- The DNA vaccines work by entering the nucleus, where they transform the genes and thus present a risk; the mRNA vaccines are a small strip of amino acids that serve as a template to synthesise a protein and then disappear.
- Pakistan is one of the few countries that are not part of the Patent Cooperative Treaty and therefore not bound to any patents in the treaty — as all are. The individual patents must be registered in Pakistan to be applicable. Even if there is a patent in Pakistan, there is a clause of humanitarian use that allows the use of the invention with a royalty arrangement which is always minimal. A similar situation had arisen in the past regarding AIDS treatment when India chose to go around the patents despite being a member of the PCT.
- While it is already late, it is never too late for Pakistani healthcare stakeholders to realise that it is time to catch up by moving into mRNA and recombinant technology to produce antibodies and cytokines to care for its population at an affordable cost. For a population growing as fast as it is in Pakistan and in the absence of any structured social support for healthcare, the cost of future medicines will leave most of the population suffering. The solution lies in promoting private-government partnerships and policies that will encourage the modernisation of the Pakistani pharmaceutical industry.
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- Now there are reports that in Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa, there is only one certified cardiologist to cater to a population of more than 37 million. Recently, this bitter 'reality' surfaced during the hearing of a case pertaining to substandard stents, at the Supreme Court of Pakistan. The apex court expressed annoyance with the performance of the provincial healthcare commission in this regard.
- The state of health in Pakistan has attracted a great deal of foreign attention. For instance, The New York Times Magazine of April 4, 2021, had a cover story on the health situation in Pakistan, focusing in particular on the outbreak of pediatric HIV in the country. The story written by Helen

Ouyang took the breakout of the disease in Sindh's city of Ratodero. "In 2020, about 2.8 million people worldwide under the age of 20 were living with HIV; over half of them were younger than 10, according to UNAIDS, the United Nations HIV programme,".

- According to the World Bank just over 3% of Pakistan's gross domestic product goes in the health sector, one of the lowest such expenditures in the world. Even neighbouring Afghanistan spends more than three times as much — 10% of its GDP. At \$45 per person, health expenditure in Pakistan is one of the lowest in the world and much of it is in the form of foreign aid. Life expectancy in Pakistan is 67 years, 10 years less than the average for developed countries.
- Pakistan is one of the three countries that has still not eradicated polio. It also currently bears some of the heaviest burden from tuberculosis, partly because being positive increases the risk by 20-fold of developing the disease." It is not surprising, therefore, that Pakistan is finding it hard to control the spread of Covid-19 by relying heavily on the use of vaccines to protect people. A multifaceted approach covering the entire health sector is needed.
- According to The New York Times, "many poorer countries manage to have better health outcomes than Pakistan by focusing on primary care and strengthening their public health capacities. Allocating resources strategically and prioritising hard-to-reach areas and marginalised groups can help ensure that access to services is not determined by geography, or income. Active disease surveillance and prevention can blunt outbreaks, or at least stop health systems from becoming apathetic and dysfunctional when crises do occur. The vexing failure that can follow these steps is nowhere more visible than it is in Ratodero,".

Education

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/2306874/the-tech-innovation-called-edtech>

- EDUCATION serves, at the very least, a dual purpose. On the one hand, education creates a skilled and well-trained workforce essential to a thriving private and public sector. On the other, through offering at a single location — the university — a multiplicity of areas of study, a certain sensibility and culture is created that one might call social capital.
- A local NGO reports that more than 70 per cent of teachers in government and private schools believe that corporal punishment improves students' performance.
- a World Bank estimate suggests that around 1m children will drop out of school as a result of income losses during the pandemic. Given that 22m children in Pakistan are already out of school, the additional dropout figure represents an increase of almost 4.2pc. A study conducted on the disruption of schooling during the 2005 earthquake in the northern areas showed that an entire cohort of students from three to 15 years of age at the time of the disaster had lower academic scores four years later, despite substantial remediation efforts.
- A recent survey by the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics has revealed some extremely concerning details about education across the country, and particularly in Sindh. The data shows that the nationwide literacy rate among 10-year-old children has stagnated at 60%. This is partly due to the incredibly poor show in Sindh, where the literacy rate for 10-year-olds actually declined. Almost every country ranked below us is either in the middle of a civil war or recently recovered from one. Bangladesh, India, Bhutan, and all other regional states, excluding Afghanistan, all have youth education rates above or approaching 90%.

- The majority of public schools (80%) are primary schools, and only 20% are middle and secondary schools. Limited access to affordable and good-quality post-primary schools is a fundamental cause for low post-primary enrolment rates.
- A non-conducive environment for learning at schools further reduces both students' and parents' motivational levels. Classrooms tend to be overcrowded, with a low teacher-student ratio, hampering effective in-class learning. Outdated pedagogical practices, inadequate subject-specialists, non-merit-based teacher appointments, high turnover rates, and multigrade teaching exacerbate the situation.
- Provincial authorities must strive to reduce political interference and increase transparency at the district and subdistrict levels of the education management system. Professionalising district education management, hiring enough officers at the district and subdistrict level via a merit-based process, and building their management and leadership capabilities would enable them to provide support and supervision to schools much more effectively.
- The government alone cannot accomplish the task of providing quality education to all eligible students. The private sector would play a monumental role in improving access to schools and the quality of education. For this, productive public-private partnerships should enhance the reach and quality of post-primary education. They should leverage the private sector's innovation and new technology for more effective delivery of education services.
- The SNC was introduced ostensibly to reduce inequity in the education system and to move towards equality of opportunity for all children. However, the objectives of the SNC are quite large and it is unlikely we will see any impact of the policy in two years even if it is implemented effectively from the coming academic year. But there are many issues with the SNC itself that will challenge its efficacy and effective implementation.
- Given education was made a provincial subject through the 18th Amendment to the Constitution, the introduction of the SNC is being seen as a clawback by the federal government and has been contested in some provinces on this count. So far Sindh has not agreed to introduce the SNC. This takes away the 'national' aspect.
- A number of significant criticisms have been made and continue to be made against the initiative. The Minority Commission has argued that the SNC has introduced religious content in non-religious subjects as well. This issue has been raised in the Supreme Court and is being looked at. Others have argued that the increase of religious content through Islamiyat is also of concern as it overburdens students and encourages rote learning.
- Some critics have argued that the SNC discourages the use of local languages in the provision of education and encourages the use of Urdu and/or English. Others have argued that forcing schools to use a single curriculum without looking at household and school-based differences will not only make the SNC ineffective, it can also turn it into a policy that ends up decreasing educational diversity and forcing schools at the top to reduce quality rather than allowing those lower down to improve. The implementation challenges, as they are being faced by schools in Punjab right now, also show that the fears expressed are not unfounded.
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- the one valuable asset we possess but have kept neglecting all these years is our ever-expanding youth bulge. Had we focused on educating and training this youth bulge over, at least, the last two decades or so, Pakistan would have managed to acquire adequate modern technology using which we could have managed with the limited availability of energy, simultaneously overcoming

capital shortages by resorting to technological innovations enhancing per capita productivity, squeezing in the process the most out of the limited availability of capital.

- According to the WEF report “Future of Jobs”, the core skills needed to survive in the 21st century are: complex problem-solving techniques, critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, and digital literacy. These are ideally developed early, in basic education, and then refined at colleges and universities and during lifelong learning. Therefore, our SNC must deliver a strong base of foundational linguistic, scientific, technological, engineering and mathematical (STEM) know-how.
- Young people therefore need to develop digital fluency and STEM skills from an early age if they are to be equipped to thrive in modern society. Education systems, meanwhile, need to ensure technology curricula are kept updated, while teachers have the opportunity to refresh their own skills and knowledge in order to keep pace with external developments. Technology has been proposed as a solution for resolving issues related to unequal access to education, e.g., in rural or hard-to-reach communities that nonetheless have digital access.
- Before the Britishers arrived, the sub-continent was a thriving intellectual region. Even though education was perpetuated through religious institutions — the ‘Madrassa’ for the Muslims and the ‘Pathshala’ for the Hindus — contemporary sciences, multilingual manners and spirituality were also a part of their teachings. The morals of the people were exceptionally high. This, according to Lord Macaulay, a British secretary who was sent by the Raj on a special task to study the educational system of this continent, was “their spiritual and social infrastructure, taught and strengthened by their system of education”. In order to break India’s backbone and destroy the self-esteem of the people, the Britishers decided to introduce a new English medium system by establishing missionary schools to enforce Western ideals and induce a sense of inferiority among the people. This is where the fracture started, and it has all been downhill still then.
- Parha-Likha Punjab and then the ‘deliverology’ of McKinsey and Michael Barber. World Bank, DFID and USAID funded a lot of these reform efforts.
- According to estimates from UNESCO, around 1.6 billion students across more than 190 countries were forced out of school at the peak of the crisis. In 2019, the World Bank estimated that 53% of children finishing primary school in low- and middle-income countries (and as many as 80% in some low-income countries) still could not read and understand a simple text. In light of these findings, the bank introduced a new concept: “learning poverty.”
- policy interventions have traditionally focused on raising academic achievement through increasingly rigorous standards and assessment measures. They have given impetus to the argument for preparing students to pass exams instead of focusing on learning and well-being, perhaps paradoxically contributing to our stagnated academic outcomes.
- The Higher Education Commission (HEC) backs research at higher education institutes by providing several research grants such as National Research Program for Universities (NRPU). For the last decade, NRPU supported researchers in building research groups and conducting cutting-edge research. The programme benefited junior faculty, enabling them to hire human resource, purchase tools and supplies crucial for their research. Resultantly, the number of research papers published and patents filed increased greatly.
- HEC revised the criterion for NRPU grants in 2020. As per the new regulations, only 30% of the total amount could be allocated to supplies and equipment — the costliest and the most essential budget head for experimental sciences. Most likely, HEC adopted this model from UK funding

agencies, where human resource is expensive. However, in the Pakistani context, devoting 70% of the budget to salaries does not make sense.

- Based on in-depth studies and interviews, it reconfirms that children learn best in a language they understand. This is generally the mother tongue or the language of the environment in multilingual communities.
- The Citizen Foundation TCF's move towards indigenous languages is laudable.
- The problem with our education system is that it is inherently too disciplinarian. It thrusts on small children an unintelligible language to put them in a straitjacket. This robs them immediately of the language they began acquiring and enjoying since infancy. Thus, their self-education process driven by natural curiosity is killed. So is their language acquisition skill that has grown symbiotically with their cognition.
- Unexamined privileges exist in Pakistani education. At one time the Cambridge 'O' level curriculum included a paper called 'Easy Urdu' as the only alternative on offer. I can only conclude that most children in the 'O' level stream didn't know enough Urdu to pass at the regular level and a fix had been contrived to let them get by with the level that was actually intended for those studying it as a foreign language.
- The class-based discrimination becomes apparent when one notes that this concession was not applied uniformly. There are many bright students from the matriculation stream who fail to complete their certification for failure to pass the compulsory paper in English. There is no 'Easy English' to help them.
- The existence of 'Easy Urdu' is an exercise of privilege to smooth the way for those born to advantage. The absence of 'Easy English' is an exercise of power to eliminate competition from those who might be more intelligent, competent, and motivated. The outcome of this exercise of privilege over an extended period of time is there for all to see if they wish to see it.
- Good teachers are thus a bit like good climate policy: future generations benefit, but they have no influence over today's decisions.
- South Korea has drawn some of its most talented people into teaching, and schoolteachers are among the country's richest people. The story of Cha Kil-yong, who earned \$8 million in one year teaching school mathematics online, has few parallels anywhere.

HEC

- Conflict of interest; didn't recuse themselves in such research papers
- Although we have seen the proliferation of universities over the last few decades, most of them have inadequate academic standards and are run as businesses committed to the mass production of graduates with very little actual education. At a basic level, it is due to the lack of well-qualified faculty, but it is also due to a lack of commitment to education as a goal in itself.
- a second negative development is undermining their purpose: the forced mass production of 'research' papers. it has substituted quality control of research with simply counting the number of research papers produced as a metric for evaluating competence. The majority of research papers produced at our institutions do not pass rigorous peer review. If they are published at all, it is in journals with low standards or through the occasional random one passing the filters of peer review despite their low quality. The emphasis in promoting research has thus shifted from quality to quantity.

- Recent changes made by the government in the structure of the HEC has put the system of higher education under government control and is causing turmoil among the educated of Pakistan. These changes are undermining the open and free atmosphere of universities and other institutions of higher learning and research in the country. By constraining freedom of speech and thought, openness to intellectual influence, and by imposing ideological constraints, the government is depriving the university of the essential ingredients it needs to promote a culture of learning, innovation and creativity. Without these elements, it is undermining the very basis for a thriving national culture.
- the revised **ordinance** about the Higher Education Commission's (HEC) autonomous status was approved by the federal government. The ordinance introduces several changes regarding the appointment and job duration of chairman and executive director.
- As per the amendment in **Section 6** of the HEC Ordinance, 2002, the chairperson can now hold the position for only two years instead of four. However, the duration of service for members and the executive director shall remain four years. Consequently, the chairperson has been ceased at once while the members and executive director of the commission stay.
- The amendment in **Section 11** curtails the commissions' authority for the appointment of the executive director. Now the prime minister shall appoint an executive director on **the Ministry of Federal Education (MOFE)**. Lastly, Section 9 of the amendment states, "all decisions of the MOFE or the Commission shall be expressed in terms of the opinion of the majority of its members present and voting."
- It appears the revised ordinance was put forward just to sack the chairperson and take the commission under the wings of the MOFE. The role of the ministry in the appointment of the executive director will politicise the hiring process. It is a critical position responsible for implementing the commission's orders, decisions, and policies.
- Involvement of MOFE in HEC matters means that it will now be the politicians rather than academics who will be making higher education decisions. The distribution of research funds and scholarships and hiring of faculty will be influenced by the MOFE. This will undermine the mission of the HEC to improve and promote higher education, research, and development without any political interference.
- Banuri believes in widening and strengthening undergraduate teaching across the country and quality instead of quantity. Rahman's approach, however, is more numerical: more scholarships, PhDs, research grants and research papers, etc. A clash of approaches between two schools of thought is normal. However, both parties have entered another level of personal attacks where policy debate has been left far behind.
- A more balanced approach could be to let policies naturally evolve themselves. Whenever required, reforms can be introduced instead of total abandonment of the existing policies and replacing them with new ones. The quality of higher education can be worked on without compromising the already running funding and scholarship programmes. The HEC has contributed significantly to promote higher education with excellent scholarship, funding, and training programmes. It has enormously contributed to the education, training, and career development of thousands like me, and we wish to see it working and delivering as an autonomous body.
- Some quarters see the HEC as a redundant entity after the passage of the 18th Amendment. Others see the option of its disbandment as disastrous. At present, the provinces are the custodians of public universities and degree-awarding institutions. On many occasions, lawmakers

have been irked by the HEC's actions. Some years ago, the process of degree verification by the HEC caused consternation when certain lawmakers were disqualified for holding fake degrees.

- Conversely, many arguments are cited to retain the HEC for all the contributions it has made to higher education. Quality control mechanisms, uniformity of core values in curriculum, the continuous revision of baseline curricula, continuing with projects, prospective grants and funding from international bodies, support to faculty in research, collaborations and seminar/conference grants etc are part of the argument to retain the HEC as it is now.
- Provincial autonomy is probably the only rationale proffered to counter the argument of HEC supporters.
- The HEC has been far more effective than the erstwhile University Grants Commission. Development grants for universities, new campuses in the public sector, assistance to private-sector institutions, research and travel grants to faculty, scholarships for doctoral studies, allocations for peer-reviewed journals and development of knowledge resources during the past eight years are some feats that have earned the HEC laurels at home and abroad.
- The creation of programmes and procedures with open access and competition for resources are worthwhile achievements, and credit must be given to the past and present leadership of the HEC which has also been instrumental in expanding higher education opportunities in less-developed provinces such as Balochistan and in former Fata. These initiatives need to be expanded, not discontinued or reduced in scale.
- In fact, there exists enough room for the provincial commissions — if this institutional nomenclature is agreed upon — to contribute to higher education. The legal and administrative framework of universities is already under the control of provincial legislatures. They can devise a formula for extending financial support to universities after examining the releases from the centre/HEC, self-generation of funds by universities and annual budgetary requirements. Alternate sources of finances also need to be explored.
- Many philanthropic organisations are willing to fund education if a credible utilisation framework, monitoring mechanism, transparency and prudent financial management are guaranteed. The provincial bodies can incorporate an efficient management structure to fulfil the demands of modern philanthropists. Choice of human resource for leading and running such bodies can make the difference. Provincial commissions can also explore the possibility of joint ventures and collaborative efforts with corporate, international financial agencies and bilateral financial institutions.
- Assistance to universities that are in need of management and administrative help is another area where provincial commissions can play a greater role. They can be entrusted with the task of scaling up administrative and academic structures of new universities and be given the resources to deal with crises that new universities may be experiencing. Sharing of information, experience and infrastructure are some of the core areas where such input could prove most significant.
- In recruiting academics and officers for provincial bodies, merit and competence must be the criteria. Higher education should not become the dumping ground for mediocre bureaucrats, retired armed forces personnel and political cronies.

University Reforms in Pak

- Decentralization (give autonomy to university)
- HEC is more focused with quantity instead of quality of research

- Proper dispensation of funds in public sector uni
- Put an end to nepotism, mismanagement, financial corruption & ethnic strifes

Climate

Most imp intl agreements

Montreal Protocol, 1987

- Though not intended to tackle climate change, the Montreal Protocol [PDF] was a historic environmental accord that became a model for future diplomacy on the issue. Every country in the world eventually ratified the treaty, which required them to stop producing substances that damage the ozone layer, such as chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs). The protocol has succeeded in eliminating nearly 99 percent of these ozone-depleting substances. In 2016, parties agreed via the Kigali Amendment to also reduce their production of hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs), powerful greenhouse gases that contribute to climate change.

UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), 1992

- Ratified by 197 countries, including the United States, the landmark accord [PDF] was the first global treaty to explicitly address climate change. It established an annual forum, known as the Conference of the Parties, or COP, for international discussions aimed at stabilizing the concentration of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere. These meetings produced the Kyoto Protocol and the Paris Agreement.

Kyoto Protocol, 2005

- The Kyoto Protocol [PDF], adopted in 1997 and entered into force in 2005, was the first legally binding climate treaty. It required developed countries to reduce emissions by an average of 5 percent below 1990 levels, and established a system to monitor countries' progress. But the treaty did not compel developing countries, including major carbon emitters China and India, to take action. The United States signed the agreement in 1998 but never ratified it and later withdrew its signature.

Paris Agreement, 2015

- The most significant global climate agreement to date, the Paris Agreement requires all countries to set emissions-reduction pledges. Governments set targets, known as nationally determined contributions, with the goals of preventing the global average temperature from rising 2°C (3.6°F) above preindustrial levels and pursuing efforts to keep it below 1.5°C (2.7°F). It also aims to reach global net-zero emissions, where the amount of greenhouse gases emitted equals the amount removed from the atmosphere, in the second half of the century. (This is also known as being climate neutral or carbon neutral.)
- Every five years, countries are supposed to assess their progress toward implementing the agreement through a process known as the global stocktake; the first is planned for 2023. Countries set their own targets, and there are no enforcement mechanisms to ensure they meet them.
- The United States, the world's second-largest emitter, was the only country to withdraw from the accord, a move by former President Donald Trump that took effect in November 2020. However, President Joe Biden reentered the United States into the agreement during his first months in

office. A few countries have not formally approved the agreement: Eritrea, Iran, Iraq, Libya, South Sudan, Turkey, and Yemen.

Multilateralism

- **ADB role**
- Under our Strategy 2030, our target is to focus 75% of ADB's operations on climate adaptation and mitigation. We will also provide at least \$80 billion in climate financing from 2019 to 2030.
- In Mongolia, our \$100 million loan for the first utility-scale energy storage project in the country will increase renewable energy use by providing a large energy reserve, load shifting capacity, and emergency back-up. This will support decarbonisation of Mongolia's heavily coal-dependent energy system.
- ADB will contribute to the global effort envisioned by COP26 on multiple fronts. We will promote greater collaboration and cooperation; balanced climate mitigation and adaptation efforts; and a holistic approach that integrates the ecological, social, and financial aspects of resilience across our operations. We are aligning our operations to support the targets of the Paris Agreement.
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- The COVID-19 pandemic has shown that we will conquer the virus by focusing on a common goal, cooperating, and allowing people the freedom to innovate. We will overcome the threat of global warming the same way.
- The scope and scale of multilateralism was first enlarged with the establishment of the United Nations after World War II. Naturally, the UN became the home of multilateralism by enabling cooperation on development, trade, human rights, health, education and science etc. [Environmental subjects, however, remained absent in this discourse until the UN Stockholm Conference in 1972 established the UN Environment Programme](#) and laid the foundation of what is now an elaborate architecture of global environmental governance.
- Today, there are more than 500 recognised multilateral environmental agreements with legislative bodies on every dimension of the environment. The **UN Environment Assembly**, with universal representation, [serves as the world parliament on environmental policies](#). The UN conventions on climate change, biodiversity, desertification and ozone depletion etc, are part of a mosaic that keeps expanding to address new challenges that transcend national boundaries.
- The most recent global treaty in the series is the [Minamata Convention on Mercury of 2017](#) that aims to [protect human health and the environment from the adverse effects of mercury](#). A similar example is that of the **ozone treaties**, established in 1987, where governments and scientific and private sectors work in tandem [to prevent further depletion of the ozone layer caused by certain gases used in refrigerators and air conditioners](#). As a result, the ozone layer that protects the earth from harmful ultraviolet rays of the sun is on its way to complete replenishment.
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- European Commission introduced the **European Green Deal** in December 2019. As Europe's new growth strategy, it aims to transform the EU into a fairer, more prosperous society by guiding the transition to a more resource-efficient, competitive economy. Ultimately, the goal is to achieve net-zero GHG emissions by 2050.
- The EU, however, represents less than 10% of global emissions, so European action alone will not be enough to slow global warming. To keep the increase in global temperature as close to 1.5°C

as possible, we must support decarbonization efforts beyond our borders. That is why we need a **Global Green Deal**.

- To this end, we have set ourselves three investment priorities. First, [we need to ensure that the most advanced clean technologies are embraced everywhere](#). Despite good progress on renewable-energy deployment, 40% of the world's electricity is still generated by coal, the dirtiest energy source.
- Our second priority is to [invest in breakthrough green technologies like never before](#). Such research and development is both necessary and an enormous market opportunity.
- Finally, we need to embrace the idea of a “**circular economy**.” As matters stand, we are taking more out of our planet than it can afford to give us. To do so, we need to invest in circular technologies that reuse resources, rather than constantly producing or importing new goods and extracting ever more raw materials. The circular economy has huge potential not only to reduce our dependency on scarce resources, but also to create jobs.
- [Bill gates rightly noted how the world can benefit from China's efforts to make green energy more affordable](#). Without China's contributions, many of the key ingredients needed to address global emissions, such as rechargeable batteries and solar power panels, would not be affordable, especially for the cash-strapped poorer countries.
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US role

- [Reagan distanced himself from the Carter administration's environmentalist agenda](#). In a symbolic gesture, the new president even removed the solar panels that his predecessor had installed on the White House.
- This is [not the first time America is re-entering such a collective effort](#), but rather the second. Biden, as vice-president, watched in awe as his boss president Obama turned America back toward joining climate talks after his predecessor [George W Bush had rejected the Kyoto Protocol climate treaty of 1997](#).
- ON April 22, world leaders from 40 countries, 17 of them responsible for four-fifths of the world's greenhouse gas emissions, held [a virtual summit convened by President Joe Biden](#). This summit, explicitly designed to make up for the time lost by America's withdrawal from the Paris agreement, will help the administration relaunch the US in the global climate arena, and align global climate policy with his domestic economic agenda. The ultimate goal is to have a carbon-neutral economy by 2050 to limit global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius, starting with a 50pc reduction in carbon emissions by 2030.
- The Biden administration has unfolded its **four-track climate strategy**: 1) the biggest-ever plan for investment in American infrastructure to make it climate smart; 2) create jobs as a byproduct of climate action (70 million Americans are out of a job because of Covid-19's impact); 3) phasing out coal by propelling renewable energy (RE) and Electric Vehicles (EVs) infrastructure, including making solar, wind and hydro-energy the backbone of the US economy; and 4) win back leadership in green technologies from China, EU and others.
- Earlier in April, John Kerry, the United States Special Presidential Envoy for Climate, visited Asia to pave the way for Biden's conference. While traveling to the UAE, Bangladesh, India and China, [Kerry flew over Pakistan](#) — the eighth most impacted country in the world from climate change.

It has suffered economic losses worth \$3.8 billion and faced 173 extreme weather events from 2000 to 2019. Lives and livelihoods of millions of people have suffered in a country that is least responsible for causing this climate crisis.

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Effects

- Moreover, the costs of such events are mounting. For example, five of the worst natural disasters in US history have occurred since 2005, causing economic damage totaling \$523 billion in inflation-adjusted terms.
 - **Air pollution** is causing the death of over eight million people globally which is about one in five deaths each year. it is the biggest public health issue according to WHO and World Economic Forum.
 - The rainforest cover equal to a football field is lost every six seconds; two-thirds of the world's original rainforest cover has already been destroyed, with 34pc of old tropical forests having been cleared to make way for agricultural practices. Another 30pc have been degraded to a dangerous extent. the annual rate of **rainforest depletion** only in 2019, matched the level of destruction over the past 20 years. In fact, the total loss of rainforest cover between 2002 and 2019 was greater than the area of France. The biggest impact has been felt in Brazil, which has witnessed a sharp uptick in the depletion of its forested land as a result of the country's lax policies towards the environment. (Rainforest foundation Norway)
 - It is comforting to imagine the **Arctic** as a snowy faraway place, populated by reindeer and polar bears. In fact, it is a cornerstone of the climate system that keeps our weather stable, our communities habitable, and our economies prosperous – and it is under immense pressure.
 - [In Sep 2020 an ice sheet the size of Paris broke off from Greenland's largest glacier shelf](#), and in July, Canada's intact ice shelf – 4,000 years old – fragmented. As Arctic ice melts, sea levels rise, threatening countries worldwide.
 - For the first time since records began, sea ice in the Arctic's Eurasian sector had not yet begun freezing in October ([guardian](#))
 - As higher temperatures cause Arctic plants to grow taller, permafrost is thawing faster – a process that releases enormous amounts of carbon dioxide and methane (a far more potent greenhouse gas than CO2), accelerating the temperature rise.
 - Major Fuel Spill in Russia's North Spreads Toward Arctic Ocean, releasing about 150,000 barrels of diesel into a river ([NYTimes](#)).
 - [rising Arctic temperatures threaten to trigger a devastating domino effect that ends in global catastrophe](#). Arctic warming affects the rest of the world by disrupting the polar vortex, a low-pressure weather system that sits above each pole and keeps cold air there. As the Arctic warms, the cold air contained in the polar vortex is thought to be displaced and moved to the south, leading to extreme and unusual cold weather in faraway places. This winter, Italy, Japan, and Spain experienced extreme snowfall.
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 - Over the next 30 years, more than 140 million people are expected to be displaced by climate change across South Asia, Sub-Saharan Africa, and Latin America, at a cost of some \$7.9 trillion.
- World Bank**

- Compounding the injustice facing marginalized and vulnerable children who have done nothing to contribute to the problem, [girls – especially adolescents – often are the first to be forced out of school when droughts, landslides, floods, and other disasters strike, and they are the last to return, if they return at all.](#) Without access to education, these girls face increased risk of sexual exploitation, early marriage, unwanted pregnancy, and child labor.
- The **Malala Fund** estimates that in 2021, climate-related events will prevent at least four million girls in developing countries from completing their education. And this number could reach 12 million by 2025.
- Recent studies indicate that an additional year of primary school for girls can raise per capita income by 10-20%. **Brookings institute**
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- As we accelerate the transition from a hydrocarbon-based economy to a sustainable one based on renewable energy, we cannot be blind to these **geopolitical effects**.
- [READ ARCTIC FACTOR](#)
- In particular, the transition itself will drive power shifts away from those controlling and exporting fossil fuels, and toward those mastering the green technologies of the future. For example, phasing out fossil fuels will significantly improve the EU's strategic position, not least by reducing its reliance on energy imports. In 2019, 87% of our oil and 74% of our gas came from abroad, requiring us to import more than €320 billion (\$386 billion) worth of fossil-fuel products that year.
- Moreover, with the green transition, the old strategic choke points – starting with the **Strait of Hormuz** – will become less relevant, and thus less dangerous. These seaborne passages have preoccupied military strategists for decades. But as the oil age passes, they will be less subject to competition for access and control by regional and global powers.
- Phasing out energy imports will also help to reduce the income and geopolitical power of countries like **Russia**, which currently relies heavily on the EU market. Of course, the loss of this key source of Russian revenue could lead to instability in the near term, particularly if the Kremlin sees it as an invitation to adventurism.
- At the same time, however, [the green transition itself will require scarce raw materials](#), some of which are concentrated in countries that have already shown a willingness to use natural resources as foreign-policy tools. This growing vulnerability will need to be addressed in two ways: by recycling more of these key resources, and by forging broader alliances with exporting countries.
- Moreover, as long as other countries' climate commitments are not on par with our own, there will be a risk of "**carbon leakage**." That is why the EU is working on a carbon border adjustment mechanism (CBAM). We know that some countries, even among our allies, are concerned about this. But we want to be clear: [setting a price on imported carbon-intensive goods](#) is not meant to be punitive or protectionist.
- [The first well-informed assessment of how South Asia may be affected by global warming](#) was made by the **World Bank**. Included in the analysis was the [increased possibility of floods](#) that might result from the melting of the Himalayan glaciers that feed water to the rivers that flow into not only into South Asia but also into China and Afghanistan. That that might indeed happen was shown by the flood resulting from the "break of a glacier in the Himalayas causing a deadly flash flood that smashed through a hydroelectric power plant and destroyed homes in India,"

wrote Niha Masih in a report published in The Washington Post. “More than 125 people were reported missing. These developments did not receive much attention at the April 22 summit.

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Faults

- **CORRUPTION** is one of the biggest enemies of healthy ecosystems. The government’s corrupt functionaries sell the banks of rivers, streams and nullahs to encroachers for building bastis, posh housing societies, plazas and even industrial installations and zones. They issue permits and licences for sand mining and direct outlets for water diversion for agricultural, commercial and industrial purposes. They allow industry to discharge its effluents into freshwater bodies. Weak governance emboldens them to dislodge communities and plan new cities on the beaches in Karachi and the riverfronts of the Ravi, Soan, Jhelum, Chenab and other waterways.
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- The fossil fuel industry has plagiarised some tactics of the American gun manufacturers. The gun industry spends a stupendous amount of money in public relations campaigns trying to convince the people that the *gun is not to be blamed for the gun violence* but rather the crazy-minded individuals who start shooting in public.
- **ExxonMobil** knew as early as the 1970s about the severe damage to the environment resulting from the use of fossil fuel. Yet, they went on to fund research, which denied such knowledge.
- For the umpteenth time, for *as long as fossil fuels are being burnt and more oil is being drilled for, there would be a relentless march toward our extinction resulting directly from climate change*. No amount of tree growing and artificially grown meat would do the magic, if fossil fuel continues to be consumed. The main criminals of climate change are the mega fossil fuel corporations that are directly responsible for causing climate change and also responsible for the misconceptions about this topic. They collectively own crude oil reserves underground, the market value of which is estimated to be close to \$3 trillion. They are not going to give up on that wealth.
- *While the profit of the environmental degradation was privatised, since it ended up in the hands of a few, the cost of climate change is now being socialised, since everybody is paying the price and everybody is being asked to do something about it*. Don’t get me wrong; I truly believe everyone should be concerned and make their contribution toward saving this only planet we have. However, these nice sounding slogans can do more harm than good, in my humble view. Because such moves change the topic from the real culprits and moves it to where the responsibility is thrown at everyone on the planet, including unborn children. And in the meantime, the real culprits are working toward undoing any positive impact we might bring by changing our lifestyles.
- The external pressure on leaders of poorer governments who engage in reckless behaviour is often rendered invisible when the international press highlights their follies. Consider, for instance, the criticism heaped on the far-right Bolsonaro government in Brazil which has encouraged destruction of the Amazon forest to boost agriculture.
- A growing number of researchers have squarely blamed EU countries for promoting deforestation and greenhouse gas emissions in the Brazilian Amazon by importing agricultural products contaminated with illegal deforestation. *Despite being so vocal in terms of criticising Brazil for deforestation of the rainforests, the EU remains Brazil’s largest trading partner*. The Bolsonaro government does rightly deserve criticism for aggressively dismantled, for defunding

environmental protection agencies, and for enabling illegal loggers and miners. Yet, through its ongoing consumption of Brazil's deforestation-contaminated agri-products, the EU must also share the blame for promoting deforestation and greenhouse gas emissions in the Amazon.

- The deforestation in Southeast Asia to grow palm oil is a similarly problematic issue. The environmental havoc caused by mining for natural resources is another major concern. Extracting cobalt to make eco-friendly lithium batteries, for which there is growing global demand, is now a major problem. [It is not only Europe but also other powerful countries like Australia, the US, and China which are fuelling supply-chain exploitation.](#)
- While richer countries are quick to criticise governments and employers in poorer countries, this criticism is no more than [hypocritical double-speak](#), especially when corporations based in these rich countries continue sourcing products and raw materials through blatantly exploitative supply chains.
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Solutions

- Unfortunately, nothing worthwhile has so far been done on this aspect of the grave issue. It is a strange situation where fish are dying by drowning and also of thirst.
- **Migration:** <https://www.e-ir.info/2021/06/24/recognition-and-protection-of-environmental-migrants-in-international-law/>
- Achieving a net-zero global economy by 2050 is technically and economically feasible with existing and emerging technologies, but it requires drastic shifts in behaviour and massive policy interventions, including a degree of international cooperation that will be very difficult to attain.
- According to the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, capping global warming at 1.5°C will require cutting carbon dioxide emissions by around 45% from 2010 levels by 2030, and to net zero by 2050. Doing so will require “rapid and far-reaching transitions in energy, land, urban and infrastructure (including transport and buildings), and industrial systems,” as well as CO2 removal.
- Cutting CO2 emissions is only part of the task. Crucially, the world must also reduce drastically emissions of short-lived climate pollutants such as methane, in order to achieve a large reduction in Arctic warming and permafrost thawing, which threatens to cause the release of more nitrous oxide and methane.
- Although over 100 countries have pledged to become carbon neutral by mid-century, global emissions have continued to increase at a rapid clip, interrupted only by the pandemic-induced recession. [On pre-pandemic trends, the world is on track to exhaust its carbon budget by 2035.](#)
- the transition to net zero is both technically possible and fairly cheap in an increasing number of sectors. Renewable energy sources like solar and wind are already the lowest-cost power option in much of the world and will become even cheaper as their adoption scales up.
- [One reason for insufficient climate action to date is that switching to zero-carbon electricity and transportation entails up-front costs.](#) True, some of these replacement costs would have to be paid anyway as cars, coal plants, and gas-fired power stations wear out or become obsolete. More often, though, [decarbonization is profitable only on a longer-term horizon in a world characterized by short-termism.](#)
- **Another reason for inaction** is that green transformations will have major distributional implications both within and across countries. At the national level, millions of new jobs would be

created, but millions would be lost. This problem is most acute in developing countries, which eventually will be better off with green technologies but typically lack the long-term finance and incentives to adopt them. The only viable solution is for rich countries to subsidize the transition in developing countries – including through multilateral development banks. However, “[g]iven that domestic fiscal solidarity is already wanting, cross-border fiscal solidarity seems like a non-starter.” With the current grossly insufficient Nationally Determined Contributions under the 2015 Paris climate agreement, the world would most likely be unable to keep global warming below 3°C by the end of this century, and would experience catastrophic climate events long before then.

- [Fortunately, although technological and political feasibility may operate on separate planes, the two are connected.](#) For example, cheaper green technologies lower the political cost for countries to deploy them, because it is now in their national interest to do so. That is why India is suddenly and voluntarily replacing its coal plants with renewables. The positive externalities from technological innovation at least partly offset the negative externalities posed by free-rider and coordination problems. This makes it all the more important for policymakers to ensure that poor countries have low-cost access to these technologies.
- Proving the pessimists wrong will require the climate-oriented transition to be part of a comprehensive policy package that includes far-reaching financial transformation and focuses on distributional issues.
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- [The world must protect at least 30% of the global ocean in order to restore marine life, increase seafood supply, and reduce greenhouse-gas emissions.](#) Meeting this goal would generate annual benefits – in terms of increased economic output and improved ecosystem services – that far exceed the investment required. **Overfishing:** A 2017 study by the World Bank suggested that reducing fishing efforts by almost half would actually increase the global catch and the economic benefits that it generates.
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- It is time transnational corporations are held accountable for the environmental and labour exploitation their profit-driven modus operandi causes globally. Desperate for foreign investment, poor countries remain locked in a desperate ‘race to the bottom of the barrel’, as they try to outbid each other to lure transnational businesses by offers of low wages and lax environmental restrictions.
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- To address the multiplying risks facing children in developing countries – particularly in crisis contexts – we must take urgent, holistic, and collective action to link education and climate change. For donors, governments, and private-sector leaders, [this means that education should be earmarked in contributions to the Paris agreement, COVID-19 response packages, and overall strategies for low-carbon, climate-resilient development.](#) World leaders must acknowledge the deepening links between the climate crisis and education.
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- [One efficient way to mitigate global warming would be to increase the price of carbon dioxide emissions by imposing carbon taxes](#) or limiting the supply of tradable emissions permits, while phasing out long-standing fossil-fuel subsidies. This will be much discussed in the run-up to the United Nations’ COP26 climate summit in Glasgow in November.

- From a consumer perspective, CO2 emissions are an invisible enemy. [Direct consumer taxes](#) that are clearly linked to the harms related to the goods people are buying, using, and dumping would be more transparent and understandable.
- Relating **green taxes** to the weight and size of goods could draw a clearer link with non-renewable resource use and would help to shift social norms. People using bigger cars or living in bigger homes would thus pay more, making smaller options more attractive.
- According to a joint research report by **Oxfam** and **Stockholm Environment Institute**, in 2015 the richest 10% of the world's population were responsible for 52% of cumulative CO2 emissions, with the top 1% alone accounting for 15%. Heavily taxing the materials and energy they consume could be sold to the rich as a more palatable option than higher income or wealth taxes.
- An even more powerful way for governments to secure support for new consumer taxes would be to strike a **"Green Grand Bargain"** with the public to use the proceeds to accelerate the Build Back Better agenda. Revenue from such taxes could, for example, finance a decrease in taxes on labor, particularly for the lower paid. This would make the package doubly progressive.
- One option would be a **"carbon dividend,"** whereby households would receive a flat-rate income financed by the green tax proceeds. This would disproportionately benefit poorer households.
- governments could use some of the tax proceeds to fund green investments, including by supporting households investing in electric vehicles (especially small ones) and home energy systems. Funding could also be directed to business and government investment in necessary infrastructure and research and development.
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- Some people say that [to avoid the threat of catastrophic harm to human welfare posed by global warming, we must radically change our behaviour](#) – cease flying, use bicycles, and give up red meat. Others believe that [new technologies can deliver carbon-free growth](#). So, who is right: Greta Thunberg, who advocates the former course, or Bill Gates, who just wrote a book (**How to avoid a climate disaster**) advocating the latter?
- Gates writes in his book that in a normal year the world adds 51 billion tons of ghg to the atmosphere.
- A lot of human activities generate greenhouse gases: generating electricity, transportation, growing food, heating buildings, and making materials like steel and cement. If our goal was simply to emit ten percent less greenhouse gas, you could imagine trying to limit those activities. But because we need to get to zero emissions by 2050, we have to come up with an alternate way which isn't too much more expensive to perform those same activities without emitting any greenhouse gases. We can compare the cost per unit of the current way of doing it to the approach that creates no emissions. The actual extra cost, which we call the "green premium," for things like green jet fuel, is very high. Jet fuel is a good example because there's a significant premium. In the United States, a gallon of jet fuel averages about \$2.20. One way to go green is instead of taking that oil out of the ground that has carbon from millions of years ago coming up into the atmosphere we can take the oil by generating it from plant material or bio-waste or even algae. Biofuels cost \$5.35 per gallon. So that's quite a premium, \$5.35 versus \$2.20 so, \$3.15 premium. More than double the typical price. The green premium is a tool that gives us a way of looking at how far away we are from making it easy. And where this green premium is the highest, that's where we need to put resources behind solving that particular area. We need a lot of research and development, a lot of innovative companies, to help us get the green premium

down. And if you can get it down close to zero, yes, that will get us to this 2050 goal of zero emissions.

- Gates wants govt to spend more on research and development for energy innovation. Gates himself had invested \$2b of his own money on companies working towards zero emissions (most-known among them are impossible foods and beyond meats both dealing with plant-based meats). His biggest bet is on Terra Power, a nuclear power company with a reactor that uses depleted uranium as fuel.
- In the long run, techno-optimism looks justified. As two new reports from the Energy Transitions Commission describe, zero-carbon electricity and hydrogen, which today account for only 20% of energy use, could account for 75% by mid-century, and clean energy will be cheaper by then than dirty energy is today. Solar electricity already costs less than coal power; battery costs have collapsed and will keep falling. The cost of producing hydrogen from electrolysis will plummet in the next ten years, too.
- But while rapid technological progress is our best long-term hope for mitigating climate change, [Thunberg is partly right today](#). Living standards in rich countries threaten both catastrophic climate change and local environmental destruction, so responsible consumer choice matters as well. We should fly less, get on our bikes, and eat less red meat. And we must ensure as rapidly as possible the massive flows of finance – from governments, companies, and individuals – needed to halt deforestation before it is too late.
- **Language of Tragedy**
- [“How terrible it is to know when, in the end, knowing gains you nothing,” laments the blind prophet Tiresias in Sophocles’ Oedipus the King. Oedipus had summoned him to reveal the source of the pestilence and ecological disaster ravaging Thebes. But Tiresias knew that the king would reject the truth. Today’s climate scientists and epidemiologists can relate.](#)
- Like Tiresias, modern-day scientists know where the planet is headed and why. They found out not through prophecies, but through countless double-blind experiments, randomized trials, and rigorous peer review. Their evidence is unimpeachable, and the consensus among them is overwhelming. But their secular augury cannot seem to overcome the wilful indifference of politicians or the public. Knowing gains them nothing, because so few are listening.
- Thunberg and many of her fellow climate activists know that the **language of tragedy** is the only way to express the cataclysm we are facing. But, as Thunberg knows first-hand, young people can easily be dismissed as overly sensitive and melodramatic. That is why the adults – especially scientists and world leaders – must urgently join the chorus of young people and speak in the language of tragedy.
- Scientists may believe that anything other than qualified statements made in careful, measured tones would undermine the legitimacy of their findings. But humans are emotional beings confronting an existential crisis. The language of tragedy is our best – and possibly last – chance to open the world’s eyes before it is too late.
- **Adaptation** and **mitigation** are the **fundamental strategies** against the climate crisis. Adaptation is important to build resilience against the crisis while mitigation is essential to stop the crisis by ceasing the emission of GHGs. The latter is a major responsibility of countries with a large share of historic and current emissions.
- This was the foremost agenda of **Biden’s climate conference**. In the conference, the US committed to reduce emission by 50% and Canada by 40-45% until 2030. China offered to put

strict limitation on coal consumption by 2025, phasing it down by 2030 along with net zero GHGs emissions by 2060. The UK committed to cut down emission by 68% and the EU by 55%, while India offered to expand renewable energy projects.

- The challenges, however, remain after Biden's conference. The [crisis demands a shift from commitments to actually stopping emissions](#) and to deliver the promised support to countries facing the worst impact of climate crisis. The COP26 would be a decisive conference to save the future of the Earth. There is no other option. "There is no Plan B as there is no Planet B."
- Mass involvement in policymaking over any issue works only when the masses constitute an **informed citizenry**. Climate change is no exception. [A huge portion of the global population doesn't know much about climate change and how its lives and livelihoods are impacted by it](#), much less what policy and lifestyle changes are needed to tackle this threat.
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Pakistan

- <https://www.dawn.com/news/1627628/environment-in-danger>
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- Pakistan as the country had the pleasure of hosting the World Environment Day 2021 on 5th June. Theme: ecosystem restoration
- <https://tribune.com.pk/story/2291963/climate-imperialism-is-coming>

Issues

- On Nov 12, 1970, around three weeks before Pakistan's first democratic elections were scheduled, the Bay of Bengal was devastated by the **Bhola Cyclone**. More than 300,000 people were killed, and the terrain, livestock, and livelihoods of numerous districts destroyed. The cyclone highlighted governance failings and poor infrastructure development in what was then East Pakis-tan, and the military government's sluggish resp-onse was widely criticised. Several academic studies conclude that its aftermath li-kely swelled the Awami League's poll results.
- [There is growing recognition that climate change fuels political instability, but the discourse is securitised](#). A **Stanford-led** study in 2019 estimated that [climate has influenced between three and 20 per cent of armed conflict risk over the past century](#), a trend that is expected to dramatically accelerate.
- It is by now well-known that a severe drought in **Syria** — the worst in modern times — and the resulting rural-urban migration fuelled that country's civil war. A UN report in 2018 pointed to the link between climate change and conflict in the **Horn of Africa** and called for urgent state-level climate risk management. In the **Pakistani context**, there is growing acknowledgement that climate change — particularly as it manifests as water scarcity — could be a key trigger for conflict with India, and climate security policies are evolving accordingly.
- There are reports that [the dense forests of North and South Waziristan are being fast denuded of trees](#), most of which are hundreds of years old, by the avaricious timber mafia. These mafias are recklessly cutting trees for use as timber and also for charcoal, which are, reportedly, much in demand in neighbouring provinces of Afghanistan.
- IN its bid to stop illegal logging in the scenic forests of Gilgit-Baltistan, the federal government has deployed **Frontier Constabulary** personnel to support the regional forest department that is said

to lack the manpower, resources and training needed to protect wooded areas. They are deployed at checkpoints on forest exit routes to stop the smuggling of timber.

- According to the **National Forest Policy, 2015**, around 66,700 acres of forests are lost every year mostly in community-owned natural forests. This is mostly because rural communities depend on trees and plants for sustenance in the form of fuel and livelihood. In this instance, the deployment of FC men is a good stopgap arrangement, but not a long-term solution.
- Food security and water scarcity.

Steps taken

- **Adaptation to climate change** means taking action to prepare for and adjust to both the current effects of climate change and the predicted impacts in the future. Adaptation leads to resilience in the system, institution and the people. The Asian Development Bank highlights that Pakistan needs financial resources of \$7-14 billion per year for climate adaptation.
- [Discuss adaptation and mitigation and then start giving solutions.](#)
- The PPP government in Sindh has outdone the federal government after launching the [country's first electric bus project in Karachi](#). While the initiative strongly indicates that officials are somewhat serious in moving towards a greener, more sustainable future, primarily because it is the new "in" thing, the project does not ameliorate the woes of commuters who have long been left to fend for themselves as "a result of a near-total absence of public transport in the biggest city of the country". Dilapidated infrastructure, broken roads and ramshackle vehicles continue to cause immense problems. One can also not ignore the traffic chaos in the city as main road corridors and arteries remain gridlocked for hours at a time.
- Amid all these wicked problems, a fleet of 100 electric buses might not even make a dent in front of the raging army of 3.6 million registered vehicles of Karachi. [While the project may be a first step, what we need is a giant leap](#). The aim should be to replace all diesel buses with electric ones. The government can also invest heavily in solar buses as another suitable alternative. This will help save money which can be reinvested where it matters the most. Officials need to restructure and rebuild the transport system from the ground up in order for such initiatives to bear fruit.
- **Miyawaki forests** are popping up but there's no nationwide strategy of integrating urban forestation in the larger urban planning. This isolated focus means projects remain in limbo and ultimately crash. Projects are concluding points in an organic development web, preceded by a long-term vision, strategy, targets, enabled human resources and technical and financial architecture. For us, the 'project' is the beginning and the end.
- [Brick kiln owners in Punjab have done a commendable job by adopting the zig-zag technology at old-style hazardous kilns](#). The healthy effects of zig-zag technology are showing up in a variety of ways. One significant impact of it is on the environment, as it has helped preserve and increase biodiversity over a wide area. Butterflies, fireflies and dragonflies that were fast vanishing due to the thick smoke produced by the obsolete brick kilns are no longer threatened species. They are thriving in the relatively clean atmosphere. The success of modern technology at brick kilns should encourage other industries to adopt similar environment-friendly measures. The increasing use of modern technology will also contribute to mitigating the perilous impacts of climate change — the greatest danger that mankind faces. Like certain inalienable rights of man, nature too has its rights.

- the **Punjab government** [has decided to run all Basic Health Units on solar energy](#). At a signing ceremony in Lahore, the provincial government's health minister, Dr Yasmin Rashid, told reporters that BHUs in Sargodha, Jhelum and Mandi Bahauddin would be converted to solar to eventually be followed up by all other BHUs around the province.
- PRIME MINISTER Imran Khan has set the direction of Pakistan's pathway to decarbonising the country's economy. In his speech in December 2021 at the UN hosted Climate Ambition Summit, he declared that Pakistan will generate 60pc of its energy from renewable sources, ensure that 30pc of new vehicles will be electric vehicles and that Pakistan will no longer pursue coal power plants. These broad pronouncements can guide the country's roadmap for decarbonisation.
- The argument for decarbonisation is driven by the learning that higher economic growth rate can be achieved without proportionately increasing carbon emissions. In fact, the opposite has been witnessed in several countries: reducing carbon emissions accelerates economic growth, attracts private sector investments, promotes startups and entrepreneurs, and creates new jobs, particularly in the small and medium enterprises. The number of jobs created by renewable energy in China and India is mind-boggling and there is no reason to think that it cannot create green jobs in Pakistan as well. Post Covid-19 stimulus packages around the world are being designed to make recovery climate-smart and inclusive in order to ensure just transition.
- It's time to decide how the subsidies lavished on the fossil fuel industry can be shifted to renewable energy for a level-playing field and to spur a new climate economy.
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- China has made impressive gains in building up its electricity grid to use more renewable energy. [Electric buses are evidently becoming the norm in many Chinese cities](#). However, China needs to increase its commitment to use renewable energy in the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), including its flagship **China-Pakistan Energy Corridor (CPEC)** initiative. Reportage of a couple of coal powered CPEC projects being shelved, and the development of the **HydroChina Dawood Wind Power project** near Karachi, are good signs.
- **Sequestering** GHGs curtails the pace of the climate crisis. For ease of understanding, sequestration can be termed as the process of cleaning the GHGs such as carbon dioxide, methane and nitrous oxide emitted in the last 200 years.
- Of the total global carbon dioxide emission, Pakistan accounts for only 0.65%. [Its biodiversity on land and sea is a crucial source of carbon sequestration](#). The 4.5 million hectares of forest area of Pakistan is an important source of cleaning carbon dioxide along with the peatlands and marshy areas. Mangroves, seaweeds, seagrass and salt marshes sequester more carbon than terrestrial forests and the carbon stored through these sea-based ecosystems is known as blue carbon.
- In addition to the above natural sources of carbon storage, Imran Khan has added an impetus against climate change. His vision yielded the **Billion Tree Tsunami Program** in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (K-P) that has attracted acclamation from the **World Economic Forum (WEF)** and the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), the NGO in charge of administering the Bonn Challenge, described it as "a true conservation success story."
- After taking over as prime minister in 2018, Imran Khan amplified his vision towards the **10 Billion Tree Tsunami Program, Clean Green Cities Index, National Electric Vehicle Policy** and others.
- A mature tree cleans nearly 22 kilograms of carbon annually from the atmosphere. This figure would jump to almost 220 million tonnes after the completion of 10 Billion Tree Tsunami Program.
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Steps to be taken

- Even so, Pakistan needs to further various aspects of climate work such as; [diversification of trees in the tsunami programme](#), [raising awareness in all walks of life](#), [integration of climatic challenges and opportunities with all sectors of economy](#), [building relevant capacities in the government and private sectors](#), [climate adaptation plans that connects national and local levels considering poverty, food security, health, agriculture, livestock, disaster risk reduction and urban planning](#).
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- Wind, solar, and biogas are critical infrastructure required to wean Pakistan off its addiction to fossil fuels. At the moment, they make up 4pc of the country's energy mix. Neither are cheap, but prices are falling, and they help meet the country's goal of using 60pc clean energy by 2030.
- **transportation standards** have to be taken up from Euro 2 to Euro 6 as in other countries, and taxes could be considered as in The Netherlands that has a 68pc tax on unleaded petrol. Also, municipalities have imposed restrictions on certain vehicles to stimulate alternative forms of transport as Paris has, creating incentives and making it safer for travel over short distances.
- [Our climate challenge is an energy challenge](#). But solving our energy challenge requires action that goes well beyond power generation. Our energy challenge is also an energy demand problem. Achieving our collective climate ambitions requires rapid and deep transitions in each of the sectors that contribute to global energy demand, including not only power, but also transport, manufacturing, steel, and chemicals. Getting these transitions on track at the required pace implies the complete transformation of our energy infrastructure. To that end, three priorities in particular will be crucial.
- First, [we need to accelerate the pace of innovation](#). Recent analysis by the **International Energy Agency** shows that nearly half of the emission reductions needed to reach net zero by 2050 may have to come from technologies that aren't yet on the market.
- The second priority is [closer collaboration between government and industry](#). The private sector is an unparalleled engine of change. It's where the lion's share of inventors, entrepreneurs, and investors are, and their contributions will be crucial if the world is to devise and deploy green technologies at the rate required. At the same time, government action is essential to unleash the full power of business. Left to their own devices, markets won't bring about the rapid transformation of our global energy system that we need. In many sectors, businesses need strong government policy to enable lower-carbon technologies to flourish. They need government to support early innovation in new technologies, create niche markets that allow them to develop, and then implement effective policies that enable their diffusion – sector by sector.
- Lastly, we need [greatly enhanced international coordination](#). Multilateral institutions have a critical role to play in all these areas. The IEA facilitates collaboration on key energy transition technologies.
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- But regional states Bangladesh, China and India, in addition to Saudi Arabia from the Arab world, were invited by Biden. What do they bring to the table that **Pakistan** does not?
- [Bangladesh is presently heading a 48-nation grouping called the Climate Vulnerability Forum](#). Put together, they have a population of 1.2 billion and contribute 5pc of global CO2 emissions. Since

CVF involves some of the most vulnerable countries, they have taken a position to stabilise global temperature rise at 1.5C and each member is committed to net-zero emissions economies before mid-century. No wonder they wield tremendous moral authority and enjoy support for many pioneering initiatives. And, this has been CVF's biggest weapon in global climate negotiations.

- [China and India are the world's highest and third highest carbon emitters respectively](#). Both countries have taken impressive strides in wind and solar energy, and have become the largest producers and users of these technologies. But both China and India are still addicted to coal power and wish to buy more time to phase out the fuel. China continues to be the biggest financier and user of fossil fuels as well as RE. [Any international process must engage both countries for a global consensus on the roadmap](#). Climate action has not become a mainstream domestic political agenda in India, unlike as in the US. China is presently leading in several technologies particularly EVs, energy storage, domestic carbon trading and carbon bonds, in addition to ecosystem-based approaches for carbon sequestration.
- The American effort is to regain some of the space it has lost by augmenting trade with India, particularly as the latter aspires to become a trade and investment destination and seeks \$170bn every year for its climate targets up to 2030. The three countries will have plenty to share and demand from each other in trade, technology and investments without always pointing fingers at one another. US climate envoy John Kerry's recent visits to China and India have already defined the contours of their future climate relations.
- **Saudi Arabia**, on the other hand, has obstructed, even blocked, international climate negotiations for decades to protect the interests of the fossil fuel industry. By inviting Saudi Arabia, the administration has taken the fault lines of American domestic politics to the Middle East. A transition to RE will deeply cut the world demand for fossil fuels and therefore it becomes imperative to engage with the oil-producing world. The administration is taking the battle for American interest groups to the heart of the Middle East. While the tectonic plates have shifted elsewhere, the agenda with Pakistan continues to centre on cleaning up the mess created by 9/11.
- [Pakistan will need to take three specific actions to draw greater attention](#).
- **First**, fill the ambition gap: Pakistan needs to align with global forces that seek rapid climate actions. Pakistan should therefore formally support 1) global temperature stabilising at 1.5C and not at 2C, 2) carbon neutrality by mid-century and near zero-emissions by 2030, and 3) phasing out coal power plants. A clear decision is essential, as is its communication of this national ambition to the world through Nationally Determined Contributions and the National Climate Change Policy, both presently under revision.
- **Second**, fill the credibility gap: Pakistan's announcements need to be fully credible, backed by roadmaps and measured actions. Fantastic declarations will lack in credibility unless supported by financial allocations and verifiable periodic reporting and disclosures. Historically, Pakistan's performance and data gaps have been bigger challenges to credibility than its research and scientific capacity gaps. Given frequent errors in our data and reporting, deliberate or otherwise, third-party validation will help overcome the perception gap. Elimination of lingering doubts will help lessen suspicions and unnecessary international isolation.
- **Third**, demonstrate clarity of purpose. For the world to engage with Pakistan in the global climate arena, Pakistan will need to show commitment to climate-smart development planning that i) leads to de-carbonisation of the economy and increasing competitiveness through RE and affordable energy, ii) integrates resilience across physical and human capital, and iii) strengthens

macro-fiscal sustainability to protect against climate-induced shocks that might affect the economy. There is no better recipe for Pakistan to be part of the international climate change discourse than to have its own success stories, emerging from these actions, which it can share with the world.

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- [PAKISTAN has pledged to the world that it will drastically reduce its reliance on fossil fuels by shifting to cleaner energy sources and encouraging electric vehicles.](#) The SAPM on climate change assured the international community during a US-hosted virtual conference that [the country will shift to 60pc clean energy and convert 30pc of its overall vehicular fleet to electricity by 2030.](#) That is a tall order given that renewable sources, barring hydropower, constitute only a fraction of the nation's overall energy mix, and issues such as infrastructural impediments, higher upfront costs and range anxiety are likely to keep consumers from shifting to electric vehicles for many years. Besides, the government is yet to fully align its climate change goals with its power and automotive strategies even though it has separately drawn up EV and alternative energy policies. For example, the long-term plan prepared by the NTDC last year totally ignored the renewable energy option in favour of dirty fossil fuels without taking into account the cost of their impact on the environment.
- Countries like Pakistan, which are affected the most by the changing climate, need to go beyond measures aimed at slowing down environmental degradation and promote policies that target the reversal of damage already done. One of those measures would include helping farmers switch to modern irrigation and seed technologies for conserving depleting water resources for the future. In fact, unless the government formulates an umbrella policy that covers all sectors of the economy and all segments of the population, it will not be able to win the climate war. The execution of different policies in silos will not work or produce the desired results.
- [The ambitious targets spelled out at the conference will have no hope of being met without a comprehensive effort.](#) There's no doubt that developing countries are also looking towards major economies responsible for global warming for financial assistance to tackle the problem. But they cannot sit still, waiting for the promised help to arrive. It is time they joined the race.
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Questions

- discuss evolution of climate issue in UN and its recent update.
- Explain Europe's green deal and idea of global green deal.
- How can China help in fighting climate change?
- Discuss roles of diff US presidents regarding global warming, namely Carter, Raegan, Bush, Obama, Trump and Biden.
- What are climate change's geopolitical effects especially elaborate arctic tussle?
- How CC affects education? Mention some of the environmental effects of CC.
- Major causes behind CC? fossil fuel industry or human routine?
- Give reason behind insufficient climate action until now?
- What is the concept of carbon taxes? Compare Thunberg and Gates methods to fight CC.

- Biden's climate summit agenda and outcomes? Why wasn't Pak invited to summit? Role citizens can play? Language of tragedy? Other solutions?
- How can CC fuel political instability in Pak? timber mafia and Pak's actions against them. Food insecurity and water scarcity issues.
- Elaborate steps taken by Pak in combating CC like Sindh's electrical buses initiative, Punjab's health sector innovations, PM's schemes like billion tree tsunami, Miyawaki forests, brick kilns, CPEC projects, etc.
- What steps Pak must take further? Improving transportation standards, energy challenge, economy challenge, etc.

Capitalism

- As the Nobel laureate economist Joseph E. Stiglitz has argued, the rules of the game are designed to strengthen the position of those already at the top of the development ladder, while holding back the less advantaged.
- Those rules have benefited creditors over debtors, and fuelled speculation rather than productive investment. Intellectual property rights and other restrictive business practices have increased the market power of large international firms, including the tech giants, over smaller suppliers and consumers, thereby undermining innovation.
- The rules of the game have also enabled large firms to hide their profits in tax havens, instead of paying their fair share or pursuing employment-generating investment. And the effect on government revenues has weakened the state's capacity to supply public goods, correct market failures, and even to meet the immediate needs of citizens during a crisis.
- Perhaps most insidious of all, the growing realization that the game is rigged has eroded public confidence in institutions, fueled political fragmentation and social discontent, and spurred deepening mistrust among countries. From vaccine skepticism to lack of international coordination, the COVID-19 crisis reflects the consequences of these trends.
- Swiss bank UBS reported that at the height of Covid-19, from April to July 2020, the world's richest saw their wealth climb by 27 per cent to \$10.2tr.
- the World Bank's estimates show that for the first time since 1998, extreme poverty is set to rise with 115 million more people falling into that category.
- the wealth of the 400 richest Americans increased from \$1.27 trillion in 2009 to \$3.2tr in 2020 (Jeff Bezos, Zuckerberg)
- Historically, pandemics have proven to be 'great levellers', ie they've lowered the gap in terms of rich and poor wealth. For example, the bubonic plague (Black Death) that ravaged Europe in the Middle Ages led to lower income inequality.
- Commercial capitalism to financial capitalism
- it took the fall of empires like Rome to set off wide-scale economic repercussions. In the 21st century, it took the fall of only two firms (Bear Stearns and Lehman Brothers) in a corner of New York to set off a cataclysmic event
- make the economic growth process 'inclusive'. For Pak, the state needs to revisit its role in terms of regulating economic activity which usually results in creating (and sustaining) cartels (like the sugar cartel, benefiting from state subsidies)
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Interpreting Iqbal's vision for pak

- Imperialists first destroy the uniqueness of their subservient countries and regions
- Then they robbed them of religion, language cultural traditions
- First supporter of composite Indian nationalism; later muslim nationalism and carved out his views on Islamic universalism

Gilgit

- Sar Zameen e Bai Aayeen (land without constitution)
- GB order 2018 annulled by supreme appellate court; challenged in supreme court of pak
- SCP restored GB order and showed its jurisdiction extends to gb as well
- Gb order empowered gbla by transferring imp subjects of legislation including tourism minerals and hydropowers from GB council (non-selected members)
- On Mar 9th 2021, the GB Assembly passed a unanimous resolution, supported by all parties in the house, demanding an amendment to the Constitution to enable GB to become a provisional province of Pakistan, without prejudice to the Kashmir dispute. It also called for representation of the region in the Senate and National Assembly

Pakistan foreign policy

- <https://www.dawn.com/news/1629274/not-by-words-alone>
- Pakistan pursued a proactive policy and Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi led these efforts from the front by travelling to the UN headquarters in New York to galvanise diplomatic efforts in favour of the Palestinian cause. Implementation of UN [resolution] for establishment of independent and contiguous Palestinian State, with Al-Quds Sharif as its capital [is] imperative.” FM said; deep pockets interview cnn
- We have talked of Pakistan being on the crossroads connecting Russia and Central Asia, the Middle East and South and South East Asia. But so far, we have failed to realise and sustain that vision due to the chaotic conditions in Afghanistan and inimical relations with India.
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- Pakistan reviews the regional matrix while attempting to realign its strategic focus with the demands of geo-economics. There is fresh impetus to lower the tensions with India, reappraise the bond with Saudi Arabia, recalibrate relations with Iran and rebalance the equation with China and the United States. It is an ambitious agenda by all measures and it is rooted in a calculus, officials say, to adjust to, and take advantage of, new dynamics shaping up in the region and beyond.
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- First US ambassador to Pakistan Paul Alling asked Jinnah about India-Pakistan relations he wished to see. “An association similar to that between the US and Canada,” said Jinnah
- Praetorianism means excessive or abusive political influence of the Armed Forces in a country. The word comes from the Roman Praetorian Guard, who became increasingly influential in the appointment of Roman emperors.

- Quaid emphasized about good relations with Britain, India and other countries, demanded non-intervention from others and respected sovereignty of other states.
- ML under Quaid supported Allies in WW2 and praised US as a beacon of light for nations like ours striving for independence and freedom from foreign rule.
- Regarding US-Soviet blocs Liaquat said the state started 'without any narrow and special commitments and without any prejudices in the international sphere.'
- Quaid said many times that Pak stands with UN Charter, bitter memories of past did not cloud his vision. 'Peace within and peace without' was his political mantra regarding relations with neighbouring countries and world at large. Jinnah said that Indian govt should shed its superiority complex and deal with Pak on an equal footing and together fight against any outside aggression.
- Despite Kabul's challenge to the boundary agreement, it had signed with British govt in 1893, Quaid hoped secure and friendly relations. Iran was first to recognize, Quaid was admirer of Ataturk.
- Policy of isolation is inimical to the interests of particularly middle and small powers, so Pak couldn't pursue it. After independence Quaid showed that he wasn't the head of a political party anymore he was the head of a state where all citizens were to be treated equally regardless of their religion caste, etc. Principle of equality on the basis of Misaq-e-Madina; UNDHR which was adopted in 1948 anticipated Jinnah's vision of human rights.
- The transition from checkered past to a beckoning future could not be achieved by Pakistan alone. Agreement on the division of the assets and liabilities of British India provided for a 17.5% share for Pakistan but India stalled implementation. the transfer of cash balances amounting to rupees 750 million was delayed for months causing severe difficulties for Pakistan.
- of the other assets, India dishonestly retained much of Pakistan's share what mattered to them above all else was to cripple and thwart the establishment of Pakistan as a viable independent state. Demarcation of boundaries in Punjab and Bengal was interested to the boundary Commission headed by Cyril Radcliffe, a British jurist. Its mandate required it to do so on the basis of ascertaining the contiguous majority areas of Muslims and non-Muslims. While it could also take into account quote other factors unquote it was expected to be just impartial. But Radcliffe yielded to Governor General Mountbatten's pressure and awarded several Muslim majority areas to India including two subdivisions of Gurdaspur district, providing its access to the state of Jammu and Kashmir. Jinnah called the award unjust and incomprehensible. Mountbatten was indebted to Nehru for retaining him as Governor General of independent. Apart from providing india with a road link to kashmir via jammu, the unjust boundary award, announced on 17 august comma three days after pakistan's independence, added fuel to the raging fire of communal warrants.
- Kamal Ataturk's heroic role in defending the Turkish Homeland inspired the Muslim people in South Asia. Jinnah called him the greatest Muslim in the modern Islamic world. Muslim community was also distressed with the injustice perpetrated on the people of Palestine. Addressing a meeting in Mumbai in 1945 Jinnah said I have no enmity against the Jews but why should the Arabs be dumped with such a large number of Jews? As Governor General of Pakistan, he sent a cable to President Truman in December 1947 conveying pakistan's shock at the UN general assembly's decision to partition Palestine. Pakistan also supported just causes of Muslim nations, it was a top priority objective of pakistan's foreign policy. Pakistan raised its voice in support of independence of Indonesia Libya Morocco Sudan Tunisia and other former colonies, spokesmen of some of these nations were given Pakistani passports to travel internationally to

solicit the world community's support for their freedom struggle. Pakistan's policy towards the Muslim world was motivated by an earnest desire for close cooperation in all fields in order to strengthen mutual security. Pakistan developed close relations with most Muslim countries especially Iran and Turkey.

- The Shehensha was the first head of state to visit Pakistan, Turkey aware of the history of support by South Asian Muslims and their admiration for Kamal ataturk responded with cordiality, Saudi Arabia, the cradle of Islam, wished the new Muslim state great prosperity and progress.
- the start was promising, Pakistan hosted a number of conferences of representatives of Muslim peoples to deliberate on issues of common concerns. differences in policies emerged with the rise of Arab nationalism that emphasized the Arab bond virtually to the exclusion of known Arab Muslim states. while Egypt lead towards the Soviet Union for support against the UK and USA Pakistan security imperatives drove it to lines with those power. The Baghdad pact provoked strong Arab denunciation on the additional ground that iraq's membership was divisive of Arab unity. pakistan's role at the first London conference on the Suez crisis further antagonized Arab sentiment against Pakistan.
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- Steer Towards indo-pacific CARS
- Asean sectoral dialogue partner -> become full dialogue partner; vision east asia
- Enhance economic development, inter-regional connectivity, diplomatic and militarily heft globally.
- India is winning in middle east counter it asap
- ON Oct 29, 2020, Prime Minister Imran Khan wrote an open letter to the leaders of Muslim-majority countries. He asked them to "act collectively" to tackle the "rising tide of Islamophobia and attacks".
- Among the major developments of the trip were agreements to enhance bilateral trade and investment, increase cooperation in science and technology, and promote tourism and cultural exchanges. Imran also invited Sri Lanka to see what it could gain by through the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor and the wider Chinese Belt and Road Initiative, noting that this would open several Central Asian markets to the island nation. Imran also noted that Pakistan is home to several important Buddhist sites, which would be of great interest to the people of Sri Lanka, which is a Buddhist-majority country.
- On the business-to-business side, PM Imran proposes establishing trade links between the two countries on the pattern of EU members. Regardless, Sri Lanka remains a large potential market for several Pakistani goods, and could be an alternative import source. Interestingly, potential defence cooperation was underplayed. Imran reportedly offered Sri Lanka a line of credit for defence purchases, countering a similar offer from India. This, combined with the offer to benefit from CPEC, has not gone down well in New Delhi, which reportedly pressured allies in the Sri Lankan parliament to keep Imran from delivering an address there.
- SRI LANKA has in a welcome move reversed its order that mandated all those dying of Covid-19 be cremated.
- In the recent past, there were mainly four foreign policy objectives of Pakistan with respect to strategic vision in regional and global scenarios. First, to safeguard the security of the country while ensuring the protection of national interests of Pakistan. The political and military strategy would be incorporated to eliminate violence, extremism and intolerance from Pakistani society

and a policy of non-interference in the matters of other states would be followed. Second, important objectives were outlined as the economic and sustainable development of Pakistan. Third, stemming from the previous two core objectives, it was to strive for a peaceful external environment in the neighborhood to proceed vigorously for core national interests. Fourth, to focus on a balancing approach through the incorporation of geostrategic, geoeconomics, and geopolitics approaches to transform Pakistan's geographical position from a liability to an asset while becoming an active part of transport, trade and energy corridors towards China, Central Asia, and West Asia.

- The strategic vision of policymakers since 2014 onwards focuses on measures to operationalize the China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). Furthermore, it was pronounced that Pakistan was no more interested to apply the flawed ideas like 'Strategic Depth' in Afghanistan while replacing it by 'Reaching out Afghanistan', which was primarily comprised of the policy of 'mutual respect of sovereignty and territorial integrity' and with no particular favourite picks.
- the reorientation of Pakistan-US mutual interests. The strategic vision also focused to revive the approach of global and regional cooperation by improving its connections with Muslim countries especially Saudi Arab, Turkey and Iran including regional organizations, such as SAARC, OIC, and ECO while on global perspective potential ties with the EU are focused.
- PM Imran Khan's decision of not visiting Malaysia and staying out of the Kuala Lumpur Summit. 'Diplomatic Subservience' which limits Pakistan's ability to freely join alliances and blocs as per its strategic interests.
- Pakistan's geographic locale in South Asia primarily characterized by its traditional animosity with India, while dealing with several other shadow enemies. India unlike Pakistan followed a nonalignment approach to establish its foreign policy paradigm; however, it enjoyed its treaty of friendship with the Soviet Union and got diplomatic and economic support without officially joining any alliance or communist bloc for years.
- Indian foreign policy vision was extended to its desirable global role from its previous assertion of regional ascendancy where another direct war with Pakistan was not at all an option due to two reasons. Firstly, Indian policymakers discarded the notion of viewing Pakistan as a competitor and a direct threat as its inability to match Indian economic growth and strategic relevance in the multi-polar world order. Secondly, due to Pakistan's defensive power through the second-strike capability since 1998, any direct war or military conflict is not in favor of Indian global hegemonic designs. This led Indian policymakers to incorporate a major shift in their policy orientation towards Pakistan where isolating Pakistan, regionally and globally, became an apparent theme to restrain Pakistan's choices to be a key part of any potential strategic planning contrasting to Indian interests. Various studies explicated that after the end of the Cold War, there was a significant shift in US strategic thought with a special focus on Asia while starting to view India as a natural partner.
- India largely pursued deterrence by denial strategy. Shivshankar Menon, who served as Foreign Secretary of India from 2006-2009, expounded that choice of restraint in response to Mumbai attacks was based on strategic calculations that more was to be gained by not attacking Pakistan rather than attacking it. India primarily focused on gradually isolating Pakistan by getting exceptional support from the international community especially from Saudi Arab, Gulf Countries, and China for her restrained reaction and obtained counterterrorism cooperation against Lashkar-e-Tayyaba.

- Pakistani decisionmakers largely remained focused on the peripheral and conventional threats while overlooking the soft power of India as its economic and cultural influences became key dynamics of her foreign policy approach of isolating Pakistan. The 2008-terrorist attacks in Mumbai commenced the process of diplomatic isolation of Pakistan as except China other four permanent members of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) agreed to vote to ban Jamaat-ud-Dawa.
- India as Co-Chair of the joint group of FATF and Asia Pacific Group (APG) tabled a resolution against Pakistan in June 2019 to put her in the blacklist of FATF, however, China, Turkey, and Malaysia opposed the move.
- Joint press conf FM and ISPR representative presented dossier underlining wicked role of India; Celebratory event at Indian Consulate Jalalabad after APS attack; Anti-CPEC terror cell with budget \$500m working under Modi supervision; Jamaat-ul-Ahrar, ttp, bla (proxies of India); Pak's foreign secretary briefed permanent members of UNSC about the dossier; India plans to upscale terrorist activities In Pak; India violates several unsc resolutions particularly 1373 which combats the financing of terrorism
- Pakistan did not send its troops in the war in Yemen (2015). Although the later developments, such as Pakistan's participation in the North Thunder exercises conducted in the northern part of Saudi Arabia (2016) and appointment of former Pakistan's Military Chief, General Raheel Sharif, as Commander of Islamic Military Alliance indicated the normalization between the two states. PM Imran Khan followed the policy of Saudi Arabia First. a job market for almost 1.9 million Pakistanis, close associate of US, religious association.
- Pakistan's support for a friendly regime in Afghanistan and indigenous movement in Indian occupied Kashmir brought several challenges including militancy, terrorist attacks, the proliferation of drug networks, and an unchecked influx of refugees to Pakistan. It brought severe domestic consequences ranging from terrorist attacks, worsened law and order situation and deteriorating socio-economic conditions. The 'Reaching Out' policy of Pakistan should be exclusively focused on economic and trade-based measures between the two countries as this economic strategy can effectively counter the increasing Indian influence on Afghanistan. However, this policy requires enhanced interaction between civilian stakeholders of both countries to expand cultural and educational cooperation rather than confining Afghan policy as a matter of security. initiate joint economic ventures with Afghanistan to connect South Asia with the Central Asian region and preferential trade and transit agreements. Pakistan also needs to furnish its economic ties with Afghanistan to deal with its potential energy security rivalry in Central Asia with India. Pakistan needs vigorous efforts through diplomacy to realize Afghan leadership about the unparalleled possibilities and opportunities of trade and transit for Afghanistan which Pakistan can foster. India's influence can only be countered by developing close economic interdependence of Afghanistan on Pakistan
- Pakistan needs to straighten up things at home because CPEC could lose its momentum domestically as there is no extensive debate at legislative forums to lead the project to the operational level. delay in the operationalization of CPEC projects is limiting Pakistan's economic and strategic options whereas Indian efforts of internationally isolating Pakistan are in full swing.
- CPEC is not just about Pakistan and China as in the case of development of Gwadar Port, it will include various regions, such as the Persian Gulf, Central Asia, UAE, and East Africa, etc., while

stretching almost 70 states which can provide potentially more international partners to Pakistan by enhancing economic interdependence.

- Public-private partnership should be promoted; Put an end to politicization of institutions; Adopt a comprehensive approach i.e., retool institutions, revitalize political maturity to fortify remarkable governance and economic well-being of the state.
- Pakistani policymakers need to rationally review their 'Pro-American' and 'Saudi First' policies.
- prospects of cooperation emerged between Moscow and Islamabad with regard to the new defence market and strategic interests in Afghanistan. However, it is a matter of fact that India-Russia bilateral relations are lacking the warmth which was previously the core of their association. US sanctions on Russia over its policy in Ukraine, search for new energy markets are important for Russia like Pakistan as a potential South Asian partner. In February 2019, Russians announced a potential investment of 14 billion in the energy sector of Pakistan.
- potential involvement of Russia in CPEC and increasing trade as part of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO). It has also been noted that the next potential rivalry between Pakistan and India apart from their traditional animosity in South Asia will be developed on energy security within the context of their geopolitics in the Central Asian Region. However, due to the geographical immediacy to the respective region and sharing similarity of cultural patterns, Russia, China, Turkey and Iran seem comparatively influential players and Pakistan needs to strengthen its ties with these states.
- Over the last few weeks, we've seen a flurry of activity, albeit tentative, indicating that the ice is melting, including murmurs of a potential cricket series between the two arch rivals. The jury is still out on whether Pakistan is being wise or desperate — only time can tell but it's clear that a paradigm shift is taking place. And it predates the current thaw. Opening the Kartarpur corridor after Kashmir's annexation shows Pakistan means business and can take difficult decisions.
- The realisation might not be benign, it may be selfish; the idea that Pakistan cannot grow the defence budget until it grows the economic pie. But the realisation exists. That the status quo doesn't work. Another example is not linking Pakistan's support in the Afghan peace process to the resolution of Kashmir. Yet another example is not loaning out our troops for a war in Yemen. Slowly but surely, our titanic is shifting course away from a straight-line barrelling towards a North Korean style national security state.
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Brexit

- If Britain is to lead in the energy transition, new technologies, and engagement with China, it must overcome several obstacles. Above all, the currently fragmented "Global Britain" agenda needs to reflect much closer cooperation between the public and private sectors, and become clearer about how to track execution and measure success.
- The UK has a strong hand to play. But playing it well will require greater political vision. British leaders should set in motion a grand scheme that creates a long-term legacy – in the spirit of the Manhattan Project during World War II to develop the first nuclear weapons, or the US government's Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency, which enabled the subsequent development of Silicon Valley.
- EU accounted for 51 percent of Britain's import and 43 of its exports in 2019
- Japan accounts for under 2 % of the country's trade (recently signed free trade agreement)

- US (9.9 import and 15.5 exports)
- Biden being Irish American is also against border
- Tariff-free trade
- The Irish border, and Belfast's relations with the rest of the United Kingdom, has been one of the most contentious issues in Brexit negotiations with Brussels. Adherence to The Good Friday Agreement, a seminal document that has largely kept the peace since 1998, has been at risk throughout the long withdrawal period.
- Perhaps the greatest difference on the island of Ireland since the Brexit vote is the role of the Republic. The Irish economy has recovered tremendously from the 2008 financial crisis, and Ireland is a prosperous, fully engaged EU member state that envisions a long future in Europe. The 2020 Irish general election also showed that Irish voters, mainly young voters, are willing to vote in greater numbers for Sinn Fein, the political party long associated with the IRA. Sinn Fein's growth as a cross-border party reflects newer voting blocs amongst the young but also enhanced Irish confidence in their place in Europe, particularly given the UK's relative decline. As such, Irish republicanism is now in favour of a reunification.
- The unionist cause has been reenergized by the **Northern Ireland Protocol (NIP)** and the increase in trade barriers between Belfast and London. For unionists, Sinn Fein appears to be winning the battle for hearts and minds, with demography and political headwinds in their favour. Northern Ireland's Catholic population is growing quickly and is set to match or exceed the Protestant population in the coming years. As such, this new incarnation of the Troubles exists in an uneven playing field, with the UK and unionism weakened, and republicanism on the rise.
- Sinn Fein may win the greatest number of seats in the Northern Ireland Assembly next year, allowing Sinn Fein to take the first minister's position and demote the DUP to second-tier status at Stormont. A Sinn Fein-led government in Northern Ireland would be a key step toward reunification and work to help legitimise the IRA's transition to a non-violent political entity that is disassociated from remaining dissident republicans. Sinn Fein leader Mary Lou McDonald's apology for the IRA's killing of Lord Mountbatten is a prominent example of the party's recent shift towards a more conciliatory approach.
- Despite the near-term consequences in Northern Ireland, Brexit's effect on the UK's disunion may not be fully felt until 2024. In 2024, Northern Ireland will vote on the Northern Ireland Protocol, and a second Scottish independence referendum may occur. The UK has the potential to lose both Belfast and Edinburgh as Brexit's legal frameworks continue to be tested, and the weight of the UK in the world becomes more fully realised.
- Brexit advocates claimed that leaving the EU would enable Britain to "**take back control.**" If that phrase meant anything, it suggested that Parliament would have more say in running our national affairs. In practice, it means nothing of the sort.
- For example, the government recently agreed to a free-trade deal with Australia. Leave aside the fact that the pact's likely economic benefits to the UK over a 15-year period are so small, even by the government's estimates, that they amount to a rounding adjustment. Just as significant is that – despite the government's promises during the passage of the Brexit legislation – Parliament cannot scrutinize, much less mitigate, the deal's impact, which will be particularly harmful for small farmers in Wales and Scotland.
- **Britain can negotiate trade deals on its own, without the EU:** Johnson had hoped to begin with India instead of Aus, and planned to visit the country to discuss a deal with Prime Minister

Narendra Modi, the visit became inadvisable as COVID-19 ravaged South Asia. Yet, in the hope that it might still go ahead, the British government delayed imposing a travel ban on people coming to the UK from India, despite barring visitors from Bangladesh and Pakistan. There was no plausible public-health rationale for this distinction. In fact, given its COVID-19 figures, arrivals from India arguably should have been prohibited first.

- As many pointed out, the thousands of travellers who arrived in the UK from India during the period when other South Asian visitors were banned must have seeded and spread what is now called the Delta variant of the coronavirus. So, this new surge in the pandemic looks like part of the collateral damage caused by the government's attempt to make the political case for Brexit and trade.

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Historical context

In 1921, the western and southern four-fifths of the island of Ireland seceded from the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland as the Irish Free State (renamed in 1937 as 'Ireland' (Irish: Éire) and 'described' in 1948 as the Republic of Ireland). The north-eastern fifth, renamed Northern Ireland, remained by design part of the United Kingdom and the UK became the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. The 'province' (as Northern Ireland is often known) had suffered sectarian tensions and at times outbreaks of serious violence between Unionists (who wish to remain part of the UK) that trace their origin to the Plantation of Ulster and Nationalists (who seek a united Ireland). The most recent of these, known as 'the Troubles', occurred during the period from the late 1960s to the late 1990s. One of its features was that the Republic of Ireland–United Kingdom border was heavily fortified and militarised. In 1998, the Good Friday or Belfast Agreement brought the conflict to an end and the border was demilitarised. Since both states were members of the European Union at the time and operate a Common Travel Area, there was no other border infrastructure.

NIP: The whole of the UK would leave the EU Customs Union as a single customs territory with Northern Ireland included in any future British trade agreements, but that Northern Ireland would adopt EU Single Market regulations on goods and thus remain an entry point into the EU Customs Union. Doing so would prevent a 'hard border' on the island of Ireland. The protocol also provides the option for the Northern Ireland Assembly to vote after four years on whether to terminate or retain the arrangement.

China Factor

- The UK once out of the EU could start to discuss a free trade agreement and work on making China a far greater factor in its own economic development. One of the emerging problems with this however is the fact that with the Trump administration, and because of the impact of COVID-19 and its origination in the PRC, the global environment towards China became considerably chillier from 2019 onwards, at the precise moment that the reality of Brexit became clearer. This was compounded by rising international unease over the issue of Xinjiang and the evidence of widespread repression of Uyghurs, and the introduction of an invasive National Security Law in Hong Kong, which the UK declared was in violation of the One Country, Two Systems rubric introduced to the city on its restoration to Chinese sovereignty in 1997.
- I am a Sinophile and I believe that we must continue to work with this great and rising power. ~ Boris

- the desire, at least during the Trump administration, for the UK to demonstrate strategic closeness to the US. Huawei, a company with almost totemic significance for American critics of China, had been allowed to operate with a moderate level of freedom in Britain. There had even been consideration of it playing a role in the development of 5G. In 2020, however, the British government issued a clear statement that this was no longer an option, showing its closeness to America. Huawei needed to stop installing equipment from September that year and remove all of the company's existing equipment by 2028. This too attracted fierce criticism from Chinese officials.
- Nigel Farage stated that China should now be a target for action after having dealt with the EU's involvement in British life. the public seem to regard this new partner with a mixture of wariness and distaste, and the dialogue between London and Beijing has seldom before been so intemperate and ill tempered.
- Britain has historically largely been the more powerful partner in this relationship. But in the last two decades, that has dramatically reversed. The change has been so quick that it is clear many people speaking about China in the UK, at least in the political realm, seem not to have readjusted their world view. Their assumption is that for trade, technology and a host of other things, China needs the UK more than the other way around. That is simply not the case anymore.
- EU may have given Britain more scope to speak out on its own on issues around China, but it has also left it far more exposed. As part of the EU, the UK was in a bloc that as a market, technology partner, and investment area did have enough size to matter for China. As the UK, while still significant, it is far less of a priority. China can increasingly easily live without the UK. Lamentable as it is, the evidence shows that absolutely nothing that Britain on its own has said about Hong Kong, an issue it feels it has a particular historic right to speak about, has made any difference to the situation unfolding in the city. Only when the UK works in concert with America, Australia, Canada, or others does it seem to have some weight.
- to look after one's own people is also a moral responsibility. These matter because they have been things that the UK has invested in for many years. It has wanted to see opportunities emerge in the financial services sector and in supplying Chinese middle class, urban living consumers with more goods. Trade delegations from the 1990s onwards, right up to the time of Cameron and May, went to China with this idea in mind. It figured as a key government objective. It even came through in the Brexit campaign as a thing that the UK could finally do, allowing London to become a financial centre for Chinese companies, and getting Chinese investment into infrastructure like the high-speed rail link planned from London to the north of Britain, in ways which had not been so easy while Britain was part of the Union.
- Britain is clearly in a very sharp strategic quandary with China. closer economic ties with a country it is also increasingly at political odds with. The unwritten laws of political economic theory would usually assert that one cannot have optimal trading relations with a partner who one is also opposed to in terms of security, values and geopolitics. For the UK at the moment, the sole comfort is that its quandary is shared by many others. In the Asia Pacific region, and through Europe and Northern America, the square circle that China policy presents remains a constant – trying to balance how to have a large, and often growing, trade and investment relations which delivers clear benefits with a country that is also increasingly seen as a threat in the security arena
- Britain's quandary is made more complicated by the fact that a natural remedy for this predicament would be to work closely with the many other countries sharing its dilemma. There

may be separate issues between these countries causing problems, but China prompts far larger and more urgent issues

Foreign Policy

- The UK's power as a state is difficult to write about in a balanced way. There is a jingoistic element in British media and within the Brexit movement that grossly overstates its power in Europe and beyond. However, in debunking these delusions, many go too far and by any normal measure the UK – even since the loss of its empire – has been an extraordinarily important country: culturally, economically, financially, politically and militarily.
- Since 1945, scholars have analysed the UK's foreign policy based on Churchill's famous paradigm of the three circles: America, Europe and the Commonwealth (Gaskarth, 2014). In recent times, the latter has been reduced to the Anglosphere (the CANZUK idea) or expanded to include all of the world. The question of Britain's foreign policy posture has been framed more critically in the famous quip of former US Secretary of State Dean Acheson, that Britain had lost an empire but had not yet found a role.
- The UK was very useful to the US as a powerful, assertive country in the EU that could be counted on to support its core policies and NATO centrality. Its interest for the US will surely have diminished.
- The Withdrawal Agreement of 2019 placed a trade border within the UK, committed the UK to paying tens of billions of pounds to the EU and placed it in a transition period during which it had to implement all EU law with no representation. This was all in return for the opportunity to negotiate a trade deal. The Trade and Cooperation Agreement of late 2020 avoids tariffs but offers relatively poor market access for the UK (albeit this was mostly the UK government's choice), leaving key future decisions about financial services and data in the hands of the EU. It did not even succeed in the symbolic ("easy win") task of recovering complete control over its fishing territories.
- all the Brexit process "reveals" is that if a country decides to withdraw from an advanced regional integration project without a feasible plan and with positions mainly based on domestic politics and an unrealistic view of its own leverage, it will end up leaving on unfavourable terms and/or economically damaged.
- **where does Brexit leave the UK as a major power?** It now certainly has more options to pursue a different kind of economic policy. It could look for trade agreements with states such as the US, India and China (all tremendously difficult prospects though). On the pro-Brexit side, it could be argued that the UK's swifter COVID-19 vaccination process shows the advantages of not being tied to an EU-wide approach, but the jury is still out on which approach works better. More broadly, it is important to understand that the EU did not really constrain the UK's foreign policy (foreign and security policy is still "intergovernmental" rather than collectively controlled like agriculture and trade), therefore the benefit of leaving the EU is not clear. Even in the Trump era it was noteworthy that the UK kept to the "European" mainstream on issues such as the Iran deal, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and climate change.
- Post-Brexit UK may prove to be a fascinating case study of the usefulness (or not) of the soft power concept. Obviously, the popularity of the Premier League or Sherlock does not translate into any kind of political influence for the British government. The extensive role of UK universities or the prestige of British science may be understood as a kind of long-term influence for the UK as a

whole. Brand Britain on the whole has been gravely damaged by Brexit, which is generally portrayed as an act of vanity and self-harm by the international media. Such reputational damage could be overcome with time.

- The UK's raw capabilities are still impressive. It is a nuclear power with extensive intelligence capabilities and military resources. It is still a permanent member of the UN Security Council. Its economy is one of the largest in the world and its scientific resources are exceptional as is its cultural and educational clout in many respects. Nevertheless, it is not big enough to lead or force other countries to its will via hard economic or military power. A recent paper by Chatham House argues that it should aim to be a global broker rather than a great power.
- protecting liberal democracy; promoting international peace and security; tackling climate change; championing global tax transparency and equitable economic growth.' In this regard, the recent reduction of the UK's aid target (from 0.7 to now 0.5 percent of GDP) sends a terrible message in this year of global crisis.
- The government's interest in the Indo-Pacific is understandable, but it is hard to know how sustainable that is, given the UK's location and the strain on its resources. Generally, doing something for the sake of it is not a good idea and the UK should be wary where efforts to redeem its pride and status could lead it. There are concerns that increased military involvement in the Pacific merely attracts trouble without giving the UK a significant role in shaping US policy in the region (which will be the defining factor).
- The major danger is the internal threat to the UK's integrity posed by a hard Brexit not supported by Scottish or Northern Irish voters. Added to this is the fallout of poor management of the pandemic and how that may exacerbate Brexit tensions. Irish unity is something that has long been accepted in principle as a possibility by British elites, but the loss of Scotland would be a body blow to the UK's great power pretensions and may even put its permanent seat on the UN Security Council in jeopardy.
- Johnson's government recently spelled out how the UK will use its supposed freedom outside the Union in a policy document that attempts to flesh out the concept of "Global Britain" – as if the country had not had global interests and influence for centuries. Johnson's policy paper suggests that the UK is shifting its trade and security focus eastward (Ind, China, Japan). Stronger UK-China trade ties would present Johnson with another hard choice. Will Britain continue to stand with other liberal democracies like the United States, Canada, Australia, and Japan in trying to contain the threat that China poses to its region and the international rule of law? Or will it kowtow whenever President Xi Jinping's regime stamps its feet?

Afghan Peace Process

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/2303315/pakistans-afghan-problem-1>

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/2304865/pakistan-and-growing-security-vacuum-in-afghanistan>

Intro

- Ironically, the **Time magazine** cover in December 2001 blared... "The Last Days of the Taliban". Little did it know... [Afghan Baqi](#), [Kuhzar Baqi](#), [Alhamdo-Lillah](#), [Alhamdo-Lillah](#). [Afghans and their mountains would keep standing, praise to Allah].

- The Mujahideen became freedom fighters in American mainstream media. President Reagan hosted the ferocious looking Mujahideen at the White House and declared them the “moral equivalent” to the founding fathers of the United States.
- The CIA and University of Nebraska printed books on Jihad; teaching Afghan children about the killing of infidels in the name of Jihad, the very ideas the Americans later came to abhor and tried to distance themselves from.
- During a 1985 visit to the UN, one Mujahideen commander named Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, refused to meet with President Reagan. Hekmatyar’s rationale was that he did not want to paint his Jihad as a paid fight, which was the Russian propaganda then. Not being able to get public acknowledgement from a man the Americans paid for dearly, Uncle Sam was furious and convinced that these recalcitrant and stubborn men cannot be trusted. As far as the Americans were concerned, Afghanistan was more acceptable as red (communist) than green (Islamic), argued Adkin and Yousaf. (**The Bear Trap**)
- An article in Washington Post aptly surmised that Washington unsuccessfully tried to ‘reinvent Afghanistan in its own image by imposing a centralised democracy and free-market economy on an ancient, tribal society that was unsuited for either.

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Peace Plan process

- As per the Agreement, Washington is bound to meet certain timelines, including the delisting of Taliban from the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) Sanctions List (R 1267); reduce its troops to 8600 in 135 days, and completely withdraw the US and North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) forces in another 9.5 months. This would be possible if the intra Afghan dialogue makes headway, which is a precondition under the Agreement.
- Their assurance under the Doha Agreement that Afghan soil would not be allowed to be misused by al-Qaeda or Daesh/Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) is a major condition, which they have promised to fulfil.
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- The Afghan government and the Taliban agreed to try to accelerate peace talks, at a meeting in **Moscow** (Extended ‘Troika’ meeting). The US, Russia, China and Pakistan called on Afghanistan’s warring sides to reach an immediate ceasefire. The delegation also called on the Taliban to not to pursue a spring offensive. On the other hand, the Taliban’s deputy leader Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar told the Moscow conference that Afghans “should be left to decide their own fate” and the world should bear in mind Islamic values, independence and Afghanistan’s national interests.
- Western actors must address three interrelated components of power-sharing in Afghanistan to avoid an unstable experience: Power-sharing must include diverse interests which may not presently have a voice at Doha yet credibly risk destabilising an unaccommodating intra-Afghan agreement; it must achieve this **accommodation** through **comprehensiveness**, broaching all consociational dimensions of power-sharing; and it must obligate **commitment** from Western actors, primarily the US, to police compliance with this agreement, without which the risk of disputes and reneging which threaten to spoil peace. Each of these lessons is inseparable and together forms an instructive model derived from the failures of conflict regulation in Iraq, where consociational power-sharing was not joined by accommodation, comprehensiveness, or commitment, and so produced an Iraqi experience characterised by instability.

- **Letter by Antony Blinken to Ghani:** four point strategy; inclusive govt, 90 day reduction in violence, high level talks btw afghan govt and Taliban in turkey, UN sponsored meeting of foreign ministers of iran, pak, china, Russia, india, pak and us. Blinken reprimanded ghani for becoming a spoiler and stressed on understanding the urgency of his tone. India is included to stop it from acting as a spoiler. Moscow has invited a moot on Afg inviting pak, china, iran , afg govt, us and Taliban.
- Taliban posit that delay in the pull-out (9/11 instead of May 1st) was a breach of the Doha agreement and refused to attend Turkey conference.
- Taliban have more to gain from resuming the peace dialogue than abandoning it especially as they would not want to risk losing the international recognition and legitimacy they now have. Release of their prisoners and removal from UN sanctions can only be secured through diplomatic engagement.
- Although correct in its basic strategic decision, the Biden administration nonetheless made a major tactical error: In announcing the new withdrawal timeline just a few days before a planned Istanbul conference on Afghanistan, it undercut peace diplomacy.

Pakistan factor

- **PM KHAN OP-ED in The Washington Post:** Our country has suffered so much from the wars in Afghanistan. More than 70,000 Pakistanis have been killed. While the United States provided \$20 billion in aid, losses to the Pakistani economy have exceeded \$150 billion. Tourism and investment dried up. After joining the U.S. effort, Pakistan was targeted as a collaborator, leading to terrorism against our country from the Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan and other groups. U.S. drone attacks, which I warned against, didn't win the war, but they did create hatred for Americans, swelling the ranks of terrorist groups against both our countries.
- I believe that promoting economic connectivity and regional trade is the key to lasting peace and security in Afghanistan. Further military action is futile. If we share this responsibility, Afghanistan, once synonymous with the "Great Game" and regional rivalries, could instead emerge as a model of regional cooperation.
- if the United States, with the most powerful military machine in history, couldn't win the war from inside Afghanistan after 20 years, how would America do it from bases in our country?
- In an interview with German publication Der Spiegel and reported by Afghanistan's Tolo News, Ghani said The US now plays only a minor role and the question of peace or hostility is now in Pakistani hands. "Pakistan operates an organised system of support for the Taliban." He went on to say that the "Taliban's decision-making bodies like Quetta, Miran shah and Peshawar shuras" are all named after Pakistani cities.
- On May 15, the National Security Adviser of Afghanistan, Hamdullah Mohib, visited the eastern Nangarhar province. In a statement there, Mohib said, "ISI, Pakistan's intelligence agency, is not taking mercy on you [the Taliban]. They neither want you nor will they help you reach power." Addressing the Taliban in the same comments, he said Pakistan was sacrificing them for "its own war".
- This was too much to ignore. Pakistan lodged a strong protest by calling the Afghan ambassador to the Foreign Office and handing over a demarche.

- “I think the country that is going to be most affected frankly is going to be Pakistan because the possibility of unconstrained refugee flows, because of the possibility of new terrorist attacks in Pakistan that could ramp up as a result of this [US troops withdrawal from Pakistan].” US CENTCOM Chief Gen Kenneth F McKenzie
- It is because of these fears that Pakistan has been advocating responsible and orderly withdrawal from Afghanistan. After President Joe Biden’s announcement to pull out all US forces by September 11, Pakistan made it clear that the withdrawal plan must be accompanied by progress in the peace process.
- Why Pakistan is seeking a peace deal is because it is aware of the negative fallout of another cycle of violence in Afghanistan. Last week’s terrorist attack at a five-star hotel in Quetta was a grim reminder that the fight against terrorism is far from over. The banned Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) claimed responsibility, something that should be a cause for concern for Islamabad.
- The attack’s timing was deliberately designed and comes just as Pakistani Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi and Iranian President Hasan Rouhani inaugurated the Pishin-Mashad crossing along the Pakistan-Iran border to enhance trade. Bolstering bilateral and barter trade through this new commercial gateway tremendously benefits the citizens of Balochistan reducing smuggling routes. Establishing trade epicentres along the Pakistan-Iran border seemingly displeased New Delhi which activated Indian sponsored assets.
- The terror attack in Quetta also comes two weeks after the US chargé d’affaires for Pakistan, Angela Aggeler, visited Gwadar to explore Pak-US investment opportunities. That too ruffled many feathers. The Quetta blast demonstrates that it’s not going to be easy for Islamabad to make Balochistan an epicentre of its aspired pivot to “geo-economics”.
- The Quetta blast was strategically timed and calculated coinciding with a high-profile delegation visit involving the Chinese ambassador, Nong Rong.
- The government and the army has stated on a number of occasions that terrorist infrastructure of TTP and its affiliates has been uprooted from Pakistani soil. But these groups found refuge in Afghanistan, exploiting the volatile situation there. Not long ago, Pakistan presented a dossier claiming that TTP and other anti-Pakistan groups were being reunified at the behest of India. This to an extent was corroborated by the UN report issued in February, which confirmed the reunification of several anti-Pakistan groups in Afghanistan in August 2020.
- It is because of this that Pakistan in recent years has laid greater emphasis on border management. The border fencing is part of the contingency plan Pakistan has been working to prevent or at least minimise the negative fallout of the civil war in Afghanistan.
- But there are other areas where Pakistan perhaps needs to put its act together. After the APS terrorist attack, there was a national consensus to root out the scourge of terrorism and extremism. The national consensus resulted in the 20-point National Action Plan (NAP). The plan looked perfect on paper. It not only talked of eradicating terrorist groups through military operations but also to fight extremist ideologies. Madrassa reforms, discouraging hate speech as well as sectarianism were the NAP’s key points.
- a civil war will come whether the Afghan Taliban attend the Istanbul Conference (postponed to May) or not (Read Taliban’s indigenous rivalries). For **Pakistan**, beset with its own problem of religious extremism and knowing that the world will seek a scapegoat for Afghanistan’s civil war, the best course would be to ask the Taliban to leave Pakistan and conduct their negotiations with other Afghan parties from their strongholds in Afghanistan.

- CIA chief in Islamabad; Giving bases to the US to execute its kill or capture operations would help it achieve what the two decades of war could not: shifting the blame to Pakistan. Pakistan would be the bad guy aiding and abetting in the slaughter of people by the advanced killing machines of Uncle Sam. Why should this even be considered, let alone done?
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- We have seen this pendulum swing before. During the 1980s, the Pressler Amendment was legislated but not enforced until the early 1990s after Pakistan's utility was no longer needed after the end of the Cold War. Then came 9/11, following the Pakistan-bashing of the Clintonian years. Bush forced Pakistan into friendship or else it was to be bombed back to stone age. The politically significant year of 2011 had started with the Raymond Davis affair who killed innocent civilians on a busy Lahore road in broad daylight. In May, Osama bin Laden was found and killed in Abbottabad, leaving Pakistanis as well as Americans seething with anger.
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- Then came the Memo Scandal where a despicable Pakistani diplomat, one Husain Haqqani had asked Admiral Mike Mullen to enlist American help in taming the Pakistani military, a dream that has eluded India and many others. Following that was the killing of Pakistani soldiers in what is known as the Salala incident. Later, Trump came and bashed Pakistan by cutting aid, saying that in return for US aid, Pakistan had reciprocated with "nothing but lies and deceit".

Realism or Liberalism

- This pull-out move is a demonstration of the fact that superpowers are driven by realism and not idealism, with vital national interest being the paramount consideration in decision-making. Notions such as democracy, human rights, gender mainstreaming, eradication of poverty and improving governance are secondary. As such maximisation of national interest, security and power are the major determinants in the formulation of a foreign policy. Nation states adjust keeping in view those elements, while dealing with other states and non-state actors.
- The phenomenon of peace in Afghanistan, if analysed from that perspective is neither a surprise nor a concern. The US did not intervene either to bolster the democracy or for better governance. Her own security compulsion and not the Taliban's style of government was the reason for intervention, with an aim to destroy and dismantle the networks of the Al Qaeda, who were striking at her vital national interests. Having achieved that objective, the US reoriented her policy by seeking guarantees from the Taliban to not allow Afghan soil to be used as a launching pad against US interests. The US, in order to preserve her own national interests, is in the process of evolving new arrangements to counter anticipated threats of terrorism from Afghanistan.

Why US left?

- The U.S. primary objective in Afghanistan since 2001 has been to degrade the threat of terrorism against the United States and its allies. That basic goal was accomplished a decade ago: Al-Qaida's capabilities are a fraction of what they used to be. The Islamic State in Khorasan (ISK) continues to operate in Afghanistan, but the Taliban has been fighting ISK assiduously. However, perpetually bad governance in Afghanistan has undermined stability and allowed the Taliban to entrench itself.
- The Biden administration correctly assessed that the threat of terrorism from Afghanistan today is in fact smaller than from various parts of Africa and the Middle East. In Somalia, for example, al-Shabab's territorial and governing power are steadily increasing and the group retains a strong allegiance to al-Qaida.

- Moreover, U.S. veterans of such frustrating unending wars are an important source of right-wing armed recruitment in the United States and the threat to public safety, democracy, and rule of law those groups pose here. By minimizing such U.S. military engagements abroad, the United States is taking a step in addressing this important danger.
- Now, threats from China, an aggressive Russia, North Korea, and Iran — as well as zoonotic pandemics — are more important strategic priorities. Investing in U.S. Special Operation Forces, top leadership attention, and financial resources to counter those threats can deliver far greater strategic benefits than perpetuating the Afghanistan military effort.

Afghan Security Situation

- The report of the Special Inspector for Afghan Reconstruction (SIGAR) says that the Afghan Air Force has no trained personnel for the maintenance of the aircraft it operates and is dependent on the personnel of Resolute Support for this purpose. So, it will be necessary for some trained men from the American contingent to stay back beyond Sept 11 if the air force, the main anti-insurgency tool available to the ANDSF, is to remain operational.
- Officially, there are 2,500 U.S. troops in Afghanistan, although the number fluctuates and is currently about 1,000 more than that. There are also up to an additional 7,000 foreign forces in the coalition there, the majority of them NATO troops. Theoretically, all of them will have to be withdrawn alongside the acknowledged military contingent.
- Pentagon suggested a condition-based drawdown but The president has judged that a conditions-based approach . . . is a recipe for staying in Afghanistan forever.
- terrorists targeted the school in the Dasht-i-Barchi area, a neighbourhood populated by the Shia Hazara community, in 2020 gunmen targeted a maternity ward located in Dasht-i-Barchi, slaughtering over 20 mothers and newborns. (possibly by IS)
- As of now, the Taliban Summer Offensive 2021 is in full swing in more than 25 out of 34 Afghan provinces. The Taliban have captured over 87 districts in all provinces. In Kandahar, Helmand and Paktia provinces and elsewhere, divisions, brigades and regiments of the Afghan National Army (ANA) and some Dostum troops have surrendered along their weapons and equipment. Taslim or surrenders were facilitated under Taliban persuasion or by rural elders. Some Afghan Air Force (AAF) pilots have absconded. And all this is happening while Allied troops are still there.
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Afghans internal stakeholders

- It was the Tajiks who took over Kabul in 2001 and while the Bonn Conference installed Hamid Karzai as president, a great deal of the power in Kabul and elsewhere in the country was with the Tajiks. Today, one can say that Tajiks like Atta Mohammed Noor in Balkh and Ismail Khan in Herat are not only dominant in their provinces but have the influence wealth brings throughout the country. In these areas, the Taliban will face fierce resistance. Similarly, the Hazaras will resist the Taliban.
- For the Taliban, the Al Qaeda ideology they have embraced means that they are anti-Shia and this alienates them from the Hazaras (9pc of the population) and Pakhtun Shias (their number could be about another 6pc to 9pc). These are people they will want to subjugate. Elsewhere, what sort of vengeance will they seek against **Rashid Dostum** who killed hundreds of Taliban by packing them in containers and letting them suffocate to death?

- Strategically, after getting assurances from the Taliban that the Afghan soil would not be misused by al-Qaeda/ISIS, the US' objective of bearing major part of Afghan liability would be over. Politically, American drawdown would leave a vacuum in Afghanistan. Financially, the US drawdown would deprive Afghanistan of a major source of economic and military assistance. Washington's financial liability, bringing minimal returns, has convinced the Trump administration that the 'war in Afghanistan is a wasteful effort. The US has also spent USD 86 billion in the past 18 years on propping up the Afghan security infrastructure, 49 apart from sharing substantive burden of the country's civil administration. It spends approximately USD 5-6 billion annually for the upkeep of the Afghan National Defence Security Forces. So far, the Afghan leadership and warlords have been extracting financial benefits without offering much in terms of political stability after the fall of the Taliban. The Afghan officials' 'rent-seeking' approach made it easier for them to dump the blame on Pakistan's door for supporting the Taliban and causing instability in Afghanistan
- Afghan leadership utterly failed to improve the socioeconomic conditions of the country or take any initiative that may have brought stability or rapprochement in the country. In addition, corruption has been rampant with no accountability. The US drawdown would be a nightmare for the present dispensation and rent-seekers in Afghanistan. Afghanistan has been a narco state. After 9/11 opium production almost doubled in the country. According to estimates, Afghan drug lords earn USD 5 billion from opium and heroin smuggling which 'benefits' the who-is-who of Afghanistan, including top government officials, warlords and the Taliban. the future dispensations in the country are likely to bank on narco money to sustain their affairs.
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- The Afghan power elite have been a divided house from the beginning. Alice Wells mentioned the dangers of this development in a Twitter post, 'Afghan leaders must prioritize and protect unity of the nation. Parallel Afghan governments are not the answer, and will be harmful to the Afghan people. The impasse over governance must end.' The US envoy for Afghan peace Zalmay Khalilzad also issued a statement saying, 'it is time for Afghans to compromise and put their differences aside to resolve the political crisis resulting from elections and dual inaugurations.' The issue of parallel government resulted in the obstruction of forming a stable government and ended up with 'two parallel governments, two presidents, two cabinets, and a division of geography in Afghanistan.' In the end, a functional government is a pre-requisite for the successful operationalisation of the Afghan peace process.
- Despite internal political wrangling, the international community has given de jure recognition to the Ashraf Ghani government, which was evident when the diplomatic corps in Kabul attended the oath-taking ceremony of Mr Ghani. However, his rival, Abdullah Abdullah, has a nuisance value amongst non-Pashtun warlords whose influence in their areas cannot be challenged.
- both face a formidable adversary – the Taliban – who have proven military prowess and possess the capability to overrun both the camps if reconciliation fails.
- Resurgence of the Taliban was 'aided by the strategic mistake made by the US to re-empower former strongmen and warlords, which caused old ethnic and tribal tensions to resurface. The prospects of Afghan peace process are 'full of uncertainty as a consequence of grave disagreement among major ethnic groups in Afghanistan.' The factions of former Northern Alliance have deep mistrust in President Ashraf Ghani and continued hostility with Taliban. Afghan territory is largely controlled by local warlords, who are mostly concerned about keeping their

areas autonomous rather than working under Kabul or any other authority. Since their de-facto autonomy could be affected if reconciliation between Kabul and Taliban is reached, their attitude towards political reconciliation could be halfhearted. Mr Ghani's U-Turn may also suit some in the Pentagon and Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) who insist on US' presence in the country.

- Ostensibly, 'the Taliban are likely to be the major shareholders in the future dispensation or, at least, this is the vibe one is getting from the Taliban's body language.' Simply put, 'other stakeholders will have to live and survive as junior partners. In such a scenario, resumption of fighting between Taliban and other ethnic groups cannot be ruled out. Such a situation would offer fertile ground to external spoilers to jump into the fray. In the worst case scenario, eruption of civil war would have severe consequences for Pakistan, foremost being the influx of fresh refugees in the country.
- The Taliban have also come out of their pre-9/11 cocoon when they would avoid meeting foreign dignitaries. Now they are reaching out to the outside world; 'beginning from neighbours - Iran, Pakistan, China and Russia - a qualitative difference in their conduct and world view is discernable if compared to their conduct prior to 9/11.' Even with India, Taliban have expressed the desire to have friendly relations, 'which shows that unlike rigidity of the past, Taliban have learnt lessons in the conduct of pragmatic diplomacy in the region and beyond. However, situation with Taliban is equally challenging as there are hardliners who seek military solution and vie for a clear victory. It is also being argued that the Taliban are changed politically but not ideologically, which is why they would remain inflexible during the intra-Afghan dialogue.

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Ghani's Plan

- The Afghan president used the **Heart of Asia conference** to present his **three-pronged peace plan** as a counter to the US peace initiative which had called for an interim government inclusive of Taliban. The core of his peace plan calls for a "sovereign, democratic, united, neutral and connected Afghanistan" which looks quite ambitious. According to the Reuters news agency, the first phase calls for "a consensus on a political settlement and an internationally monitored ceasefire". Phase two of his peace plan centres on "holding a presidential election and the establishment of a government of peace and implementation of arrangements for moving towards the new political system". The third and final phase calls for "building a constitutional framework, reintegration of refugees and development for Afghanistan moving forward".
- Ghani appears to be holding a peace deal hostage to convince the Americans to stay. It is a big gamble, and Afghanistan could be in for a bloodbath if it doesn't work.
- Ghani has been trying to exploit the prisoner exchange clause of the US-Taliban deal in securing his second tenure. This generates fear that if he continues to play the role of a spoiler, it would plunge the country in another bout of civil war. On the political front, he is cobbling together an alliance of major ethnic groups to face the Taliban on the negotiating table. His announcement of 'a 21-member team to negotiate with the Taliban is a tentative sign of progress for the US-brokered peace deal.' Abdullah Abdullah, while endorsing the composition of the Ghani nominated negotiation team, has agreed to lead it.

Regional impacts

- Regionally, the US withdrawal would be seen with satisfaction especially by Iran, Russia and China as the weakening of America's footprint in Afghanistan would mean less points of friction and more opportunities of access to Afghanistan both for political and economic reasons.

China, US & Russia

- **China** considers Afghanistan an unstable neighbour, which can destabilise its Western region of Xinjiang where Uighur Muslims are already agitating. . It sees American troops in its 'backyard' as a serious strategic threat, but at the same time, it has 'benefited from the security that the US has provided there, especially in terms of curtailing the growth and spread of anti-China terrorist groups. China has maintained its lines of communication with the Taliban. 'Since 2014, Taliban delegations began to publicly and regularly visit China, culminating in secret talks that China facilitated between Kabul and the Taliban in Urumqi. China has made significant investments in Afghanistan, including a US\$ 3 billion copper mining project in Mes Aynak in Logar province, which has stalled because of security concerns.' 24 China would be happy to offer economic incentives to the future Afghan government including a share in the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI)/China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). The extension of China's BRI to Afghanistan could conceivably make a significant contribution to the country's economic progress. Similarly, a railway corridor envisioned in the Afghanistan National Railway Plan (ANRP) would improve the country's regional connectivity and enhance its integration into the BRI. 'China and northern Afghanistan are also linked through the Sino-Afghan Special Railway Transportation Project (SARTP), the proposed Five Nations Railway Corridor, and a possible connection to CPEC. After the US' withdrawal, China may enhance security assistance to the government that may emerge after the success of the intra-Afghan dialogue. However, China would prefer to adopt a regional approach to ensure that Kabul remains secure and stable.
- The **US** approach is founded on creating a strong central government in Kabul and a well-equipped and well-trained national security force; **Russia**, meanwhile, works with a wide range of actors, some of which compete directly with the government in Kabul. The Taliban would be acceptable to the Russians if the former do not allow Central Asian jihadist groups or Chechens to make sanctuaries in Afghanistan. the US withdrawal would mean lesser chances of American meddling in the Central Asian Republics (CARs). Russia has already been accusing the US of resettling ISIS/Daesh from Iraq/Syria to Afghanistan

Iran & KSA

- Iran has been in contact with the Taliban since 2005 when the latter started full swing operations against the American-led coalition. Prima facie, both Iran and the Taliban had reached an understanding that they would not harm each other's interests, and that Taliban would not disturb the Iranian border with Afghanistan. Iran's involvement in Iraq and Syria are diversionary factors for it to stay quiet on Afghanistan, at least for the time being. Iran may have a slightly different stance towards the Taliban due to its close contacts with the Tajiks, Uzbeks and Hazaras dating back to pre-9/11. Iran may use the Shia card with the Hazaras and Persian card with the Tajiks and Uzbeks. Nevertheless, Iran would be satisfied with the US withdrawal as it would save its borders from American interference. Iran shares Russia's view that the US has been facilitating ISIS/Daesh to relocate its fighters in Afghanistan once they came under pressure in Iraq and Syria due to Iranian and Russian operations. In fact, there was a convergence of interests between Iran and Taliban once the latter started their operations against the coalition forces in Afghanistan. Iran sees the Afghan conflict through the lens of the Middle East conflict where it fears that 'Saudi Arabia may use Afghan-based proxies against it. There may be a thinking in Tehran that the Americans, Saudis and Emiratis may jointly advance the project on 'regime change' in Iran, and use 'Afghanistan as a springboard' to foster cross-border subversion against the clergy. 'Tehran

fears that the US objective in Afghanistan is to create a Syria-like situation in the region that will engulf Iran in violence and anarchy.

- Like Iran, Saudi Arabia also sees the Afghanistan conflict through the lens of Middle Eastern conflict. In reality, regional rivalry was a factor for holding the round of US-Taliban talks in Abu Dhabi in place of Doha³³ to enable Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates (UAE), which have strained relations with Qatar, to participate and contribute towards the Afghan peace process. Their financial assistance would be crucial for the future government in Afghanistan.

PAK & IND

- Pakistan's known position has been that peace in Afghanistan is an imperative which should be maintained by the stakeholders. In Murree talks in 2016; the Quadrilateral Coordination Group (QCG); Pakistan-Russia-China Trilateral Meeting; ³⁵ as well as the US and Taliban deal in Doha. Pakistan has done its bit to facilitate dialogue by convincing the Taliban to come to the negotiating table,³⁶ it cannot dictate terms of the compromise to them. Pakistan has been a linchpin for the Americans in the Afghan imbroglio. President Trump,³⁷ after his initial diatribe against Pakistan, realised that the situation in Afghanistan requires a political solution and for that to happen, he will have to soften his attitude towards the Taliban, who have already been in control of half the country and contested another 20 per cent. Pakistan provides easy access to the Afghans which they do not enjoy in the neighbourhood. Tens of thousands straddle Pakistan's border without a visa for business and jobs. Despite irritants with successive Afghan regimes, Pakistan is the food basket of Afghanistan and is its largest trading partner. Third, it provides the shortest and more reliable transit route to the country. Therefore, a symbiotic relationship exists between the two countries which President Karzai used to describe as one being akin to 'Siamese Twins'. For Islamabad, peace is essential in order to ease the two-front situation it faces due to Indian hostilities. The country will suffer the most if war breaks out between the Taliban and other rival factions - hundreds and thousands of Afghans may rush to Pakistan for refuge. For Pakistan, the major achievement would be peace and stability in Afghanistan; return of bulk of Afghan refugees; and resumption of normal business activities between the two countries and Central Asia. This objective can be achieved by playing the role of an honest broker without playing favourites. Pakistan must change its mindset and stop looking at Afghanistan through the Indian prism. Former Foreign Secretary Riaz Mohammad Khan has aptly remarked in his article that 'peace (in Afghanistan) will contain Indian capacity for mischief.'
- India would be the only country in the region to be upset of the US drawdown. India would see Taliban ascension as a setback to its objective of sabotage in Pakistan through Afghan intelligence, the National Directorate of Security (NDS). Also, Indians may lose the leverage on Afghan governmental machinery, including media houses to malign Pakistan. 'India's Afghan policy has largely been Pakistan-centric. From the beginning, Pakistan-Afghan relations hit the rocks when Afghanistan voted against Pakistan's membership in the United Nations (UN). Except for the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, and ascension of the Taliban, the history of Pakistan's relations with its western neighbour has been mired in mistrust, a situation which suited India in keeping Pakistan under pressure. Hindutva ideology, describe Afghans as invaders and show Muslim rulers of India in poor light.' ⁴² Nevertheless, India has cultivated a host of Afghan warlords from different ethnic backgrounds to do its bidding in sabotaging Pakistan-Afghanistan relations as well as facilitating India to carry out its destabilising activities in Pakistan.⁴³ 'Its consulates in Kandahar and Jalalabad are serving as bases for espionage activities. Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) has

been supported by India and NDS. Furthermore, Indian development projects close to Pakistan's borders are meant to recruit operatives to create trouble in its tribal areas. Interestingly, in a tribal society, intelligence work cannot remain a secret for long, which helped Pakistan to bust such networks' 44 operating in its territory. The prime motive for Indian policymakers is to keep Pakistan engaged in Afghanistan to divert its military resources along the Afghan border, while simultaneously using Afghan soil to stir trouble in Balochistan and tribal areas (Jadhav case).

- In an ideal situation, a cooperative relationship between Pakistan, India and Afghanistan could tremendously benefit the entire landmass of South Asia, Central Asia and the Middle East. Unfortunately, mutual suspicions and mistrust have negatively impacted not only the overall security paradigm in the region, but also deprived the people and the region of its economic benefits.

Afterwards

- The anti-Taliban elements in Afghanistan are, in the meantime, said have grouped themselves under the banner of "mujahedin" fully equipped with necessary fire power professing an alliance with Kabul and signaling a clear return to the territory-based warlordism seen in the past during the civil war following withdrawal of the Soviet troops.
- in Takhar province, armed militias have re-emerged under the leadership of Ahmad Massoud, the son of late mujahedin commander Ahmad Shah Massoud, vowing to resist the Taliban post-US withdrawal.
- With Massoud's political office claiming support from people in Takhar, Baghlan, Kunduz and Samangan provinces, the possibility of an ugly war involving not only Afghan security forces but also irregular armed militias is said to have increased manifold.
- Atta Muhammad Nur, a former mujahedin commander known as "The Teacher" for the training he provided to Afghan mujahedin during the Soviet-Afghan war, has also said that his affiliated groups will resist the Taliban and stand by "our system and government".
- For Russia and China, a wider civil war in Afghanistan could mean destabilisation of their Eurasian Economic Union and the BRI projects, respectively. As President Vladimir Putin recently remarked, "The peaceful development of Afghanistan is of key importance for security and stability in Central and South Asia. Russia will continue to assist in forming an economically independent Afghan state, free from terrorism."
- A report published in the New York Times reveals that the US is already engaged in negotiations with Pakistan and some other regional countries for a base for the CIA surveillance operation.
- The Pentagon wants to continue "over-the-horizon" operations to target Islamist extremists in Afghanistan deemed to pose a threat outside of the country. But so far no one in the region has offered the facility.
- The Biden administration, meanwhile, is in talks with Turkish officials over leaving Turkish troops to secure Kabul International Airport. Meanwhile, the Taliban have asked Turkey to leave alongside other NATO nations. The Taliban's refusal to attend Istanbul parleys reflects their deep-seated hostility for Rashid Dostum, the "butcher of Sheberghan", who is frequently hosted and provisioned by Turkey.
- Reuters reports that officials under Nato's authority are seeking Qatar's permission to use a military base to train Afghan special forces. The US, Britain and Turkey are among the Nato countries prepared to send military trainers to Qatar to assist the Afghan forces.

- Prime Minister Imran Khan has made it loud and clear that Pakistan will not allow its territory to be used by the US for any sort of action inside Afghanistan. “Absolutely not” was the PM’s reply when asked during a recent interview. But one thing is sure: the Biden administration is not going to take it lying down? Absolutely not. It is expected to try and use every pressure tactic it can to impose a decision of its choice on Pakistan. See the tools the US has in its political repertoire: the FATF, the IMF, a few of our “friendly” countries, etc. For Pakistan, sustaining the pressure is not going to be easy.
- Previously, under martial law and civilian regimes, Pakistan always allowed its land to be used by Americans as they saw fit in whacking people, such as the Badaber base in Peshawar, Shamsi airbase in Quetta, and so forth. Those tacit agreements made between the US and Pakistan represented three things mainly: one, the harming of Pakistan’s national security; two, the denial of democratic rights of the people of Pakistan; three, defogging America’s hypocrisy in singing songs of democracy but encouraging the undemocratic practices abroad for its selfish interests.
- The US military would like to continue using the ‘Combined Situational Awareness Room’ to coordinate (on WhatsApp) air support for ANA from a yet undetermined location. USAF will likely operate from bases in the Middle East (Qatar/Bahrain/KSA) or from aircraft carrier, USS Eisenhower in the Arabian Sea; significantly reducing ‘loiter time’... as carrier-based jets need frequent midair refueling. Former Soviet republics bordering Afghanistan (Tajikistan, Uzbekistan) are adamant to house US troops, without Moscow’s blessing; and Pakistan has publicly balked at the idea of the reprovision of Shamsi airbase.
- the **EU** can positively contribute to health and agriculture sectors as well as institutional reforms, including rule of law and police training.⁵⁵ The EU has positively contributed to women empowerment programmes, human rights and mother and child health. However, except for the UK (when it was a member of the EU), the EU countries have had clear ‘caveats’ ⁵⁶ concerning their military engagement. They refused to participate in direct combats or military operations; and were mostly deployed on camp duties.
- The question is whether the US would continue to help Afghanistan financially even after withdrawal of troops. If it does, then the prospects of peace brighten up although largely depending on how successful the peace process culminates. In case the US cuts down aid, other countries, preferably neighbours, will have to step forward. China and Russia may be encouraged to monitor the security situation, while other neighbours may help the country financially.
- With slight variation, the ethnic composition of future government in Afghanistan should be the same which was in power after the deposition of the Taliban. The real test for the Taliban would be winning support from various ethnic (Tajik, Uzbek, Hazara and Turkmen) and religious (Hanafi, Shia and Ismaili) groups. Interestingly, the list of 5000 Taliban prisoners in government prisons include all the ethnic and religious groups, which in a way belie the accusations that the Taliban are overwhelmingly Pashtuns. However, there is no denying the fact that Taliban rivals possess formidable power who can push the country into a civil war. A neutral Afghanistan with friendly ties in the neighbourhood can truly become a conduit between South and Central Asia.
- An intra-Afghan consensus for peace, and regional assurances of neutrality would be needed for the success of reconciliation efforts in Afghanistan. All concerned stakeholders, especially Iran, China, Russia and Turkey (for Uzbeks) may hold consultations to ensure that neighbours of Afghanistan are on the same page and discourage spoilers from derailing the withdrawal process or provoking Afghan factions to take up arms again. Demands of other stakeholders should also

be given due importance. Pakistan should also impress upon them to announce a ceasefire during the course of the dialogue process. Reportedly, Taliban are asking the leaders of other ethnic groups to declare their allegiance (Baiyat) to the Amir-ul-Momineen Mullah Haibatullah Akhund. Such an attitude is likely to derail the reconciliation process. The international community, especially the US/EU, should give assurances to the Afghan stakeholders that in the post-US withdrawal period, Afghanistan's essential requirements, including maintenance of its forces would be met. Islamabad may seek Washington's assistance to counsel New Delhi not to derail the peace process, and cease its activities in Afghanistan aimed at destabilising Pakistan. Women's rights in Afghanistan have attracted great interest at the international level and are likely to influence Afghan politics in the future. Taliban's diplomatic success would largely depend on this issue. Therefore, it is important that they show flexibility towards women's rights. Pakistan may seek international cooperation for the repatriation of Afghan refugees, including assistance for their return and creation of conditions inside Afghanistan for their rehabilitation. During the past two decades, the US has failed in its nation-building efforts in Afghanistan. Therefore, the UN's role during post-withdrawal period in Afghanistan for rehabilitation and development work should be sought.

- **If peace process fails** Afghanistan will return to the status quo antebellum. That means, an unencumbered trade in opium; second, expanded space for domestic and foreign jihadists to train to kill 'crusaders;' third, the painstaking reconstitution of Afghan women's rights (human rights in general, actually) achieved over the past twenty years will collapse
- If parties fail to reach a compromise, the country may plunge into civil war, although in the presence of limited US military support, the Taliban may not be able to gain further territory. The regional warlords are likely to become more powerful pushing the country closer to anarchy. India may take advantage of such a situation. Afghanistan may turn into a sanctuary once again for religious extremists affecting the entire region. Pakistan will have to face massive influx of Afghan refugees for which the country's economy is not geared to cope with.
- Swiss option: <https://tribune.com.pk/story/2302882/pursuit-of-a-neutral-afghanistan-the-swiss-way>
- Their strategy seems to be to encircle provincial capitals and seek to choke several key routes to set the stage for the siege of cities later. Nine districts have already been captured. Defections from Afghan forces at the local level are aiding them in this strategy.

Parliament

five features that a modern democratic parliament must possess.

- Socially and politically representative of diverse people and protect all members, especially minorities and other vulnerable elements of society. Although the authors of the article find the existing arrangements in Pakistan adequate, they suggest parliament could be made more inclusive by reserving a small number of seats for farmers, industrial workers, students and people with disabilities;
- Transparent in the conduct of business and open to the media;
- Accessible to the people, including civil society, associations and the youth;
- Accountable (ie its members) to the electorate;
- Effective when it performs its legislative and oversight functions in accordance with the people's needs and aspirations and keeps in mind a proper comprehension of future generation's needs.

Globalisation

- No need of G7; When the G7 countries (Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the United Kingdom, and the United States) began their annual summit meetings in the 1970s, they still dominated the world economy. In 1980, they constituted 51% of world GDP (measured at international prices), whereas the developing countries of Asia accounted for just 8.8%. In 2021, the G7 countries produce a mere 31% of world GDP, while the same Asian countries produce 32.9%.
- The G20, by including China, India, Indonesia, and other large developing countries, represents around 81% of world output, and balances the interests of its high-income and developing economies. It is not perfect, as it leaves out smaller and poorer countries and should add the African Union (AU) as a member, but at least the G20 offers a fruitful format for discussing global topics covering most of the world economy.
- Globalization encourages innovation, or so the conventional wisdom goes. The conventional wisdom is based on a 1991 study by Gene M. Grossman and Elhanan Helpman, which showed that, by creating larger, more integrated markets, globalization bolstered efficiency, encouraged specialization, and strengthened incentives for profit-seeking entrepreneurs to invest in research and development (R&D). The result was an increase in the global rate of innovation.
- Yet recent research on China's global impact indicates that the relationship between globalization and innovation is not so unambiguous. On one hand, Nicholas Bloom and his colleagues find that greater competition from China has contributed to an increase in patents in Europe. On the other hand, David Autor and his colleagues point out that the "China shock" has reduced the innovation rate in the United States.
- Manufacturing is traditionally where most innovation happens. But in rich countries – in particular, the US – manufacturing as a share of output and employment has been declining for decades, as multinational firms have moved labor-intensive production to lower-wage economies, such as China or Eastern European countries. If innovation happens where production takes place, it makes sense that China's rise as a manufacturing powerhouse would be correlated with falling innovation in a country like the US.
- On June 5, the world's leading economies announced an agreement that will bolster their ability to raise taxes on global corporations. The G7 agreement has two planks. First, it proposes a global minimum tax of 15% on the largest corporations. Second, a portion of these corporations' global profits will be clawed back to countries where they do business, regardless of the location of their physical headquarters.
- global corporations have been able to shift profits to pure tax havens such as the British Virgin Islands, the Cayman Islands, or Bermuda, without having to move any of their actual operations there. What is now clear is that countries that operate as pure tax havens – interested merely in shifting paper profits without bringing in new capital – have little to complain about. They have been doing global corporations a great service by facilitating tax avoidance, at considerable costs to other countries treasuries. Global rules are fully justified to prevent such blatant beggar-thy-neighbour action. The G7 agreement is an important step in the right direction.
- **Critique:** many developing countries will decry the global minimum as an unwarranted restriction that will impede their ability to attract investment. Speaking in April, Irish Finance Minister Paschal Donohoe said smaller nations should be allowed to have lower tax rates given that they

don't have the same capacity for scale as the larger economies do, the U.K.'s Guardian newspaper reported.

- These freer movements had two profound consequences: they changed the way products were produced and also the way commerce was organised and conducted. Looking at the cost of producing things, firms split their operations, taking some parts to the places where they could manufacture cheaply.
- The result was the development of global supply chains that were networked to produce final products. Apple became the most cited example of the working of these "split" production lines. The design for the firm's products were made in its headquarters near Seattle in the United States but most of the manufacturing was done in south China. There, a huge Taiwanese-owned company assembled parts and components made in and imported from a number of countries, mostly in East Asia. The final product assembled was flown or shipped to the points of consumption mostly in North America and Western Europe.
- The Economist, called the "story of a man's shirt." These items of male dress were designed by fashion boutiques in Europe and the US and were made from the fabric turned out by factories in Bangladesh. Since Bangladesh did not grow cotton, the fabric was made from the yarn spun in India or Pakistan. Cutting and sewing was done by shirt manufacturers in China. The shirts, once made, were sent to Hong Kong to be packaged and shipped to the US and Europe.
- The way the retailers operated also changed; big retail stores found it expensive to build and operate large warehouses; they began to rely on what came to be called the "just in time system of production and sale." It was more efficient and cheaper to bring in products as they were made rather than store them in expensive space in anticipation of the demand for them.
- Globalisation delivered until the time it couldn't. As a reviewer writing for The New York Times put it, "**yet, as in everything in life, overdoing a good thing can bring danger.**" The most glaring example of failure came in late March when, The Evergreen, a giant container ship, the size of four football fields, got stuck in the Suez Canal, stranding a hundred ships on both ends of the world's most important passageway. According to Bloomberg, the loss in the value of goods held each day was estimated at \$9.6 billion. This became a cause of a major disruption in international business. One-tenth of the world's trade is shipped through the Suez.
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- The world is confronting three great ruptures: the COVID-19 pandemic, the digital revolution, and climate change. Unfortunately, it is confronting them with the nation-state, which is no longer fit for purpose.
- Human beings are creatures of habit. We tend to envisage a future much the same as the past, so we cling to familiar tools, approaches, and perspectives, even as the world changes. But, at this moment of profound social, political, and economic transformation, we must take care not to permit our habits to lead us astray.
- traditional political institutions – first and foremost, the nation-state – are faltering. They have struggled to address the pitfalls of digitization, such as by reining in tech giants. And they have proved ill-equipped to cope with both the pandemic's global scope and its psychological dimension, particularly many people's experience of it as an abstraction.
- the world has clung to its old ways, indulging parochial national rivalries rather than pursuing forward-looking solutions. Nowhere is this more apparent than in the race for vaccine doses.

- Using the nation-state to address the pandemic is tantamount to aiming an antiquated muzzleloader at an F-16. And if the COVID-19 crisis is a modern warplane, climate change is a nuclear missile. By failing to build systems capable of defending against such large-scale threats – including inevitable future pandemics – humanity is jeopardizing its very existence.
- At the June 2021 G7 meeting in Cornwall, US President Joe Biden and UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson signed a New Atlantic Charter to reaffirm their nations' commitment to a rules-based, and democratic international order. The original Atlantic Charter, signed in 1941 by British Prime Minister Winston Churchill and US President Franklin D. Roosevelt, helped pave the way for decades of transatlantic cooperation, as well as a 'special relationship' between the US and the UK. It was forged at a time when Britain was eager for the US to enter World War II, and the signs of a postwar American-led order were on the horizon. Now, the **New Atlantic Charter** signed by Biden and Johnson comes at a time of renewed strain in the international order that both nations helped create and for many years vigorously defended. For the US, the charter is a strong signal from Biden that 'America is back' and ready to resume its role as a guarantor of European security and as a promoter of democratic values. For the UK, the charter elevates its long-standing alliance with the US and confirms the alliance to be unaffected by Britain's departure from the EU and any subsequent disunion within the UK's constituent nations.
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- The first aim of the charter is to ensure that democracies are capable of 'solving the critical challenges of our time', with the important addition of 'starting with our own', a reference to Washington and London. The UK and the US remain strong, representative democracies, however the US is arguably more flawed and fractious in the wake of the Trump presidency and the January 6 insurrection. While Brexit has pitted neighbour against neighbour in the UK and led to increased partisanship, the UK's institutions, the rule of law, and public faith in elections have largely held in a way that has not occurred in the United States. However, the New Atlantic Charter is arguably more significant for Britain than it is for the United States. Now that the UK has officially left the EU and is in the midst of a strategic foreign policy and defence review, the charter allows London to craft new alliances that are guided by the weight of its historical alliance with Washington.
- As the New Atlantic Charter is signed, the transatlantic unity that underpins the original charter is now guided by a pivot to the Indo-Pacific. While Biden remains a true Atlanticist, geostrategically, the Atlantic is less important than it used to be. During World War II, it was a critical area of conflict between the Allies and Germany, and it retained its strategic value throughout the Cold War. Now, the Atlantic is a bridge between the old and established powers in the global order, with the potential for flashpoints that are unlikely to disrupt pre-existing geopolitical trends. It is a safe space strategically and ideologically – and a symbolic bridge that can help promote strength and unity in the Indo-Pacific.
- In crafting the new charter, both Biden and Johnson know that the world around them has changed dramatically, partly at their own making. Yet both men are determined to maintain some shred of the dominance and superiority that brought both of their nations to the height of their global power. In the wake of Brexit and Trump, the New Atlantic Charter serves to ground both nations in a common glory and greatness that is not jingoistic and divisive, but for the benefit of a shared security and prosperity.

Political sustainability

- Country after country has witnessed a rebellion of the left-behind, from Brexit to the election of Donald Trump as US president to the French “yellow vest” protests. Each community has expressed unhappiness in its own way, but the common threads are unmistakable. As Raghuram Rajan has put it, the world has become a “nirvana for the upper middle class” (and of course the wealthy), “where only the children of the successful succeed.” Those left out increasingly end up in the nativist camp, which offers a sense of belonging. This calls into question the political sustainability of globalization.

BRI

- During his official trip to Kazakhstan in 2013, Chinese President Xi Jinping elaborated his notion of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) aimed at reviving the old trade routes connecting China with Asia, Europe and Africa.
- After sharing the idea in 2013, followed by its official launching in 2015, with the release of the BRI blueprint document ‘Vision and Action’.
- no other policy initiative has attracted so much attention at home and abroad than Xi’s ambitious foreign and economic policy plan. In China alone, over a hundred institutes have formed a special BRI think tank alliance and the academic research on this subject has been significantly expanding.
- Some view the rising role of China as an alternate source of financing to build and modernise their infrastructure and accelerate the process of industrialisation. For others, the BRI is a security and geopolitical gambit by which Beijing aims to expand and cement its footprint in diverse regions. They perceive the initiative as an economic colonization of developing countries by China through debt trap.
- Termed as Marshall plan (MP) of China to achieve economic and foreign policy objectives. MP was aimed at rebuilding war-ravaged European economy and infrastructure, but it was also aimed at containing the presumed threat of communism.
- in the case of the Marshall Plan, there were clear foreign policy goals: the containment of communism in Europe and beyond and fostering new strategic partnerships. The second distinctive feature is that there is also a set of various domestic imperatives behind the BRI.
- To reduce domestic disparity and inequality, Beijing has planned to develop several mainland regions and cities across the country to bring them up at par with more developed areas of the country. Beijing intends to utilize Xinjiang’s geographic position as a gateway to ‘deepen communication and cooperation with Central, South and West Asian countries, make it a key transportation, trade, logistics, culture, science and education centre, and a core area’ in the overall BRI.
- To implement the BRI projects, Beijing has come up with various financial instruments and mechanisms. Two prominent are the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) and the Silk Road Fund.
- China has stated that the initiative “is in line with the purposes and principles of the UN Charter” and that Beijing will abide by the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence: mutual respect for each other's sovereignty and territorial integrity, mutual non-aggression, mutual non-interference in each other's internal affairs, equality and mutual benefit, and peaceful coexistence.

- Addressing the 2017 BRI Forum in Beijing, UN Secretary General also lent support to the BRI and how it can catalyse the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. He stated that the BRI has a potential for countries desirous to become more integrated with the global economy and increase their access to markets.
- warmly welcomed by the South Asian countries except India. In terms of population, geography and economic and military might, India has a dominant status in the region. particularly, the smaller states in SA [South Asia] welcome China's interest and engagement, both for the economic benefits and as a counterbalance to India.
- expected that the BRI will bring significant dividends in the form of massive investments in power, transport and telecommunication infrastructure. its investments in infrastructure projects, is fostering interdependence and regional integration that far exceed what has been accomplished as a result of SAARC and other regional groupings.
- India was one of the first countries to join the AIIB and also backed the BRICS-led New Development Bank (NDB). China is also India's largest bilateral trading partner and there have been regular interactions between both states. Both are members of BRICS and SCO. However, border issues still aggravate situation as happened in Doklam in the summer of 2017, which led to a military standoff between both nuclear powers. The summer of 2020 once again experienced a clash between both sides, since 1962 war. Fatalities were reported as the two Asian giants did not show restraint as opposed to their mutual policy in the past. the defeat of India in the 1962 war, China's unwavering economic, military and diplomatic support for Pakistan has also contributed to India's apprehensions vis-à-vis China and its growing role in the South Asian region.
- **India** is deeply sceptic about the BRI and its real motives, particularly its main artery in Pakistan: the China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). Xi's signature and ambitious policy plan and is a collection of numerous projects aimed at building energy and communication infrastructure and developing industrial zones costing over US\$ 60 billion to be invested during the 2015-2030 period. There are two aspects of India's concerns and its rejection of the entire BRI enterprise: one is Pakistan administered Kashmir and the other is Gwadar port and its ultimate objectives.
- Under the CPEC, several communication projects pass via Pakistan's Gilgit-Baltistan region, which India considers part of the disputed territory of Jammu and Kashmir. Consequently, during his state visit to China in June 2015, Indian Premier Narendra Modi termed the project 'unacceptable.' Since the beginning of CPEC, India has taken a stand that the corridor is a breach of its sovereignty and has conveyed this to their Chinese counterparts during bilateral interactions. Although both China and Pakistan have offered India to join the connectivity corridor, the issue of sovereignty vis-à-vis the Kashmir issue hinders any such progress.
- The other dimension of India's apprehension and hence, its resistance to the BRI is the development of the Gwadar port in Pakistan, which will provide China a direct access to the Indian Ocean. Delhi see Gwadar emerging as an important naval base for China in the Indian Ocean." India's concerns are also further heightened because in addition to Gwadar, Kyaukpadaung in Myanmar, Chittagong in Bangladesh, Hambantota in Sri Lanka, Kra Isthmus and Laem Chabang in Thailand, Sihanoukville in Cambodia and various other locations in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR) have been discussed in news reports as being potential areas of influence by China after developing ports, roads, or energy pipelines. Indian security and strategic experts see India's influence in the region to be declining and they are concerned that their country will be encircled by Chinese bases: the so-called string of pearls in various neighbouring states.

- The BRI has come at a time that has led to sharpen the security dilemma between the two Asian financial giants, despite the fact that their overall ties have steadily improved, particularly their bilateral trade has witnessed a huge upward trend in recent years.
- To counter Chinese influence, India has initiated several ventures: both at the economic front as well as at the security front. One such project is the Asia-Africa Growth Corridor (AAGC), in which India and Japan aim to establish a connectivity corridor in response to the BRI. The primary target of AAGC is the Indian Ocean and its various coastal states. India has noticeably fewer political, economic and military resources at its disposal to implement its foreign policy ideas. India has also responded by upgrading and modernizing its military. For instance, India has been continuously increasing its defence spending as it remained the largest arms purchaser from 2008 to 2012, intensified its military co-operation with the island states of Mauritius, the Seychelles, Maldives and Comoros. The country has been vigorously enhancing its nuclear delivery capabilities like Agni V and the superior BrahMos cruise missiles.
- Indian security elites assume that China does not seek an egalitarian international common in the Asia-Pacific region but rather prefers some form of Chinese-led hierarchy or hegemony. Due to this real or perceived Indian apprehensions vis-à-vis the transcontinental BRI, the participating countries have not been able to make a tangible progress on the Bangladesh-China-India-Myanmar (BCIM) corridor. While the BCIM predates the BRI and also there are no sovereignty issues, unlike CPEC, still there has been little considerable progress on this route. Here again, India is at the horns of dilemma. On the one hand, Delhi is aware of the economic dividends if Northeast India is connected with Southeast Asia. On the other hand, India is not eager about the integration of the Eastern Subcontinent with the Chinese economy as Delhi “perceives China as its competitor and the BCIM in today's geopolitical contours will advance Chinese expansion in the subcontinent, a region in India's traditional sphere of influence.
- Pakistan-India ties have significantly deteriorated following the commencement of work on various CPEC-related projects. A peculiar example of this is the escalation of tensions at the Line of Control (LoC) between the two nuclear-armed neighbours. If India agrees to stop its opposition of the CPEC it can truly transform the whole region. In case India shows willingness to join the BRI and Pakistan grants it overland access to Afghanistan, it could exploit huge Central Asian markets and could get access to the region's abundant natural resources. To sum it up, the participation of India in the BRI can lead to open new vistas of regional cooperation, integration, interregional trade, stability and sustainable development. However, for that to happen, China, India and Pakistan must display some maturity and their political leadership must exhibit true statesmanship to create a scenario which is a win-win situation for all the stakeholders.
- some major powers including the US, European Union (EU), Japan, Australia and India stayed away from the forum citing various reasons. Key reservations and apprehensions of these major actors are economic worries related to debt and financial risks; strategic apprehensions concerning the political motive behind infrastructure building and environmental and social implications of unprecedented Chinese loans and investments. although Japan is believed to have softened its position since mid-2017. several developed countries have welcomed the initiative. For example, “New Zealand became the first developed country to officially endorse the BRI. the five Nordic countries of Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden have embraced the initiative and have “expressed a positive interest in the BRI. Central and Eastern European (CEE) countries are also closely watching the rising role of China as a development actor and a major partner to invest

in infrastructure projects. the Silk Road Economic Belt aims at bringing together China, Central Asia, Russia and Europe (the Baltic). Since they have their reliance on the EU, the stance of most CEE countries is still of the wait and see type.

- Poland has emerged as an essential partner of China under the BRI as it is expected that all rail freight transport from China to Europe will pass via Poland. There is now a greater realisation that as compared to transportation through sea, “the transportation time was cut by half from 30 days to 15 days” through land from China to mainland Europe. Hence, because of its geographically significant location, Poland is expected to turn into a hub for land-based transit of merchandise between China and Europe. CEECs are still reliant on EU structural funds and are not yet ready for a major geopolitical shift, such as a break-up from Western Europe.
- 1993 is considered to be a historic year when Beijing emerged as a net importer of oil from the region and this quest for minerals and natural resources from Africa became a key element in Beijing’s foreign policy. After 2007, China also became a net importer of coal and due to this dependency on natural resources, official visits of Chinese premiers to African states were often termed ‘energy trips’ by the Chinese media. For Africa, China is one of the main sources of foreign aid and one of the largest investment partners in infrastructure projects.
- the rising role of China presents a big challenger to other actors in the development arena because Beijing is willing to invest in countries where western donors are now more reluctant to invest (such as fragile states) and in sectors (such as infrastructure) that are not the priority of the traditional donors. Thus, for African governments, a key attraction towards the Chinese is Beijing’s inclination to fund projects in energy, transport, and communication as most western donors are reluctant to finance interventions in these sectors like many other developing countries, African countries have similar expectations from Chinese investments in infrastructure and other sectors along with “positive spill overs such as job creation, technology transfer and productivity increases.”
- While so far, only South Africa and Egypt have signed MoUs with China on the BRI, various other African countries such as Djibouti, Kenya, Tanzania, Mozambique, Madagascar, Ethiopia and Rwanda are looking at the BRI as an opportunity to advance their industrialization, infrastructure upgradation and development process. There is no doubt that Chinese financing under the BRI could be a huge boon for the African countries to overcome low investment in infrastructure, but priorities need to be given to projects that have maximum chances of success. Similarly, prevalence of corruption in Africa and lack of transparency and open bidding procedures in the award of infrastructure contracts by Chinese are some of the risks that could impede smooth implementation of BRI projects in Africa.
- CA [Central Asia] and Russia are integral elements for the implementation of the BRI as these countries are vital for effectively connecting China’s overland to Europe, the Persian Gulf and the Mediterranean. Besides, the geo-economic benefits to China, Central Asian countries also recognize the BRI to be a source of much needed financial injection to upgrade and improve physical infrastructure that could lead to better connectivity and enhanced trade, along with increased stability. by opening up new markets for these landlocked countries
- Russia has also expressed its interest in the BRI on account of its economic prospects for Russia. Russian interests in this regard are determined by the need to obtain reliable international partners for modernization and long-term development, which could also help to address acute security issues. Although, Central Asia has predominantly remained under the geopolitical

influence of Russia, both Beijing and Moscow have shared regional interests pertaining to “ensuring security, stability and order as a key priority.” In addition to it, their mutual interests also converge regarding “the establishment of a multipolar world, post-unilateral world order that ends the global supremacy of the US.” Due to these factors and shared benefits, China and Russia have maintained cordial bilateral relationship in recent years which also augur well for the success of the BRI in the region.

- A number of “foreign policy analysts view BRI largely through a geopolitical lens, seeing it as Beijing’s attempt to gain political leverage over its neighbours” and beyond the immediate neighbourhood.

CPEC

- 5th meeting of Joint working group (JWG); vowed to connect gawadar port to the second phase of free trade zone (FTZ) through eastbay expressway by 2021’s end
- FTZ will bring many dividends for Beijing and Isb but the biggest beneficiary will be locals
- Lives will change because of socio-economic activity; road infrastructure from port to ftz will accelerate business, attract investors
- Lack of telecommunication networks can emerge as a significant stumbling block in the overall development of Gwadar

Background

- Plans for a corridor stretching from the Chinese border to Pakistan's deepwater ports on the Arabian Sea date back to the 1950s, and motivated construction of the Karakoram Highway beginning in 1959.[43] Chinese interest in Pakistan's deep-water harbor at Gwadar had been rekindled by in 2002 China began construction at Gwadar port which was completed in 2006. Expansion of Gwadar Port then ceased thereafter owing to political instability in Pakistan following the fall of General Pervez Musharraf and subsequent conflict between the Pakistani state and Taliban militants.[44]
- In 2013, the then Pakistani President Asif Ali Zardari and Chinese Premier Li Keqiang decided to further enhance mutual connectivity.[45] A memorandum of understanding on cooperation for long-term plan on China–Pakistan Economic Corridor between the two governments was inked
- 2014 Pakistan Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif met with Premier Li Keqiang in China to discuss further plans. During the state visit of Chinese leader Xi Jinping to Pakistan in April 2015, he wrote in an open editorial stating: "This will be my first trip to Pakistan, but I feel as if I am going to visit the home of my own brother." On 20 April 2015, Pakistan and China signed an agreement to commence work on the \$46 billion agreement

Definition/Details

- As per official definition, CPEC is a “growth axis and a development belt” featuring a comprehensive transportation corridor and industrial cooperation. China-Pakistan is the ‘growth axis’, containing major collaborative projects of infrastructure construction, industrial development, economic and trade cooperation, social uplift and socio-economic development including people-to-people exchanges and cultural communications.
- CPEC officially covers the Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region in western China, and the whole territory of Pakistan in a format comprising a ‘core zone’ and ‘radiation zone’. Development of western China is pursuant to China’s longstanding policy, “Go West”, aimed at removing

developmental disparities between coastal China in the east, and the under-developed mountainous China in the west.

- Both China and Pakistan have agreed to the “1+4 cooperation mode” for CPEC with the corridor as the core, and Gwadar, energy, transport infrastructure and industrial cooperation as its four priorities.
- CPEC is intended to greatly speed up “industrialisation and urbanization”, making Pakistan globally competitive and domestically prosperous. Long-term project (LTP) matches up locational advantage of Pakistan with China’s economic and industrial potential.
- LTP identifies some impediments to CPEC such as; global power adjustment to a rising China; weak industrial base/economy of southern Xinjiang; hard geography of Sino-Pakistan border areas (escalating costs); and demographic and economic disparities in Pakistan. The Indus River valley, though relatively developed, has “high population density and limited resource-carrying capacity”; whereas, western Pakistan is poorly developed and has harsh natural conditions. The corona pandemic is also another unforeseen impediment.
- <https://tribune.com.pk/story/2301766/cpec-facts-and-fog>
- <https://tribune.com.pk/story/2303119/cpec-where-do-we-stand>
- <https://tribune.com.pk/story/2304775/cpec-fallacies-and-realities>
-
- China’s vision, as alluded to, is to “further advance its western development strategy”. And to promote economic and social development, accelerating BRI construction, utilising China’s advantages in capital, technology, production capacity and engineering operations. China aims at the formation of a “new open economic system”.
- From Pakistan’s standpoint, CPEC is to fully “harness the demographic and natural endowment of the country”, enhancing its industrial capacity through new industrial clusters in order to balance the “regional socio-economic development, enhancing people’s wellbeing, and promote domestic peace and stability”.
- CPEC also has an international/regional vision, entailing the creation of a new “international logistics network and industrial layout, based on major transportation infrastructure”. It aims at elevating the “status of South Asian and Central Asian countries” through economic integration, trade growth, technological/economic cooperation and people-to-people exchanges. This vision welcomes inclusion of all left out countries like India in the CPEC.
- CPEC has strong focus on social development, population welfare and poverty alleviation along its command areas... unlike any other programme of the International Monetary Fund (IMF), World Bank etc.

Core areas

- ‘eight core areas’ of the agreed CPEC architecture.
- The first core area deals with the ‘integrated transportation system’, including construction/development of Kashghar-Islamabad. The Gwadar City Master Plan comprises Gwadar city, port, a new international airport and corresponding transport system, the

construction of East Bay Expressway and enhancing the effectiveness of Gwadar Free Zone to promote social progress and economic development.

- Second, is 'information network infrastructure'. This includes construction/operation of local communications (broadcast and TV networks), strengthening bilateral information and communication to synchronise construction of 'information, road and railway infrastructure'. It also contains laying of cross-border optical fiber and 'backbone optical fiber networks' in Pakistan
- This core area aims to improve Pakistan's Information Communication Technology (ICT) — enabled development like e-government/e-commerce; electronic monitoring of borders and safe city projects; and building IT industrial parks and IT industry clusters. Human resource and technology exchange is inbuilt in these programmes.
- Third, cooperation in 'energy related' fields. It spans collaboration in oil and gas, electricity/power grids, construction of major thermal power, hydropower, coal-gasification and renewable power generation projects. It supports 'power transmission networks' to enhance 'power transmission and supply reliability'. This entails construction of high-voltage power grids, power transmission and distribution networks and developing the related industry to manufacture the entire range of energy sector equipment.
- Catering especially to the Chinese hunger for fossil fuel, the long term plan (LTP) agreed to diversify oil supplies and cooperate in developing oil/gas resources and research. It develops storages along the CPEC route. Other initiatives comprise optimising Pakistan's coal-sourcing and utilisation; developing wind and solar enabled energy supply sources; However, this area at inception, missed building large water reservoirs, that needs to be included.
- Fourth, 'trade and industrial parks'. This core area targets textile and garment industry for quality improvement, value addition, competitiveness and efficiency improvement to help Pakistan's exports and enhance mutually beneficial regional cooperation. Special economic zones (SEZs) are envisaged in all Pakistani provinces/regions and in China
- China shall promote industrial cooperation in sectors like chemical/pharmaceutical, engineering goods, agriculture, iron/steel, light manufacturing, home appliances and construction materials etc. The focus is to use energy-efficient and environmentally-friendly processes/equipment, helping Pakistan's exports.
- Fifth, 'agricultural development and poverty alleviation'. This area encompasses biological breeding/production/processing, storage/transportation, infrastructure construction, disease prevention and control, water resources utilisation and land development etc. ICT-enabled agriculture and marketing of agricultural goods is expected to develop systematic, large-scale and standardised agricultural industry.
- The core area focuses on upgrading agricultural infrastructure like water-saving techniques, modern agricultural zones, increasing productivity of medium/low-yield land, and strengthening drip irrigation technology.
- Sixth, 'tourism'. Both countries agree to exploit the tourism potential of regions along CPEC, especially the China-Pakistan border areas, coastal belt and across border. LTP encompasses improvement in quality of bilateral tourism services like public information, transportation and security protection.
- Seventh, 'social development and non-government exchanges'. This core area constitutes cooperation between local governments, NGOs, people-to-people friendship and social development in cities along CPEC. This shall provide an enabling social environment for CPEC

projects, especially in restive Balochistan. Node cities are to benefit from China's new urbanisation concepts like public transport, water supply and drainage systems through pilot projects, utilising China's strength in technology, equipment, and capital.

- Drought prevention and disaster relief cooperation through comprehensive planning of water resources and river-basin development, utilisation, conservation and protection, are some other areas planned, that directly affect public livelihood and welfare.
- Eighth core area is 'financial cooperation'. LTP emphasises a multi-layered cooperation and policy coordination covering financial reform, opening-up, innovation of financial products/services and risk mitigation to create conducive financial environment. It includes monetary cooperation between central banks and financial regulatory agencies; implementing and expanding existing bilateral currency swap arrangements; assigning foreign currency to domestic banks to support project-financing; and encouraging payment settlement in RMB and rupees, to reduce reliance on third-party currency.

Where do we stand?

- <https://tribune.com.pk/story/2303119/cpec-where-do-we-stand>

Fallacies and realities

- First, that the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) with CPEC as its flagship project, is a tool of Chinese neo-imperialism. That China is using BRI/CPEC for advancing its global power and influence. True partially. No super power offers free lunches, but the Chinese mode generally and CPEC particularly is not exploitative; it offers a win-win situation for participating nations and is extensively sensitive to social development. BRI/CPEC is not about economy alone; it's about geo-economics, and establishing a parallel non-exploitative economic system... and that makes the West uncomfortable.
-
- The 129 or so mainly under-developed and developing nations on board will benefit from the regional development projects and enhanced connectivity under BRI. Most of these nations have no access to otherwise affordable capital. CPEC in particular has a strong component of social development, poverty alleviation and demographic uplift, unlike similar programmes under other international donors. For full-scale socio-economic development, CPEC is Pakistan's only choice, having tried others. Chinese conditionalities are comparatively milder and mostly without political caveats.
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international donors. For full-scale socio-economic development, CPEC is Pakistan's only choice, having tried others. Chinese conditionalities are comparatively milder and mostly without political caveats.

- Fourth, that the CPEC projects would only benefit Punjab. CPEC's Punjab-centricity is negated as its projects, in all core areas, are spread nationwide
- that Pakistan has a risky security environment. Actually, Pakistan protects Chinese working on CPEC projects through an integrated security system, incorporating local police (Punjab has raised special CPEC police), paramilitary forces, intelligence apparatus and Pakistan Army. The army has raised two 'Security Divisions' (a division roughly has 20,000 personnel) for K-P/Punjab and Sindh/Balochistan respectively. There are over 80,000 Chinese nationals living in Pakistan including around 25,000 deployed on CPEC projects. Attack on any Chinese anywhere for any reason is exploited as attack on CPEC workforce.
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- In the final verdict, Pakistan should stay the course and China to maintain its amity through re-scheduling of loans on softer terms, being sensitive to corona-induced damage to Pakistan's economy. Expectations should be manageable and CPEC benefits spread equally far and wide.
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- If CPEC can boost Pakistan's industrial productivity, exports, and job creation, it should be a game-changer. It actually is.

Debt trap?

- The Atlantic article
- the 'anti-China campaign' mainly by the US/Western media/governments and their local interlocutors in media and our ashrafiyya (elite) in/out of power corridors. These elements cite China's ultimate economic domination of Pakistan given Pakistan's fragile, highly indebted economy, weak exports, dependency on foreign assistance and susceptibility to periodic external payment crises.
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- For greater clarity, infrastructure projects are financed by grants and long-term concessional loans with an average interest rate of 2% or so. Chinese state-owned companies — designated by Chinese government — are financing projects through 'project loans' from government-owned banks on concessional terms. And in several projects, Chinese and Pakistani companies are into joint ventures. And Chinese investment benefits Pakistan also through technology transfer, job creation and value addition etc.
-
- Easing energy shortages is to reduce import of capital goods, leading to saving on import bill. Reduced demand for imported fuel oil/diesel will ease-up POL imports. The above calculations do not take into account the 'transit fees' of the Corridor or associated economic activity generated in the CPEC command areas. These calculations also do not reflect the 'second order bonus', whereby greener projects make our industries more competitive for import substitutes and new export products. And sustained Chinese inflows are projecting Pakistan as an attractive investment destination.
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- The cumulative effect of all this is not only enabling Pakistan to repay its obligations under CPEC; Pakistan shall have surplus capital for investment in more projects. This is hard-nosed economics and not some gullible rosy picture-painting. So, the chance to break Pakistan's begging bowl is now or never.
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- Chinese interlocutors are especially incensed by misrepresentation of facts by many Pakistanis and the constant barrage of doubts being created in the Pakistani population — from inter-marriages to economic enslavement etc. China is characterised as the erstwhile East India Company and Pakistan its likely satellite. Chinese companies are also irked by Pakistan's red tape, inconsistency of power tariffs and slower dispute resolution etc.

Indian concerns

- India has raised its concerns about CPEC at every platform stressing that it is a violation of international border as it passes through the disputed region of Kashmir. Pakistan has not only rejected Indian claims but has offered India to join CPEC maintaining that its economic corridor is not against any country.
- Indian defence analysts intimated their government that with the development of the Gawadar port, Indian navy would remain under observation by both Chinese and Pakistani authorities. Both countries can easily monitor Indian movement in the region that would create huge security concerns for India.

US concerns

- China factor; Thucydides Trap; China's belt and road initiative, establishment of AIIB and its role in regional organizations such as SCO and BRICS show its increasing prominence in the world order.
- the US Principal Deputy Assistant of State for South and Central Asia, Alice Wells has criticized CPEC. Wells viewed CPEC to hang over Pakistan's economic development potential. On another occasion US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo has expressed concern that IMF fund may not provide pay off to lenders in case of CPEC.

BRI V B3W

- The G7 recently announced the Build Back Better World Partnership (B3W), a commitment to invest up to \$40 trillion to plug the infrastructure gap in low- and middle-income countries exacerbated by the Covid-19 crisis. This initiative gives Islamabad a new framework within which to engage with Washington beyond the security realm.
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- The B3W is pitched as a challenge to China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), and a key part of the US plan to counter China's growing global influence. There is therefore a knee-jerk sense that there will be no place for Pakistan in B3W planning, especially given that CPEC is among the most strategic and well-developed aspects of the BRI, mounting challenges and disruptions notwithstanding. Biden's snub to Pakistan at a recent environmental roundtable also suggests B3W talks may be a non-starter.

- why do we have to choose sides — either it's the US or China? I think we should have a relationship with everyone" PM in NYT. Balancing relationships between competing superpowers is the only viable option for Pakistan.
- BRI's focus is on strategic infrastructure such as ports, and most expenditure to date has been on transport and power. The B3W, meanwhile, will focus on climate, health, digital technology, and gender equity and equality.
-
- It remains to be seen whether China embraces a parallel approach or seeks to clamp down B3W ambitions by tramping on the same terrain. China has since 2015 been pushing for a 'Digital Silk Road' that would overlay traditional infrastructure projects developed as part of the BRI. Since the pandemic hit, Beijing has also started to speak of a 'Health Silk Road'.
- Given that the EU has recently negotiated a trade agreement with China, and Italy, a G7 member, is a BRI participant, the either/or dimension is unlikely to materialise as bluntly as some are forecasting.
- Key challenges will result from how B3W is structured. To work, the initiative will need to corral multiple governments and mobilise multiple sources of private capital, a slower and messier approach than BRI's bilaterally negotiated, largely state-funded projects. But post facto complications and renegotiations linked to many BRI projects may have increased appetite for better planned projects at the outset.
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- As always, the ultimate onus lies on Pak-is-tan to map its needs, clarify its values and priorities, and participate in international initiatives so as to serve public needs.
- Indian media went overboard projecting the B3W initiative as if it's going to bring in a new era of prosperity for 900 million Indians surviving on food stamps issued by the Modi government. The same euphoria was displayed when India joined QUAD, however, nothing concrete has come up. India lost 1,450 square km in Ladakh to the Chinese army, but Quad never came to her rescue, resulting in an embarrassment of the world's third largest army.
- It may also be interesting to have a look at the economic state of G-7 members. Since the seven countries first got together in the 1970s, their share of global GDP has halved to 40%. Can B3W take on China's BRI, then?
- The G-7 are some of the most indebted countries in the world. Today, US public debt stands at \$28 trillion, the UK's at \$3 trillion, France \$3.2 trillion, Canada \$2.3 trillion, Italy \$3.3 trillion, Japan \$1.3 trillion and Germany is almost at \$3 trillion. How can these paper tigers confront the BRI backed by a surplus Chinese economy?
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- China has already engaged over 100 countries in BRI. The G-7 is selling a red herring which exists on paper only. Let's see if B3W becomes a practical reality or not.

FOIP and BRI

- Asian countries increasingly find themselves in a diff situation to either support a current superpower or align with the major power of the region which, in the long run, can displace the US as a superpower. The third option for them is to hedge between Beijing and Washington by cooperating with both in selective economic and foreign policy endeavours. This can complicate successful implementation of both the Indo-Pacific strategy and the BRI.

- In a way, America was the hegemon in Asia since it provided security, sustained stability, supported market economies and maintained partnerships with an array of political actors in the region. This is now changing. In Asia, a rising China is driving a new geo-political balance of power. When the 'old order' was being shaped, Beijing was marginalised in the international political order.
- As multilateral economic cooperation and trade are growing in Asia, so are the signs of a major power contest between China and the US. Two hierarchies are discernible. First, the security hierarchy is dominated by the US. Second, the economic hierarchy is dominated by China. Asian countries continue to look towards Washington to provide security and boost their military capabilities. Meanwhile, most of the region's countries are tied closely to China in the matters of commercial and economic cooperation. Earlier, most nations had the US as the major trading partner. Now China is the leading trade partner of the Asian economies. This shows that though America remains the largest economy in the world, the economic hub of Asia is China. In future, China will surely gain even more ground.
- This dual hierarchy raises crucial questions for the long-term strategic outlook of Asia and the choices that the regional countries will make in future. Earlier, the regional and global order was tied to a single great power, providing security and ensuring trade. It made choice for the weaker or middle states straightforward: the military and economic hegemon was one superpower.
- Both China and the US have put forward competing visions, that is, the FOIP and the BRI, the regional order will be influenced by how middle states respond to growing Sino-US competition.
- **What is an order?** The order can be a consensus of group of states or it can reflect on agreed-upon rules of international conduct or it can be imposed by a hegemonic state. Theoretically, the order is organised around hegemonic principles or the balance of power framework. Robert Gilpin provided theoretical reasoning behind hegemonic order. The dominant states use their material capabilities such as power, economy, technology and ideology to build and sustain order. A hegemon has at its disposal, the means for direct and indirect coercion to maintain control. Gradually, military power and economic resources erode, and new challenges to the hegemon emerge. Hegemonic wars take place and lead to the emergence of a new order when states get together to set new rules. Again, a new hegemon enforces rules and sustains order until challenged. Hence, the cycle repeats itself.
- In contrast, the order can also be founded on the balance of power as theorised by Kenneth Waltz. A power equilibrium among major states in international system can establish and sustain the order. No major power can dominate the system. Alignments and re-alignments take place constantly, as states compete and manoeuvre to prevent a leading state from establishing dominance. In this decentralised order, the optimum strategy of ensuring security for all the states is to continue balancing power. Inevitably, the weak or middle nations band together to counter-balance and resist a dominant power. In this context, the current order in Asia exhibits both phenomenon: hegemony and balance. For more than five decades, America was the dominant power in Asia and order was organised around the US-led economic and security arrangements. The increase in the relative power of China has led to the emergence of trends within the regional order that led to a relative balance of power. As power is shifting, the logic of the new international order is becoming apparent. As the US is losing its preeminent status, China is rising and gaining more space.

- The dynamics of the order are visible in the strategies adopted by the middle states, both large and small during power transitions. the choices available to Asian nations can be divided into three categories. **First**, Asian countries can choose to deepen their existing cooperation with the US as the threat from China increases. states often view a distant hegemon as more benign than a continental neighbour, and thus, seek their involvement in balancing powerful neighbours. This form of balancing, however, carries with it substantial domestic political and economic costs leading to a gradual erosion of strategic autonomy.
- **Second**, Asian states can choose buck-passing over balancing. At present, despite its growing economic and military prowess, China is far from being a direct threat to Asian countries. Establishment of an Air Defence Identification Zone (ADIZ) in East Asia and constructing islands in the South China Sea are defensive developments from China's perspective. So far, China has not disturbed the present status quo in Asia.
- **Third**, the middle states can pursue strategic hedging. Asian nations are noticing a 'decline' in the US influence over the long-term. China has developed the capacity to field advanced maritime assets in considerable numbers, which if continued in similar fashion in the future, can undercut American capabilities and its resolve to fight in Asia. And, in the meantime, Asian states can build a constructive relationship with China through confidence-building measures (CBMs) to enhance mutual trust. This study argues that, in the long-term, Asian countries will prefer a balance of power-based order in Asia.
- The origins of the FOIP policy lie in Washington's '**Pivot to Asia**' strategy announced during the Obama era (2009-17). Its objective was to shift the focus of American foreign policy from the Middle East to Asia-Pacific. the Trump administration embraced competition with China and advocated the FOIP strategy. It aimed at redefining the Asian order through a multilateral regional process as manifested in renaming it as Indo-Pacific from Asia-Pacific.
- Washington has embraced a 'realist' approach. The National Security Strategy (NSS) document declared "geopolitical competition" is underway between "free and repressive visions of world order." Moreover, the NSS argues Beijing aims to "displace" Washington in this region through its "state-driven economic model" with the ultimate goal of reordering the "region in its favour." To compete and win the long-term competition, Washington, thus, has accorded foremost priority to maintaining a favourable power balance in the broader Asia-Pacific region.
- For achieving its geo-strategic goals, the US is pursuing a networked security architecture bringing together multilateral and bilateral security partnerships. At the core of the FOIP is the concept of '**Quad**,' comprising of Australia, India, Japan and the US. It aims to counterbalance expanding Chinese influence in Asia. The stated goal of Quad is to establish and promote a 'rules-based' economic and security order. Yet, strategic thinking of these four states about Indo-Pacific is diverse. Japan embraces the idea of the FOIP in entirety. In fact, the term 'Free and Open Indo-Pacific' has been borrowed from Japanese leadership. It was suggested by Prime Minister Shinzo Abe in 2007. He called for linking Indian and Pacific Oceans for 'preserving common good.
- The BRI consists of an overland route, the Silk Road Economic Belt (SREB) and a maritime route – the Maritime Silk Road Initiative (MSRI). The aim is to link edges of the Asian continent from East Asia to Europe and also to connect Asia with Africa and Europe through land, sea and air corridors. The BRI is geared towards promoting economic development of the Asian countries through trade and investment while enhancing connectivity. The secondary aim is to develop and maintain people-to-people contacts in various countries. To realise these goals, Beijing has engaged in

proactive diplomacy as the BRI has expanded China's traditional sphere of influence beyond its immediate neighbourhood.

- there is a **security rationale** for the BRI, as well. Beijing is highly dependent on an uninterrupted flow of imported oil from the Persian Gulf and the Middle East, for the smooth functioning of the Chinese economy. Nearly 80 per cent of the energy imports of China passes through the **Strait of Malacca**, where the US navy has a dominating presence. China seeks to ensure secure routes by circumventing the Malacca Strait through constructing ports and refuelling stations in the Indian Ocean. Beijing is making investments in the ports across the Indian Ocean Region (IOR). For instance, in Myanmar, a Chinese state-owned company holds 70 per cent stake in the port under construction in western Rakhine state. Meanwhile, another Chinese company is managing a shipping container facility in Chittagong, Bangladesh. Similarly, the Chinese firms have made investments in the ports in Hambantota, Sri Lanka and Gwadar, Pakistan. A Chinese consortium is investing more than US\$3 billion in the development of a port city in Duqam, Oman. In **Djibouti**, China has established its first overseas support base for its military ships. Combined together, the Chinese investments in these ports reflect the China's growing presence and give context to the BRI and a new concept of Asian security.
- **Middle states strategy:** Their reactions are rooted in the decades-old American presence in Asia, the history of bilateral relations with China, the fear of being caught up in great power competition and the need to maximise their security while pursuing their economic goals. The middle states recognise that a shift in Asia is underway. They are cognizant of the fact that the actions of a rising China will have direct implications on the regional and global strategic balance. The result is that the states around the region are trying to adapt to a new reality. Asian nations have been eager to join the BRI since its inception. It was in Indonesia and Kazakhstan that Xi made speeches announcing the land and maritime routes of the BRI. Every country in Asia requires extensive financial assistance for improving its infrastructure. When the BRI was announced, the Asian countries were keen to join it and its associated organisations such as the AIIB.
- The Asian countries were unsettled by the US withdrawal from the TTP, public criticism of the pivot to Asia policy of the Obama administration, and the focus on an 'America First' foreign policy. President Trump and his team raised questions about the costs of continued American military engagements in Asia, particularly of those forces stationed in Japan and South Korea. However, when Trump visited Asia for the APEC summit, he dilated upon US vision guiding the FOIP and reiterated the US commitment to Asia. From then onwards, most of the Asian states have adopted a more nuanced approach.
- In **Myanmar**, the relationship with China has improved in the recent years as Western criticism of the Burmese treatment of the Rohingya minority has increased. both countries agreed to build a China-Myanmar Economic Corridor, it is likely that Myanmar will press ahead with BRI projects for meeting its infrastructure development needs as investments from Western countries have slowed down.
- **Thailand** is a key country in China's BRI vision: a trans-Asian railway line to link southern China and Southeast Asia runs through Thailand. Beijing has also adjusted the BRI program to link up with the Eastern Economic Corridor (EEC), a project initiated by Bangkok in order to foster economic growth and improve the public services infrastructure, including transportation and logistics in three eastern Thai provinces. Similarly, Bangkok signed an extensive 'Joint Vision

Statement' for 2020 with Washington to facilitate a "stable, prosperous, free, open, inclusive and sustainable" region in the Indo-Pacific region.

- The city-state of **Singapore** is a prime example of the dual nature of the state of Asian order. It is expanding its economic cooperation with China under the BRI framework. Despite China's plans for developing new ports in the Malaysian islands adjacent to Singapore, the city-state has maintained engagement with China on providing support services for the BRI. Singapore has agreed to form an international mediation panel to resolve the commercial disputes related to BRI projects. These have been established to support international courts established in Shenzhen and Xian by China to adjudicate disputes arising from BRI projects. Singapore has consistently supported the BRI from the beginning. At the same time, Singapore has deepened security cooperation with the US also. It is committed to a strong and united ASEAN, to the maintenance of international law, and to freedom of navigation.
- They (Asian states) acknowledge that rising China will, undoubtedly, seek a modern military as it aspires to become a maritime power. In recognising so, middle states want China to wield its growing influence and prowess with restraint and in a legitimate manner. Secondly, Asian states are eager to engage with China in economic cooperation, as they recognise that China is their largest trading partner and also the country best able to provide them with large-scale infrastructure financing. They do not, however, want to be over-dependent on China. This has created space for the US to influence the discourse on China's economic model. Despite the resulting critical discourse, Beijing has pressed ahead with the BRI and engaged in extensive infrastructure projects based on mutual cooperation with Asian states. Thirdly, the US leadership is important in directing Asia's strategic vision. Under President Obama, the US policy-makers had clarity on what they were seeking in Asia. The China policy of the Obama era sought engagement. It had enabled Asian states to seek a relationship with China based on cooperation. This led to a stable regional balance. The coming of the Trump administration in January, 2017, however, first led to uncertainty as President Trump questioned the costs of America's long-standing defense commitments in Asia. Subsequently, even as the Trump administration embraced the FOIP strategy, Asian states sought to maintain a balance between Beijing and Washington. Fourthly, the Trump administration's FOIP strategy appears to be a containment-of-China strategy. It is vital that the need to balance the rising power of China does not lead to over-reach from Washington and regional states. Beijing, meanwhile, has criticised American maritime activities, including freedom of navigation operations in the SCS. Fifthly, as a collective, Asian states, particularly members of ASEAN, are seeking to maintain a balance between the two sides, and to refrain as much as possible from siding with either Beijing or Washington. ASEAN members are focused towards preserving order and stability. They do, however, recognise the duality of the Asian order and seek to work effectively in that environment. For Asian states, particularly ASEAN members, the preferable path is where China and the US communicate, build trust, manage and resolve differences, and pursue regional stability. Finally, middle states symbolise a pivotal agency in the China-US dynamic in Asia. Their agency is limited, but Asian countries can work towards deepening their economic cooperation with both major powers and work towards increasing the role of China in regional and multilateral institutions.
- Conclusion: The interests of both great powers also diverge in Asia but both have an abiding interest in maintaining stability. Both countries have different visions for regional security, where China views America as an outside power, Washington considers Beijing's actions as undermining

stability in the region. With this as the backdrop, the Trump administration unveiled its FOIP strategy which it believed would address its concerns related to America's lopsided trade relationship with China, its fears with regards China's growing presence across Asia and its need to reassure its allies in the region of US support. For China, however, the BRI signifies its arrival on the global stage as a great power. For Beijing, the BRI gives it the required strategic depth to compete with the US in both the Indian Ocean and the Pacific Ocean. The BRI has enabled it to have a presence in countries along key maritime routes and in the Eurasian heartland. In this ongoing competition, Asian states are struggling to chart an independent course. They are dependent on China for trade and access to new technologies, and also increasingly for their security requirements. Middle states want to maintain a balance in relations between Beijing and Washington. For them, the ideal scenario is where China and the US prioritise diplomacy over confrontation. Asian states have used the China-US struggle to seek better terms of trade and the financing of infrastructure projects from China. Even Washington has been more forthcoming with regard to defence arrangements in the face of competition with Beijing. This has allowed middle states to strengthen their defence capabilities while reaping the benefits of increased trade and greater financing of infrastructure projects with Beijing under the BRI. As long as the China-US rivalry remains peaceful, Asian states will continue to take advantage of both the FOIP and the BRI.

Europe

- When the Iron Curtain fell in 1989, the countries that comprise today's EU, plus the United Kingdom, accounted for 27.8% of global GDP (in terms of purchasing power parity). For the US, that share was 22.2%. China, with a share of 4%, still hardly registered as an economic power.
- Thirty years later, the EU, together with the UK, accounted for 16% of global output, still slightly ahead of America's 15%. The big shift was in China's position, which had surpassed its Western counterparts with a share of 18.3%.
- Europe's share of the global economy may be declining, but the EU remains a major economic power with strong ties to the rest of the world. If its pursuit of strategic autonomy devolves into a push for protectionism or even autarky, it risks losing that status. If that happens, Europe really would be vulnerable.

Strategic autonomy

- Since the signing of the Lisbon Treaty in 2007, the European Union has progressively developed a distinct foreign policy agenda with a principal ambition of "strategic autonomy". This term refers to the EU's desire to reduce its dependency on the trans-Atlantic alliance, as well as to diversify its diplomatic and economic relations in order to eliminate its vulnerability to particular shocks in the international system. Further, strategic autonomy entails the ability to act decisively and independently on foreign policy issues, and to leverage influence in global affairs. The notion of EU strategic autonomy, however, has been criticised on the grounds that the Union lacks the political unity and the military heft to act in the manner of an autonomous power. That is, strategic autonomy is impossible for an entity that remains an economic union first, and a political union second.

- In an academic sense, the concept of strategic autonomy is fairly self-explanatory. Lippert et al. describe it succinctly as “the ability to set one’s own priorities and make one’s own decisions in matters of foreign policy and security, together with the institutional, political and material wherewithal to carry these through” (Lippert et al. 2019, p. 5). Specifically, strategic autonomy describes the capacity of a power to act as a “rule-maker” – as opposed to a “rule-taker” – in international affairs, determining its own direction and distinct interests, “rather than copying the models of others” (De Graça 2020). It involves a power maintaining responsibility for its own security, as well as taking an active role in international peace and stability (Hwee 2017, p. 3). Strategic autonomy also involves exercising leadership in response to global challenges and emerging trends in geoeconomics (De Graça 2020). In this way, strategic autonomy encompasses diplomatic, political, economic, military and even geographic dimensions, and thus is seemingly at risk of “conceptual bloating” – to borrow from Mark Purcell (Purcell 2014, p. 141). Indeed, in the European context, the notion of strategic autonomy is often criticised as mere rhetoric, with no actual substance or achievable policy outcomes. Despite this criticism, the President of the European Council, Charles Michel, provided a fairly concrete definition of what “strategic autonomy” means for EU policy. To President Michel, achieving strategic autonomy involves pursuing three objectives: ensuring stability – physical, environmental, social and economic – for the Union, disseminating European standards, and promoting European values (Michel 2020b). Importantly, strategic autonomy is not protectionism, but instead involves “upholding and developing an international order that is at least rules-based, open and inclusive” (Lippert et al. 2019; Michel 2020b).
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- The viability of achieving strategic autonomy for the European Union, however, remains a point of contention. According to Leonard and Shapiro, the EU has relied on three pillars for its security and stability over the past several decades: first, the multilateral, rules-based order; second, the US security alliance; and third, free and fair global trade (Leonard and Shapiro 2019, p. 2). However, all three of these pillars are currently weakening. The first pillar – the multilateral, rules-based order – is progressively giving way to a bipolar world order characterised by the superpower rivalry of the US and China (Kim et al. 2019; Leonard and Shapiro 2019, p. 3). In such a system, the autonomy of third powers will be increasingly undermined by the interests of the hegemon, in much the same way that the US and USSR vied for influence in the “Third World” during the Cold War. The second pillar – the US security alliance – has become increasingly strained under the Bush and Trump administrations, with EU foreign policy interests often at odds with those of the United States (Leonard et al. 2019, p. 4–6). European strategic autonomy is thus increasingly understood to necessitate “decoupling” from the US alliance, with the EU taking on sole responsibility for its security and defence (Drent 2018, p. 3). Critics of the notion of European strategic autonomy, however, insist that the EU is incapable of satisfying its defence interests on its own, especially in the context of an increasingly belligerent Russia (Brattberg and Valášek 2019; Drent 2018; Fiott 2018; Howorth 2019). Strategic autonomy is thus seemingly a paradox, as it requires decoupling from the US alliance which, in turn, would undermine the EU’s autonomy and stability. In addition, there remains a high level of heterogeneity amongst EU member states on defence matters, with certain nations outright suspicious of suggestions of EU defence cooperation (Lippert et al. 2019, p. 16–22).
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- Finally, several issues emerge regarding the endurance of the third pillar – free and fair global trade – for achieving European strategic autonomy. First, there is the rising trend of protectionism and the weaponization of trade negotiation – exemplified in the increased tendency of the US and China to abuse their advantageous positions to extract economic or strategic gains via tariffs, sanctions or other mechanisms (Leonard and Shapiro 2019, p. 3; Leonard et al. 2019, p. 3–6). In addition, Europe maintains “harmful dependencies” on Russia, the US and China in its supply chains and economic connections, raising its vulnerability to market shocks or even targeted abuse (Fiott 2018, p. 8; Lippert et al. 2019, p. 24). Finally, the EU’s competition and anti-monopoly laws make many EU firms unable to compete with state-backed Chinese firms (Leonard and Shapiro 2019, p. 3). Chinese firms have more resources at their disposal and Beijing – which does not distinguish between economic and strategic ends – will increasingly use those to achieve political and strategic outcomes, where the EU is ideologically incapable of doing the same (Leonard et al. 2019, p. 3–4). In this way, the third pillar of “free and fair global trade” has seemingly become a point of vulnerability for the EU rather than a point of strength. Strategic autonomy, then, seems difficult to achieve with the continued decline of the rules-based, multilateral order, dependence on the US security alliance, and an uneven playing field in international trade.
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- Yet strategic autonomy remains realisable for the European Union. While it cannot do much to make up for its defence shortfalls in the near-term, the EU can leverage its proven competency in diplomatic and trade negotiation to preserve the rules-based order and to strengthen its economic security. One way to achieve these objectives would be to negotiate a Free Trade Agreement (FTA) with ASEAN. A common theme across the literature is that European strategic autonomy is predicated upon the preservation of the multilateral order (Anghel et al. 2020, p. 29; Lippert et al. 2019, p. 23). An EU-ASEAN FTA would go a long way in strengthening this order. The EU and ASEAN are both dependent on a rules-based international system, are united in their anti-protectionist stances, and share key security concerns regarding climate change, migration and terrorism (Hwee 2017, p. 3–4). The EU also has shared interests with ASEAN in regard to sustainable development, poverty eradication and pandemic response (European Commission 2015, p. 14; European External Action Service [EEAS] 2020, p. 20). An FTA between the two organisations would reaffirm their regional identities as well as giving more weight – or “strategic relevance” – to their actions on the international stage, providing a strong platform for multilateral responses to these shared concerns (Anghel et al. 2020, p. 30; Hwee 2017, p. 6). Indeed, the EU has long desired a “strategic partnership” with ASEAN and regards an interregional FTA as the primary vehicle for achieving this (European Commission 2015, p. 14). Moreover, in negotiating an EU-ASEAN FTA, the EU can focus on what it is good at and leverage the “power resource” that is the European Economic Area (Lippert et al. 2019, p. 24). An interregional FTA would strengthen EU strategic autonomy without needing to develop “hard” military capabilities. As long as the international system does not devolve into a shooting war, the fact that the EU is likely be unable of stopping a Russian offensive has little bearing on whether or not it can exercise strategic autonomy. If the multilateral, rules-based order is preserved, then the EU can continue to exercise autonomy via diplomatic and economic means. As the rest of this paper will demonstrate, an EU-ASEAN FTA provides a first step to developing EU Strategic Autonomy in this way. Specifically, an interregional agreement would both ensure stability and contribute to

disseminating European standards and values, fulfilling the objectives outlined by President Michel.

EU-ASEAN

- while doubts about the EU's capacity to exercise autonomy in military matters are well-founded, such criticism fails to appreciate the EU's proven ability to further its interests via diplomatic and economic means. As this paper has demonstrated, the EU's strategic autonomy is vested in the preservation of the multilateral, rules-based order. As long as this order is maintained, questions of military capacity are irrelevant. An interregional EU-ASEAN FTA provides a clear vehicle both for preserving this order and, accordingly, for achieving strategic autonomy.
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- First, an interregional FTA would build economic stability by diversifying the EU's dependencies, and build geopolitical stability by counter-weighting the influence of the US and China. In addition, the FTA would facilitate multilateral responses to shared traditional and non-traditional security concerns of the two organisations. An interregional FTA would also enable the proliferation of the EU's high market standards – extending the so-called “Brussels effect”, as well as the promotion of European values of democracy and social liberalism. Finally, the FTA ensures that the EU will maintain the necessary soft power reach in such a pivotal region and thus remain a meaningful actor in the international system.
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- Indeed – more than anything else – this centrality of South East Asia in the emerging Asia-centric world order is the reason why ASEAN is the key to EU strategic autonomy. The ability to exercise influence and shape market standards in this region will be the determinant of an autonomous power in much the same way as European influence determined the Great Powers of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. If European interests are sidelined, if ASEAN fragments, and if the US and China are allowed to shape and define the region, then the multilateral order will give way to one that is firmly bipolar, and any notion of strategic autonomy will become the fantasy of a forgotten era. An interregional FTA is the key to avoiding such a world. The EU-ASEAN FTA would facilitate the existence of at least two more major powers in the international order, preserve some semblance of a multilateral system, and strengthen the strategic autonomy of both organisations. In this way, beyond finally achieving the elusive notion of autonomy, interregionalism could be the key to avoiding the worst of a new Cold War.

COVID-19

- As we look around the globe at the impact of the pandemic, one thing is clear: we are all in the same storm, even if we aren't all in the same boat.
- Three factors played imp role in curbing covid: state capacity (health infrastructure, etc); social trust (btw citizens and govt and among citizens); political leadership
- WHO is urging countries to vaccinate at least 10% of the population of every country by September, and a “drive to December” to achieve the goal of vaccinating at least 30% by the end of 2021.
- Similar proposals from the IMF estimate that by investing to ensure 60% global vaccination coverage by 2022, the world economy would secure a 35-fold return on investment. That is a staggering return in any market — jobs preserved, lives saved, health costs averted all just by frontloading vaccinations now that will have to be delivered anyway.

- The rapid spread of new variants is a wake-up call for us all and we must help ensure vaccines are available in countries currently under pressure. And the recent call by the UK to vaccinate the world against Covid-19 by 2022 is a welcome development. Indeed, vaccinating the world not only makes sense, it is the soundest financial investment any government could make.
- A World Bank report has made two contrasting forecasts about economic recovery in the developed and developing countries in the post-coronavirus pandemic situation. In its latest report, the bank has predicted that economies in developed countries will grow by 5.6% this year than the estimate made in January. These countries are now expected to expand 1.5% faster than the earlier projection mainly as a result of extensive coverage of corona vaccination. This would be the fastest rate of recovery post- recession in the past 80 years. However, emerging economies would rebound at a slower rate because of the slow vaccination process due to lack of resources and the relatively more serious financial shock that the pandemic caused in these countries.
- The closure of schools and the extremely patchy switchover to online education left a vast swathe of children unable to continue classes due to absent or unreliable internet coverage. This loss of an entire school year will have long-term consequences for literacy levels, especially where girls' education is concerned. Meanwhile, the pandemic — with 'work from home' directives and curtailed freedom of movement — also threw together victims and perpetrators of domestic violence and sexual abuse in close proximity for extended periods of time, leading to a spike in these crimes.
- On January 18, the director-general of the World Health Organization, Tedros Ghebreyesus, noted that more than 39 million doses of COVID-19 vaccine had been administered in at least 49 higher-income countries. By contrast, he said, "Just 25 doses have been given in one lowest-income country. Not 25 million; not 25 thousand; just 25."
- The impact of this inequality is visible as the developed world has completely vaccinated one in every four people, while the Global South has barely managed to vaccinate one in 500, according to the WHO. The longer the vaccine rollout takes the chances of a mutated vaccine-resistant version spreading globally increases, taking us all back to square one.
- According to reports from the New York Times, the pace of cremations is so ceaseless that the iron grills on which the bodies are placed for the purposes of cremation have started to melt.
- How did everything go so wrong so soon after **India** recovered from the first wave of the pandemic last year, resumed normal life and economic activity, and started exporting vaccines? The list of errors is long.
- Begin with symbolism over substance. On national television, Prime Minister Narendra Modi urged Indians to bang plates together. Two weeks later, he instructed them to light lamps at a specific moment. Superstition replaced science-based policies in confronting the pandemic.
- Modi also enlisted Hindu nationalism in the fight against COVID-19. Just as the epic Mahabharata war was won in 18 days, he claimed, India would win the war against the coronavirus in 21 days. At no point was this based on anything more than wishful thinking.
- Another error was ignoring the World Health Organization's advice. From the start of the crisis, the WHO recommended a containment strategy that required testing, contact tracing, isolation, and treatment. While a handful of states, like Kerala (which recorded India's first COVID-19 case on January 30, 2020), initially implemented such measures successfully, the Modi government's ham-handed response resulted in their uneven application in several states.

- Then there was over-centralization. From the first nationwide lockdown, announced by Modi in March 2020 with less than four hours' notice, the central government managed the pandemic under obscure provisions of the Epidemic Diseases Act and the Disaster Management Act, which allowed it to ride roughshod over India's federal structure. Instead of delegating India's 28 state governments the authority to design strategies tailored to local conditions, the central government tried to manage COVID-19 by decree from Delhi, with calamitous results.
 - Although India produces 60% of the world's vaccines, the government took no steps to scale up production of the two COVID-19 vaccines cleared for manufacture in the country. Nor did it permit the import of foreign vaccines, help expand available manufacturing facilities, or license other Indian firms to produce doses. India launched its vaccination drive nearly two months after the United Kingdom, but by April, only 37% of health workers, and barely 1.3% of India's 1.4 billion people, had been fully vaccinated. Only 8% had received at least one vaccine shot.
 - Here, too, the authorities initially bet on centralization, and its refusal to grant emergency-use approval to vaccines from abroad led to a nationwide shortage of vaccines by mid-April. It was only at this point that the government delegated the vaccine roll-out to state governments and public and private hospitals and permitted the import of vaccines approved by the United States, the UK, the European Union, Russia, and Japan. Even then, the central government failed to distribute vaccines equitably to the various states, resulting in some of the worst-affected (like opposition-ruled Maharashtra and Kerala) running short of vaccines as cases peaked.
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- Travel policies, too, can produce their own absurdities, especially when exceptions are made for the influential and the well connected. The United Kingdom, for example, recently instituted a complete travel ban, but exempted "essential" business travel. Accordingly, some suddenly deemed it essential to look after property abroad. The "Stanley Johnson loophole" was born, so named for Prime Minister Boris Johnson's father, who had justified traveling to Greece on these grounds.
 - The pandemic afforded these countries an opportunity to strengthen their healthcare sector through the construction of new hospitals, updating to contemporary technology and improved training for healthcare workers on infectious diseases.
 - Secondly, innovation was at a record high with people looking for alternatives to ensure survival, especially following the disruption of economic activity. In Kenya, some people made masks in their homes for sale or to give away to those that could not afford them. Some textile factories repurposed towards the production of masks and personal protective equipment aiming to supply millions of them to the public and healthcare workers.
 - Frequent hand-washing has reduced the spread of such diseases as typhoid, influenza, cholera and diphtheria.
 - Negative impacts: unemployment, reduction of tourism, worsening food insecurity and poverty, gender inequality, racism, reduction of aid.
 - **North South divide:** The economic, social, technological and power gap between the global north and global south is likely to grow wider the longer the pandemic goes, and the developing countries will face the harder end of this gap. While the pandemic has not wreaked the havoc (fatality and infection rates) it was predicted to especially in Africa, the long term economic impact may turn out to be devastating. Aid packages from the North are dwindling, trade volume is also

decreasing, and these governments may not be able to sustain their poor populations for very long, leaving them to chronic food insecurity, malnutrition and poor access to basic goods and services (UNCTAD, 2020).

- The gap between the global north and south may always exist, but that does not necessarily mean that the south is doomed to remain as relatively underdeveloped as it is. The COVID-19 pandemic has had varied impacts on both sides, but the north is likely to have a relatively easier time recovering from it compared to the south. For instance, before the pandemic, many countries in the south, especially Africa, were highly indebted to the foreign donors, and that debt has increased exponentially to mitigate the cost of policy responses towards COVID-19 (Sallent, 2020). Even with debt standstill or postponement, developing countries are very likely to default on repayment since their economies, which were already struggling with depreciating currencies, unsustainable debt and high fiscal deficits (Njoroge, 2020), will take a long time to recover.
- To mitigate the impact of the pandemic, it is time the global south, particularly Africa, cleaned house and took initiative for its own development. Primarily, the dependence on aid from the West which has evidently caused more harm than good needs to be severed; alternatively, Africa could lean into its innovative potential to benefit from its considerable wealth in natural resources and a resilient and youthful workforce. Secondly, it is imperative that systems of accountability begin to work in favour of the citizens to reduce corruption and mismanagement of public funds, actions which have gravely affected the trajectory of the pandemic in developing countries.
- the extant vaccine nationalism magnifies the longstanding inequality between developed and developing countries.
- China, it has been reported in the Western press, has offered Paraguay vaccines in exchange for cutting off diplomatic relations with Taiwan. China has denied the allegation and Taiwan and the US have since stepped in to help Paraguay with its vaccine shortages. But vaccines and politics are intersecting like never before. It has also been reported, for instance, that in a secret deal, Israel had paid Russia to send Sputnik jabs to Syria in exchange for a prisoner swap.
- Countries with the highest inoculations tend to count amongst the richest: Israel, the United Kingdom, the United Arab Emirates, the United States, to name but a few.
- it entails the pandemic will linger for at least three more years and become endemic to the wretched of the earth.
- in response to criticisms as to why it takes from COVAX, Canada's international development minister, Karina Gould, retorted that 'Canada made the decision, as other countries have, to take on this first allocation, because we recognise how important it is that all Canadians have access to vaccines.' So much for a nation lauded as one of the most tolerant in the world.
- To ignore the drowning children – probably because they are not our compatriots and do not fall within the realm of those we should care for – when they most need our assistance is to detract from our moral obligation to make the world a secure space for everyone to flourish.
- But there is an economic reason for why wealthier nations should care about the inoculation of the global precariat: If the pandemic is not brought under control everywhere global economic prosperity will decline and both rich and poor nations will suffer as a result. Supply chains will be disrupted. Of course, the poorest will degenerate further, but even the richest nations will feel the heat. Indeed, it is estimated that, devoid of the global distribution of vaccines, high-income nations and regions will lose \$119 billion annually; and, globally, over \$1.2 trillion will be lost.

- vaccine apartheid,” as UNAIDS Executive Director Winnie Byanyima calls it, means that rich countries will most likely achieve widespread vaccination coverage and economic recovery sooner, leaving poor countries far behind.
- The US alone is reputed to have the capacity to produce 4.7 billion doses by the end of 2021 – four billion more than America needs. Again, according to Amnesty International, the G7 will have “three billion doses surplus to requirement by the end [of 2021].”
- Where are those doses going? Apparently to wealthy customers. This includes 1.8 billion doses committed to the EU for “booster shots,” as reported by Varsha Gandikota-Nellutla of Progressive International.
- Meanwhile, there’s China, and at a smaller scale, Russia. China currently is vaccinating more than ten million people per day – an accelerating pace that will cover their entire population this year. In 2022, China could produce up to five billion doses for the world – enough for India and Africa combined. Meanwhile, Chinese producers are determined to build production sites worldwide, beginning recently in Egypt. And Russia has plans to produce over 850 million doses of Sputnik V in India alone this year. That’s just about the same as the entire G7 commitment – and it will happen sooner.
- I would say that all of this is unprecedented, but it’s not. In the cold and hungry European winter of 1947-48, Jan Masaryk, the Czechoslovak foreign minister, pleaded with the US for food shipments. The US dithered, imposing conditions. Klement Gottwald, head of the Czechoslovak Communist Party, appealed to Joseph Stalin, who put 300,000 tons of wheat onto trains. Czechoslovakia fell under full communist control in February 1948.

RELATIONS

Pak-India relations

- REPORTS emerging from India about the theft of uranium and possible sale on the black market should be a cause for concern for the international community. According to reports in the Indian media, police had arrested members of a gang in the eastern state of Jharkhand who were trying to sell several kilos of uranium — a key ingredient of nuclear weapons — while a similar incident occurred recently in Nagpur, Maharashtra.
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- Pakistan’s Foreign Office has rightly highlighted this important issue, calling for a “thorough investigation into such incidents” while adding that the reports “point to lax controls ... as well as possible existence of a black market for nuclear materials”.
- India has filed a claim in the EU seeking a geographical indication tag for Basmati rice, a move opposed by neighbouring Pakistan, which has filed its own request for protected geographical indication.
- A geographical indication is a label applied to products with a specific geographical origin that has qualities or reputation essentially based on the natural and human factors of their origin.
- Pakistani and Indian exporters, however, believe that joint ownership of Basmati is the only viable solution to the dispute.
- unearthing by EU DisinfoLab of the vast anti-Pakistan disinformation and propaganda network run by India

1. Defame and discredit Pakistan in international forums and media.
 2. Shape the international as well as domestic narrative with regard to Pakistan.
 3. Defang Pakistan's ability to influence international human rights forums, principally at the UN and EU, with regard to India's egregious human rights violations in Indian-occupied and illegally held Kashmir.
 4. Divert Pakistan-bound investment, exports, tourism to weaken the country's economy.
- Pakistan's population is the target for two additional aims of the Indian campaign (5th gen warfare/ hybrid warfare)
 1. Drive a wedge between the populace and the armed forces.
 2. Deflate the morale of the Pakistani nation.
 - Modi's edifice complex (expansion of Indian Parliament)
 - two fresh developments have posed further questions. Firstly, the Foreign Office has said the Saarc summit, due to be held in Pakistan in October, can take place if "artificial obstacles" are removed, in a thinly veiled reference to India. In the second, more ominous development, the US National Intelligence Council has said Pakistan and India may "stumble" into a large-scale war within the next five years.
 - It's not for the first time that after a long stand-off India and Pakistan have agreed to normalise relations through secret negotiations. The history of the Indo-Pak ties is chequered with breakups and new beginnings, and stuff like that. In the distant past, when the nuclear tests – conducted by India and Pakistan in May 1998 – jeopardised their ties, a track II dialogue involving non-officials with the support of their respective governments led to Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee visiting to Lahore in February 1999. The attack on the Indian Parliament on December 13, 2001 resulted in a prolonged stand-off, with one million forces from the two countries locked in an eyeball-to-eyeball contact on their mutual border. India banned its airspace for Pakistani planes; cut off road, rail and air links; and downgraded diplomatic relations with the country. But the breakthroughs that followed – like India and Pakistan agreeing to normalise relations and cease fire along the line of control; and Vajpayee visiting Islamabad to participate in SAARC summit in January 2004 – were the result of backchannel negotiations in Bangkok and elsewhere.
 - The current stand-off between India and Pakistan after the Uri attack in occupied Kashmir in September 2016 is the longest thus far, as it also include the Balakot and Pulwama incidents of February 2019 and annexation of Jammu & Kashmir in the Indian Union on August 5, 2019 under Jammu & Kashmir Reorganization Act. After the Uri attack, India suspended the composite dialogue with Pakistan and along with Afghanistan, Bangladesh and Bhutan boycotted 19th SAARC summit which was to be held in Islamabad in November 2016. Following the illegal absorption of occupied Kashmir in the Indian Union, Pakistan downgraded its diplomatic relations with India and suspended trade and travel ties with its eastern neighbour. Now, almost two years after the illegal August 5, 2019 annexation, there is rethinking on the part of Pakistan and India to resume the process of dialogue. Pakistan decided to import sugar and cotton from India a month ago, but when critics raised a hue and cry against the decision, the summary forwarded to the cabinet for endorsing the import from India was withdrawn.
 - The Indus Water Treaty talks were held between the water commissioners of India and Pakistan in March after two years to discuss the future of hydroelectric power plants being constructed by India in occupied Kashmir, as Pakistan has the right to raise objections on the design of the dams built by India on the rivers designated to it for unrestricted use.

- <https://www.dawn.com/news/1627204/india-policy-revisited>

People to people diplomacy

- #PakistanStandsWithIndia and #IndiaNeedsOxygen became top trending hashtags on Twitter in both countries; Eidhi offering 50 ambulances, govt offered ppe, ventilators; pawri meme

Islamabad Security Dialogue

- The first-ever Islamabad Security Dialogue (ISD) was held in Islamabad on March 17-18, 2021, under the National Security Division of the Government of Pakistan, in collaboration with various think tanks. Sessions were devoted to comprehensive national security, economic security, human security, regional peace and security, and the evolving world order and Pakistan.
- Pakistan's own experience has been that despite having a highly professional armed forces and being a nuclear power, due to a weak economy it has to rely on foreign assistance that imperils its national power and inhibits decision-making. I know the pain this government went through right at the start when we had to go to Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Abu Dhabi and put our hand out. Where is your national security, where is your influence when you have to ask to be saved? It is pretty embarrassing," Abdul Razzak Dawood (PM's advisor on commerce) said in a candid speech at the Islamabad Security Dialogue. The context of his statement was to highlight the fact that countries which lacked economic security often ended up compromising their sovereignty.
- Imran noted Pakistan's continuing willingness to talk, while reminding that the ball was now in the Indian court. Gen Bajwa went as far as saying that "it is time to bury the past and move forward." Bilateral relations have been hostage to the Kashmir dispute. Neither side is willing to budge on their position, and apart from a few rare instances, the insistence on including Kashmir in all discussions has caused bilateral talks to regularly get derailed.
- If New Delhi can prove it is upholding basic human rights obligations in Occupied Kashmir — which it is not at the moment — talks on issues unrelated to the disputed region should occur. One of the most notable examples is Gibraltar, the subject of a 300-year long dispute between the United Kingdom and Spain. After fighting several wars over the Iberian territory, both sides moved forward and have maintained close diplomatic and even military ties for several years, despite the dispute remaining unresolved — at least from the Spanish point of view.
- Still, India and Pakistan getting along is in the economic and security interests of the entire region, if not the world. Gen Bajwa did reference this when he spoke of the aftermath of World War Two, when he spoke of the advantages of working towards economic security and cooperation instead of cold wars that only bring pain and suffering.
- Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi has also expressed Pakistan's desire to step away from geopolitical competition and rivalries in favour of the pursuit of co-existence and win-win cooperation.
- The stated security paradigm contains a geo-economic vision as its foundation, with three pillars, namely: lasting and enduring peace within and outside, non-interference of any kind (in the internal affairs of neighbouring and regional countries), and boosting intra-regional trade and connectivity. The last pillar in particular is the most critical, articulated through CPEC's North-South routes. Pakistan seeks to extend CPEC to Central/Western Asia as an energy and trade corridor. It will in the process, re-energise the Afghan-Pakistan Transit Trade.

- A STRATEGIC and potentially transformative shift is occurring in Pakistan, as the country's policymakers try to pivot away from geopolitics to geoeconomics. Winning at geoeconomics, however, is more complicated than winning at geopolitics. Aligning with a superpower to fight a war is easier, since all you need to do is open up supply lines and manage relations at the state level. On the other hand, securing even a paltry \$100 million investment for a manufacturing plant requires policy and bureaucracy to work in sync across areas ranging from taxation and power generation to land procurement and labour regulations. Geopolitics is also a seller's market — there are limited options when it comes to gaining access to Afghanistan — while geoeconomics is a buyer's market where countries from Rwanda to Indonesia are competing for a finite pool of investment and trade dollars.
- India's economy is the seventh largest in the world. The Western and Arab countries are India's investment partners on a reciprocal basis. The Gulf countries have invested in India to the tune of \$100 billion. This economic success has been one of the significant reasons behind Pakistan's failure at the United Nations Security Council on the issue of Kashmir. The United Nations Human Rights Commissioner had released two consecutive reports, in 2018 and 2019, on human rights violations in Kashmir. Still, all five Security Council members have been standing behind India.
- What is it that makes India the darling of the West and the Gulf countries? The answer lies in India's foreign policy, which has primarily been prejudiced against any external intervention in its strategic interests. From opting to support the nonaligned movement to becoming the United States' strategic partner to balance China's rising power in the region, India's policies provided a stable and profit-driven milieu to foreign investors. Nehru's protectionist trade policies had been instrumental in establishing India's industrial base, building upon which the future governments introduced market liberalisation reforms that internationally strengthened the competitiveness of the Indian economy. This trajectory gradually led India to become a member of 20 significant economies of the world.
- In all likelihood, India's peace initiatives are dictated by immediate compulsions as the country is facing an economic squeeze and the maltreatment of minorities is raising serious international concern. The forceful uprising in Kashmir is another major factor influencing its recent gestures of peace. Perhaps one reason is that the Biden administration has privately advised India to lower temperatures with Pakistan so that it can focus on collaborating with the United States against China in the Asia-Pacific. Another more important reason could be that after the Indian military's confrontation with China in Ladakh, the Modi government has realised the perils of a two-front confrontation with Pakistan and China.
- **Other side of the coin:** Past experiences demonstrate that whenever India comes under international criticism for its repression in Kashmir and consequent tensions with Pakistan, it engages in talks with Pakistan, arguing that this is a bilateral issue and the international community should not interfere. But in the talks, India maintains that Kashmir is an "internal" issue and the only subject to be discussed is Pakistan's support to Kashmiri "terrorists". The dialogue thus becomes an endless circular argument. Even on other issues, such as Siachen, Sir Creek or the Wullar Barrage, the Indians adopt inflexible positions and refuse compromising solutions. On several past occasions, India has even reneged on agreed solutions, such as in the case of Siachen.
- Another key objective for India has been to use the dialogue process to demoralise the Kashmiris by signaling that Pakistan has abandoned them and that their only hope is a union with India. Yet

another diversionary tactic is to propose that the difficult issues like Kashmir be set aside while progress can be made on soft issues like trade and people-to-people contact. The purpose is to create a façade of normalisation behind which repression of the Kashmiris can continue.

- Modi's India perceives itself as a global power, with American backing. It, therefore, requires Pakistan's capitulation and subservience like other South Asian states. In this environment, Pakistan's relations with India cannot improve. On the contrary, Pakistan will be asked to not only abandon its position on Kashmir but also to accept Indian dictation on its foreign relations, such as with China.
- Pakistan should not put its faith in the US either. Due to the Indo-US strategic convergence against China, Washington's geo-political interests will continue to override its principles about human rights or Pakistan's national interests.
- The foregoing is not to argue against resumption of a dialogue with India, at least to test the waters. But Pakistan should do so with the confidence of a nuclear-armed state with credible deterrence against India. While it does have its challenges, India too faces several problems. Externally, it has to contend with a two-front confrontation with China and Pakistan. In occupied Kashmir, it has failed for decades to overcome a popular uprising. Internally, several Indian states are beset with raging insurgencies. Modi's propagation of the fascist Hindutva agenda has divided the country and alienated 200 million Muslims, apart from tarnishing India's secular credentials. His economic policies combined with mishandling of the Covid pandemic has slowed down economic growth, increasing the number of Indians below the poverty line. India, then, is not the great power that it pretends to be and it is certainly not in a position to dictate to Pakistan.
- Therefore, while engaging with India, Pakistan must not compromise on its principled position. Pakistan should also engage directly with the Kashmiris and take them into confidence so that they do not feel betrayed. It should also consult with China which has a major stake in Kashmir and the Pakistan-India dialogue. This would further strengthen Pakistan's negotiating position. Above all, the Pakistani people need to be taken fully into confidence since any outcome in the dialogue process must have national support.
- "the interests of decision-making elite in power always clashes with the interests of the people they represent" writes American historian Jarred Diamond, the author of the 2019 famous book *Upheaval: How nations cope with crisis and change*. He also writes that although the people suffer with what the elites decide and do, elites never suffer as they "insulate themselves from the consequences of their action". No wonder, Nawaz is in London, Pervez Musharraf in Dubai and all others who should have been in prisons are living comfortable lives in their beautiful mansions and dazzling palaces. Yet none of them "sold Kashmir". That they sold the future of our children is something they will never be asked.
- Long-term issues like 'Kashmir' that earn no immediate political capital to the politicians have their place only on the backburner. Politics prefer to handle issues that respond to short-term fixes and earns politics the political capital and so the politics of short-termism continues to murder the possibilities of any reform for long-term issues like Kashmir.
- Democracies of today have become 'Twitterocacies'. In these 'Twitterocacies' it is all about engaging in a constant reputational warfare, about putting up democratic defence against why nothing is compromised and sold on social media and cable news channels. 'Kashmir cause sold' is more tweet-worthy and can create greater political drama and reputational costs so there is no

need to import sugar and cotton from India because political reputation and standing is more important than giving people any economic relief.

- Given India's economic might and new-found strategic significance, Pakistan's diplomatic advances cannot pull in anything more than a statement of condemnation of the human rights violations in Kashmir from some friendly countries. To a certain extent, narrative certainly matters but building it requires reputation, influence, time and consistency. Vilified for allegedly sponsoring terrorism and reliant on external financial assistance to stay solvent, our opinion lacks the power to make substantial difference.
- What other leverage can Pakistan exercise to bring India's helter-skelter missions in Kashmir to an end? No talks and trade until reinstatement of the state's special status? A weak country can also not be cowed into accepting such preconditions for dialogue let alone an aspirant for regional and global leadership. Grandstanding may earn momentary plaudits but it does not help solve pressing issues. We may have near nuclear parity with India but that home to 1.3 billion people is set to become the world's third largest economy by the end of the decade with a GDP of over \$5 trillion.
- Recognising the limitations of one's choices is not defeatism. It is pragmatism. Let us turn to our 'all-weather' friend for a dose of wisdom. In 1978, president Deng Xiaoping relocated the fulcrum of China's foreign policy from ideology to domestic economic growth. This called for a benign external environment; thus, rather than rushing to sort out multiple problems of disputed sovereignty, he enjoined to shelf those challenges for future generations whose greater national power will give them greater leverage to settle disagreements with its neighbours in China's favour. One only needs to look at the statistics. In four decades, the country's poverty rate has declined from 90% to 0.6%. Today, China's large consumer market has become the ultimate arbiter of the regional geopolitical game. The colossal volume of trade and tourism between the Middle Kingdom and its adversaries does not mean the former has given up its historical claim to Taiwan or the Senkaku Islands, for instance, nor does it dampen the patriotic sentiment of its citizens and leaders.
- THE road to peace in South Asia runs through Kashmir. This was the gist of Prime Minister Imran Khan's message while speaking to a foreign newswire on Friday. "If there is a road map [on Kashmir], then, yes, we will talk", the PM told Reuters while discussing Pakistan-India relations. Mr Khan added that if India was willing to revert to the status quo ante, before it moved to rescind the held region's autonomous status in 2019, bilateral parleys could move forward.

Kashmir

- George Orwell, in Nineteen Eighty-Four, had a term for people whose lives didn't matter and whose deaths and disappearances could not be discussed: they were called unpeople. The Palestinians and the Kashmiris are the real-life unpeople.
- PM Modi met with 14 top political leaders including Omar Abdullah and Mehbooba mufti; urged leaders to participate in delimitation of constituencies so elections can be held quickly; Omar said, In other states, delimitation will be taken up in 2026, why has Jammu and Kashmir been singled

out? Ms Mufti had raised the issue of the restoration of Article 370 in the moot, though Mr Modi said a return to full 'statehood' would come "at the right time".

- 15000 acres land grabbed in name of tourism by Indian govt
- introduction of new domicile laws to change demography
- pro Indian Kashmiri leaders now against govt (Farooq Abdullah mehbooba mufti) There was a young lady of Niger/ Who smiled as she rode on a tiger;/ They returned from the ride/ With the lady inside,/ And the smile on the face of the tiger. William Cosmo Monkhouse's notorious limerick pretty much sums up situation of Pro Indian leaders
- GB as fifth province would be violation of UN security council resolutions and 73 constitution
- OIC passed resolution in its 47th session of council of foreign minister reaffirming its strong support for Kashmir cause
- LOC situation (3000 ceasefire violations 2020 FO; UN Military Observer Group's vehicle targeted
- NY Assembly Passes 'Kashmir American Day' Resolution
- While Urdu had been the official language of IOK for over a hundred years, last year the Indian Union government passed the bill to introduce Hindi and Dogri as official languages too. It is evident in South Asian history that Urdu has always been seen as the 'language of the Muslims', especially as many religious scriptures were written in Urdu. The attempt by the government to erode away Urdu in IOK is undermining Islam in the region. Moreover, there have been attacks on the culture of the Kashmiris as well, such as the ban of the traditional Kashmiri attire, pheran.
- Believing that the world will be suddenly up in arms over human rights violations in Kashmir is naïve, when it otherwise remains silent as the Rohingya are being forced to settle on an uninhabitable island, as Syrian children escaping conflict drown in the Mediterranean or as Israeli settlers bulldoze Palestinian homes.
- Historically and factually, Article 370 came into effect in 1949 which exempted Jammu and Kashmir State from the Indian constitution. That article, according to Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah who is called the Lion of Kashmir and the first Prime Minister of J&K, became the basis of the relationship between the Indian state and the state of J&K. That article allowed the Indian-administered region jurisdiction to make its own laws in all matters except finance, defence, foreign affairs and communications.
- Likewise, Article 370 established a separate constitution and a separate flag and denied property rights in the region to outsiders which meant that the residents of the state lived under different laws from the rest of the country in matters such as property ownership and citizenship. That was the special status which was given to the Indian occupied J&K in 1949 which diminished with the passage of time. Prime Minister was replaced with Chief Minister, and President with Governor. With each passing day, the erosion of the writ of Article 370 led to a direct control of occupied J&K by the Indian state as most of the times since 1970s Governor's rule was imposed by New Delhi. Consequently, Article 370 which provided special status to occupied J&K as compared to other Indian states became a piece of paper which was ultimately revoked by the Modi regime on August 5, 2019.
- As far as Article 35-A is concerned, it was introduced through a presidential order in 1954 to continue the old provisions of the territory regulations under Article 370 of the Indian constitution and permitted the local legislature in the disputed territory to define permanent residents of the region. It forbade outsiders from permanently settling in the occupied territory, buying land there, getting local government jobs and security education scholarships. The article, referred to as the

Permanent Residents Law, also bars female residents of the occupied region from property rights in the event that they marry a person from outside the state. The provision also extends to such women's children.

- While analysing articles 370 and 35-A, it becomes clear that the former was the essential source of legitimacy which India derived while maintaining its association with occupied J&K and its importance cannot be relegated. That article thus cannot be termed India's internal matter because as rightly stated by Mehbooba Mufti, a former chief Minister of occupied J&K, by revoking Article 370, India lost its legal and legitimate status over the disputed territory. She asserted that after the revocation of Article 370, Kashmiris are not bound to maintain their association with India and without reversing the August 5, 2019 acts by the Modi regime, things cannot be normalised.

Legal position of Indian occupation

- Firstly, the territory's forcible occupation by India is based on an illegal instrument of accession signed by the last maharaja who had fled to New Delhi fearing an uprising by Kashmiris who wanted to accede to Pakistan in October 1947. Following this, India sent its troops into Srinagar and illegally occupied the territory.
- Pakistan's claim about the illegal instrument of accession is based on three plausible arguments: Indian government failed to produce the original document and always presented a copy; as per the principle of Partition, Muslim-majority areas were to be part of Pakistan; and if Indian illegal occupation is accepted in the case of J&K, then the decisions of Junagarh and Hyderabad Deccan to align with Pakistan have to be accepted as well.
- Secondly, the legal position recognises that the territory of J&K is disputed and the situation is of an illegal occupation by India. Article 42 of the 1907 Hague Regulations states, "A territory is considered occupied when placed under the authority of a hostile army." It is evident that the Indian army has been hostile and brutal in J&K since 1947.
- Thirdly, India being an occupational force is bound by international humanitarian laws, which were violated by the Indian revocation of articles 35 and 370. Since then, Kashmiris are under a continuous siege and curfew.
- Fourthly, the infinite curfew and communication blackout in Kashmir since August 5, 2019 worsened the situation when the Covid-19 pandemic hit. This situation indicates a clear violation of the law of Kashmir and international law. Article 47 of the Geneva Convention IV says, "Agreements made between an occupying power and local authorities cannot deprive the population of the occupied territory from the protection afforded by the international humanitarian law." According to the Geneva Convention, "the occupying power must respect the existing laws in an occupied territory", and "the occupying power must ensure sufficient hygiene and public health standards... provision of food and medical care to population under occupation". Whereas, humanitarian agencies like WHO were denied access to J&K, the fundamental religious freedom of Kashmiris was curtailed, and access to media, diplomats and activists was denied.
- The Indian government's denial of granting the universal right of self-determination to people of J&K is against the spirit of UN and its resolutions 1541 and 2625.
- The government's action of changing the demography of J&K is also against international laws. The current regime has not only shattered India's secular image but also the philosophies of

Gandhi and Nehru. Allowing non-Kashmiris to gain permanent residence in J&K is a deliberate attempt to change the land's demography where now non-Muslims would subjugate Muslims. Similarly, Indian forces are transporting the 'Hindutva' extremists to J&K to force the local people either to be displaced or accept new laws.

- Finally, the Simla Accord offers a resolution through bilateral means. This was used by the Indian government to deny a third-party mediation. However, in August 2019, India also violated the Simla Accord.
- The UN's 27th report on terrorism identifies India as a source of terrorism within its own boundaries and in the region. Organising and patronising terrorist activities in the region shows strong evidence that India is a rogue state that threatens the peace, security, freedom and prosperity of its people and the people of J&K.

Way forward

- As we have seen, the issue of the Falkland Islands was resolved after 181 years through a referendum under UN supervision. Similar privileges should be given to the people of Kashmir

Pak-China

- In 2003, both countries conducted maritime exercises and it was the first time in the history of China when People's Liberation Army (PLA) participated in any kind of naval exercise with a foreign country.
- In 2005, Pakistan and China signed a treaty of friendship and good relations. This was a serious treaty in its nature, because word "strategic" was used in this treaty for the first time in the bilateral ties of both countries. According to one of the clauses of the treaty, "Both countries shall actively develop and consolidate their bilateral strategic ties of good neighbourly friendship and mutually beneficial cooperation". Chinese also assured Pakistan that China would protect Pakistan's territorial sovereignty.
- Jf-17; 1990s exported missile tech to pak despite US pressure
- In 2001, when the situation worsened in Chinese province of Xinjiang, President Musharraf went to China and visited Xinjiang and asked Muslim community to cooperate with the Chinese government. Again in 2009, when riots erupted in Xinjiang, Pakistan supported the Chinese stance and played a pivotal role in OIC not to take notice of Xinjiang in the annual summit. Even Pakistani religious parties did not take notice of Xinjiang riots, JUI-F and JI supported Chinese stance over Xinjiang.
- China asked Washington to respect Pakistani sovereignty, and any pre-planned move against Pakistan would be considered a move against Beijing. The US received warning from Beijing for the first time, and China for the first time announced such kind of support for any of its neighbouring countries. {Abbottabad}

Pak-Iran

- Raja Ghazanfar Ali Khan (quaid's close friend) first ambassador to Iran
- Iran-Iraq war Pak supported Iran
- Islamic rev received blessing from Pak
- 3 lacs pilgrims visit Iran every year

- Border of peace, friendship, and love
- THE two key takeaways from Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi's trip to Iran on Wednesday were the need for better border security and trade relations between Islamabad and Tehran.
- The fact is that the Pakistan-Iran relationship, though amiable for the most part, has not been able to grow to its full potential. There are various reasons for this, most of them being geopolitical. While both states share a long border and centuries of cultural, linguistic and religious ties, these links have failed to translate into robust bilateral trade relations. President Rouhani hinted at "unimplemented agreements" standing in the way of better trade ties, specifically mentioning the stalled Iran-Pakistan gas pipeline project. Pakistan has been wary of attracting US sanctions and annoying friends and benefactors in the Arab world by getting too close to Iran in the post-1979 era. However, it needs to explain to its friends that one relationship does not need to come at the cost of the other.
- Official Pakistan-Iran trade is only in the region of a few hundred million dollars. This figure can grow manifold if both states decide to significantly improve trade ties. For example, there is a thriving informal border trade in Balochistan. If this were formalised and the requisite facilities provided in this underdeveloped part of the country, it could bring jobs to the impoverished region. While the opening of a third border crossing at Pishin-Mand is a welcome move, many more such points are required, along with infrastructure — roads, utilities, shops catering to the needs of traders and travellers — to facilitate trade. If trade brings with it economic prosperity, security concerns can also be lessened as locals on both sides of the border are provided employment.
- A geostrategic cooperation can emerge btw Three regional giants (south asia; east asia; middle east) pak, china ME
- Iran's natural resources ancient history cultural ties with CARs; China's economic boost, veto power, global influence, connectivity inventiveness; Pak's nuclear power, emerging regional hub (economy, defence), geopolitical regional vitality
- Afg (iran supports northern alliance; pak supports Taliban)
- China scared instability in afg may spill over to its Xinjiang region
- Latest china iran agreement

Pak-US relationship

- The needle seems to have moved, even if slightly, on the matter of the Pak-US relationship.
- Pakistani and us national security advisors met in Geneva in may; Jake Sullivan and Moeed Yusuf; improving bilateral relations, India, Afghanistan and economic cooperation were discussed
- The latest Amnesty International report entitled 'The State of the World's Human Rights' has sounded the warning that it is from democracy that megalomaniac dictators emerge. Based on a close scrutiny of the rights situation in 149 countries, the report depicts a depressing picture of human rights in around half of these states, as most of these countries used the coronavirus pandemic as a pretext to curtail fundamental rights of their peoples with the aim of making their grip on power unassailable. Such states have overtly flouted the boundaries marked under the doctrine of separation of powers. These observations are corroborated by court judgments, reports of civil liberties organisations and investigative media stories of these countries. The US

and India have come under scathing criticism from Amnesty. Many Muslims have been arrested under the National Security Act for cow slaughter. As many as 16 judges of the Allahabad High Court ruled the detentions unlawful and said the NSA was used without application of mind. Sedition laws are being used so indiscriminately to silence the regime's critics that it is being said that now anti-state people far outnumber patriots.

- Relationship of convenience
- Both were moving in same direction for diff reasons
- Us was guided by its global policy of containing communism and pak was motivated by problem of national security and defense
- This asymmetrical diplomacy gave rise to mistrust
- 71 turning point for pak and tilt towards china (betrayal by usa)
- Breakup of pak affected south asia's political dynamics in three ways
 - India emerged as leading/dominant power in the region
 - Pak's insecurity towards India intensified leading to the idea of strategic depth
 - 'fear of hindu idea' drifted pak towards the policy of islamization
- The idea behind strategic depth is
 - Offset india's influence in afg by install pak friendly govt
 - Replace Pashtun nationalist and separatist sentiment with Islamism
 - Keep the Durand line contested
 - By training and preserving ideological non-state actors for pak's regional policy objectives
- Indians have promoted their interests cunningly while americans have acted out of stupidity
- Signing of BECA entails both countries (US/IND) to share all kinds of military information, aero-space, geomagnetic and gravity data, sensitive satellite and sensor data
- Reactive posture of our foreign policy must be converted to preemptive
- Isb, Beijing, Moscow must chalk a comprehensive policy to deter ill designs of the US/IND
- [Pak-US relations and the nuclear factor \(tribune.com.pk\)](http://tribune.com.pk)
- excluding Pakistan from the climate summit is a deliberate political snub from the new US administration (Bangladesh, India & Bhutan invited)
- the Foreign Office claimed that it was because Pakistan — despite being one of the most climate change-sensitive countries in the world — was not among the world's largest polluters, or the most sensitive country in the region. If we were to accept this, it would make sense for the foreign ministry to arrange talks with Kerry when he was scheduling meetings with leaders in this part of the world. Instead, we learn that while India, Bangladesh and the UAE all made the list for Kerry's stopovers, Pakistan did not. The fact of the matter is that the invite list for the summit also includes all of the world's 10 most populous countries, except Pakistan.
- Although it was clear and comes as no surprise that US interest in Pakistan would recede as it withdraws from Afghanistan. Recently speaking in a seminar in Islamabad, the former US ambassador to Pakistan, Cameron Munter, who has deep insight of the region, repeatedly mentioned that Pakistan is no more relevant to Washington. He added that its importance is only in the context of Afghanistan.
- In the past our nuclear programme was the focus of US attention, albeit for the wrong reasons, but with Pakistan having taken effective measures for safety and security it is no more an issue. In fact, its safety regime is considered better than its neighbour.

- Pakistan's economy though has a great potential but at present is too weak and would take a few years before it would attract the US market.
- The attitude of the US toward Pakistan is largely being influenced by its rivalry with China. Pakistan is considered too close to Beijing and any interaction that helps Pakistan is considered as strengthening its strategic ally also.
- there are strong anti-Pakistan and pro-Indian lobbies in the US Congress and think tanks that influence the US in shaping and determining policy. Moreover, there is a strong anti-Muslim and pro-Israel lobby in the US power structure that lends further bias against Pakistan.
- History is replete with examples where the US has influenced various countries to promote its interests and later discarded them to face the ignominy of squalor, poverty, and underdevelopment, etc. It has also been observed that various autocratic leaders and political parties were the recipients of US munificence for their undivided support which resulted in short-term benefits and long-term complications. Such autocratic leaders tend to form coalitions with other elites to legitimize their incumbency as well as to ensure the longevity of power. These coalitions come at a great cost of bad governance.
- The concept of the "**alliance curse**", presented by Hilton L. Root in 2008, explains that once asymmetric alliances between first and third world countries are agreed upon based on improving the well-being of both countries. This provides gains for both countries at first. The superpower country benefits in lieu of its political and military influence, and gains policy concessions, such as cheap oil, UN votes, military bases or access to strategic routes from the third world country; these gains are highly lauded within the superpower country. The third world partner with an autocratic regime gains a sponsor and a strong supporter which provides protection, the much-needed economic aid, military aid, and abundant credit.
- This scenario, though, seems like a fair alliance of mutual benefit but as time progresses it becomes a curse for the population residing within the third world partner-country.
- The concept is derived from the notion of "**resource curse**", also known as the 'paradox of plenty'
- The concept discusses the irony that natural resource rich countries having large deposits of fossil fuels and precious minerals, tend to exhibit lower levels of economic growth, develop lower democratic traditions, and have poorer mechanisms for development in comparison with countries having fewer natural resources.
- Many reasons have been cited for the lack of democratization, lower levels of economic growth, and development. The reason which has gained most traction is that natural resource wealth within a developing country breeds corruption and corrupt leaders within these countries tend to collude with the natural resource extraction companies to supersede the country's laws while discounting and suppressing the objections made by the public and opponents.
- The wealth accumulated from the extracted natural resources which ought to be spent for developing the economy, tends to end up in the coffers of the corrupt leaders, or it is frivolously spent on the construction of grand palaces and colossal showcase projects rather than investing in those sectors which are in dire need of investments, like health, education, job creation, etc.
- In the concept of Alliance Curse, the outcome is the same as that of the "resource curse" but the wealth gained from the extraction of natural resources have been substituted by the sponsorship of political legitimacy, economic aid, military aid, protection, and abundant credit from a superpower partner. These benefits received by the autocratic leadership within the third world country pave the way for the country to enter into a "**development trap**", as the legitimacy and

support from a superpower partner markedly reduces the incentives for the autocratic leadership to govern the third world country for prosperity and invest in local institutions, which promote accountability and transparency. Therefore, the assistance received by the third world partner has also been termed as a “**hypocrisy trap**”.

- Usually, the aid money received by these autocratic leaders plays an important role in providing concessions to a small coalition of elites within the third world country who in return promise loyalty and provide local legitimacy to the autocratic regime in the face of opposition.
- History is testimony of US tendency of meddling in affairs of other countries through orchestrating regime changes in its favor (March-1949 Syrian coup d'état and 2012 to present attempts at regime change; 1953-Iranian coup d'état and 2005 to present; 1979-89 interference in Afghanistan; 1980-Turkish coup d'état and many others)
- The asymmetric alliance tends to last until the country remains autocratic. Once the underdeveloped country crosses the threshold point on the curve, the alliance tends to end or severely weaken.
- *An alliance with the US in the long run weakens democratic transition in Pakistan.*
- *An alliance with the US leads to weakened government institutions in Pakistan (Zia decided to hold general elections without the participation of political parties; major political parties boycotted the elections of 1985)*
- *An alliance with the US curbs sustainable economic growth in Pakistan (the economy crumbled each time the regime ended, which is owed to cut-off of US aid packages and unsustainable economic policies.)*
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Future of Pak us relationship

- Concern to pak will be washington's china policy
- Us need pak help in afg
- Wont push pak to pick either china or us; instead will like pak to remain weak ally of china and serve its purpose
- Enhanced economic partnership is possible depending on pak's economy
- Us not concerned with Kashmir issue but with the crisis it might generate

Pak-Afghan relations

- Remarkable improvement in ashraf ghani's era
- Same ideological, cultural affinities
- Public diplomacy shall always remain open
- Pak-Afghan Youth Forum (PAYF) a civil society; cricket diplomacy, scholarships
- The Indian government's commitment to help Afghanistan build the Shahtoot Dam on Kabul River has upset Pakistan.

Pak-Russia

- Russia's Greater Eurasian Partnership (GEP) is regarded as an important component of Moscow's foreign policy. President Putin simplified this grand strategic vision as "[being formed] on the basis of the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) and China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI)".
- Importance of CARs (energy rich landlocked {except for Uzbek and Turkmenistan (Iran provides these 2)}) Pakistan provides shortest route to sea
- Moscow's approach in international affairs can and probably will affect Pakistan's neighbourhood. It has, for instance, re-appeared in Afghanistan in ways that are disturbing that long-troubled country's attempt to make political progress. It is negatively influencing the Afghan attempt to fashion a society out of diversity. Russia has close relations with some of Afghanistan's northern neighbours that were once part of the USSR. Tajiks and Uzbeks are not fully reconciled to creating a political system in which the central government operating out of Kabul has the final word in governance. They are being encouraged by Moscow.
- In a press conference along with Pakistani Foreign Minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi, Mr Lavrov said Russia was ready to promote bilateral cooperation with Pakistan in diverse fields including economy, trade and defence. One of the projects Qureshi spoke about was the Steam Gas Pipeline project, which would link Pakistan with one of the world's biggest gas suppliers. Russia is also building a gas pipeline within Pakistan, connecting Karachi and Lahore (North-South gas pipeline). Pakistan has also sought Russian expertise to modernise the country's railway system as well as its energy sector.
- Mr Lavrov also assured his counterpart that Russia would be sending more Sputnik vaccine to Pakistan and this is a welcome gesture as vaccines are not easy to come by in the international market. Similarly, defence cooperation is a key area. It was announced that Russia would provide more counterterrorism equipment to Pakistan which is perhaps an acknowledgement of Pakistan's success in this area. Five rounds of Pakistan-Russia military exercises have already taken place. Pakistan-Russia ties are on an upward trajectory and it is important that Islamabad put greater effort into strengthening them even further.
- Russia's ties with India; US factor; weapon sales issue; India won't risk its relation with US
- Russian President Vladimir Putin has offered Pakistan a "**blank cheque**" offer of support, Lavrov's exact language was an offer of "any cooperation" that Pakistan needs. Lavrov also expressly noted areas such as gas pipelines, economic corridors, and defence.
- The recent visit by the Russian Foreign Minister to Pakistan is being termed strategically very important, and a likely game-changer in the geo-politics of this region. Pakistan is most certainly on the threshold of building a new relationship with its Cold War rival. Some even see this new-found relationship with Russia helping Pakistan to make the much-needed transition from geo-strategic to geo-economic domain.
- A free trade agreement by the name of Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) came into being in 2015 with the goal of increasing the economic cooperation and raising the living standards of its members. A year prior to that (June 2014) Russia had lifted the self-imposed arms embargo on Pakistan and the same year when EAEU came into being the process of including Pakistan in SCO began which culminated when Pakistan together with India officially joined SCO in 2017.
- Also in 2015 Russia posted on its state-funded official Think Tank Website RISS (Russian Institute of Strategic Studies) an article written by Andrew Korybko titled 'Pakistan is a zipper of Pan-Eurasian integration'. It was in this article that the Russian dream of Eurasian integration was

highlighted in detail and it was in the same article that Pakistan was referred to as ‘South Asia’s gatekeeper’ and a country that was at the heart of any scheme designed to extract geopolitical and geo-economic benefits in Eurasia. Far from being a lost cause, Pakistan was termed the supercontinent’s most important economic hope. The importance of Pakistan’s potential was explained in its ability to connect the massive economies of the Eurasian Union, Iran, SAARC, and China, thereby creating a pan-Eurasian economic zone. Therefore, it doesn’t require a doctorates degree from a world renowned university to understand why the Russian foreign minister had visited our country first time in over a decade. Russia recognises Pakistan’s prime geopolitical potential and has thus maneuvered to rapidly increase its full-spectrum relations with a country that it considers South Asian gatekeeper. What should Pakistan do in return?

- To begin with we must formulate a well thought out long-term strategy in dealing with Russia. For us the course of the 21st century in this region will be determined in how we build our relations with China and Russia. Technology has fundamentally changed the human history and both these countries are technological giants. In today’s world, it is technology that fuels the economic growth and both these resurgent powers can help us and our technology-starved industries. Russia and Pakistan were Cold War rivals but in the words of Kishore Mehboobani, “The 21st century is almost certainly headed for trouble if we sail into it with nineteenth or even twentieth-century mental maps. We have to discard old mental maps and prepare new ones.”
- Formulating a long-term strategy for a strong partnership with Russia requires asking the right questions. Getting the questions wrong is like getting the answers wrong and thus getting the strategy wrong. The best way is to identify the core issues around which a partnership or alliance can be built. The **first question** that we must ask is: shouldn’t our policy be to improve the lives of the 210 million people living in this country and not to leave this cause as a hostage to any other impediment that might hijack it? All the economic benefits that we can extract from our improved relations with Russia are paradoxically attached to how our relations must improve with India. If Russia can also play a role in removing the political differences between Pakistan and India (perhaps within the SCO framework) then SAARC, as an organisation, can also cash in on its economic capability and actively participate in integrating itself with the rest of Eurasia.
- The **second question** that we must seek to answer is: can Russia prove to be Pakistan’s solid partner and ally? America did not win the Cold War on its own. It formed solid partnerships with Western partners in NATO and cultivated Third World friends and allies like China, Pakistan and Egypt. It also opened up its economy to its allies and generously extended its aid to them. Any future partnership in this region also requires same Cold War American spirit of alliance building. Americans have launched a containment war against China and even if we don’t want to admit it, we are caught in the middle of this ‘containment war’ and so it is absolutely essential that together with both Russia and China we should forge a new partnership in the region.
- The **third import question** that needs answering in forging Pak-Russian friendship is identifying our core common interest. What can be that interest? Both Russia and Pakistan will have to deal with the fallout of the American withdrawal from Afghanistan in September 2021. ISIS is a dangerous threat and its presence in Afghanistan can make this threat much worse for both the countries. The group is already present in the three provinces of Afghanistan i.e. Farah (West), Helmand (South), and Nangarhar (East). ISIS has proclaimed its intention to eliminate the Durand Line and ‘annex’ the ‘State of Hind’ (Pakistan, India, Bangladesh, and Myanmar), so it’s likely to use the three provinces as staging grounds for pushing deeper into Pakistan and the independent

Republics bordering Russia. ISIS has a stated position that it would wage war in north Caucasus and also liberate Chechnya. The geographical proximity of IS threat and the mere fact that President Putin does not want to lose control of Russia's outlying regions against this global jihadi organisation creates a deep commonality of interest between Russia and Pakistan. Both must build on this common interest.

- The **fourth question** that we must rightly answer is: how will the Pak-Russia partnership help us to shift from geo-strategic to geo-economic domain? Strategy is defined as building a bridge between desire and possibility. If the collective desire is to improve the lives of people in the region then trade can be conducted through overland routes transiting Pakistan which is more convenient and less cost effective. China's grand investment in the region also views this as most sensible option. Only by providing an opening to the overland routes can Pakistan act as the 'zipper' to connect Eurasian Union, Iran, China and SAARC countries; and only when the overland routes open can Pakistan make the transition from geo-strategic to geo-economic domain. For this, the political differences between Pakistan and India are a great impediment and that may be the only reason why these days there is a heightened behind-the-scenes diplomatic activity to sort out these differences.

US-Russia relations

- AT the height of the Cold War, both sides indulged in a regular exchange of rhetoric, characterising each other in less than flattering terms. The capitalist West termed the Soviet Union an 'evil empire' leading a godless Eastern bloc, while the communists berated the 'decadent, imperialist' West. The verbal exchanges were of course apart from the much more dangerous nuclear posturing and proxy wars across the planet. Now, it seems the ghosts of the Cold War have been revived as Russia and its Western nemeses indulge in a fresh bout of verbal jousting. Delivering a major policy speech in Moscow recently, Russian President Vladimir Putin issued a stern warning to the West, telling it not to cross a "red line", adding that Russia's response would be "asymmetrical, rapid and harsh". Last month, US President Joe Biden had, in rather tough fashion, called Mr Putin, a "killer", to which the Russian leader acerbically replied: "it takes one to know one."
- There are numerous global hotspots where Russia and the Western bloc's policies are diametrically opposed. These include Ukraine, Belarus and Syria, to name a few. In the post-Soviet period Russia has been alarmed by Nato's expansion in the former Eastern bloc countries, which it considers part of its 'near abroad'. On the other hand, the US-led West has been critical of a resurgent Russia throwing its military weight around in places such as Crimea and Syria. Up till recently the situation in Ukraine remained tense, as Moscow had amassed a large number of troops near the former Soviet republic. Both camps need to realise that Cold War-era posturing and a combative relationship do not bode well for global peace. The US must come to terms with the fact that Russia is a sovereign power and must be handled with respect. Moscow, on the other hand, should also communicate to its European neighbours as well as Washington that all outstanding issues should be resolved through diplomacy instead of sabre-rattling.
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- The US has imposed sanctions on Russian individuals, government agencies, and companies for alleged interference in the 2020 elections and the SolarWinds hack. Washington has also expelled 10 Russian diplomats, some of whom were allegedly intelligence officials. The new round of

sanctions comes soon after restrictions were imposed over Russia's alleged role in the poisoning of Kremlin critic Alexei Navalny. Russia has denied all the charges, and has come up with a tit for tat response. Interestingly, it happens just two days after US President Joe Biden and Russian President Vladimir Putin spoke on the phone. Despite their differences, they did appear to agree on several issues, including nuclear weapons controls.

- For Putin, Ukraine, a former Soviet republic, rightfully belongs to the **rodina**, the Motherland, and he has already grabbed two pieces: Crimea and the Donbas. Nord Stream 2 enables Putin to weaken both countries by depriving them of transit fees and breaking Ukraine's grip on the tap.
- Regardless of how often Germans and Russians have been at each other's throats, the enduring reflex goes back to Bismarck, who famously told the country in the middle: "Never cut the link to St. Petersburg." In other words, keep the peace with the giant on Germany's eastern flank.
- Zero-sum outlook in both capitals
- Belarus (US and its allies want to get rid of autocratic govt, Moscow won't let that happen to a state near its borders) Ukraine is an example
- Russia militarily weak but can't be ignored (Georgia 2008 ukraine 2014 syria 2015 will deploy military force to preserve its geopolitical position)
- US economy is more than 12 times the size of Russia's (more than \$21 trillion)
- Cooperate on arms control, public health, military de-escalation, stable trade relations and less interference in each other's matters
- Moscow expects Biden to spend the better part of the next four years mired in all-consuming domestic political battles, making any significant breakthroughs in the U.S.-Russian relationship impossible.
- Under these circumstances, Russia will try to avoid a new arms race or direct military confrontation with the U.S., but will hope for little else... Instead, it will prioritize strengthening ties with China and other rising powers like India.
- One can easily imagine other countries — China, North Korea, Iran — making a similar calculation. Even putative allies like Japan or Australia are likely to loosen their grip on the American bandwagon over the longer term.
- Dog in the room (konni angela merkel)
- Winston Churchill famously put it in 1939, Russia is "a riddle, wrapped in a mystery, inside an enigma." But, in his less-remembered next sentence, Churchill identified the key to deciphering it: the Russian national interest.
- Russia's 2014 annexation of Crimea, which Putin portrayed as an effort to right historic wrongs and a reasonable response to NATO's eastward expansion. His approval rating soared by 20 percentage points.

US-Europe

- On **Airbus-boeing dispute (17 years)** US and EU settled for a truce for 5 years; removing tariffs on each other which were placed after WTO hearings. Why? Pandemic causing losses to airlines & in 2019 6.8 M people visited Heathrow airport in 2020 0.2 M; China factor
- From now on, every country or group of countries must ask itself three questions. First, do we produce the technologies we need? If not, do we have access to them from a number of sources?

And if still not, do we have guaranteed, unfettered, long-term (more than five years) access to them from monopoly or oligopoly suppliers from a single country, typically the US or China?

- A country that answers no to all three questions is vulnerable to technological coercion that is no less severe than the military coercion of yesteryear.
- Mike Pompeo, Trump's secretary of state, leaned heavily on Johnson to exclude Chinese technology firm Huawei from the UK's 5G network, implying that the United States otherwise would stop sharing intelligence with the UK. Pompeo also referred to the fact that the US controls the City of London's payment infrastructure, and that all electronic chips used in the UK require US electronic design tool software.
- Trump's aggressive overreach in using America's semiconductor dominance to cripple Huawei served as an alarming "Sputnik moment" for the Chinese government, prompting it to launch a massive state-funded national effort to make the country independent in semiconductor production.
- Nvidia may takeover Arm (Cambridge based chip designer) whose microprocessors are in most cars and information-technology infrastructure equipment, as well as 95% of the world's mobile phones; will deprive Britain of a valuable bargaining chip in the struggle for technology sovereignty.
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- the European Commission presented its vision for a European "digital decade." approached US President Joe Biden's administration with a proposal to create a joint Trade and Technology Council.
- Thanks to the Iraq War, the 2008 financial crisis, and the Trump presidency, the world no longer places a premium on US power; if anything, it now applies a discount. After all, rather than maintaining an interest in the crises of the Middle East, Eastern Europe, Africa, and other regions, the US has pulled back, and other powers have filled the vacuum.
- In Latin America, the US can still fulminate against Venezuela's government, but to little effect. In much of Sub-Saharan Africa, China has become the most important player. In Syria, Libya, and the disputed Nagorno-Karabakh region of the South Caucasus, it is Russia and Turkey that are shaping the future. But most shocking of all are developments in America's oldest, staunchest ally: Europe.
- With the COVID-19 pandemic killing millions worldwide, it was easy to miss the fact that the European Union and China concluded negotiations on a Comprehensive Agreement on Investment in late 2020. After seven years of negotiations, the CAI was pushed over the line just weeks before Biden's inauguration, with the Europeans dismissing public pleas by the US national security adviser, Jake Sullivan, to consult with the new administration first.
- 2020 was the fifth successive year in which China was Germany's largest trading partner.
- By pressing ahead, the EU publicly undercut the Biden administration's top foreign-policy priority of re-engaging with allies to manage the China challenge together. It is no less striking that it was German Chancellor Angela Merkel who negotiated the CAI. Merkel is a committed Atlanticist who would not oppose the US even when it decided to invade Iraq in 2003. Many Europeans back then were unhappy with President George W. Bush's administration, and worried that America had too much power. Today, the problem is inverted: Europeans are happy with Biden and his China agenda, but fear that America is too weak to pull it off.
- Most Europeans think they should be investing in their own defense, rather than relying on the US; and many now see Berlin, rather than Washington, DC, as the "go-to" capital for leadership.

Most alarmingly, most Europeans are not interested in the Biden team's goal of developing a common transatlantic approach to China. A majority in each country wants to remain neutral in any future conflict between the US and China.

- At best, the CAI is too little, too late. The same goes for the "phase one" trade deal by Donald Trump's administration which came into effect one year ago. Rather than address the critical issues of government subsidies and the market-distorting role of SOEs, the Trump administration said they would be included in "phase two" negotiations, which never began.
- China often disregards its bilateral commitments. Australia is a case in point. Despite a comprehensive bilateral free-trade agreement, China recently imposed restrictions on imports of Australian wine, barley, and coal, among other products, over what are essentially political grievances. After South Korea's 2016 decision to deploy an American missile-defense system within its borders, China imposed heavy economic sanctions, despite the bilateral free-trade agreement that had come into force the previous year.

US-Iran

Latest

- President Rouhani choosing to inaugurate a cascade of advanced centrifuges for producing enriched uranium at the Natanz facility gave contradictory signals. Perhaps it was meant to indicate that despite the very harsh sanctions, through sheer determination Iran has made a major breakthrough in development of nuclear technologies and equipment. And hopes that this would lend weight while conducting the tough negotiations.
- the Iranian nuclear facility of Natanz was targeted by a "small explosion" which Tehran has squarely blamed on Tel Aviv, while sections of the Israeli and American press have also pointed to the Jewish state's role. Israel has long been trying to neutralise Iran's nuclear capabilities. In the past, it was believed to have targeted the Islamic Republic's nuclear programme with Stuxnet malware, while a number of assassinations of Iranian nuclear officials — most recently that of Mohsen Fakhrizadeh last year — were also believed to be the handiwork of Tel Aviv. However, such reckless behaviour has its limits, and there is a high possibility that this covert and proxy war may transform into a 'hot' war.
- In retaliation, Iran announced that it would begin enriching uranium to 60% purity, three times higher than the 20% level to which it had hitherto adhered (and which already far exceeded the 3.7% allowed by the JCPOA).
- If the international community, especially Israel's Western backers, want to truly revive the nuclear deal and prevent a fresh conflagration in the Middle East, they must communicate to their friends in Tel Aviv that the current path of sabotage must be abandoned.
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- For Iran's neighbours, a US-Iran détente that does not address the Islamic Republic's ballistic-missile program and support for proxies across the Middle East is a nightmare scenario. They fear that once tensions with Iran are defused, the US is likely to shift its focus away from the Middle East.
- Against this background, it would be unwise to pursue French President Emmanuel Macron's suggestion that Saudi Arabia and other regional actors be involved in any new negotiations about the JCPOA. Of course, Saudi Arabia — which, along with the UAE, has demanded the Gulf states'

involvement – welcomed Macron’s call. But, as Iran recognizes, this is a sure route to diplomatic failure and the perpetuation of conflict.

- All great revolutions aspire to secure their legacy through expansion. For Iran, the imperative is to protect the Islamic Republic’s credibility not only among its citizens, but also among the proxies that channel its influence in Iraq, Lebanon, Syria, and Yemen. That is why so many powerful voices in Iran will oppose returning even to the 2015 agreement: nuclear capabilities are regime insurance. The US doesn’t wage wars against nuclear powers.
- Yet Iran has hardly shut the door on the JCPOA. On the contrary, it recently signaled its enduring willingness to compromise, by agreeing to hold for three months recordings from monitoring equipment installed at nuclear sites by the International Atomic Energy Agency. If the US rolls back sanctions within that timeframe, the recordings will be released.
- The Biden administration should use this window of opportunity to secure a straightforward agreement: the US lifts sanctions in exchange for Iran’s compliance with JCPOA restrictions on its nuclear activities.
- But this would not be enough to mitigate the risk of a region-wide conflagration. For that, the US would have to negotiate a “phase two” agreement that addresses Iran’s ballistic-missile program and support for non-state actors across the Middle East, in addition to the JCPOA’s “sunset clause,” which would lift restrictions on Iran’s nuclear enrichment program after 2025.
- Given China’s massive investments in – and energy dependence on – the Middle East, it could be a useful ally in this effort. Already, China has proposed establishing a designated forum, in which Persian Gulf countries can address regional security issues, including compliance with the JCPOA.

Story

- Started with **Abadan Crises**, Mosaddeq nationalised the Iranian assets of the British Petroleum BP controlled Anglo-Iranian Oil Company (AIOC) and expelled Western companies from oil refineries in the city of Abadan. British sought US help and both decided to remove Mosaddeq from power as shown in CIA documents and then 1953 coup happened, and SHAH was brought back to power who was West-friendly. Iran was considered strategic ally under SHAH (buffer to Soviet Union and access to cheap oil). However, Shah was suffering from crisis of legitimacy at home. Was hell-bent on westernizing Iran. That western influence angered shia clergy and later rest of the populace.
- **Iranian Revolution (78-79)**: exiled shia cleric Ayatollah Khomeini embodied the revolutionary movement, returned from France in 79. Within months Iran became Islamic republic which it remains to this day.
- **The Hostage Crisis (79-81)**: Carter allowed Shah to come to US for cancer treatment, angered Iranian students took a group of US employees hostage demanding that Shah return to stand trial. Iran became poster child of Islamic fundamentalism for US political establishment. Rescue attempt went wrong, Carter failed to win re-election. Lasted for over 444 days. Meanwhile, Saddam decided to invade Khuzestan province, home to Abadan oil refinery. Iran retaliated and it turned into gruelling 8-year war.
- **The Iran-Iraq War (80-88)**: US supplied weapons to both, but favoured Saddam over Iranian clergy. Iraq came on the top and this hardened Iran’s attitude towards US.
- **US embassy bombing (83)**: Israel invaded Lebanon in 82 to push out PLO, Iran intervened and trained and armed militia fighting Israel. Iran used asymmetric warfare against US, and this is

where proxy groups become handy. Hezbollah bombed the US embassy. Both militia and political party and dominates Lebanon today.

- **9/11:** Iran had nothing to do with it, but Iran came to experience the repercussions of it. By now Iraq had become an American foe and attacks become justification for US to invade it. Seeing Americans on its border Iran started nuclear program.
- **The nuclear age:** claimed for civilian purposes but West responded with sanctions. Iran didn't stop enriching Uranium but sanctions crippled its economy which moved her to negotiating table (JCPOA).
- **Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action:** limited Iranian nuclear facilities and opened it up to more rigorous inspections in return for sanctions relief.
- **Maximum Pressure:** trump withdrew from deal in 2018 and reimposed sanctions under the policy of maximum pressure, Once again raising tensions in the region.
- Irony to this rivalry is that American society is much closer to Iranian society then to say with Saudi society. But their leaders are held hostage by history.
- Deaths of **Qasem Soleimani** (commander of the Quds Force, an IRGC division primarily responsible for extraterritorial and clandestine military operations) and **Mohsen Fakhrizadeh** (father of Iran's nuclear programme).
- the underlying premise of Trump's abrogation of this deal was the undeclared policy of regime change in Tehran. Encouraged by hawks in his national security team, Trump expected the Iranian government to be swept away by a popular upheaval due to the tough US policy of sanctions, covert actions, isolation and coercion. That policy failed.
- From the first intervention in Iran in 1953 ("the original sin" of Mosaddeq's overthrow) to 70 years of clandestine US actions across the Middle East there has been "no case of clear success, some catastrophic failures, and universally high costs and unintended consequences.
- **Iraq Factor:** Rockets struck the U.S. embassy in Baghdad on Monday Mar 1st, following two attacks targeting American military bases this past week. With many analysts attributing the spate of attacks to Iran, there is pressure on the Biden administration to pursue a hard-line response against Iran.
- Iran is altogether not a threat to the United States or even the region. Iran's conventional military is based on modified equipment from before the 1979 revolution. Iran's only sources of strength are in its asymmetric forces in the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps. And these are not designed to take territory, but to punish and deter a superior rival with ballistic missiles.
- Consequently, the United States would only be threatened if it chooses to stay in Iraq, Syria, and in the Persian Gulf, among the few places where Iran is actually capable of striking effectively. Iran is only powerful near its borders and in its maritime backyard. Unfortunately, that's just where U.S. troops have been positioned. It's rational to exchange vulnerability for invulnerability by moving troops out of Iran's crosshairs. President Ronald Reagan did just that in response to the 1983 Beirut barracks bombing.
- Moreover, the United States is overstaying its welcome despite the Iraqi parliament's demands for withdrawal last year. Iraq's sovereignty is not just a dispensation of American power, and both U.S. interests and the legitimacy of Iraq's democracy would be furthered by a U.S. withdrawal.
- American withdrawal doesn't mean Iraq becomes a satrapy of Iran. As recent reorganizations of the Iraqi Popular Mobilization Forces show, Iraq's factional politics already serve as a check on Iran's influence. The United States has two options in response to continued rocket attacks in Iraq.

It can double down on a failed attempt at deterring Iran. Alternatively, Washington can acknowledge that the price of staying is not worth it and pursue limited objectives with a renewed diplomatic approach.

- **JCPOA then and now:** The JCPOA closed all possible paths to an Iranian nuclear weapon by requiring drastic cutbacks in Iran's nuclear activities. This included disposing of 97 percent of its low enriched uranium, disposing of all of its uranium enriched to higher levels, ripping out two-thirds of its enrichment centrifuges, filling a reactor with cement, and various other measures. A result was to set back the "breakout time" that would be required to build a nuclear weapon if Iran chose to do so, from what most experts estimated to be as little as two or three months before the JCPOA to a year or more after the agreement went into effect.
- For assurance that Iran was living by its obligations, the JCPOA imposed the most intrusive system of monitoring by the International Atomic Energy Agency to which any nation has ever voluntarily submitted. The IAEA inspections confirmed that Iran did indeed abide by its obligations, from the entry into force of a preliminary agreement in January 2014 through a full year after the Trump administration reneged on all U.S. obligations in May 2018.
- The result of that reneging provided a stark contrast from the earlier favourable results. Trump's policy of "maximum pressure" on Iran was a maximum failure. After exercising patience for a year, Iran responded to the U.S. pressure with counterpressure of its own. This mainly took the form of incrementally exceeding the JCPOA limits regarding uranium enrichment (which Iran was no longer obliged to observe, given that the United States was now in violation of the agreement). As a result, Iran has acquired twelve times the low enriched uranium that it did when the JCPOA was fully in effect, as well as beginning to enrich to higher concentrations of fissile material than it did under the agreement. This heightened activity represents a bargaining chip that Iran has repeatedly emphasized it can, and will, quickly reverse if the United States comes back into compliance. But in the meantime, Iran's nuclear program is bigger than it was when the United States was complying with the JCPOA, and breakout time has decreased (though not down to where it was before the agreement was negotiated).
- For the right-wing government of Israel, the main goal may be not so much regime change but rather the perpetuation of Iran as a despised, sanctioned, and isolated *bête noire* that can be blamed for every malady in the region. Keeping Iran in this role serves Benjamin Netanyahu's government by weakening a regional rival, blocking it from any rapprochement with the United States, deflecting blame and international scrutiny from Israel's own activities, and diverting attention from other troubles.
- Saudi Arabia and UAE have been vocal critics of Iran's nuclear and ballistic missile programs and have constantly demanded to be included in the negotiations. Riyadh, apart from Tel Aviv, pressured President Trump to pull out of the Accord. Currently, the GCC places no trust in Iran and has been concerned about the Persian state developing a nuclear weapon that could invariably set in motion the Middle East nuclear arms race.
- The GCC has concerns beyond just the JCPOA. Iran's missile program has been a worrying aspect for the Gulf Arab states. The missile threat is amplified especially as frequent missile and drone attacks have been launched by the Houthis in Yemen towards the Saudi Arabian territory. Not including the regional states in the talks could also be counter-productive in the sense that these states cannot be deterred when they make attempts to sabotage Iran's nuclear program within their individual capacity. The recent cyber-attack on the Natanz enrichment facility in Iran raises

the alarm. Mohsen Fakhrizadeh, being assassinated not long ago. instigating offensive attacks on nuclear establishments is also not new for Israel that is known for the 1981, 2007 and 2010 attacks on Iraqi, Syrian and Iranian nuclear plants respectively.

- Israel as well as the Gulf Arab states find themselves on the same page concerning Iran and that has been a major driver for their rapprochement.

US-China relations

- G7 leaders meeting in the UK lambasted the People's Republic for what they termed excesses in Xinjiang and Hong Kong, while calling for "peace and stability" across the Taiwan Strait. Beijing is particularly sensitive about all three areas and considers criticism in these issues as meddling in its internal affairs. The G7 also called for a new investigation into Covid-19's origins. Meanwhile, at the Nato summit in Belgium, the military grouping seemed even more direct when it criticised China's martial activities. Though the Nato secretary general said he did not want a new cold war with China, the summit communiqué stated that Beijing poses "systematic challenges to the rules-based international order and to ... Alliance security". On the other hand, China has termed the G7 statement "baseless accusations" while Nato's concerns were akin to "slandering China's peaceful development".
- The US and G-7 have clearly adopted an ideological and a confrontational posture against China — ideological because China was termed a threat to the democratic world, and confrontational because the G-7 countries declared that they will stand up to China's "autocracy, human right abuses and economic rule breaking".
- China has rightly responded to G-7 by saying that "the days when a small group of countries decided the fate of the world were long gone".
- America's flawed approach to China is rooted in an enduring belief in the concept of **absolute national security**. But, while this might have been a reasonable goal for the United States in the decades after World War II, when the country stood at the helm of a unipolar world order, it is not realistic in today's multipolar system.
- G7's unveiling of a US orchestrated infrastructure plan — billed as a "Green" development initiative — to challenge China's BRI: The 'Build Back Better for the World' initiative. Earlier, the former president Donald Trump had announced an alternate plan of BRI called Blue Dot Network (BDN), but it failed to take off. He was also suggesting that QUAD, a loose alliance composed of Australia, India, Japan and the US, should counter Chinese BRI.
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- The two key questions raised by Biden's Europe trip are how far European allies will be willing to go beyond tough words and sign up to an adversarial policy with China and what is the outlook for the future course of US-China relations. With some exceptions most European allies are sceptical about a confrontational policy especially as they have key economic equities in ties with China. Last year China became the EU's top trading partner surpassing the US. Germany's top export market and biggest trading partner happens to be China, which is why Chancellor Angela Merkel once said that EU and US interests on China are "not identical". Italy is part of BRI and is reported to have agreed with Merkel during the G7 summit that action against China should be avoided.
- Other than perhaps France and Belgium, most EU countries prefer a more measured approach to China. Washington's closest ally, UK may also be reluctant to adopt too antagonistic a policy

especially as it wants to expand trade and investment with China. British Prime Minister Boris Johnson was quoted as saying when he arrived for the Nato summit that “When it comes to China, I don’t think anybody wants to descend into a new cold war.”

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- China shares sea or land borders with 19 countries, 10 of whom have ongoing territorial disputes with China; but unlike the US which invaded Iraq and destabilised the entire Middle East region, China has resisted from employing military as an instrument of power to permanently resolve these disputes. China exhibits behaviour of strategic patience more than the US does.
- China is already the largest trading partner and foreign direct investor for many developed and developing countries, and it is now the largest lender to emerging-market economies – bigger than the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, and the Paris Club of sovereign creditors.
- Why should US send vaccines and how it helps in US national interest? Medical interest; soft power; geopolitical competition, China sending equipment worldwide, etc
- The Norwegian political scientist Geir Lundestad has argued, the American role in postwar Europe may have resembled an empire, but it was “an empire by invitation.” {soft power}
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- The US had ended its expensive and absurd war in Iraq and then gone on to defeat the Islamic State in Syria. Having become self-reliant in energy terms tapping domestic shale oil and gas, America set its sights on a fuller military withdrawal from the region.
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- When the Iron Curtain fell in 1989, the countries that comprise today’s EU, plus the United Kingdom, accounted for 27.8% of global GDP (in terms of purchasing power parity). For the US, that share was 22.2%. China, with a share of 4%, still hardly registered as an economic power.
- Thirty years later, the EU, together with the UK, accounted for 16% of global output, still slightly ahead of America’s 15%. The big shift was in China’s position, which had surpassed its Western counterparts with a share of 18.3%.
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- the US Senate Foreign Relations Committee officially backed the Strategic Competition Act of 2021, which labels China a strategic competitor in a number of areas, including trade, technology, and security. The Strategic Competition Act purports to highlight supposed “malign behaviors” in which China engages to attain an “unfair economic advantage” and the “deference” of other countries to “its political and strategic objectives.” In truth, the bill says a lot more about the US itself – little of it flattering – than it does about China.
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- Even if containment worked against the Soviet Union in the Cold War, a with-us-or-against-us strategy will not deliver the same results today. With an economy that topped out at roughly three-fifths the size of that of the US, the Soviet Union never came close to developing the wherewithal to outpace its democratic challengers. Its sclerotic socialism and coercive alliances crippled its economy and weakened its global appeal.
- It’s not so with China, whose GDP will soon surpass and then far exceed that of the US. With its competent top-down political and economic governance, technological prowess, sizeable foreign investment, and ambitious diplomatic outreach (including large-scale exports of its own COVID-19 vaccine), China already enjoys substantial global sway. There is no going back to the decoupled, two-bloc global order of the Cold War.

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- In 1981, about 50% of Chinese lived in extreme poverty but today that number has lessened to just 5%. History proves that only when political systems enable the formulation of vibrant middle class that the aristocratic and feudal cultures are smashed and destroyed. Chinese did exactly the same and in last 30 years created in their country the world's largest middle class. In year 2000, only 4% of Chinese households were in the middle class but by year 2012 that figure had raised to over 65%.
- Isn't re-educating the people who have lost their way not much better than torturing and killing them? Hundreds of thousands of Muslims have died at the hands of the Western powers since 9/11. By executing the policy of rendition, the US sent hundreds of Muslim prisoners to countries like Syria, Jordan and Egypt where they were tortured, interrogated and even killed. American forces would remember well what they did in Bagram Air Base in Afghanistan as well as in Abu Ghraib prison in Iraq. Drones also played a big role in the American targeted assassinations of the 'declared terrorists'. In his book, *The Great Delusion*, American international relations scholar John Mearsheimer describes how "President Obama had a kill list known as the 'disposition matrix', and every Tuesday there was a meeting in the White House – it was called 'Terrorist Tuesday' – where the next victims were selected". So, the big question here is that whatever the US and its defence and strategic partner India do to combat terrorism is right but whatever China and Pakistan may do is wrong. America needs to overcome its fixation with the Chinese and the Muslim world. Any strategic thinker will agree that disputes are best resolved through negotiations. America showcases the largest strategic thinking industry in the world and no country spends as much on strategic thinking and creating and running think tanks as America does. Yet so far the American strategies to deal with both China and the Muslim world have only backfired. Isn't it a classic case of a military industry complex 'overstating foreign dangers' to get more resources?
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- On March 24, the Communist Party's youth wing denounced H&M on Chinese social media over its sanctions on Xinjiang cotton. Meanwhile, Chinese state-backed media outlets were also calling for consumers, owing to the same reason, to boycott other international clothing brands, including Nike, Adidas, Uniqlo, etc. From the COVID-19 pandemic to the Xinjiang cotton crisis, China's diplomatic department and diplomats aggressively hit back against Western criticism in confrontational ways; and this type of diplomatic practice is also known as another name, "**Wolf Warrior diplomacy**". Since the outbreak of the pandemic, the Wolf Warrior diplomacy has been guiding the official rhetoric of state propaganda.
- China has always been cautious about loosening family-planning rules. But, if it is to sustain its economic dynamism in the decades to come, it must work hard to expand its labour force, including by raising the retirement age and encouraging families to have more children. Otherwise, its population will become old in the same way Ernest Hemingway described how one goes bankrupt: gradually, then suddenly. In 2016, the Chinese authorities finally abandoned the country's one-child policy, which had caused the birth rate to plummet well below replacement level by the 1990s.
- Both states pounced on each other in Anchorage, Alaska. A better way would be for both sides to go back to basics – the economics and trade issues that have long anchored the US-China relationship. Harsh exchanges followed in the Anchorage meeting when Blinken raised his

country's "deep concerns" over China's actions in Taiwan, Hong Kong and Xinjiang", its cyber-attacks and "economic coercion" toward US allies.

- To Blinken's remarks, China's top diplomat responded bluntly saying the US could no longer speak to China from a position of strength and that it could hardly lecture others given its treatment of Native Americans and when it faces race problems at home and waning public confidence in its democracy. As for Blinken's claim that he was speaking for the international community Yang Jiechi said the US didn't represent world opinion and neither did the West.
- Answering who is the greatest leader of the 20th century, Nadav Eyal in his international bestseller book *Revolt – The Worldwide Uprising Against Globalization* writes, "Only one twentieth century leader inherited a backward and poor country and in return gave back to its people a superpower." His name is Deng Xiaoping.
- Mao intervened in the Korean War against the US, fomented the Taiwan Strait crises later in the 1950s, and encouraged wars of national liberation against Western powers. When President John F. Kennedy's administration entered office in 1961, it regarded China as a rising nuclear *bête noire* and considered military action against it.
- "The problem of absolute poverty that has plagued us for thousands of years has come to an end" announced the triumphant People's Daily (the Communist Party's official newspaper). According to the materials released by the Chinese state, 100 million people had now been lifted out of extreme poverty. This means that no one in China now lives under \$1.69 a day.
- According to the Washington Post, China has not released the standards or metrics it is using to define "extreme poverty". In the past, the Chinese have used metrics that vary from the ones used by the World Bank. Nor is there much clarity as to how China will sustain its feat of poverty eradication in a year when the World Bank has forecast that in 2021, 150 million more people could fall into abject poverty worldwide owing to the Covid-19 pandemic.
- Located in the northwest of China, Xinjiang is a vast region rich in natural resources. It has a very important strategic location as it connects China with Central Asia. Home to several ethnic groups, the region has been deeply affected by ethnic separatism, religious extremism, and violent terrorism, called "the three forces". These forces are a cause of thousands of terrorist attacks carried out in Xinjiang from 1990 to the end of 2016, resulting in huge losses of lives and property. While this violence seriously jeopardised the stability and security of the country, it particularly hindered Xinjiang's economic development and social progress. (China's stance)
- At the height of World War II, Hitler issued the infamous 'Night and Fog' decree, following which thousands of opponents of his regime were forcibly disappeared and sent to concentration camps. (institutionalisation) Xinjiang (US stance)
- **China is Not the Soviet Union: Applying Kennan's 'Long Telegram'** (the five-thousand-word essay George Kennan wrote from the U.S. Embassy in Moscow in February 1946 explaining the Soviet strategic mindset, and which became the intellectual foundation for the U.S. strategy of "containment.")
- While Kennan observed that "Moscow sees in the UN not the mechanism for a permanent and stable world society founded on mutual interest and aims of all nations," Beijing today in fact does see the UN as such a mechanism—albeit with a somewhat different vision than most Western powers for what such a "world society founded on mutual interests" would look like.
- Chinese support to North Korea against UN & US in 1950s; US military and nuclear threat in support of Taiwan 1954, support to Tibetan uprising 1959

- Formal relations July 1971 secret visit of Kissinger to China
- US policy of appeasement of India and Indo-Pacific policy to counter Chinese regional supremacy (India taking adv and wants to become regional hegemon, UN permanent member with US help)
- India buying Rafale aircrafts against US offers, playing spoiler role in Afg to keep US entangled there
- US blind support will create one more major power in the region which may turn against US interest in Indian ocean as happened with US before when it rewarded China with security council seat and supported china against Soviet Union
- China's debt-trap diplomacy (Nigeria Zambia Sri Lanka), and hostage diplomacy (Canada Huawei CFO)
- Over the past decade, Chinese leaders abandoned Deng Xiaoping's moderate policy of "Hide your strength, bide your time." They became more assertive in many ways; building and militarizing artificial islands in the South China Sea, intruding into waters near Japan and Taiwan, launching incursions into India along the countries' Himalayan border, and coercing Australia economically when it dared to criticize China.
- China overtook the US in total number of diplomatic posts in 2019
- RCEP: by indirectly establishing a free-trade zone among China, Japan, and South Korea – the so-called iron triangle – it will consolidate supply chains in Northeast Asia and the West Pacific. This puts the US at a growing strategic disadvantage.
- A sign of things to come is the EU-China Comprehensive Agreement on Investment, concluded under German leadership just three weeks before US President-elect Joe Biden's inauguration. With the CAI, Biden's hope of recruiting the EU into a strategic coalition against China evaporated. Indeed, together with the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership – which 15 Asian countries, including China, concluded the previous month – the EU-China deal has left the US out in the cold.
- Germany close relations with China; EU-china Comprehensive Agreement on Investment (CAI)
- Artemis Accords-a set of bilateral agreements between the US and Australia, Canada, Italy, Japan, Luxembourg, the United Arab Emirates, and the United Kingdom that set out principles for future civil space exploration. (US circumvent UN to avoid China)
- The next phase of competition in space will be to establish a mining base on the Moon. Lunar mining is important for two reasons. First, ice on the moon's surface can be converted into hydrogen and oxygen and used as rocket fuel, which is crucial for deep-space missions.
- The second reason is closer to home: the moon's surface contains highly valuable rare-earth metals that are used in technologies like cell phones, batteries, and military equipment. China currently produces approximately 90% of the world's rare-earth metals, giving it significant leverage over other countries, including the US. By sourcing these metals from the moon, countries could reduce their dependence on China.
- Chinese President Xi Jinping's new strategy centres on the concept of "dual circulation." Behind the technical-sounding phrase lies an idea that could change the global economic order. Instead of operating as a single economy that is linked to the world through trade and investment, China is fashioning itself into a bifurcated economy. One realm ("external circulation") will remain in contact with the rest of the world, but it will gradually be overshadowed by another one ("internal circulation") that will cultivate domestic demand, capital, and ideas.

- The purpose of **dual circulation** is to make China more self-reliant. After previously basing China's development on export-led growth, policymakers are trying to diversify the country's supply chains so that it can access technology and know-how without being bullied by the United States. In doing so, China will also seek to make other countries more dependent on it, thereby converting its external economic links into global political power.
- Today's main geopolitical contest is not just about enforcing global rules; it is about who makes them. Whereas the West previously struggled to secure Chinese compliance with the trade, investment, and intellectual property (IP) frameworks it had crafted, China is now also seeking to make and enforce the rules. There are already or have been Chinese heads at the International Telecommunication Union, the International Organization for Standardization, and the International Electrotechnical Commission, and Chinese companies are increasingly trying to define the future of technology. Huawei alone holds more than 100,000 active patents, particularly in 5G technology, where it is competing with Western companies like Ericsson and Nokia to set global standards.
- As one well-placed private-sector observer put it to me, "China's idea is that if companies like Daimler or Volkswagen want to work in China, they will have to move services, R&D, and new products there. Beijing hopes that dual circulation will transform them into Chinese companies."
- Recent research shows that the pandemic has prompted an increasing number of rich-country firms to reduce their reliance on global supply chains and invest more in robots at home. This is because the pandemic has changed the relative costs of these two production models. Global supply chains have become costlier and more uncertain, with many firms anticipating further lockdown-related disruptions to production. At the same time, the decrease in interest rates during the ongoing economic crisis has enabled cheaper financing, thereby lowering the cost of a robot relative to that of a worker.
- China has effectively taken ownership of the Greek port of Piraeus with the stated intent of making it Europe's biggest and most important maritime hub
- Robert Axelrod – now a professor emeritus at the University of Michigan – in his book *The Evolution of Cooperation* found that the most beneficial long-term strategy for an actor such as a nation-state is to cooperate first and then play tit-for-tat. In other words, a country will gain in the long run if it offers a goodwill gesture and then responds in kind to its opponent's subsequent moves.
- The only way to prevent a new round of deterioration in US-China relations is for either Biden or Xi to take the first concrete step signalling willingness to cooperate, and then adhere strictly to the reciprocity rule thereafter. Since the long-entrenched Xi seems to have more room to manoeuvre than Biden, he is better positioned to take the initiative. Moreover, he has a rich menu of options to demonstrate goodwill – and likely elicit a positive US reaction – without risking too much political capital. For example, China should immediately allow the return of the American journalists it expelled last year in response to US restrictions on reporters working for state-run Chinese media outlets in the US. Another possibility would be to dismiss the charges against the 53 pro-democracy activists in Hong Kong arrested in early January.
- Autocracies tend to privilege loyalty over competence as a recruitment strategy. The resultant misgovernance is predictable.
- United States will regard the huge, Leninist surveillance state not just as a competitor, but as a determined threat to all free societies.

Will containment work?

- A third cold war would be a non-starter because of three main reasons, as follows:
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- First, European allies of America, particularly Germany, is not keen to confront China because of its huge trade and investment ties with Beijing. China has augmented its trade with Europe by road and rail, and European markets are flooded with Chinese commodities. In the first cold war, the Soviet Union and its allies had no such trade or investments in the West and there were no economic stakes which both China and the West, particularly European countries, have on each other. A cold war only perpetuates in an environment of hostility, propaganda and psychological warfare which is not the case with China. If the Biden administration is trying to equate China with the former Soviet Union, it will be a wrong comparison.
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- Second, in view of its 'open door policy' launched by Deng Xioping in 1979, China will not fall into the trap laid by the US as it is set to overtake the US as the world's number one economy in coming years. Adhering to the concept of 'soft power', the Chinese leadership is wise enough to focus on its policy of economic engagement rather than overt confrontation with neighbours or with America. China and India have contentious border issues and their relations briefly soured a year ago, but how can one undermine the fact that China is India's leading trading partner with a yearly trade of more than 100 billion US dollars. Beijing is mindful to the fact that its huge foreign exchange reserves, investments and BRI will go down the drain if it reacts to what the US and its western allies are planning to. Likewise, China and Russia are able to mend fences with each other despite their unresolved border conflicts. Unlike the US which has consumed several trillion dollars in overseas wars in Korea, Vietnam, Iraq and Afghanistan, the last war which China fought was against Vietnam in January 1979 and since then it has strictly followed the policy of non-interference and non-intervention in foreign policy matters. If the US has consumed several trillion dollars in wars which it was unable to win, China utilised its energies for trade, investment and BRI.
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- Third, despite the US strategic ambitions to hurt and damage China by pursuing a policy of containment, the image of Beijing is much better than America's in majority of the Third World countries. If China through its investments has helped develop and modernise the infrastructure of many Asian, African and Latin American countries, the US and the West are blamed of exploiting the resources and not contributing to the industrialisation of developing countries. NATO summit communique targeted both Russia and China. In case of Moscow, the summit criticised Russia's military buildup and offensive behavior vis-a-vis Nato's eastern frontier as "contributing along Nato borders and beyond". The US President during the Nato summit stated, "We have Russia that is not acting in a way that is consistent with what we had hoped, as well as China."

The World China wants

- On May 15 2021, the Chinese successfully landed its Tianwen-1 spacecraft on Mars. The Chinese space lander and rover (named Zhurong after the Chinese god of fire) is the most recent of a number of missions to Mars — by the United States, the Russians, and in their wake an unlikely United Arab Emirates with its Hope orbiter.

- perhaps the most telling achievement is that the Chinese space programme is home-grown. They did not abduct German scientists as the Americans and the Russians did following the defeat of Germany in 1945. Ironically, German brains provided the fission that exploded bombs over Hiroshima and Nagasaki, took Sputniks into space, sent men to the moon, and fuelled a simmering Cold War.
- Chinese power is formed by the nexus of authoritarianism, consumerism, global ambitions, and technology (ACGT model)
- Since 1978, the CCP has worked to address one of the most notable flaws of the Soviet Union: the failure to cater to the needs and desires of domestic consumers.
- China's expanding role in the 21st century rests on a reimagining of the twentieth.
- China wants to assert that it played a central part in the creation of postwar order as it was first to sign UN Charter as foreign minister reminded listeners in Munich Security Conf 2020
- Played a crucial role in defending Asia and pinning down over half a million Japanese troops until the arrival of americans and british at the cost of 14 million Chinese lives
- China wishes to portray itself as leader of global south (during cold war it wanted to be leader of Third world)
- Regards itself as new guardian of postwar order and also as inheritor of non-western anti-imperialism of the postcolonial world
- Following Marxist-Leninist thought at home
- BRI (China's Marshall plan?)
- Seeks to boost its trading interests in geographic triangle formed by crucial ports in Greece, Djibouti and Pak
- 5G and its concerns; no western alternative
- Countries are content with Chinese investment, but arrival of PLA will be a less welcome development
- If china is pushing inside UN that's because west is giving it way
- Constructive criticism would be good for its image; Mao invited black leaders in 1950s and US faced backlash
- Joining the global economy has made it more vulnerable to scrutiny of its authoritarianism at home. (boycotted barley sales from aus; threatened uk of 'consequences' over Huawei scenario)
- Chinese authoritarianism threatens to limit Beijing's ability to create a plausible new form of global order
- on March 27, what was being dubbed as a phantasmic idea became reality when Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi and his Iranian counterpart Javad Zarif inked the document in a ceremony in Tehran.
- Experts have stated that this contract is largely unchanged from the draft that was previously obtained, which called for \$400 billion in investments in Iran spread over 25 years encompassing telecommunications (5G), infrastructure, banking, free trade zones as well as a vast expansion in military cooperation. In exchange, China will benefit from a steady and secure supply of discounted oil to cater to its ever-increasing needs. **As predicted by Samuel Huntington**
- Needless to say, the latest expansion of the multi-billion-dollar Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) will give relief to a downtrodden Iranian economy while providing China with a strong foothold in the Middle East.

- For Pakistan the deal portends many benefits. Firstly, it will pave the way for increased border security, something which has amounted to much blame-game between Pakistan and Iran over the years. Even though both sides have been continuously engaged in addressing border issues through their Joint Border Commission and have formed a Rapid Reaction Force to counter threats from militants, there are still unaddressed issues such as human trafficking and smuggling. For China, increased security between Pakistan and Iran is a necessity for the successful implementation of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) which is the BRI's flagship project.
- Secondly, Iran's official inclusion into the BRI will be crucial in lessening Pakistan's energy woes. The former has the capacity to export 3000MW of electricity to Pakistan at low rates. By the same token, the completion of the Iran-Pakistan (IP) Pipeline can now be expedited. In 2016, China Petroleum Pipeline Bureau (CPPB) stated its willingness to help complete the unexpended part of the IP from Gwadar to the Iranian border. Moreover, there are also plans of an LNG pipeline to China from Iran along the CPEC. Realisation of this project will have a number of advantages for all three countries.
- Additional benefits to Pakistan from the Iran-China deal are a much-needed boost to Pak-Iran trade — the potential of which amounts to \$5 billion. Moreover, Pakistan can benefit from another important component of the 25-year plan which is the proposed sharing of intelligence between Tehran and Beijing.
- In the context of territorial position and utility, Gwadar has the upper hand. This is not to dismiss Chabahar's significance in anyway. In fact, the two ports undeviatingly supplement each other and with a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) of Sister Ports already in place, further convergence now seems more likely than ever.
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- China is deepening ties with America's closest allies in the Middle East, including the United Arab Emirates, Egypt, and even Israel.
- For now, China's motivation seems primarily economic. Aside from gaining access to the region's energy resources, China can boost its profile in cutting-edge sectors by cooperating with Israel's high-tech industries. That is why – much to the annoyance of the US – it has sharply increased its investment in Israel in recent years.
- China has also looked to Israel to advance its connectivity ambitions, encompassed by the Belt and Road Initiative. Just as China has already taken control of seaports elsewhere across Asia and Europe, it has established itself at the Israeli port of Haifa. Similarly, anticipating reliance on Iranian oil, China has developed a direct shipping route to the port of Bandar Abbas on the Strait of Hormuz.
- One thing the US does not have to worry about – at least for now – is China stoking conflict in the Middle East. The last thing China wants is for a regional conflagration to disrupt oil exports or destroy its investments in the region. This makes China a responsible stakeholder in regional peace. But it doesn't signal China's willingness to underwrite security in the Middle East. Military alliances are not China's preferred tool in its global competition with the US.
- China's economic interests are best served by keeping the Middle East's established US-led security system intact. This partly explains why China's main partners in the Middle East are mostly US allies. As for the US, its military superiority in the Middle East will probably remain undisputed for some time. But military power will not be enough to stem China's strategic rise in

the region (and beyond). For that, the US will also need to boost its political clout, economic engagement, and cultural influence. Otherwise, as Biden put it in February, China will “eat our lunch.”

- Two views regarding china-latin America relations: one view points out that China-Latin American relations are different from US-Latin American relations because of i) South-South principles, such as non-involvement in internal affairs and sovereignty, ii) China’s alternative development model, and iii) the absence of policy conditionalities when it comes to loans. Consequently, China promotes alternatives to the Bretton Woods system, resulting in increased Latin American autonomy. Such authors argue that improving relations with China will contribute to Latin American countries’ development and a multipolar world order.
- On the contrary, other scholars point out the reproduction of center-periphery dynamics, the reproduction of Latin America international insertion as an exporter of commodities and an importer of manufacture. They highlight i) the asymmetrical trade relationship, resulting in new types of dependence and ii) the formation of a new hegemony (Li, 2019). Moreover, they argue that extractivism – chiefly through mining, oil extraction, and monoculture farming – generates wealth concentration and does not lead to development.
- Considering the debate, it is worth asking: is China an alternative for Latin America? Does the expansion of Chinese financing and cooperation contribute to Latin American development?
- **Loans and investments:** China’s loans to Latin America became relevant starting from 2004 when Hu Jintao made a trip to the region, and Argentina, Brazil, and Chile recognized the country as a market economy. China’s loans to Latin America come from two institutions, the China Development Bank (CDB) and China Import-Exports Bank. They are primarily directed to Venezuela, Brazil, Ecuador, and Argentina.
- Initially, China’s loans to Latin America represented a new source of financing to the region and were celebrated for not being attached to political conditions. It created alternatives that substantially differ from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank conventional loans and aid packages. The importance of options is sharp when we single out the major recipients from Latin America: three of the four, except Brazil, had trouble accessing global-market financing.
- Venezuela experienced strained relations with the United States since 2002, which led to sanctions. Argentina and Ecuador both defaulted their debts recently – the former in 2001, (technically in) 2014 and in 2020, and the latter in 2008 and 2020. Nevertheless, the prevalence of such governments as the primary recipients of investments does not imply a Chinese preference to relations with left-leaning regimes; on the contrary, the Asian power has signed free trade deals with Chile (2005), Peru (2008), and Costa Rica (2011)
- China’s capital was fundamentally different from Western loans and aid because it was not attached to a neoliberal economic policy. when directed to national governments, China’s capital improved financial autonomy and capacity to invest in social programs since Chinese lenders consider a long-term horizon and do not insist on austerity policies.
- despite not demanding austerity, Chinese loans are not thoroughly free of conditionalities. First of all, the Chinese government requires the recognition and maintenance of diplomatic relations with China – and not Taiwan – which led to a change in ambassadorial relations in El Salvador, the Dominican Republic, and Panama. Furthermore, in Argentina, deals are sometimes connected: an agreement to build hydroelectric dams was connected to another one, destined to improve the

Belgrano railway line. In 2016, Macri criticized the hydropower project but could not terminate it due to a cross-default clause – to stop the dams would mean discontinuing the railway line investment, which was less advantageous from the Argentine perspective.

- Most loans also provide opportunities for the supply of Chinese goods and services or are commodity-backed, implying the continuity in exporting commodities (Kaplan, 2016). Chinese investments reproduce dependence and natural resources exploitation through such mechanisms, not creating real alternatives for development and aggravating the environmental crisis.
- Chinese investments and imports from Latin America do not impact the region's international peripheral position. China buys raw materials and sells cheap manufactured products, reproducing the long-term dependence of such countries and leading to deindustrialization.
- China's partnership is essential to Latin America and can lead to win-win deals, but the relationship is asymmetrical and should be perceived as such. It can be seen as a short-term alternative, but it is not essentially different from North-South cooperation. China's offers of financing and collaboration do not promote Latin American development but can lead to little wins. In the end, the quest for autonomy and development is contingent on national strategies, and Latin American countries should rely on home-grown abilities and sub-regional integration. Partnership with China can bring short-term wins, but it does not offer opportunities to overcome dependence or underdevelopment.

Biden and World foreign policy outlook

- Former senate foreign affairs committee chairman therefore has visited and knows the region.
- Coauthor of Kerry-lugar bill which sought to triple non-military aid to pak
- Will move against china through alliances
- will seek an orderly withdrawal from afg and push intra-afghan dialogue
- 2000 soldiers on ground to combat IS
- Revive Iranian nuclear deal and Saudi relations
- Problems at home (pandemic, racial tensions)
- DEMOCRACY in the United States was killed on Jan 6, 2021, when the US Capitol building housing the Senate was stormed by a mob incited by former president Donald Trump. It was buried in a ballot box on Feb 13, when 43 out of 50 Republican senators voted not to impeach Trump.
- Ending support for 'offensive operations' in yemen, Antony blinken revoked the designation of Ansarallah, sometimes referred to as the Houthis, as a Foreign Terrorist Organization (FTO), declassification of Khashoggi investigation
- Repairing relations with European allies particularly NATO
- America First mantra has made 'America alone'
- By defining today's geopolitics as a clash between democracy and autocracy, the Biden administration risks both empowering America's adversaries and undercutting its allies. And an us-versus-them approach will make it impossible to confront shared global challenges.
- Premising US policy on a clash between democracy and autocracy would not just fail to contain China. Worse, it would actually encourage China's recalcitrance by consolidating its unholy alliance with Vladimir Putin's Russia. China and Russia have been rivals historically, and China's

rise should naturally alarm the Kremlin. But the two autocracies have instead formed a marriage of convenience to resist what they see as the West's encroaching ambition.

- Rather than pushing Russia and China together, the US should wean Russia off its cozy alignment with China. Just as the US reached out to China in the 1970s to weaken the communist bloc, Biden and his European allies should try to lure Russia westward.
- Should Biden continue to circle the ideological wagons, he also risks weakening, rather than strengthening, solidarity among the world's democracies. After all, it is not as though America's European and Asian partners are spoiling for a fight with China. This past December, the European Union finalized an investment treaty with China, despite the incoming Biden administration's objections. Similarly, South Korea, Japan, and other Asian democracies in China's neighborhood are not interested in a blustery confrontation. Biden would be wise not to force US allies to make stark choices.
- The US and its democratic allies should continue to face down the threats posed by autocracies; but they must also reserve a place for cooperation on global challenges.
- Encourage a split btw sino-russian relations; putin's discomfort with Russia's growing dependence on China
- Ask for Israel concessions to Palestine; stop further land grabbing
- May revive Palestinian diplomatic mission in Washington; preserve the viability of future Palestinian state
- Reassessment of US support for KSA (Trump-kushner); endless war in Yemen
- Supports domestic opposition to Erdogan, is concerned about US keeping nuclear weapons in turkey
- Opposed the 2007 surge in Iraq and proposed diving it into three self-governing regions
- Considered Withdrawal of US forces from Syria, a betrayal to Kurds
- Biden will be tough against Russia (involvement in elections, human rights abuse)
- Biden has said that his first foreign policy move will be to call foreign leaders and say, "America's back: you can count on us."
- He has vowed to end the destructive policies of the Trump administration, such as the travel ban on Muslim-majority nations, the slashing of U.S. refugee numbers to historic lows, family separations at the southern border, the berating of allies, and the embrace of authoritarian leaders
- his administration will reengage in a variety of international forums and initiatives that Trump abandoned, such as the UN Human Rights Council and the Global Compact for Migration.
- May join COVAX, 184-nation initiative aiming to make 2 billion vaccine doses available worldwide by the end of 2021
- With decades of expertise from global immunization campaigns targeting polio, measles, and smallpox, Ebola, United States has a singular capacity to help other countries with their strategies for administering a vaccine (CDC USAID)
- US must make its universities the most attractive in the world to foreign talent
- the Biden administration can take the lead in driving changes that reduce corruption, money laundering, and global tax evasion
- Autocrats around the world prefer 'China model' to hide their corruption

- Biden may not pair Pakistan with China as the target of Washington's Indo-Pacific strategy to exert dual American and Indian pressure as this will put Pakistan firmly in the Chinese camp and thus lost to Beijing's strategic purposes. But if Pakistan wants friendly relations with the US, it will have to be responsive to shared US-Pakistan interests.
- the relationship might become normal, with Pakistan neither allied nor alienated. And that should be good enough. The alternative could be worse.
- The only way forward is through true multilateralism, in which American exceptionalism is genuinely subordinated to common interests and values, international institutions, and a form of rule of law from which the US is not exempt.
- push for sovereign-debt restructuring!
- Pak-US relations should perhaps revolve more around less tension creating spaces like education; IT; and clean energy's rather than unrealistic expectation about security co-operation. Recalibrating ties in this manner, will certainly keep Pakistan important for Biden's America's hopefully for the right reasons this time.
- No trade system can function without a method of adjudicating disputes (Trump's refusal to point new judges to WTO dispute-settlement mechanism)
- For many, he is a welcome antidote to the last four years of fire and fury, like a bite of white bread to alleviate the pain of a mouthful of habanero pepper.
- Neville Chamberlain, a mainstream Conservative, not overly imaginative, and a man of compromise, was not the leader his country needed to face Hitler in 1940. In peacetime, Chamberlain was an effective prime minister, whereas Winston Churchill was regarded as an unreliable blowhard. But in May 1940, when Britain was hardly ready to fight a war with Nazi Germany, the country needed a fierce romantic like Churchill to inspire its people with his heroic spirit. Unfortunately, too many post-war US presidents have chosen to emulate Churchill, rather than Chamberlain, which has sometimes led to foolish wars. Moving into the Oval Office, Biden removed the bust of Churchill that Trump had prominently displayed behind the desk. Not a bad start.
- the American gulag at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, has been synonymous with egregious abuse of power and open disregard for fundamental rights, as Joe Biden settles into Washington, there are voices from within his administration saying that the new leader is reviewing efforts to close down the detention centre. Of course, these efforts will meet stiff resistance by the Republicans, as was the case during the Obama presidency. But if President Biden is serious about upholding the human rights agenda, he needs to shut down Guantanamo without delay.
- The southern US state of Louisiana enacted a law in 1859 giving people of color the "freedom" voluntarily to opt in to slavery, a practice often described as "warranteeism."

Tech rivalry

- The US, in order to undermine China's economy and rising military capabilities, has imposed multiple sanctions and blacklisted its very successful companies that were trading with the US on the basis that these were indulging in malpractices and stealing technology. By denying them any access it expects to retard China's technology and manufacturing capabilities. The US administration under former president Donald Trump had blacklisted 31 Chinese companies and declared several Chinese firms off-limits to American investors. These include telecom,

construction and technology firms including China Mobile. The list has been further expanded to nearly 60 by the present US administration. China has been compelled to take reciprocal steps and banned several US companies.

Power Comparison

- For many reasons, the Chinese authorities will probably someday stop pegging the renminbi to a basket of currencies, and shift to a modern inflation-targeting regime under which they allow the exchange rate to fluctuate much more freely, especially against the dollar. When that happens, expect most of Asia to follow China. In due time, the dollar, currently the anchor currency for roughly two-thirds of world GDP, could lose nearly half its weight.
- Considering how much the United States relies on the dollar's special status – or what then-French Finance Minister Valéry Giscard d'Estaing famously called America's "exorbitant privilege" – to fund massive public and private borrowing, the impact of such a shift could be significant. Given that the US has been aggressively using deficit financing to combat the economic ravages of COVID-19, the sustainability of its debt might be called into question.
- Even if China surpasses the US to become the world's largest economy, national income is not the only measure of geopolitical power. China ranks well behind the US in soft power, and US military expenditure is nearly four times that of China. While Chinese military capabilities have been increasing in recent years, analysts who look carefully at the military balance conclude that China will not, say, be able to exclude the US from the Western Pacific.
- On the other hand, the US was once the world's largest trading economy and its largest bilateral lender. Today, nearly 100 countries count China as their largest trading partner, compared to 57 for the US. China plans to lend more than \$1 trillion for infrastructure projects with its Belt and Road Initiative over the next decade, while the US has cut back aid. China will gain economic power from the sheer size of its market as well as its overseas investments and development assistance. China's overall power relative to the US is likely to increase.
- Nonetheless, balances of power are hard to judge. The US will retain some long-term power advantages that contrast with areas of Chinese vulnerability.
- One is geography. The US is surrounded by oceans and neighbors that are likely to remain friendly. China has borders with 14 countries, and territorial disputes with India, Japan, and Vietnam set limits on its hard and soft power.
- Energy is another area where America has an advantage. A decade ago, the US was dependent on imported energy, but the shale revolution transformed North America from an energy importer to exporter. At the same time, China became more dependent on energy imports from the Middle East, which it must transport along sea routes that highlight its problematic relations with India.
- The US also has demographic advantages. It is the only major developed country that is projected to hold its global ranking (third) in terms of population. While the rate of US population growth has slowed in recent years, it will not turn negative, as in Russia, Europe, and Japan. China, meanwhile, rightly fears "growing old before it grows rich." India will soon overtake it as the most populous country, and its labor force peaked in 2015.
- America also remains at the forefront in key technologies (bio, nano, information) that are central to twenty-first-century economic growth. China is investing heavily in research and development, and competes well in some fields. But 15 of the world's top 20 research universities are in the US; none is in China.

Coming storms, the return of Great-power war

- Economic interdependence won't cause war? (UK and Germany were closely interdependent on each other before ww1)
- Nuclear deterrence? Mutual assured destruction (MAD) prevented Cold War, but technological evolution has made thinkable that was once unthinkable (limited nuclear war won't resulting in apocalyptic destruction)
- Liberal international order? You know problems about this one
- Case study of Germany and UK and its relevance to US-China
- Germany's Weltpolitik strategy (transforming Germany into a global power) provoked uk; Britain saw Germany's economic and military rise antithetical to its liberal values, its prosperity derived from state intervention not through liberal laissez-faire approach; no direct clash over throne, territory or borders in fact trade, cultural bonds, interconnected elites and royal families were some factors which could foster peace; Thucydides trap
- 'the century of humiliation' Western powers and Japan kept China down
- China lost from France and UK in Opium wars
- Japanese annexed Taiwan when they defeated China in the Sino-Japanese war in 1895. Their occupation of China from 1937 to 1945 in the Second World War was even more brutal. According to an estimate 14 million Chinese lost their lives in the Japanese occupation of China in the Second World War. There was also this opium war (1839-1842) between the Western powers and China and the subsequent humiliation which China suffered and which is referred to as the 'century of humiliation'.
- To spur its economic growth, modernization and avenge its humiliation china under Deng entered US led order; not to help to preserve it but to challenge it from within
- Purchasing Power Parity China has surpassed US acc to IMF in 2014
- Measured by market determined exchange rate, china's gdp is now 70 % of US, militarily, technologically coming closer
- Rather than seeing it as an ideological competition which are zero-sum in nature it should be taken as traditional great-power rivalry which diplomacy could manage through conciliation, compromise, and search for common ground
- US wont peacefully cede its dominance in East Asia to China (presence in south china sea, using india as a staunch ally, supporting taiwan's independence, etc.)
- This is an age where major nations realise that military dominance has to be accompanied by economic power. President Joe Biden's primary focus and strategy is to weaken China economically by raising trade barriers, accusing it of malpractices and taking multiple measures to put brakes in China's economic rise.

Taiwan

- In 1954, President Dwight D. Eisenhower threatened to use nuclear weapons after China shelled a rocky islet near Taiwan's coast, when the ROC was still a military dictatorship. But things were different then. The US was treaty-bound to defend Taiwan. This changed after 1972, when President Richard M. Nixon agreed that Taiwan was part of "one China," and President Jimmy Carter nullified the defense treaty in 1979. Whether the US would still fight a war over Taiwan has become a question subject to what Henry Kissinger long ago termed "strategic ambiguity."

- There are practical reasons why a Chinese military attack on Taiwan might still provoke a war with the US. China's control of the East China Sea would be a threat to Japan and South Korea. Allowing that to happen could start a dangerous nuclear arms race in East Asia. Taiwan also has highly advanced computer technology, which the US and its democratic allies would prefer not to see in the PRC's hands.
- At the core of contemporary Chinese nationalism is the idea of national humiliation redeemed by renewed greatness. According to this narrative, for at least one hundred years, between the Opium Wars in the 1840s and the brutal Japanese invasions in the 1930s and 1940s, China was degraded, bullied, and occupied by foreign powers. Only the national revival overseen by the Communist Party of China will ensure that this never happens again.
- Americans are affected by a different history – for which they weren't even directly responsible. It was Britain's Neville Chamberlain who signed the Munich Agreement in 1938, allowing Hitler's Germany to begin dismantling Czechoslovakia. Chamberlain's name would be associated forever with cowardly appeasement, while Winston Churchill emerged as the great war hero. Presidents and prime ministers have been terrified of being compared to Chamberlain and have dreamed of being heroic Churchills. When the British refused to send troops to Vietnam to help the French fight against Ho Chi Minh in 1954, Eisenhower accused Churchill, of all people, of "promoting a second Munich."
- So far, China appears to be playing a game of chicken, probing Taiwanese defenses, flying into its airspace, stepping up naval patrols, engaging in military practice runs for an invasion, and making provocative statements about "not ruling out the use of force." This is met on the American side with more arms shipments to Taiwan and tough talk about a new cold war.
- John Cena #TaiwanIsACountry

Stabilisation?

In the quest for pre-eminence, China seems to be treading with great caution and thoughtfulness whereas the US has not only stepped up its intense competition with China but has also become aggressive in rallying up its allies against China. This would turn out to be a perilous course as described by US Senator **Bernie Sanders** in his recent article titled "Washington's Dangerous New Consensus on China". He refers to a growing consensus in the US over relations with China as a "zero-sum economic and military struggle" and suggests that Americans "must resist the temptation to try to forge national unity through hostility". American public opinion driven by the rhetoric of antagonism and fear is also an important factor when it comes to defining the US-China relations.

Can the relationship be stabilised? A prudent response to this has been offered by a Chinese academic in an article in Foreign Affairs titled 'New engagement consensus'. Professor Wang Dong argues that a new cold war is neither inevitable nor desirable. He proposes a new approach to engagement involving strategic reassurance among other things. China, as a rising power, would need to credibly reassure Washington that "it is neither pursuing a sphere of influence by pushing the US out of East Asia" nor aiming to replace the existing international order". The US for its part would have to "resist pursuing a containment strategy and seeking to mobilise the US public and its allies for a new cold war". Whether this sensible advice will be heeded remains an open question.

Pakistan's options

- the crossing by China in the last several years of several 'red lines' for US strategic planners upended the conventional thinking within the American security establishment on how to tackle China's rise. These include the acquisition of high-end technological capability, a challenge to the international 'rules-based' order set up by the US to ensure its continued global hegemonic dominance, building of maritime power, and last but not least, the projection of soft power via the Belt and Road Initiative.
- Into this milieu, enter the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor. The US has made every effort to wean Pakistan away from it. It has used public diplomacy to warn of the consequences, leaned on the Pakistani leadership privately, raised directly as well as via information operations the bogey of China's 'debt trap diplomacy' (put to rest by The Atlantic, and brought the IMF into play. It has also activated 'spoilers' within the government and political actors to sabotage CPEC.
- Unfortunately, in Great Power rivalry there can be no fence-sitters or casual bystanders. While Pakistan should aim to de-hyphenate its relationship with China and the US, realistically it will be increasingly difficult to 'balance' its relations with both, especially if the expectation from the US is that Pakistan will tone down its strategic relationship with China in any way.
- A quick review of who brings what to the table for Pakistan is illustrative. The US has had a transactional relationship with Pakistan for decades, subjecting its 'ally' to arms embargos and financial sanctions on multiple occasions since the 1980s. Under the Obama administration, the relationship broke down almost completely with the unprovoked killing of 24 Pakistan army soldiers at the Salala check post by US forces in Afghanistan in November 2011.
- As the war in Afghanistan headed towards ignominious defeat for America, Pakistan was increasingly subjected to a campaign of demonisation, with successive US administrations scapegoating the country rather than take ownership of the outcome.
- China, on the other hand, is a strategic ally of Pakistan since the very beginning. It has provided steadfast and unflinching diplomatic, financial, military and people-to-people support for Pakistan for virtually the entirety of the latter's existence. It is now Pakistan's main arms supplier at a time when the US has again blocked the transfer of weapons to the country (the latest episode involves the T-129 ATAK Turkish gunship helicopters), while deepening its own defence partnership with India.
- By putting together and leading the \$62 billion CPEC, China is now playing a potentially transformational role in Pakistan's economy. Despite Pakistan's inability to conceive a grand design for CPEC, the project offers an unprecedented opportunity to transform the country's economy. The immense benefits will accrue, however, not by limiting CPEC to a transit corridor for two-way shipments to and from China using Gwadar, or by over-investment in power generation leading to expensive excess capacity, but by integrating Pakistani firms into the Chinese supply chain and relocating 'sunset' industries from the mainland to Pakistan. This should have been the clearly articulated central aim and purpose of CPEC for Pakistani planners from the start. By focusing on this 'mission', constraints to growth (specifically to exports) would have been identified and seriously addressed — such as bottlenecks in logistics and physical infrastructure, the low skills level of the domestic labour force, impediments embedded in the country's taxation regime etc.
- While at the moment we appear quite far from achieving the potential benefits inherent in an economic corridor such as CPEC, all is not lost. Improved strategising and better planning even at

this late stage can retrieve the situation, albeit further out than desirable. Once Pakistan has aligned CPEC with its foundational objective of improving its external competitiveness and enhancing exports, it should then leverage it as a conduit for east-west regional connectivity. **The first order of business, however, should remain delivering on the promise of CPEC.**

US-KSA

- the White House decided to publicly release a long-suppressed intelligence report pinning the blame on the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia's de facto ruler, Crown Prince Mohammed Bin Salman, for the 2018 death of dissident journalist Jamal Khashoggi.
- The potential restrictions threaten a tentative Saudi contract for up to 50 of Lockheed Martin's F-35 fifth-generation stealth fighters, as well as earlier Saudi efforts to procure over a dozen U.S. armed drones.
- Khaled al-Malik (prominent Saudi journalist) suggested that Riyadh can respond to Biden's potential arms sales restrictions by turning to Russia or China for its weapons import needs.
- "The aim is a recalibration, not a rupture," a senior Biden official told the Washington Post.
- Since it was introduced in 2016, "Vision 2030," as the Saudi government's ambitious plan to reshape the nation's economy and society is officially known, has touched virtually every sector of life in the kingdom. In the span of a half-decade, it has begun to reorient the country's economy away from its traditional reliance on oil exports toward greater tech innovation, significantly elevated the role of women in Saudi society, and relaxed strictures on culture and social interaction. what is visible in the Kingdom today cannot be called an outright repudiation of the core Wahhabi creed of the House of Saud. Nevertheless, the aggregate result of the changes taking place within the Kingdom is that, while perhaps not yet part of the solution in the struggle against Islamic extremism, it is now a significantly smaller part of the problem than in years past. This new role is one that needs to be nurtured by the United States as part of its ongoing efforts to confront and combat Islamic extremism.
- For the Kingdom, America Is No Longer the Only Game in Town. Saudi officials trace the modern U.S.-Saudi partnership back to the historic summit between Saudi King Ibn Saud and President Franklin D. Roosevelt aboard the USS Quincy in 1945. Since then, America has ranked as the Kingdom's foremost international ally, although those bonds have been sorely strained in recent years by issues like Islamic extremism, economic policy and human rights. Yet America's standing with the Kingdom is no longer nearly as unassailable as it once was. That's because the past half-decade has seen the emergence of a burgeoning strategic partnership between Saudi Arabia the People's Republic of China (PRC). This "new era" of bilateral ties has been punctuated by upwards of \$100 billion in Chinese investment and assorted other contacts that have cumulatively made the PRC a major stakeholder in the kingdom's Vision 2030 plan and Saudi Arabia a key node in China's vaunted Belt & Road Initiative.
- Up until now, the House of Saud has taken pains to balance its deepening ties to China with its historic relationship with the United States. That stance, however, is likely to shift in the face of more punitive U.S. policy, and amplify questions already percolating in Riyadh about whether the strategic partnership between America and the Kingdom has truly run its course.
- What the White House does next will go a long way toward determining the shape of the future U.S.-Saudi relationship—as well as Riyadh's larger geopolitical trajectory. To that end, Washington

should have every interest in nurturing the kingdom's current course, and ample reason to fear the potential consequences of nudging it in the opposite direction.

- In his first foreign policy statement, Joe Biden announced an end to the sale of "offensive" weapons to Saudi Arabia, given its role in the war that has devastated Yemen. But there's no bar on "defensive" weapons.
- The Saudis have lately also mended ties with Qatar, home to the biggest American base in the Gulf, after a failed effort to bring it to heel. And women's rights activist Loujain al-Hathloul's release last month from years of imprisonment and torture was also interpreted as an overture to the new administration in Washington.
- MBS's predecessor as crown prince, and a prominent princess — the daughter of Saudi Arabia's second king — and her daughter remain incarcerated.
- For successive American administrations, concerns about human rights have seldom been much more than a pretence. They are routinely heightened in the case of regimes that refuse to kowtow to Washington and glossed over in innumerable other instances. Venezuela is red flagged, but not Brazil. The Saudi, Emirati, Israeli and Egyptian regimes get more or less a free pass, but not Syria.
- the two countries have a shared interest in the stability of global energy and financial markets, as well as the supremacy of the US dollar as the world's reserve currency. All Saudi oil is traded in dollars, an arrangement that neither side has an interest in changing.
- America and Saudi Arabia also agree on the need to stabilize the Middle East, fight global jihadist groups, contain Iran, and end the war in Yemen and rebuild the country — and for Arab states to normalize relations with Israel.

Pak-KSA

- On Kashmir, today Saudi Arabia has a nuanced position, if not totally supportive to Pakistan's stance, it also doesn't toe the Indian line. Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Faisal Al Saud has recently offered mediation between India and Pakistan.
- Islamabad was able to avoid a default on loan repayments, thanks to the crucial Saudi financial support to the Imran government. And the kingdom has consistently interceded on behalf of Pakistan using its economic power, influence and clout.
- Pakistani troops deployed in Saudi Arabia consider it a religious obligation to protect the Haramain Shareefain with their lives, like no other military.
- The Pakistani military has extensive training, logistics and advisory linkages with the Saudi armed forces. A heavy brigade (over 15,000 troops) was deployed during 1970s and 1980s to defend Saudi Arabia against Israeli and Iraqi threats, respectively.
- The Pak-Saudi relationship is also interdependent. The anti-Saudi liberal lobby in Pakistan and those on the Saudi side do not realise that each is the other's game-changer. Non-Arab Pakistan helps the kingdom to expand its ideological reach beyond the Arab world. And it provides the kingdom a security umbrella. In return, Pakistan through its ties with Riyadh boosts its credentials with the Muslim world and other powers. Our more than 2.2 million expats in the kingdom remit a crucial over \$6 billion annually.
- Pakistan had consciously joined the Saudi bloc opposing the secular pan-Arabism of Egypt's Gamal Abdel Nasser. Pakistani pilots were deployed to the kingdom as early as 1969 against North Yemeni rebels. Both nations fought the USSR together in Afghanistan and coordinate closely for Afghan peace and reconstruction.

- Saudi Arabia, as early as 1943, financially supported the Pakistan Movement. In early 1980s, Riyadh paid the \$500 million shortfall for Pakistan to buy 40 F-16s from the US. PM Nawaz's government was gifted \$1.5 billion; and in 1998, Riyadh pledged 50,000 barrels of oil per day to offset American sanctions after Pakistan carried out its nuclear tests. The kingdom has been providing considerable material support to Islamabad during the recent pandemic and other calamities.
- However, we need to realise that the contemporary young Saudi leadership values economic relations over ideological alliances given the ravages of coronavirus, dwindling Hajj/Umrah revenues, volatility in oil prices and its curtailed demand etc. Previously, the Saudi debt was rolled over or converted into a grant, however, under the prevalent environment, that should not be expected.
- Imran Khan reiterated Pakistan's lasting support to "protect Saudi sovereignty and territorial integrity", besides reaffirming political support to end the conflict in Yemen. He condemned Houthi-generated violence, especially the attacks inside Saudi territory. PM Imran appreciated MBS' recently launched "Green Saudi Arabia and Green Middle East" initiatives. Both sides signed an agreement on the establishment of Saudi-Pakistan Supreme Coordination Council (SPSCC), co-chaired by PM Imran and the crown prince, to "impart strategic direction" to bilateral ties.
- Important among the numerous bilateral agreements/MoUs signed was a 'framework MoU' for financing projects up to \$500 million in energy, hydropower generation, infrastructure, transport/communication and water resource development. This project-specific outlay, rather than the traditional Saudi balance of payments or budgetary support, would help finance some CPEC projects.