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## Heavy

## Vocab

1. **Gaslight**: manipulate (someone) by psychological means into doubting their own sanity; *in the first episode, Karen Valentine is being gaslighted by her husband.*
2. **Decadent**: characterized by or reflecting a state of moral or cultural decline; "a decaying, decadent Britain"
3. **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.
4. **Alacrity (n)**: promptness in response, eagerness, willingness; "she accepted the invitation with alacrity"
5. **Paladin (n)**: a trusted military leader (as for a medieval prince) 2 : a leading champion of a cause
6. **Forlorn**: adj; (of an aim or endeavour) unlikely to succeed or be fulfilled, hopeless; "a forlorn attempt to escape"
7. **Lockstep**: n; close adherence to and emulation of another's actions; "they raised prices in lockstep with those of foreign competitors"
8. **Schizophrenia** is a serious mental disorder in which people interpret reality abnormally; schizophrenic towards science
9. **Concomitant**: adj; related; associated
10. **Rodomontade**: a bragging speech
11. **Perfidious**: adj; deceitful and untrustworthy
12. **Paraplegic**: adj; affected by or relating to paralysis of the legs and lower body; "a paraplegic war veteran"
13. **Elliptically**: concisely, ambiguously or cryptically
14. **Sclerotic**: adj; becoming rigid and unresponsive; losing the ability to adapt.
15. **Elusive**: hard to express or define
16. **Senescence**: the condition or process of deterioration with age.

17. **Euphemistic**: the substitution of an agreeable or inoffensive expression for one that may offend or suggest something unpleasant.
18. **schadenfreude** means finding joy in someone else's misfortune.
19. **Phantasmic**: lacking reality, illusive
20. **Oxymoron**: a combination of contradictory or incongruous words (such as *cruel kindness*)
21. **Nosedive**: to suddenly fall in value, quickly and by a large amount; after Pak-US relations nosedived.
22. **Ring-fence**: guarantee that (funds allocated for a particular purpose) will not be spent on anything else; The budget for the region was ringfenced.
23. **Fissiparous**: inclined to cause or undergo division into separate parts or groups; "the fissiparous tendencies innate in tribalism"
24. **Obdurate**: stubbornly refusing to change one's opinion or course of action; "I argued this point with him, but he was obdurate"
25. **Pugnacious**: eager or quick to argue, quarrel, or fight; "his public statements became increasingly pugnacious".
26. **Moth-eaten**: unattractive or useless because it is old or has been used too much
27. **Ad nauseum**: used to refer to the fact that something has been done or repeated so often that it has become annoying or tiresome; "the phrase he repeated ad nauseam".
28. **Groundswell**: a rapid spontaneous growth (as of political opinion); a groundswell of support.
29. **Genuflect**: bending a knee to the ground, a gesture of deep respect for a superior; Pak's foreign policy continues to genuflect in the direction of national security.
30. **Nadir**: at its lowest point
31. **Crescendo**: the highest point reached in a progressive increase of intensity.
32. **Yesteryear**: last year or the recent past, especially as nostalgically recalled; "return with us now to those thrilling days of yesteryear"
33. **Sine qua non**: an essential condition; a thing that is absolutely necessary.
34. **Colloquially**: in the language of ordinary or familiar conversation, informally.
35. **Quixotic**: unrealistic, impractical
36. **Virulent**: bitterly hostile
37. **Neuralgic**: causing or feeling very strong, painful emotions; Their populations have become increasingly neuralgic about immigration.
38. **Intransigence**: refusal to change one's views or to agree about something.
39. **Internecline**: destructive to both sides in a conflict; "the region's history of savage internecline warfare"
40. **Ancillary**: providing necessary support to the primary activities or operation of an organization, system, etc; A U.S. policy that weakens the authority of the House of Saud, therefore, will have the ancillary effect of strengthening recidivist forces.
41. **Recidivist**: a convicted criminal who reoffends, especially repeatedly.
42. **Nettlesome**: causing annoyance or difficulty; "nettlesome regional disputes"
43. **Atrocious**: horrifyingly wicked; "atrocious cruelties", of a very poor quality, extremely bad or unpleasant; "he attempted an atrocious imitation of my English accent"
44. **Pipedream**: an unattainable or fanciful hope or scheme; "free trade in international aviation will remain a pipe dream"

45. **Naysayer:** a person who criticizes, objects to, or opposes something; "he continues to win, despite the many naysayers"
46. **Uncouth:** lacking good manners, refinement, or grace; "he is unwashed, uncouth, and drunk most of the time"
47. **Sundry:** of various kinds; several.
48. **Futility:** pointlessness or uselessness; "the horror and futility of war"
49. **Overdrive:** a state of great or excessive activity
50. **Pseudo:** not genuine; spurious or sham; "we are talking about real journalists and not the pseudo kind"
51. **Janus-faced:** duplicitous, two-faced
52. **Exasperated:** feeling or expressing extreme annoyance or irritation; In the final moments of a wild debate, the exasperated moderator tried to regain control of the conversation.
53. **Succinctly:** in a brief and clearly expressed manner.
54. **Indelible:** (of ink or a pen) making marks that cannot be removed, not able to be forgotten.
55. **Camaraderie:** mutual trust and friendship among people who spend a lot of time together.
56. **Eponymous:** (of a person) giving their name to something; Marshall's eponymous plan
57. **Megalomania:** obsession with the exercise of power
58. **Punitive:** inflicting or intended as punishment; "he called for punitive measures against the Eastern bloc"
59. **Fervour:** passionate and intense feeling
60. **Gratuitously:** without good reason, unjustifiably.
61. **Connivance:** willingness to allow or be secretly involved in an immoral or illegal act; "this infringement of the law had taken place with the connivance of officials"
62. **Incongruity:** incompatibility; "the incongruity of his fleshy face and skinny body disturbed her"
63. **Pyrrhic:** (of a victory) won at too great a cost to have been worthwhile for the victor.
64. **Votary:** a person, such as a monk or nun, who has made vows of dedication to religious service.
65. **Loutish:** uncouth and aggressive; thuggish; "youths responsible for awful, loutish behaviour"
66. **Inkling:** a slight knowledge or suspicion; a hint; "the records give us an inkling of how people saw the world"
67. **Egregious:** outstandingly bad; shocking; "egregious abuses of copyright"
68. **Fracas:** noisy disturbance, quarrel; The political fracas leading up to the Senate election has familiar echoes of the past.
69. **Opprobrium:** harsh criticism or censure; "the critical opprobrium generated by his films"
70. **Gulag:** GULAG was the government agency in charge of the Soviet network of forced labour camps set up by order of Vladimir Lenin, reaching its peak during Joseph Stalin's rule;
71. **Jettison:** abandon or discard (someone or something that is no longer wanted); "the scheme was jettisoned"
72. **Whim:** a sudden desire or change of mind, especially one that is unusual or unexplained; "she bought it on a whim"
73. **Pedantic:** excessively concerned with minor details or rules; overscrupulous; "his analyses are careful and even painstaking, but never pedantic"
74. **Quandary:** a state of perplexity or uncertainty over what to do in a difficult situation; "Kate was in a quandary"

75. **Esoteric:** intended for or likely to be understood by only a small number of people with a specialized knowledge or interest.
76. **Grandiloquent:** pompous or extravagant in language, style, or manner, especially in a way that is intended to impress; "a grandiloquent celebration of Spanish glory"
77. **Repudiate:** to refuse to accept; repudiate a contract
78. **Aberration:** a departure from what is normal, usual, or expected, typically an unwelcome one; "they described the outbreak of violence in the area as an aberration".
79. **Tacitly:** in a way that is understood or implied without being directly stated.
80. **Covet:** desire, crave; I covet one of their smart watches.
81. **Reticence:** the quality of being reticent; reserve; "the traditional emotional reticence of the British"
82. **Contention:** heated disagreement; The debate between realists and liberals has re-emerged as an axis of contention in international relations theory.
83. **Caprice:** a sudden and unaccountable change of mood or behaviour; "the caprices of the electorate"
84. **Burgeon:** begin to grow or increase rapidly; flourish; "the city's suburbs have burgeoned, sprawling out from the centre"
85. **Acolyte:** an assistant or follower
86. **Dupe:** a victim of deception; "men who were simply the dupes of their unscrupulous leaders," deceive, trick; the newspaper was duped into publishing an untrue story.
87. **Furtively:** in a way that attempts to avoid notice or attention, secretly; "I furtively glanced over at my father to see his reaction"
88. **Recalcitrant:** having an obstinately uncooperative attitude towards authority or discipline; "a class of recalcitrant fifteen-year-olds"
89. **Exude:** (of a person) display (an emotion or quality) strongly and openly; "Sir Thomas exuded goodwill."
90. **Crib:** copy (another person's work) illicitly or without acknowledgement.
91. **Palatial:** luxurious, resembling a palace in being spacious and splendid; her palatial apartment in Mayfair
92. **Inimical:** tending to obstruct or harm; "the policy was inimical to Britain's real interests"
93. **Consternation:** a feeling of anxiety or dismay, typically at something unexpected; "to her consternation her car wouldn't start"
94. **Contretemps:** a minor dispute or disagreement; "she had occasional contretemps with her staff"
95. **Pretention:** a claim or assertion of a claim to something; "Turkey's neo-Ottoman pretensions are threatening European interests."
96. **Caveat:** warning, caution; *there are several caveats which concern the validity of the assessment results.*
97. **Preponderance:** *the quality or fact of being greater in number, quantity, or importance, prevalence, predominance; "the preponderance of women among older people"*
98. **Quandary:** *a state of perplexity or uncertainty over what to do in a difficult situation; "Kate was in a quandary"*
99. **Onus:** *something that is one's duty or responsibility; "the onus is on you to show that you have suffered loss"*

100. **Anglophile:** *a person who is fond of or greatly admires England or Britain; Cannoli restaurant owners were anglophiles.*
101. **Gratuitous:** *done without good reason; uncalled for, unjustified; "gratuitous violence"*
102. **Dilapidated:** *(of a building or object) in a state of disrepair or ruin as a result of age or neglect; "old, dilapidated buildings"*
103. **Earnest:** *resulting from or showing sincere and intense conviction; "an earnest student"*
104. **Chum:** *companion, close friend*
105. **Unencumbered:** *unaffected, without impediment; an unencumbered trade in opium.*
106. **Otiose:** *serving no practical purpose or result; "there were occasions when I felt my efforts were rather otiose"*
107. **Render:** *cause to be or become; make; "the rains rendered his escape impossible"*
108. **Antebellum:** *occurring or existing before a particular war; Afghanistan will return to the status quo antebellum.*
109. **Verity:** *a true principle or belief, especially one of fundamental importance; "the eternal verities"*
110. **Sputtered:** *make a series of soft explosive or spitting sounds; "the engine sputtered and stopped or The efforts at intra-Afghan peace talks have, generously speaking, sputtered."*
111. **Parsimonious:** *miserly, very unwilling to spend money or use resources; "even the parsimonious Joe paid for drinks all round."*
112. **Denouement:** *outcome, epilogue*
113. **Ignominious:** *humiliating, undignified; Trump's ignominious departure*
114. **Chasten:** *subdue, bring down, (of a rebuke or misfortune) have a restraining or moderating effect on; "the director was somewhat chastened by his recent flops."*
115. **Irrevocably:** *in a way that cannot be changed, reversed, or recovered; "my life changed irrevocably in an instant"*
116. **Nadir:** *the lowest or most unsuccessful point in a situation; there is a sense that the crisis of liberal democracies has reached a nadir.*
117. **Toadyism:** *sycophancy, flattering in hope of gaining favours*
118. **Oleaginous:** *exaggeratedly and distastefully complimentary; obsequious; "candidates made oleaginous speeches praising government policies."*
119. **Cusp:** *a point of transition between two different states; those on the cusp of adulthood*
120. **Acquiesce:** *accept something reluctantly but without protest; Sara acquiesced in his decision.*
121. **Infamy:** *the state of being well known for some bad quality or deed; Capitol hill attack is described by US commentators as America's "day of infamy."*
122. **Alacrity:** *eagerness, willingness; she accepted the invitation with alacrity.*
123. **Milieu:** *a person's social environment; "Gregory came from the same aristocratic milieu as Sidonius."*
124. **Denigrate:** *criticize unfairly; disparage; Netanyahu has held on to power by denigrating Israeli Arabs*
125. **Opprobrium:** *public disgrace arising from shameful conduct; the opprobrium of being closely associated with gangsters*
126. **Chauvinism:** *exaggerated or aggressive patriotism; There is no excuse anywhere to govern by racial hatred and ethnic chauvinism*

127. **Exemplar:** a person or thing serving as a typical example or appropriate model; *the place is an exemplar of multicultural Britain.*
128. **topsy-turvy:** upside down, a state of utter confusion; *Trump's topsy-turvy policies*
129. **Unbridled:** uncontrolled
130. **Mendacity:** lying, untruthfulness
131. **Abominable:** loathsome, detestable; *"what an abominable mess!"*
132. **Equipotent:** equally powerful; *China has no equipotent in South Asia.*
133. **carte blanche:** complete freedom to act as one wishes; *the architect given carte blanche to design the store.*
134. **Pulverize:** defeat utterly, crush; *Monicagate perjury and the failure at the second Camp David conference pulverized Clinton.*
135. **de rigueur:** strictly required as per custom, fashion; *challenging the election results has now become de rigueur.*
136. **Apropos:** with reference to, appropriate; *the composer's reference to child's play is apropos*
137. **Obliterate:** destroy utterly; *He obliterated his ex's memories*
138. **Hyperbole:** exaggeration; *The film is being promoted with all the usual hyperbole.*
139. **Wisecrack:** a clever remark or joke
140. **Quintessential:** typical, stereotypical; *he was the quintessential tough guy—strong, silent, and self-contained*
141. **Imperative:** an essential or urgent thing; *immediate action was imperative*
142. **Coalescence:** the joining or merging of elements to form one mass or whole; *the lack of coalescence among fields of science*
143. **saber-rattling:** the display or threat of military force; *saber-rattling by the superpowers*
144. **tinderbox:** a thing that is readily ignited; *"the estate was a tinderbox where riots could explode at any moment."*
145. **Assiduously:** with great care and perseverance; *"leaders worked assiduously to hammer out an action plan."*
146. **Portend:** be a sign or warning that (something, especially something momentous or calamitous) is likely to happen; *"the eclipses portend some major events."*
147. **Incentivize:** motivate or encourage; *ceasefire may dis-incentivize their fighters*
148. **Prima facie:** based on the first impression; *Prima facie, both Iran and the Taliban had reached an understanding.*
149. **Mauled:** wound (a person or animal) by scratching and tearing; *His reputation was mauled by recent scandal.*
150. **Heaping:** piling, direct a great deal of praise, abuse, criticism; *cleric heaping scorn on populace*
151. **Scorn:** contempt, disdain
152. **Unhinged:** mentally unbalanced, deranged; *unhinged President Trump*
153. **Denouement:** finale, epilogue, outcome
154. **Farcical:** absurd, ridiculous
155. **Ignominy:** public shame or disgrace; *the ignominy of being imprisoned*
156. **Putsch:** a coup



157. **Galvanize:** shock or excite (someone) into acting; *the urgency of his voice galvanized them into action*
158. **Fratricidal:** denoting conflict within a single family or organization; *fratricidal conflict among various Afghan Mujahedeen groups*
159. **Potemkin:** having a false or deceptive appearance, especially one presented for the purpose of propaganda; *Narendra Modi's Potemkin Democracy*

## Phrases

- **chickens come home to roost:** One's previous actions will eventually have consequences or cause problems for oneself; *I'd be careful before making any rash decisions—you know that chickens come home to roost.*
- **Modus Vivendi:** an arrangement allowing people or groups of people who have different opinions or beliefs to work or live together; *Our two countries must put aside the memory of war and seek a modus vivendi.*
- **Faustian bargain:** Faust, in the legend, traded his soul to the devil in exchange for knowledge. To “strike a Faustian bargain” is to be willing to sacrifice anything to satisfy a limitless desire for knowledge or power.
- **What is to be done?** In 1902 was the title of Vladimir Lenin's famous pamphlet in which he prescribed a strategy for what later became the Bolshevik's successful takeover of Russia's 1917 revolution.
- **The tyranny of geography:**
- **Malthusian Trap:** In an Essay on the Principle of Population (1798), Thomas Robert Malthus posited that an increase in a society's cost of living was linked to the inability of its population to produce enough food and to maintain a level of economic stability. It is known as the “Malthusian Trap”.
- **Eyes wide shut:** hidden in plain sight; We have an eyes-wide-shut policy attitude when it comes to the population elephant in the room.
- **run with the hare and hunt with the hounds:** to be on good terms with both sides; India in Afghanistan has tried to run with the hare and hunt with the hound
- **Albatross around one's neck:** a psychological burden that feels like a curse; *That old car is an albatross around my neck.*
- **caught between the devil and the deep blue sea:** in a difficult situation where there are two equally unpleasant choices.
- **a boon or a bane:** Something that is either good or bad
- **Bull in a china shop:** a person who breaks things or who often makes mistakes.
- **Don't throw the baby out with the bathwater:** expression for an avoidable error in which something good is eliminated when trying to get rid of something bad; *Why are we scrapping the entire project? Come on, don't throw out the baby with the bathwater.*
- **when two elephants fight, it is the grass that suffers.** ~ African proverb
- **one swallow doesn't make a summer:** because one good thing has happened, it is not therefore certain that a situation is going to improve.
- **Up the ante:** If you up the ante, you increase your demands or the risks in a situation in order to achieve a better result.

- **between the devil and the deep blue sea:** If you say that you are between the devil and the deep blue sea, you mean that you are in a difficult situation where you have to choose between two equally unpleasant courses of action.
- **Take to task:** to chew someone out for something they've done wrong; the European Parliament took Pakistan to task over human rights violations.
- **nooks and crannies:** the parts of something that are hidden or difficult to find; There's lots of great information hidden in the nooks and crannies of our site.

## Quotes

- As **Winston Churchill** had long ago observed: "However absorbed a commander may be in the elaboration of his own thoughts, it is sometimes necessary to take the enemy into consideration."
- A politician thinks of the next election, a statesman of the next generation. ~ **James Freeman**
- **Albert Einstein** was spot on when he said the definition of insanity is doing the same thing over and over again with the expectation of different results.
- "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".
- **Gates** complained in 2007 that "it is just plain embarrassing that al-Qaida is better at communicating its message on the Internet than America" and again a year later that "[w]e're being out-communicated by a guy in a cave."
- On the eve of US failure in the Vietnam War in 1969, **Henry Kissinger** explained America's failure to win victory as: "We fought a military war; our opponents fought a political one. We sought physical attrition; our opponents aimed for our psychological exhaustion. In the process we lost sight of one of the cardinal maxims of guerrilla war: the guerrilla wins if he does not lose. The conventional army loses if it does not win."
- **George Bernard Shaw** once said, "There are two tragedies in life. One is not to get your heart's desire. The other is to get it."
- anthropologist **Margaret Mead**, "Never doubt that a small group of committed people can change the world; indeed, it is the only thing that ever has."
- "LET China sleep, for when she wakes, she will shake the world". **Napoleon Bonaparte**
- As **Nelson Mandela** argued in 2001, "a vibrant network and range of civil society activities and organs" is essential to "cement the foundations" of democracy.
- Tactics without strategy, says **Sun Tzu**, is the noise before defeat.
- You can't keep snakes in your backyard and expect them to only bite your neighbour. Eventually, those snakes are going to turn on whoever has them in the backyard.' **Hillary Clinton**
- As **De Gaulle** remarked, treaties, like roses and pretty girls, last only as long as they last.
- History repeats itself, first as tragedy, second as farce. ~**Karl Marx**
- "Don't gamble on the future," warned **Simone de Beauvoir**. "Act now, without delay."
- "The shining city on the hill is not as shining as it used to be. ~ German member of the European Parliament regarding US

- Being an old farm boy myself, chickens coming home to roost never made me sad; they only made me glad. ~ **Malcolm X** on Kennedy's death
- One heartbeat away from the Presidency and not a single vote cast in my name. Democracy is so overrated. ~ **Frank Underwood** VP House of Cards
- the owl of Minerva spreads its wings only with the coming of the dusk. ~ **Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel**; *He meant that philosophy understands reality only after the event. It cannot prescribe how the world ought to be.*
- If adoption of American principles of governance is made the central condition for progress in all other areas of the relationship, deadlock is inevitable. ~ **Richard Nixon** to Chinese PM 1972
- "IT is the mark of an educated mind to be able to entertain a thought without accepting it." ~ **Aristotle**
- EVERY man may not be a misogynist, but every man benefit from a misogynist society, says **Pauline Harmange**, author of I Hate Men.
- **Machiavelli** famously declared in his Discourses that "Gold alone does not procure good soldiers, but good soldiers will always procure gold." In other words, clout beats cash.
- As **Wordsworth** said in the wake of the French Revolution, "to be young was very heaven".

## Facts

- According to the **World Justice Project Rule of Law 2020** report, Pakistan is ranked 120 out of 128 countries.
- According to a recent report by the UN's World Food Programme, 41m people in 43 countries are "on the very edge of famine". Two years ago, this number was 27m. The primary factors are conflict, climate change and economic instability.
- THE **World Press Freedom Index** listed by Reporters Sans Frontières (RSF) ranks India at an embarrassing 142 out of 180 countries. India is three notches better than **Pakistan** (145). Bangladesh (152) is the worst performer from South Asia.
- According to the **Credit Suisse Global Wealth Report**, the world's richest 1 percent, those with more than \$1 million, own 44 percent of the world's wealth.
- The UNDP's latest **National Human Development Report** places Pakistan's powerful elite in an uncomfortable moral dilemma as it says this class has cornered economic privileges amounting to \$17.4 billion or 6% of GDP. It highlights that policies often result in exacerbating inequalities instead of reducing them. The elite use their power, mostly furtively, to obtain the lion's share in the national income, leaving little for the less influential and only crumbs for the have-nots.
- According to the report released last week, the corporate sector is the biggest beneficiary of the unequal system. They get inputs cheap and sell their output at higher prices, and enjoy preferential treatment in access to land, capital and services. They acquire around \$4.7 billion in benefits. Next on the list of beneficiaries are feudal lords. They are a mere 1.1% of the total population but they own 22% of all agricultural lands.
- the report stark statistics with regard to inequality in Pakistan. While measuring inequality on two factors – income and human development – the report shows that the income share of the richest quintile is 49.6% as compared to only 7% of the lowest quintile. Similar is the case with the measure of human development. The value of human development for the poorest quintile is as low as 0.419 as compared to the corresponding value for the country's richest quintile which is 0.698.

- IN the **Economist Intelligence Unit's** annual **Inclusive Internet Index** report, measuring internet inclusion in terms of availability, affordability, relevance and readiness, Pakistan's overall ranking has dropped to 90th place among 120 nations: the second lowest ranking country in Asia and the lowest in South Asia.

## Issues

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1604242/defining-challenges>

- Climate data from register; foreign policy data
- <https://www.dawn.com/news/1635340/dangerous-water-supply>

## SDGs and MDGs

### September report

- SDG1 end poverty 2 no hunger 3 good health 4 quality education 5 gender equality 13 climate action 16 peace justice and strong institutions
- The Sustainable Development Goals (SDG), comprising 17 inter-related development goals and 169 specific targets, provide a “scheme to achieve a better and more sustainable future for all”.
- The SDGs cut across all areas of government – from health and education to ending poverty and achieving gender equality, through to tackling climate change and utilising natural resources sustainably. The objectives underpin good governance and integrate three dimensions of sustainable development – economic development, social inclusion, and environmental sustainability. These are ambitious and complex goals requiring clearly mandated institutions and unflinching commitment to provide resources from the national exchequer for a decade and half.

## Pakistan progress

- In the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) lies the solution to Pakistan's three central challenges: development, democracy and defence. That said, the SDGs will provide the glue that holds this fragile triangle. Implementing the UN's 2030 Agenda for sustainable development, if realised as an integrated policy package, will also lead to long-term economic prosperity, human and environmental development. However, aside from external threats, a poor score card on meeting the 17 SDGs and the 169 targets specified by the UN will pose a serious, non-traditional threat to the country's national security. That said, it is time to address what could turn out to be more like 17 socio-economic risks to Pakistan's security and progress, if targets remain unmet, especially those related to poverty alleviation, gender empowerment and climate change adaption.
- the government in Pakistan did what it always does: let the SDG business take care of itself. To be fair to the rulers, they have been grappling with the pandemic challenge since March and seem to be managing the spread and mortality rate better than others.
- It, however, did not stop the country from slipping four positions to rank 134th on the Global SDG Index this year, from 130th in 2019, out of the 193 countries. The said report traces, tracks and reports the nation's performance on 17 goals.
- Tangible progress could be made in six out of 17 goals during the year, with climate change being the only goal where progress is said to be perfectly on track. The efforts of the PTI government for course correction — bringing people at the heart of development efforts — have yet to reflect

in the recorded social indicators. The leaders of the ruling party were in perfect denial. They blamed the bureaucracy for Pakistan's poor rating on the index.

#### *Steps taken*

- To begin with, parliament has adopted the SDGs as a national development agenda unlike the MDGs that were generally considered a UN-driven initiative only to be complied with by four-yearly progress reports. These reports were prepared by consultants, without any implementation mechanism in place to actually deliver.
- Special SDG units have already been established at the Planning Commission and provinces to mainstream SDG objectives by creating synergies among various federal and provincial organisations and agencies.
- Pakistan has introduced eight selected projects covering sustainable development goals (SDGs), with high potential to attract foreign direct investment (FDI). The projects presented at the two-day virtual SDG Investment Fair 2021 which concluded on Wednesday, organised by the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs.
- The projects were from varied sectors including infrastructure, hydro power, medical devices development center, silicon solar PV panels fabrication, production of agriculture drones and smart farms, university technology parks and IT incubation centers across Pakistan.
- Board of Investment has a repository of over \$14 billion SDG aligned projects in the sector of transport and communication, energy including renewable energy, water supply and sanitation, education, health care and information technology.

#### *Regionalism*

Regionalism is also called as regional integration. The term is widely used in international politics with implications on the foreign policy of nation-states. Regionalism can be simply defined as a process of establishing alliances/organisations at regional level among different countries.”<sup>3</sup> Since regionalism is a process which requires substantial political will and determination among countries belonging to that region, a feeling of oneness and nationalism also exists in order to give a practical shape to forming a regional organisation.

Penguin Dictionary of International Relations defines “regionalism is to a region what nationalism is to a nation. A complex of attitudes, loyalties, and ideas which concentrates the individual and collective minds of people(s) upon what they perceive as ‘their’ region. Regionalism exists both within states and between states. Within states it can be one manifestation of ethnic nationalism and the political goal of separatism and independence. Between states, regionalism is positively correlated with the idea of region.”

In the context of International Relations; “regionalism is the concept of organising states and dependent areas on a regional basis. In International Relations, a region is invariably an area embracing the territories of three or more states. They are bound by ties of common interests as well as of geography. In other words, regions and organisations are not necessary congruent. In its essence, the main debate about regionalism is whether it is leading to a more polarised or more cooperative world economy and world order. The relationship between regionalism and a multitasked system is a complex one, and it is becoming more complex as the number and the scope of regional initiatives increase.

### Three Asias

As far as the three Asias are concerned, the concepts and requirements of regionalism can be examined as to what extent the three regions can benefit from the wave of the future. Application of regionalism in Europe, South East Asia and elsewhere cannot be replicated in Central, South and West Asia because of structural contradictions. However, the three regions, which are inter-connected, can certainly learn lessons from such models. The two regional organisations covering the three Asias i.e. SAARC and ECO were formed several decades ago<sup>11</sup> and are still unable to render positive results. If SAARC has become a victim of Indo-Pak conflicts,<sup>12</sup> ECO, unlike SAARC, has power symmetry. However, because of the non-serious and non-professional attitude of member states along with instability in Afghanistan and American sanctions against Iran, it has not been able to play a meaningful role. In view of the growing need to forge connectivity for augmenting economic, commercial, trade, environmental, educational and scientific cooperation in today's world, regionalism is not a myth but a reality. It needs to be examined in the context of present and future challenges faced by Central, South and West Asia.

### The Challenge of Regional Connectivity

Geographically, Central, South and West Asia are inter-connected but lack vibrant economic, commercial, trade, educational, cultural and connectivity in science and technology. Stretching from Turkey to Bangladesh and Kazakhstan to Sri Lanka, the three Asias<sup>13</sup> consist of huge land mass with a combined population of around 2 billion people. ECO composed of Iran, Pakistan and Turkey, was established as a successor of Regional Cooperation for Development (RCD)<sup>14</sup> in 1985. In 1992, ECO was expanded with the inclusion of six states namely Afghanistan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan. That bloc got a boost with the emergence of independent Central Asian states following the disintegration of USSR in December 1991.

The idea of South Asian regional cooperation, which was conceived by the former President of Bangladesh Zia-ur-Rehman in 1978, was transformed into a reality in December 1985, on the occasion of its first summit held in Dhaka. As compared to ECO, SAARC performed better in terms of identifying several areas of cooperation and holding around two dozen summits. ECO on the other hand, is not like SAARC, a victim of Indo-Pak conflicts. It failed to proceed for strategising connectivity and regional cooperation. Afghanistan and Pakistan are simultaneously in ECO and SAARC and act as a bridge between South, Central and West Asia. Unfortunately, violence and armed conflicts in Afghanistan are a major impediment for the task of regional connectivity in the three Asias. Without establishing peace in that war-torn landlocked country, one cannot expect stability and peace in Central and South Asia. The challenge of regional connectivity in the three Asias needs to be understood by examining four major factors.

**First**, in order to promote connectivity and regional cooperation in the three Asias, both SAARC and ECO must work together and overcome hurdles which have so far prevented the economic development and free movement of the people, goods, services and capital. All the three regions share geographical, historical, cultural and religious bonds, yet the approach which should have been pursued by SAARC and ECO for promoting common areas of cooperation, remained missing. So far, there is no joint ministerial meeting or conference between the two regional organisations to discuss how linkages could be forged connecting the three Asias. It is also known to the leadership of Central, South and West Asia that their regions share common issues ranging from water, energy, environmental, educational, scientific, technological areas, along with the challenges emanating from global warming and climate change. All the three regions are exposed to pandemic crisis, thus deepening their human security predicament. Even

then, internal and structural contradictions in Central, South and West Asia are such which preclude the transformation of vision of three Asias as a powerhouse into a reality.

Interestingly, the glaciers located in Himalayan, Hindukush, Karakorum and Pamir regions are a source of water resources to the three Asias and because of global warming, there is a serious threat of melting of glaciers and the looming water crisis in all the three regions. This is one area which can be a source of meaningful cooperation in the three Asias because water crisis will lead to food and energy shortages along with reduced agricultural and industrial production. Another major issue which is shared by the regions of Central, South and West Asia is rise of extremism, intolerance, radicalisation of youth, violence and terrorism. These are issues which must be a source of alarm and concern for more than one billion population of the three Asias.

Second, connectivity in the three Asias depends on the vibrant leadership of Central, South and West Asia. Paradoxically, there exists leadership vacuum in SAARC and ECO, which is a major impediment for unleashing the process of regionalism. In case of South Asia, the 19th SAARC summit which was to be held in Islamabad in November 2016, it became a victim of Indo-Pak polemics. In September 2016 after the terrorist incident in Uri, the Indian occupied Kashmir, and the so-called surgical strikes, the Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi threatened to isolate Pakistan in the region and outside. Implementing his threat, India boycotted its participation in the 19th SAARC summit to be held in Islamabad in November 2016. Along with India, Afghanistan, Bangladesh and Bhutan also expressed their inability to participate in SAARC summit. As a result, the SAARC summit is in limbo, which has seriously jeopardised the process of regional cooperation in South Asia. It means there is an acute leadership crisis in South Asia as India's pre-eminent position in the region is only contested by Pakistan. Other members of SAARC lack the ability to take a stand on New Delhi's attempt to impose its suzerainty.

As far as ECO is concerned, there is no SAARC like situation but the member countries lack political will and determination to expedite the process of regionalism. Afghanistan is termed as a major destabilising factor in ECO as the absence of peace in that war-torn country impedes the process of connectivity among the ECO member countries. Due to instability in Afghanistan, Turkmenistan, Afghanistan, Pakistan, India (TAPI) gas pipelines also failed to materialise. Likewise, the ambitious project of Central Asia-South Asia (CASA) for an energy corridor providing electricity from Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan to Afghanistan, Pakistan and then to India has not been launched because of the turmoil in Afghanistan. Once peace returns to Afghanistan and Indo-Pak relations get normal, one can expect a major trade and commercial breakthrough in the three Asias particularly, between Central and South Asia.

Another issue faced by ECO is the US sanctions against Iran and continuous tension between the two countries preventing other members of ECO to enhance their investments, economic and commercial ties with Tehran. Iran-Pakistan gas pipeline, which was earlier called as Iran-Pakistan-India gas pipeline (IPI), was abandoned by New Delhi because of US sanctions against Iran. Therefore, as long as there is tension and confrontation in Iran-US ties, other ECO members will be reluctant to continue their engagements with Tehran. It is yet to be seen if the administration of President Joseph Biden rejoins Iran nuclear deal and gradually lifts sanctions against Tehran.

Leadership crisis in ECO is also because of the involvement of Turkey in extra-territorial engagements like in Syria and Libya. Turkey, which is the world's 19th largest economy<sup>15</sup> and a strong player in West and Central Asia, has yet to play a leadership role in ECO. Countries which possess military, economic and political clout in the three Asias are India, Pakistan, Turkey, Iran, Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan but these five



countries, instead of focusing to strengthen regional connectivity in Central, South and West Asia, are either involved in mutual discords or extra-regional involvement.

Third, inter and intra-state conflicts, which derail the process of progress and development, is a major challenge as far as regional connectivity is concerned. No member of ECO and SAARC is devoid of issues which are of critical nature ranging from ethnic, sectarian, communal, lingual, economic, territorial and resource-based conflicts. Majority of members of the two regional organisations are grappling with the unresolved inter-state conflicts, particularly those between India and Pakistan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. Unless issues which trigger violence and the outbreak of armed conflicts are resolved, it will be quite difficult for the three Asias to achieve the goals of regionalism. Unlike Europe and South East Asia, where the process of regionalism and connectivity got an impetus because of relative peace and stability, the case of Central, South and West Asia is different. In the three regions, proliferation in inter and intra-state conflicts tend to derail the process of regional cooperation with India and Pakistan, as the two nuclear states confront each other as a result of the escalation of Kashmir conflict.

#### Role of Russia

The role of Russia as a major player in the three Asias should also be taken into account because the former Soviet Central Asian Republics possess strategic, security and economic ties with Moscow. Russia also has age-old relations with India and has now cordial relations with Iran and Pakistan. In case of Afghanistan, Russia is now involved in a big way for peace in that violence-ridden country.

#### Political will

How ECO and SAARC can play an effective role to help the process of conflict prevention, management, positive conflict transformation and resolution, depends on the political will and determination of members concerned. Ownership of unresolved issues and professional handling of matters which cause instability, political polarisation and tension, can go a long way in creating conditions for a viable peace in the three regions.

#### Role of NGOs

role of the non-governmental organisations and civil society groups in strategising efforts for the deradicalisation of youths, counter-extremism, violence, terrorism and dealing with human security issues can help the process of peace and stability in the three Asias. Observance of human rights, ensuring political pluralism and democracy by state actors will mitigate authoritarian culture. Coordinated efforts on the part of governmental and nongovernmental organisations to promote economic, cultural, educational, security and scientific cooperation in Central, South and West Asia will go a long way in transforming regionalism into a reality.

Unfortunately, surge of the culture of civil society has failed to cause any qualitative change in the thinking and mindset of power elites of the three Asias. Democracy, political pluralism, enlightenment, human rights and pro-development approaches, which are supported by civil society groups, should have an impact on the policies of the state. Coercion of religious and ethnic minorities, suppression of gender, youth, children rights remain on the horizon. Recent happenings in India, where the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) along with other ultra-right wing Hindu nationalist groups like Shiv Sena, Bajrang Dal, Sang Pariwar and RSS are held responsible for the persecution of religious minorities, particularly the Muslim community under the cover of Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA). It tends to make a mockery of Indian democracy and secularism. State failure to take care of human security like access to the people of



clean and safe drinking water, housing, transport, quality education, proper health facilities, employment opportunities along with energy and food means that the regions of Central, South and West Asia are far behind the standards of human development index.

Ameliorating socio-economic conditions of the people must be the priority of regimes in power in the three Asias. For that purpose, ECO and SAARC, along with various governmental and non-governmental organisations, must play their role so that human security predicament could be effectively dealt with. When human and social development is the priority of the state and society, the road to peace and stability is already smooth.

#### Regionalism for Peace and development

There cannot be two opinions about the essentiality of regional cooperation for peace, security and stability in Central, South and West Asia. Yet what seem to be missing are efforts on the part of two regional organisations representing the three regions i.e. ECO and SAARC, to expedite and strengthen the process of regionalism. The logic and rationality while following the road to regionalism, the countries can strive for peace and development. They can be substantiated on two grounds: First, in the process of regionalism, the ultimate goal is to promote free movement of people, goods, services and capital. With the four characteristics of regionalism taking a practical shape, progress and development in the form of trade, commerce, tourism and cultural connectivity can help to sustain peace and improve the socio-economic conditions of the people.

The countries representing three Asias are unable to resolve ethnic, sectarian, economic, political, water, environmental and energy issues, including TAPI and other options to enhance regional connectivity. The arguments which are forwarded by those who impede connectivity are: national security threats, terrorism, illegal migration, proliferation of drugs and narcotics. In the name of national security, state actors go an extra mile in tightening visa and travel restrictions while cultural, trade and educational ties also suffer because of that mindset. Several years ago, SAARC agreed to launch South Asian Free Trade Arrangements (SAFTA) in order to promote regional trade and commercial ties. However, SAFTA failed to take off and became a victim of bureaucratic hurdles and Indo-Pak polemics. In EU, where trade among the member countries is around 40 per cent and trade within ASEAN is around 60 per cent, unlike these two regional organisations trade among SAARC countries is less than 10 per cent. Same is the case more or less with other ECO members where the level of intra-regional trade is far less than what is among EU and ASEAN member countries.

Moreover, due to the non-implementation of SAFTA, South Asia is rightly called as the least integrated region of the world. According to a working paper of Asian Development Bank (ADB) Institute "South Asia has an abysmal performance in intra-regional trade as bilateral movement of goods is throttled between India and Pakistan. There is a need to harness the potential of regional cooperation through promoting multilateral experiences of European Union (EU) and Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) to address the challenges faced by South Asia. The region should firmly promote South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) to focus on deeper economic integration and trade."

The working paper of ADB Institute states: "the economic integration of South Asia could deliver large benefits to its poor population and potential areas of the sub-regional links should include high-market integration, better transport, improved energy, wider information and communication technology and people-to-people connectivity, more investment, and reducing economic vulnerabilities and risks."

Vibrant economic, trade and commercial ties can go a long way in mitigating the level of suspicion and mistrust among the countries of that region. Furthermore, viable trade will also help the process of sustainable development thus creating enormous employment and commercial opportunities. That is what primarily prevails in Europe and South East Asia where trade and commercial activities in the two regions not only manage conflicts but also mitigate the level of frustration among the youth. Second, pro-development approach pursued by the regimes of the three Asias is the only solution of dealing with extremism, intolerance, radicalisation of youth, violence and terrorism. Majority of the countries of Central, South and West Asia are squabbling with such issues. Only by unleashing a process of development, both at the social and human level, one can expect around two billion people of the three regions to enjoy the fruits of regionalism and connectivity.

There are numerous opportunities for a viable economic cooperation and connectivity in the areas of travel, information technology, science, education and tourism among the countries of Central, South and West Asia. This needs realisation on the part of the decision-makers to take advantage and pursue a practical approach. Crises and challenges related to issues discussed above also provide an opportunity for bettering situation which can help the process of peace, security and stability in the three Asias.

As long as Afghanistan remains conflict and violent-ridden prospects for peace in the three Asias would also remain bleak. The future of TAPI, CASA and better trade ties between Central and South Asia depend on peace in Afghanistan. The beneficiaries of peace in Afghanistan will not only be the people of that war-torn country but also its neighbours. Likewise, if relations between the United States and Iran on the one hand, and India and Pakistan on the other are normalised, such a situation will be an added advantage for better connectivity in the three Asias.

### Lessons from EU

While the European experience of regionalism and connectivity cannot be replicated in Central, South and West Asia because of structural contradictions, yet the three regions representing ECO and SAARC can certainly learn lessons as far as the success of transforming Europe from war-devastated continent to a relatively peaceful and prosperous place is concerned. Some of the lessons which can be learned from the success story of Europe in unleashing the process of regionalism and connectivity are:

- The role of perceptive, forward-looking and visionary leadership who focused on the present and future of their generations instead of getting bogged down on unresolved issues having historical roots. Unfortunately, the three Asias have not been able to produce visionary leaders like the French President Charles de Gaulle and the West Germany's Chancellor Konrad Adenauer who changed the destiny of Europe by signing the historical Franco-German Treaty of Peace and Cooperation in 1963.
- Political will, determination and commitment to sustain the process of regional cooperation first under the auspices of European Economic Community and then European Union.
- Establishing strong institutions, semblance with the institutions established by the EU to promote stability in financial, trade, economic, commercial and political cooperation. The formation of European Central Bank (ECB) and European parliament has played a pivotal role in fiscal/monetary management of EU member countries and to provide representation for policy formulation on political and foreign policy matters. ECB was able to effectively deal with EURO crisis of 2011 by providing bailout package to Greece. ECO and SAARC can thus learn lessons from the EU in taking institutional measures in fomenting the process of regional cooperation and connectivity. There

is no SAARC or ECO bank or SAARC or ECO parliament because those who were given the responsibility in the two regional organisations are unable to transform the vision of regional cooperation into practice.

There may be more lessons which ECO and SAARC can learn from the EU but the foremost lesson which one can comprehend from the experience of Europe is the upholding of good governance, rule of law and justice system. In EU countries, there is a growing threat to enlightenment and egalitarianism in the form of populism. It is prevailing in almost all the member countries of the European Union. Similarly, the threat of far-right in targeting immigrants and those having a different cultural way of life is exorbitantly increasing. Yet the rule of law and justice system to a large extent acts as a deterrent against xenophobia and ethnic/religious violence against the minorities.

### Conclusion

As rightly said by the founder of modern China, Chairman Mao Zedong, "A journey of thousand miles begins with a single step," is the key to success of any struggle. Perhaps, ECO and SAARC have not taken note of how struggle with single-minded and consistent approach can yield positive results. The three Asias need to take a single step for a meaningful regional cooperation to be led by SAARC and ECO.

### National Unity/Integration

#### Intro

"It is a process through which people having common goals, sense of belonging and patristic sentiments arrive at a consensus on social, political, cultural, religious and economic cohesion with diversity."<sup>3</sup> Common goals, interests and preferences may create a sense of unity among fragmented elements of society, which helps in laying the foundations of constructive nationalism against internal and external challenges.

Socio-cultural, and ethno-lingual diversities are the centrepiece of national integration, wherein the intermingling diversities enrich each other and in no way weaken them. The provinces of Pakistan are rich in socio-cultural, and ethno-lingual heterogeneity, and the phenomenon of national integration has to run in the backdrop in engaging the provincial citizenry, acting as a bonding material of harmony and coexistence, thus enabling the centripetal forces to take on a central role to intraregional integration. Punjabi, Sindhi, Balochi, and Pashtun nationalisms are always at the heart to form Pakistani nationalism, which is crucial to solidify the foundations of nationhood.

It is also observed that the intersecting features make unification of the fragmented strands of society an uphill task in the pluralistic society of Pakistan, where multiplicity of cultural and ethnic traits crosscut each other for their competing interests in attaining specific goals of ensuring maximum shares within the meagre national resources. This competition has made national unity difficult for national integration.

Ever since the creation of Pakistan, the country has remained entangled with the multiple challenges: bad governance; socioeconomic and power disparities; politico-ethnic polarization; racial and lingual differences; civil-military and of late judicial confrontations; weak political system and leadership; ideological identities; religious extremism and sectarianism; modernity confusion; national identity crisis; and threats to territorial integrity from neighboring countries. The mistrust between the Centre and the small federating units infused by a sense of deprivation has piled up the problems being exploited by the

hostile exogenous elements. These challenges have complicated the process of national integration in Pakistan.

The consciousness of separatism usually emerges in suffocated societies having internal crevices created by their ethno-lingual, racial, caste, and creed corrosions. With the deepening of these fault lines, the sub-nationalists try to exploit loyalties of the dissatisfied factions to their advantage. Therefore, in Pakistan, the centrifugal elements within the country's "national politics have promoted separatist tendencies and identity crisis striking at the very soul of Pakistan's ideology."<sup>5</sup> The emerging situation gets ripened to be exploited by both the Islamists and secular political entities for their own vested interests. The sectarian extremist tendencies under the guise of Shia, Deobandi and Barelvi sects have further threatened national integration and challenged the very birth of Pakistani nation.

### Concept

National integration is a quest for unanimity within the state regardless of religion, race, creed or ethnic traits and language. It ties up every section of the society for a combined purpose of serving and developing a nation state therefore, it has great bearing and relevance to national security and nationhood.<sup>7</sup> A nation is an evolved community having particular territory, common history, values, language, ethnicity, and psychological characteristics of oneness.

Nation-building and state-building are twin processes of the concept of national integration, which is vital to national cohesion and security. Nation-building refers to creating psychological sense of unity without any particular linguistic and regional affiliations. State-building is a process of territorial integrity in which separatist feelings are absent within the geographical boundaries of the state "where the administration of central and state government runs.

Factors influencing national integration involve social values, culture, language, interfaith harmony, religion, and ethnicity. Therefore, collaboration, cooperation, fusion, and development among these elements on the principles of inclusive approach, shared future, and win-win situation are the core to the process of national integration. As a result, the exchange of ideas, history, social customs, knowledge, art, languages, goods, and cultural beliefs increase people-to-people interaction and trust. Thus, "national integration is about national spirit, which brings peoples from different areas, dialects and beliefs together in a common endeavour to build systems for enhancing the prosperity of a nation"<sup>15</sup> with the aim of creating allegiance towards a state.

In the multi-cultural societies, national integration is considered as a tool to create unity in diversity by minimizing cultural differences even in a complex societies and forging uniformity in the nation. National language also unites the nation by promoting national consciousness in the multilingual country. Likewise, interfaith harmony, dialogue, respect to religious freedom, and mutual acceptance have the potential to assimilate in promoting the national solidarity and integration.

### Impediments to National Integration

The theory of the founding father perceived the Muslims of sub-continent as a separate nation opposite to the Hindu nation in the form of "Two-nation theory."<sup>17</sup> In fact, the empirical evidences of Muslims of sub-continent show that they were divided on the lines of Aligarh and Deobandi traditions; pro-Indian National Congress political ideology of territorial nationalism; pro-Muslim League's political ideology of distant Muslim identity; and religious parties' opposition for separate Muslim state in order to preserve the Muslim Ummah.

Pakistan started its early life journey with internal and external complexities that demanded hard struggle for country's survival and political consolidation. Ultimately, the process of nation-building has been complicated and even become a more difficult task by the evolving events and unfavourable political landscape of Pakistan. For instance, the period from 1947 till 1971 was stressful and unstable for the federal integration. With the early death of Quaid-i-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah, the infant state witnessed administrative and governance challenges; economic and political instabilities pushing the military to power; the emerging sub-nationalist tendencies sponsored by hostile agencies; and the Indian animosity of "1948, 65 and dismemberment of 1971"<sup>19</sup> made integration a difficult process, creating many hurdles, which later on dragged the country into identity crisis.

In that era, the futile debate on ideological identity of the nation "as an Islamic state, moderate state, socialist state has also been the contributory factors affecting the state efforts for the national integration."<sup>21</sup> The ideological divide pushed Pakistan into an endless discourse of constructing the state identity on the bases of "Quaid-i-Azam's vision; socialism during 1970s; Islamization during 1980; and enlightened moderation even after 73 years of the country's existence."<sup>22</sup> Hence, Pakistan inherited ideological cleavages for developing state identity, along with "multi-ethnic, linguistic and cultural groups and sub-groups, which had little in common besides Muslim."

the successive regimes had been unsuccessful to offer due share to the citizenries in policy-making process at grass-root level. They were unable to initiate effective people-centric policies that could address the real grievances of various ethnicities at the social, political, and economic levels, specifically of the communities of East Pakistan, Balochistan, tribal areas, and Sindh to some extent. Eventually, the dismemberment of East Pakistan in 1971, the number of "insurgencies in Balochistan,"<sup>25</sup> and the demands for "Pushtunistan, as well as Sindhu Desh,"<sup>26</sup> are the cases in points.

As of today, the political leadership of Pakistan still faces the challenges of creating "a national identity out of the diverse regional, linguistic and cultural identities."<sup>27</sup> The hurdles to national integrity are not specifically internal to Pakistan, as they also originate by the unfavorable circumstances and environment engineered by the external elements to aggravate the situation, thereby perpetuating economic disparities, ethno-religious extremism, political instability and sub-national tendencies at the domestic front. The victimization of Pakistan by the external hostile states has added complications to the phenomena of national integration.

### *Leadership Dilemma*

Behavior and psychology of the leadership play an important role to promote awareness of oneness among disjointed sections of society. The leadership's charisma, sagacity, and deeper insight about peoples' feelings or emotions, play a constructive role in minimizing the sociocultural, and politico-economic identity rifts to implement the national order. However, after the death of Quaid-i-Azam, the leadership of Pakistan has been making efforts to transform the centrifugal tendencies of marginalized ethnic groups into centripetal feelings. Even, influential leaders like Zulfikar Ali Bhutto lost his charisma after the debacle of East Pakistan and had been unable to transform the parochial feelings of the people of East Pakistan, Balochistan, and former North-West Frontier Province (NWFP) recently named as Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) by diluting the separatist sentiments with national loyalty.

Although 18th Amendment was passed in 2010<sup>28</sup> for giving maximum autonomy to the provinces, yet the leadership of Pakistan seems reluctant to devolve further power at grass-root level. This fact hindered individuals' direct participation in the decision-making process, depriving them of the sense of ownership.

Ultimately, the socio-economic and development policies formulated for the wellbeing of masses could not get general recognition. Instead of promoting the sense of oneness among the diverse ethno-cultural identities, the illperceived policies caused dissatisfaction among the public.

It may lead to instability or disintegration in an extreme case as evident in the “Bengali ethnic identity crises of Pakistan.”<sup>29</sup> In the present-day Pakistan, the instability is factored out by the insecurity of Baloch dissatisfied groups —the ongoing low intensity ethnic insurgency in the province<sup>30</sup>—and the demands for social justice and human rights in the garb of Pashtun Tahafuz Movement (PTM) in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP). The onus is on the political leadership to pacify the alienated ethnic groups by seeking national identity out of the various provincial identities, thus giving the sense of ownership unified by national loyalty in the backdrop of internal and external challenges.

### *Bad Governance*

Good governance is a prerequisite to “strengthening the process of national integration by providing equal development, ensuring equal rights and services’ delivery for all communities, regions and the federating units.”<sup>32</sup> It helps to incite a strong sense of national identity and national pride in the society. It also supports formulating effective policies centered around the concepts of “sharing, entrustment and allocation of national resources to the provinces”<sup>33</sup> to create a sense of satisfaction among all regional sub-systems. In return, the communities get encouraged to participate progressively as a medium to enhance the process of national integration.

Contrarily, bad governance is the root cause to all inefficiencies: social injustice; economic inequality; regional disparity; unemployment; unaccountability; delayed justice; misuse of power; corruption; nepotism; uneven infrastructure and industrial development; unequal distribution of natural resources along with the demands for royalty; inefficiency of institutions; and dissatisfaction among the general public. Rather, the “uneven division of resources either natural or other and favouritism in political and administrative manners of central and provincial governments always destroy the state.

The lax governance has generated economic backwardness in Pakistan, giving rise to social ills fueled by massive poverty, and crime, spreading frustration, and demoralization in the underprivileged regions especially the South Punjab, interior Sindh, Balochistan and tribal areas of Pakistan, where sentiments of marginalization have triggered militancy casting serious consequences on national integration.

The ill-disciplined governance in the country has made space for both the religious fanatics, and the sub-nationalists fulfilling their nefarious designs with the foreign backing and funding. Eventually, the religio-ethnic schism based on provincialism has become a breeding ground for discontentment, and deprivation, eroding the national harmony, integration, and prosperity.

Despite passing the bill of Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) merger with KP<sup>36</sup> to integrate the underprivileged tribal areas into the mainstream socio-economic landscape, the people of the region are still facing “unsteady development”<sup>37</sup>— an illustration of bad governance. “The administrative, security, and economic reforms in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Tribal Districts are being implemented at a snail’s pace.”

Although, the federal government pledged in “2018 to spend around US \$10 billion on development schemes over a decade, approximately 10 per cent of the US \$540 million were reserved for the tribal districts’ development during the fiscal year 2019-20.”<sup>40</sup> That kind of performance is causing frustration among the tribal people, providing grounds to justify the demands of anti-nationalist elements such as

PTM in the name of social justice, which already have unfriendly sentiments towards the civil and military establishment.

Some efforts have been made to address the socio-economic and political grievances of the alienated regions of Pakistan in the form of National Finance Commission (NFC) Award, 18th Amendment, Pervez Musharraf development plan for Balochistan, Aghaz-e-Haqooq-e-Balochistan, National Action Plan, CPEC project and FATA merger with KP. These measures are considered positive steps to meet the demands of the provincial governments of Pakistan for attaining more political power, ensuring larger share in national funds, developing basic infrastructure, and warranting basic services for raising the living standards of the people.

However, these measures are unable to produce the desired results and bring clear trickle-down effects on the livelihood of the locals, owing to the weak administrative ability, capacity issues and poor planning of the provinces, in particular, and federal government, in general. That is why; the remote areas of each province of Pakistan along with the tribal belt do not have the provision of proper facilities of health, education, and economic opportunities at par with the bigger provinces and their metropolitan hubs.

#### *Ethno-cultural diversity*

Ethnic and cultural diversities have the potential to play a central role in making common community. They are equally pivotal to assessing the ethnicity that to what extent it has an inbuilt paradox of conflictual and consensual characters. It is described as a cognitive act constructed on identity or loyalty, aimed at furthering the interests of specific group and region. Therefore, ethno-cultural and linguistic divide in Pakistan is prone to suffer owing to the tendency of unwillingness of interest groups to accept the cultural and linguistic diversity.<sup>56</sup>

The result is seen in the tug of power among various political parties at the provincial and federal levels dominated by the conflicting ethnicity, causing unease of relations between the center and provinces - the key concerns for national integration. The cleavage may disintegrate the nation by spiraling the feelings of marginalization and alienation, as evident in the case of East Pakistan dismemberment in 1971, wherein the few initial riots got massively triggered on charges of ethno-lingual marginalization, leading to the violent conflicts costing the national integrity. It is observed that the social fabric of Pakistan is also fragmented around biradari and caste structures that are much cherished as a main source of identity, and recognition, specifically in remote areas of the country, thereby eclipsing the importance of nationhood.

Though, the provincial or regional identity is essential to solid nationhood. Yet, using regional identity as a political card for vested interests poses challenge to national integration as evident in the activism of PTM<sup>57</sup> and in the slogans of separatism raised by the Baloch insurgents like the Balochistan Liberation Army (BLA).<sup>58</sup> All these elements are sponsored by the hostile states with the aim to destabilize the country.

Read [Baloch militancy](#)

#### *Sub-nationalist Politics*

Muslim nationalism of sub-continent played a crucial role in the Pakistan movement. Later, its role to preserve the integrity of newly independent state had been gradually undermined due to its inability of agreeably resolving the issues of language, provincial status and division of natural resources among the



stakeholders of diverse cultural backgrounds. The never-ending delays in solving these issues provided conducive environment for solidifying the sentiments of subnationalism in Pakistan.

With the passage of time, perceived marginalization of provinces and deprivation of nationalities set a stage for launching subnationalist movements, which “provided an opportunity to the leaders of sub-national groups such as Jeay Sindh Mahaz, All Pakistan Muttahidda Students Organization now called Muhajir / Muttahida Qaumi Movement (MQM), and “National Awami Party (NAP)”<sup>63</sup> to start gripping the political landscape of the regional politics, while creating and exploiting controversy on the issues like Kalabagh dam.

Even today, the nationalist leaders of the small provinces such as Shafi Muhammad Burfat, Chairman, Jeay Sindh Muttahida Mahaz<sup>64</sup> Ayaz Latif Palijo, President, Qomi Awami Tahreek,<sup>65</sup> and Manzoor Ahmad Pashteen, Chairman, PTM<sup>66</sup> are inciting the sentiments of regionalism on the self-professed exploitation, alienation, and deprivation of their ethno-lingual identity. These sentiments may dent the process of national integrity by the acts of vandalism and brutality, thus threatening the national social fabric.

#### *Weakened Federation*

Federal form of government is considered an effective tool to crystalize the national integration process by separation of power between the federal government and the federating units. In this form of government, constitution guarantees protection of the rights of federating units and their ethnic strata. The federal form of government enables the diverse ethnicities to freely flourish their cultural uniqueness and integrate their belonging into the mainstream political system, which is indispensable for the process of national security and integration.

the entire political structure of Pakistan evolved in a manner that a small ruling elite has remained dominated on the main landscape of the federal politics. They comprise the Punjabi rural, Sindhi feudal, Baloch Sardars, tribal Maliks and Khans, small group of Mohajirs, sub-nationalist leadership, industrialists and top civilian and military bureaucracy. In contrast to the Punjabi elite, the Sindhi, Balochi, and tribal elite tend to consider themselves excluded from the nation-building process on ethnic lines, and not on political grounds. Politically, they hold even more exclusive position in the peripheral landscape of regional politics. Such characteristics of regional polity, along with, dynastic politics have deepened polarization in the political milieu of federal politics on the bases of caste and creed system affiliated to narrow ends of ethno-cultural politics.

Dominance of the aristocrats over national political system does not represent will of the masses, who feel excluded from the decision-making process. Concentration of power in few hands rather weakens the institutions, compelling the military to intervene, and introduce its own style of democratic system, while the judicial intervention takes the form of Suo moto apparently to correct the executive and legislative measures.

Tug of power among the political aristocracy for preserving their legacy has further weakened the federation, rendering the social structure ineffective. Pakistan is, therefore, still struggling to seek societal integration at federal level of its diverse society fragmented on ethno-cultural, and sectarian lines. In this context, “the role of federal body as facilitator is essential to enhance the development of national integration in the country.”



The responsibility of the central government is to provide guideline to provincial governments for conducting their affairs in an organized but mutually coherent manner.<sup>71</sup> The federal entity also listens to the political voices of the small provinces, with the aim of creating harmony on constitutional issues. It is necessary for the federal government to learn lesson from the bitter realities of the past of not listening to the demands of small provinces and not taking into confidence the small federating units on matters of constitutional amendments.

A smooth, cordial, and balanced relations between central and provincial governments are the pre-requisites to meaningful national integration. Otherwise, marginalization, alienation, disagreement with federal government, dissatisfaction, and insecurity among the small provinces will flourish centrifugal forces, causing national security issues like “separatist tendencies, anarchy, internal turmoil, subversion, ethnic issues, and violent struggles for power.”

#### *Sectarianism, Extremism, Ideological Identity and Modernity Confusion*

The Quran forbids exaggerating religious matters (religious extremism) and ordains just and balance (middle path) between the extremes. Islam celebrates “Ikhtilaf”<sup>73</sup> (diversity). It defines the boundaries of religion to avoid overstepping and to prevent schism. The Holy Prophet (peace be upon him) said that “Ikhtilaf” is a blessing. According to a saying of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), “diversity among the Muslims is a blessing (Ikhtilafu um matirahma).” **Source:** Muhammad K Masud, “Ikhtilaf al-Fuqaha: Diversity in Fiqh as a Social Construction

However, in the intellectual history of Islam, diversity, space, and freedom of opinion have led to difference of opinions among the religious scholars, which has tended to dent the unity of the Muslim Ummah. However, various Muslim thinkers and jurists had been trying to prevent this schism by suggesting “Ijma” and “Ijtihad” (consensus and collective wisdom).

The major religious divisions in Pakistani society are based on Islamic laws such as “Hanfi,” “Shafi’i,” and “Jafari.”<sup>77</sup> The founders of Islamic laws always explained that they had differences on the interpretation of Islamic laws for which all of them are right.<sup>78</sup> The division in Islamic laws is not “Firqa”. Fiqh has become “Firqa (Sect)” in Pakistan where “Hanfi”, “Shafi’i”, “Jafari”, and “Ahl al-hadith” schools of thought tend to opt sectarian lines. In this regard, sectarianism has been promoted and supported in religious ways without realizing its severe implications for the Pakistani society.

The assumption of the exclusive role of madrassa-trained clergy for giving religious interpretation has created a space for them to establish their monopoly over religious issues in Pakistan. The indulgence of external actors and their funding to religious institutions have further worsened the situation, thriving the religiously disruptive forces. With the passage of time, sectarianism emerged as a security challenge to national security and integration. The situation got worsened when various clergy from different sects gave divergent interpretations of Islam, which led to the tendency of extremism in the country.<sup>87</sup> The reasons for not raising voice against religious extremism in Pakistan include fear and anxiety, weakness, ambiguity, misunderstanding and lack of critical and analytical outlook.

In reality, there is an ambiguity in Pakistan about the spirit of religion, Islamic state, religious systems and objectives that affect certain questions such as: What is the type of the state identity? What should be the trends for Islamisation? What is Pakistan’s national vision? Consequently, it has to get into a blind type of discussion such as whether Islam or secularism was the idea of the founding father of Pakistan. To

achieve this goal, there are a number of Ulama Mashaikh conferences held in Pakistan, which have merely resulted in strengthening the existing strong sectarian sentiments of the religious groups.

Thus, Pakistan has a lot of ambiguities in dealing with these questions, which gets accelerated by a belief that Islam is the only religion that unites the different religious sects. Instead of solving the questions of corruption, languages, provincialism, the Pakistani society and its political and religious leadership have been stuck with an idea that being a Muslim, they should stand closer and united by Islam. In fact, they have a vague idea of unity and identity.

Pakistan could not solve the conundrum of role of religion in the ideological construct of the state. According to Stephen P. Cohen, "The most significant struggle in Pakistan is not a civilizational clash between Muslims and non-Muslims but a clatter between diverse conceptions and interpretations of Islam, predominantly how Pakistan should implement Islamic identity in State's outlook." 89 Such debates have always cast negativity and have been a source of persistent friction in the society and have kept the nation divided along religious-ethnic lines.

### Recommendations

Against this cloudy horizon, steering the process of national integration urges the federal government to focus on following steps:

- A well-thought-out National Social Action Plan (NSAP) is required considering the socio-economic, and political imperatives of all the provinces, thereby satisfying the essential needs of the ethno-cultural, and socio-political divergent identities. It will minimize the regional-provincial disequilibrium, granting more sense of ownership to the federating units supportive of the process of national integration.
- The on going political-economic initiatives for Balochistan taken by the federal government are appreciable, yet more efforts at the grass-roots level are needed to integrate the Baloch communities with the other provinces. In this regard, the provision of 4G internet service, and the development of the transmission lines and rail-road networks in all the provinces will help bring the on going initiatives to a logical end. In addition, there is a need to allocate seats to the people of Balochistan in all federal departments on the criteria of poverty, backwardness, and area so that they could consider themselves integral part of the country. It will equally help ensuring participation of the dissatisfied people, thus neutralizing their strong sub-nationalist feelings in the favour of national cohesion.
- Equitable distribution of development projects is required while accommodating the local private sector for creating new entrepreneurial units, cementing the unified economy. The central government needs to give priority to those projects, which generate economic mergers, inter-provincial interdependency, and national integration.
- To improve efficiency and capacity-building of all provincial and federal departments, the central government should launch a national policy giving guidelines for optimal departmental performance based on administrative accountability, decentralization of power, and removal of the traditional bureaucratic attitudes.
- National political parties need to shed off their major reliance on provincial politics. They should transform their role, behavioural pattern, political priorities, and party interests from regional politics to more national politics.

- The scope of Council of Islamic Ideology should not be only confined to its role as an advisory body for the legislature that whether or not laws are against the spirit of Qur'an and Sunnah. It should also oversee any religious interpretation(s) given by madrasa-trained clergy to avoid divergent Islamic interpretation, and verdict, causing extremist leanings in Pakistan. It is observed with concern that the Friday sermons of various mosques tend to generate deviations, and sectarian divides, thus flourishing extremism. To curb this detrimental inclination, there is a dire need to develop a state-level single national Friday sermon mandatory to be recited at the Friday congregational prayers, thus solidifying the roots to national integration.
- Media plays an important role for cultural consolidation and national integration. A strong national narrative should be broadcasted to counter the extremist and sectarian along with provincialism narratives in the society.

### Bureaucratic Accountability

Administrators possess authority and influence in many societies due to their expertise, permanence, status, discipline, organizational structure and their closeness to the corridors of political power. The administrators' Accountability is inevitable to make sure credibility of government and justify the role of the civil servants as the real servant of the people.

The accountability mechanisms of the bureaucracy can be formal and informal. formal tools of bureaucracy are the hierarchical arrangements, rules and regulations, performance evaluation, legislative checks, judicial review, Ombudsman and so on. and informal consists of personal values, professional codes, media, public opinion, Interest and pressure groups, and etc.

“Public service accountability involves the methods by which a public agency or a public official fulfills its duties and obligations, and the process by which that agency or the public official is required to account for such actions”.

### Historical Background of Bureaucratic set-up in Pak

Pakistan's colonial heritage has great impact on its bureaucratic and political institutions (Islam, 1989). Colonial regime developed strong and highly centralized bureaucratic set-up during the 19th and 20th centuries. It was administered by the Indian Civil Service (ICS). While manipulated democratic institutions were gradually allowed into colonial India. The 'elected representatives' role was to recommend rather than to decide. Powers were not transferred to these democratic institutions but they were formed to legitimize and strengthen the bureaucratic state (Washbrook, 1997). Thus Pakistan inherited very sound bureaucratic institutions from colonial rulers and weak democratic institutions. Since the withdrawal of British from India-Pak, bureaucratic institutions of the country have played assertive and influential role in the governing structure as compared to democratic actors. They, in collusion with power military elites, exercised powers in the corridors of government directly or indirectly at the expense of the political institutions of accountability.

### Intervention of Civil bureaucracy in Politics and bureaucratic accountability

For the early decade after partition (1947-1958), political scenario of Pakistan was dominated by senior civil servants with the support by the military elites. The governor-general, representing the bureaucracy, derailed the political process. Ghulam Mohammad, the third governor-general, took the extra-constitutional dismissal of the elected Prime Minister; Khwaja Nazimuddin in 1953 despite the latter was

supported by majority of the members of the parliament (Newman, 1959). He also dismissed the Constituent Assembly when it had almost completed its task of constitution-making. Ghulam Mohammad also institutionalized the role of the army into polity by including the army's commander-in-chief, General Ayub Khan, as defense minister in the cabinet. Iskander Mirza took the charge of the governor-general, replacing Ghulam Muhammad and later on as head of state in 1956. He misused his powers of dismissal of prime minister given under 1956 constitution. Mirza manipulated this power and dismissed four cabinets from 1956 to 1958 with the political engineering of ill-organized and undisciplined political parties and political elites. He also took the civil-military bureaucrats in to confidence on this account (M. Azhar, Interview, March 16, 2018). Resultantly, the external instruments of the bureaucratic accountability such as legislative review, advisory committees, and judicial actions and so on remained weak to make civil servants accountable.

### Nutshell

The major challenge to the cause of greater bureaucratic accountability in Pakistan is the absence of commitment and spirit of the politician actors towards real and across-the-board accountability process. The majority of civil servants compromised played second fiddle to the civil and military rulers to make themselves up in the slippery slope of the civil services pyramid. Moreover, corrupt civil servants made themselves safe from internal and external accountability process. The fundamental obstacles to the external accountability of the civil service in Pakistan are primarily political in nature. The Political aspect of accountability envisages rule of law, adherence to the norms and values of concept of accountability. The technical aspect of accountability provided for effective, skilled, dynamic, and professional civil servants. Political interference reduced the spirit of responsibility, answerability, effectiveness and professionalism among the civil servants. Internal accountability of the bureaucracy suffered from cronyism, favoritism, in-group feelings, and rules available for internal accountability of the civil servants suffered from mutual interests. So far as external check on the bureaucracy by accountability watch dogs is concerned, these institutions lost credibility due to their selective, discriminatory, and politically motivated accountability process. The lesson is the same in all dimensions of bureaucratic accountability: better laws, stronger, greater, transparent accountability mechanisms and more transparency alone will lead to transitional phase of bureaucratic accountability in Pakistan.

### Rich-poor divide

Charles Dickens's epic novel *A Tale of Two Cities* begins with the famous lines — "It was the best of times, it was the worst of times". The recent UNDP publication 'Pakistan National Human Development report 2020' reveals that it is the best of times for a privileged few while it is the worst of times for the increasing underprivileged. The report outlines the widening gulf and massive disparities between the rich and the poor segments of our population. The report clearly highlights the uneven distribution of the benefits of development in our society. While on the one hand, a small segment of the population has human development indices comparable to the more developed countries of the world, on the other hand the indicators of a vast majority compare with countries in sub-Saharan Africa. The report shows that 16% of the total property in the country is owned by just 1% of the population while 22% of farmland is owned by 1% of the large landowners.

An important factor that widens and perpetuates the rich-poor divide is unequal access to social services including education and health. The literacy rate among the richest quintile is 79% while in the poorest it is 30%. Life expectancy in the richest quintile is 70 years while for the poorest it is 61 years. The richest

households have better access to health services, 65% have access to tap water compared to 36% among the poorest. Vaccination coverage among the richest quintile is 80% while in the bottom quintile it is 38%. Delivery in health facilities is 92% among the richest and 42% in the poorest quintiles.

While there are several financial and economic strategies that the government can follow to close the gap between the rich and the poor, an approach that needs more attention is to lower our rapid population growth rate. There is now abundant evidence to show the undeniable link between poverty and household size. It is estimated that poorer households tend to be 40% larger than non-poor households. Poor families can be helped to graduate out of poverty by providing them access to affordable health care that includes family planning services. It is estimated that the likelihood of a household to fall below the poverty line increases by about 22% with the addition of one person. The average number of children a woman has in the highest wealth quintile is 2.8 while in the lowest wealth quintile it is 4.9.

A high population growth rate reduces government investment in human and physical capital development making it harder to remove societal inequalities, it also leads to lowering wages and household investments thereby exacerbating poverty. A smaller household size implies more household savings, enhancing the standard of living, thereby enabling families to invest in children's education, health and nutrition. Currently poorer families are able to spend a maximum 2% of their income on their children's education.

Family planning has been identified as the most cost-effective intervention to foster human development and poverty reduction. The existing poverty alleviation schemes in the country such as the Ehsaas programme should focus at helping poor rural women to easily access family planning services at both the public and private sector facilities through the provision of vouchers that cover the private provider fees and associated travel costs.

## Population

- CPR
- contraceptive prevalence rate CPR is defined as the proportion of women of reproductive age who are using or whose partners are using a contraceptive method at a given point in time. Pakistan's CPR is extremely low at 34.5pc. To put this in perspective, Iran has a CPR of 77.4pc, Turkey's is 73.5pc and even Bangladesh's CPR has climbed to 62.4pc.
- Pakistan's CPR of 34.5pc means that 65.5pc of women of reproductive age or their husbands are not using any contraceptive method. And this is why Pakistan needs contraception.
- The Population Council estimates that there are around 9m pregnancies in Pakistan annually. Half of these are unintentional. And around 2.25m end up in abortion — which is mostly unsafe. Had these couples had access to contraceptive methods and the appropriate information about their use, these unwanted pregnancies would not have occurred in the first place.
- According to reliable data available from the Pakistan Logistics Management Information System, between January and March this year, 50pc of districts in Pakistan didn't have a government supply of condoms. Couples don't have timely access to and actionable information about contraceptives even when they want to control the size of their families.
- The non-availability of contraceptives and chronic stockouts, however, are indicative of a much bigger problem. The hard reality is that population control has not been a major priority for successive governments in Pakistan. Population ministries and departments are chronically underfunded and badly governed and have been pushed to the public policy junkyard. Staff

working in population ministries/ departments is least motivated. One way of mainstreaming population issues is by merging population departments with health departments. In some provinces it has happened and in others such efforts are politically stalled due to power and trough issues.

- In Pakistan today, the biggest development challenge, both social and economic, is unhindered population growth. High population growth, an unstable economy, depleting resources and climate change challenges coupled with high poverty and poor human development indices are all ingredients to land and live in a classic Malthusian trap. And the biggest issue is that it is not being perceived as an issue. We have an eyes-wide-shut policy attitude when it comes to the population elephant in the room.
- With an annual population growth rate of 2.4 per cent (the Asian average is 0.92pc), Pakistan adds 5.2m people every year to its headcount which is close to adding one Norway annually!
- DEMOGRAPHIC TRENDS, especially age structures, are one of the key components of any country's future. Such trends have a long gestation period just as their impact is also long-term. If such trends are anticipated and planned for, rich economic dividends can be reaped as demonstrated by the East Asian economies. If the necessary measures are not taken early, the consequences will manifest themselves after decades by which time it may be too late to rectify the situation. Experts believe that Pakistan is going through a demographic transition and is experiencing a 'once-in-a-lifetime' window of opportunity of a 'demographic dividend' as the working-age population bulges and the dependency ratio declines.
- countries that have a larger proportion of working-age population relative to the young and elderly dependents is said to be undergoing a demographic transition that creates the condition for a demographic dividend. However, a demographic dividend is a timespecific window of opportunity, and does not last indefinitely. If harnessed, it could lead to potentially greater economic activity. If it is not capitalized upon, it could lead to massive unemployment and its attendant consequences.
- In order to actualize the demographic dividend, the basic question to be asked is whether those entering the labour market can be absorbed productively against the backdrop of an increasingly globalized and technologically advanced world. 'Anextremely worrying feature of the current unemployment situation is that the rate among literate workers is more than twice that among illiterate workers. In fact, the highest rate of unemployment, three times above the national average, is observed in the case of highly educated workers with either degree or postgraduate qualifications. Ansari abbasi in The News article
- The one positive feature of the otherwise gloomy demographic scenario is the outward migration of Pakistani labour. Presently, Pakistan has a huge and diverse diaspora sprinkled all over the world. Pakistan is one of the largest labour-exporting countries in the region and huge remittances from the overseas workforce is one major source of income not only for their families but also for the development of Pakistan. Remittances sent by workers are the second largest source of foreign exchange, after exports.
- What happens if the demographic dividend is not realized? The flip side of an unrealized demographic dividend is that the massive 'youth bulge' could pose a serious threat to law and order.
- The other problem with an unrealized demographic dividend is that an unproductive population would pose huge pressures on resources like food, water and energy. A country that was near to

being self-sufficient in food in the early 1980s has a food security issue today largely due to increased population. As noted earlier, agriculture accounts for about 20 per cent of Pakistan's GDP and employs 60 per cent of its labour while 70 per cent of export revenue stems from agriculture. A decline in water availability would impact on food production at a time when the population is increasing, creating multiple crises.

- A more widespread risk of not operationalizing the demographic dividend is the radicalization of youth – the threat of millions of young, impoverished and unemployed Pakistanis succumbing to extremism.
- Finally, it is worth noting that after the period of demographic dividend, there would be rapid population ageing.
- Pakistan then could be caught between a large uneducated and unskilled young population and a significant older population, which would place an extraordinary burden on Pakistan's economy. Durr-e-Nayab warns: 'Aging of population is the inevitable end of demographic transition, and Pakistan, albeit slowly, is moving towards it. In the absence of any state planned old age security system and the existing low saving rates in the country, the demographic dividend can turn into a demographic nightmare for majority of the elderly.'
- There are no short cuts here. Pakistan will have to make heavy investments not merely to realize the demographic dividend but to ensure that the demographic dividend does not become a demographic nightmare; that Pakistan's population structure, instead of becoming a 'once-in-a-lifetime' opportunity, does turn into a 'ticking time bomb', hastening the country's slide towards the abyss.
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- 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

## Education

Education is a fundamental institution of change which impacts generations. Education lay basis for social and economic development, it is defined in oxford dictionary as “the process of receiving or giving systematic instruction, especially at a school or university”. The success and development of Western countries especially the leading ones are mainly due to education. It has played an important role in transforming previously less developed societies into leading nations; therefore, education could be a tool of reformation. Western countries have worked hard on developing their social capital as per the contemporary requirements. It is only because of their skilled labor that has helped them to develop modern technologies. Those countries not only use education as a tool for skilled development but they also used education for the purpose of nation building. They use education to implement their modern social and political values as well as keep their old traditions. They encourage and facilitate their youth to take up higher education so that they can train them not only to compete in the world but also to turn them into better citizens. They designed education according to their own needs and to fulfill the national and international demands of the modern times.

Pakistan is a developing country and world’s sixth largest population and major portion of the country’s population is quite young. In Pakistan, since her inception education has taken back seat and this is mainly due to the problems that she faced immediately after her independence which made her to give priority to her security over education. The adult literacy rate in Pakistan is also considerably low. The other major reason of concern is the female education in the country that make more than one half of Pakistan’s population and due to old rigid traditions and customs that still prevail in our society they are discouraged to get education. One other reason for this literacy rate is the dearth of educational infrastructure as most of the areas are without schools and if there is any then it lacks basic facilities and teaching staff. In order

to increase education rate in the country it is very important that more importance should be given to education and the local talent should be promoted as it will also protect Pakistan from brain drain. Most of the educated and skilled people are migrating to developed countries in the search for better opportunities. Pakistan should work on retaining her social capital in her country otherwise the local educational condition will further deteriorate.

### Overview

- Those who talk about 'Jinnah's Pakistan' ad nauseam would do well to heed his prophetic words: 'The importance of education and the right type of education cannot be over-emphasized. ... There is no doubt that the future of our state will depend upon the type of education and the way in which we bring up our children as the future servants of Pakistan.' 59 Poor education in Pakistan today has similarities with the Muslims failing to take to Western education in post-1857 era. What Pakistan needs today is another Syed Ahmad.
- 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.
- Pakistan's education sector is a combination of three parallel streams — public or government-run schools, private schools and madrasas. (The schools run by the military are in a class of their own.) Each of these three streams has its own curriculum and examination processes. The National Internal Security Policy 2014–18 has summed up the impact of such stratification of education as: 'Serious cleavages have appeared in the society as a result of these systems, and continued existence in parallel spheres compounds the possibilities of violence among divided youth.'
- The problems associated with Pakistan's education system can be attributed to socio-cultural demand side barriers too. At the systems level, we lack adequate finances, policy implementation, competent faculty, and a conducive teaching environment. The brunt of this is borne by marginalised groups, particularly girls. Gender wise, boys outnumber girls at every stage of education (and hence the economic journey).

### Socio-political aspects

Higher education plays a very important role in developing skilled labor and with such a proportion of young population Pakistan can progress if only provide youth with educational facilities after that they will be able to compete at international level but the most important role that education can play and especially higher education can play is that of social and political training of the Pakistani youth. The biggest gift that education gives to an individual is the power to think and to evaluate one's surroundings and this is the first step towards awareness regarding the ills and evils that exist in the society. The education also enables an individual to identify ways through which social evils ought to be eliminated. It also plays a very important role in creating collective mind-set that is very important in eradicating social and political ills.

Higher education in our country is limited to a specific class and to those who can afford higher studies and lives in urban areas. Education network and news must reach every corner of the country as they have equal rights to avail all the facilities granted by government for students. Every sect, region and creed should enjoy equal facilities of education. Moreover, student unrest among institutions of higher education is a serious problem as the political parties of country have student wings which are often

politicized by politicians for their own purposes. This way student attention is diverted to political activities which results low performance in academics by those students. To make higher education a triumph, education at low level must be improved and specialized so that student may get some incentive to go further for their respective subjects. Quality research should be conducted at university level and latest academic text and research articles need to be available to the students. Investment and proper administration of their institutes is also required, accountability of these institutions should be done impartially by government. Students should be provided with effective counselling so that they will be able to discuss their problems and aptitude these way students can take himself away from any immoral social or political activity. Their understanding about their norms, culture, and values social and political environment can be increased. Humans are the biggest resource and youth is an asset for any country. Pakistan is sufficient in both these aspects. Government and institutes should properly direct their students so they may make them socially responsible citizens.

Politics in the appointment of officials must be eradicated. A delegate must be formulated to select any deserving one. Opinion of staff and students has to be the priority of this delegate. Selection of favourites has to be nullified fair and square selection without any politics can change the fate of students, institutes and country. At the end, every student should have to be politically and socially aware but must not become the part of politics. Other than academics, students should focus on curricular and extra-curricular activities rather than political activities. On the other hand, institutions need to equip students with political, social and ethical values.

#### English superiority

- 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.
- 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 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.
- The Citizen Foundation TCF's move towards indigenous languages is laudable.
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#### Learning poverty

- 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.
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#### Youth bulge

- With the population continuing to grow at an alarming 1.9 per cent and a huge youth bulge, millions of children are entering the education market year after year. The colossal challenge for Pakistan is clearly educating all these millions to reap the demographic dividend before the window of opportunity closes.
- 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.

## OOSC

- To be fair, the PTI during its electoral campaign also spoke of putting all out-of-school children in classrooms, improving the quality of education, and emphasising technical and vocational education. However, it has only made progress in introducing the SNC. It has billed the SNC as a way to end the 'education apartheid' in the country — which, on the face of it sounds commendable. The other three priority areas would require a heavy financial commitment, which the meagre national allocation to education could not promise.
- Take priority number one. With 22.8 million out of school children, according to Unicef data, and the total number of enrolled school students around 25 million, there are nearly as many out of school children as there are in school. 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.
- To put nearly 23 million additional children into school would be a gigantic task. Pakistan would need to build nearly as many schools as exist today, furnish them and employ as many new teachers as are currently in service. Imagine the amount of resources needed to provide schooling to all 23 million out of school children. How difficult this will be is illustrated by the example below.
- The Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) lies right under the nose of the federal government and is hardly some rural district of Balochistan or Sindh, and yet there is a 35 percent deficit of teachers in ICT public schools. The posts are not being filled because the government has no money to pay the additional salaries.

## Quality

- If the government is really serious about the quality of education, it must not pass the burden of providing education to the private sector. A large part of the private education sector consists of low fee schools. Their business model works with low fees only because they employ uncertified teachers at very low salaries. Hence the quality of instruction in those schools remains abysmally poor. The government knows this very well, because it supports such schools through national and provincial Education Foundations, and pays them a meagre subsidy of 300 rupees per student to encourage them to continue.
- Given the state of education in Pakistan, especially scientific education, it is hardly surprising that Pakistan is among the least innovative countries in the world. Pakistan's rank drops to 107th position in Global Innovation Index 2020 from last year's 105th rank. (Total 131 countries) The current allocation on research was only 0.2 per cent of GDP, far below the world average as most developed countries spend between 2 and 4 per cent of their GDP on research.
- Enhancing the quality of instruction in public schools would require several things.
- One, it would require more frequent and better pre-service and in-service training for the teachers. Provincial staff development departments would vouch that, presently, a public sector teacher receives only about three days of in-service training per year. What is needed is perhaps 10 times more training.

- 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.
- Two, public schools still lack in essential facilities such as furniture, water supply, toilets, etc. The situation continues to be so in spite of receiving donations for the infrastructural improvement of schools from several countries. A rigorous auditing of where these funds go is badly needed.
- Three, textbooks provided by the state are of abysmal quality, both in content as well as in presentation. Pakistani textbook boards have repeatedly proved unable to provide good-quality learning material. A comparison between the books used in public schools with those used in the elite private schools easily shows the differential in quality. A heavy investment in high-quality textbooks is an essential requirement for improving educational quality.
- 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.
- 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.

#### Technical/vocational training

- Finally, the last priority area of the Educational Framework — introducing technical and vocational training in schools — would also require substantial expenditure on equipping schools with functioning workshops and an assured supply of consumables.
- Thus, meaningful action in priority areas numbers 1, 3 and 4 obviously call for substantial financial input. Instead, the government has taken the easy road by simply tinkering with the curriculum. This not only vitiates the very idea of reform, it also creates other deep problems.

#### Financial problems

- Pakistan has a long-standing target of spending 4 per cent of the GDP on education. This target was set in 1992 and every government has repeated the pledge since. Pak spent 2.9 percent acc to Global innovation index 2020
- on an average, at the national level, 89 per cent of education expenditures comprises administrative expenses like salaries of teachers. Only 11 per cent comprises development expenditures, which is not sufficient to raise the quality of education. Across provinces too an overwhelming proportion of actual education expenditures are spent on administrative heads, mainly teachers' salaries, leaving a very small proportion for development expenditures.

#### HEC

- 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.
- 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.

#### *Controversy*

- 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 V. Rehman*

- 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.

#### *Provincial autonomy*

- 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

#### SNC

- The Single National Curriculum (SNC) is an outcome of the promise of Naya Pakistan. A Pakistan free of educational apartheid, where education is aligned to the emerging international trends in teaching, learning and assessments, which develops analytical skills, critical thinking and creativity in students, and which moves away from rote memorisation. A Pakistan where it doesn't matter whether one attended an 'elite' private school, a public school or a madressah. A Pakistan where every schoolchild will receive the same kind of education, and will thus have the same opportunities in life.
- Prime Minister Imran Khan has launched the first phase of the Single National Curriculum in august. The SNC scheme aims at bringing about a revolution in education in the country. Its main goals are elimination of the duality in the education system and promoting moral values in line with the teaching of Islam, taking due care of the followers of other religions, and to link it up with the demands of modern times by focusing on the teaching of science and technology subjects and

on vocational and technical training. Since the SNC will encourage inculcation of morals, based on religious teachings, it will foster tolerance and help achieve national cohesion.

- By doing away with the dichotomy caused by the hitherto different curriculums being taught in English-medium and Urdu-medium schools, the SNC is expected to remove disadvantages faced by those receiving instructions in Urdu and the inferiority complex that the dual system induces in the latter category of students. Now English will be taught from Grade-1 in all schools and seminaries. The SNC will help towards attaining social justice.

#### *Issues*

- 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.
- **Constitutional Transgression:** In the current design of SNC, the federal government has transgressed upon the constitutional domain of the provinces. The Parliament, through the 18th constitutional amendment, had transferred the curriculum-making authority to provinces, restricting the federal government's domain to the federal capital area and the educational institutions directly under its control. 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. Sindh, however, has some reservations on the issue. Chief Minister Murad Ali Shah insists that the curriculum in Sindh is good enough and there is no need for adopting the unified educational curriculum. The province's concerns need to be addressed. This takes away the 'national' aspect.
- The government's slogan of reform is 'an end to educational apartheid', a laudable goal indeed. But what has been approved and notified is a **uniform curriculum, not a system of uniform education**. The latter would also imply equal educational facilities for all — rich and poor, rural and urban, boys and girls. Only a uniform education would ensure an end to the educational apartheid. But the government has not put forward any plan for uniform education yet. And it is unclear if it ever will.
- **Critical thinking** is central to modern knowledge, while through the SNC, policy planners seem to be promoting influences that are antithetical to critical thinking. The primary focus is on the sheer quantity of information poured into students' heads.
- **Article 22 (1)** "No person attending any educational institution shall be required to receive religious instruction, or take part in any religious ceremony, or attend religious worship, if such instruction, ceremony of worship relates to a religion other than his own."
- This law implies that no lesson in any textbook that is compulsory to students of all faiths can contain material specific to any religion. The SNC violates this fundamental right of non-Muslim Pakistani citizens by prescribing lessons in Urdu and English courses that are already a part of the Islamiyat curriculum. Urdu textbooks are asked to start with a hamd and a naat, and there is invariably a lesson on Seerat-un-Nabi or the life of the Prophet (PBUH). A lesson on Seerat-un-Nabi is also prescribed in English textbooks of all grades. This is in spite of the fact that the course on Islamiyat has a substantial part on the Seerat. It also has another substantial part on sacred personalities of early Islam.

- When challenged to justify this violation of constitutional right, officials at MOFEPT refuse to correct the wrong. Instead, they prescribe outlandish ways of avoiding the violation: they want teachers to ask non-Muslim students to leave the class during such lessons.
- **Govt response:** The SNC has also taken special care to ensure that there is no material in it that offends the sensibilities of any of the minorities in Pakistan. In fact, it is for the first time that a separate special curriculum has been prepared for Hindus, Christians, Bahais, Sikhs and Kalaash. Ministry's entire attempt has been to ensure that the curriculum is not only reflective of all Pakistanis but promotes tolerance, peace and brotherhood among all communities in the country," according to a statement issued by the Ministry of Education in response to objections being raised by various quarters on the SNC. The federal government's approval process for science textbooks does not involve any consultation with the Muttahida Ulema Board and so any claim that the board has prohibited the inclusion of any diagrams or educational material from the biology textbooks is factually inaccurate.
- The much-debated Single National Curriculum should have made a deliberate effort to address the disrespect towards women and the propensity to condone violence against them. Although the SNC aims to create national harmony, it fails to address grave social injustices in the revised curriculum. It does not see **gender equity** as a moral and societal obligation.
- the use of religious injunctions to impart ethical, civic-oriented lessons — another key pillar of the SNC — is not a particularly controversial idea on its own. But has any consideration been given as to what the long-term impact of this might be, in a multi-ethnic, multi-sect polity, where gender-based subjugation is also frequently rationalised under the garb of religion? If citizenship ideals inculcated in the early years are repeatedly intertwined with particular religious outlooks, what kind of citizens are we left with in the long run?
- if it was really about raising standards for all, the government would actually do something about making the public sector schooling more competitive, which would give the private sector a run for its money. To the contrary, the generally high-performing private sector is being put under pressure to downgrade its standards in the name of a uniform curriculum. In other words, instead of improving its own game, the government is asking the private sector to shift the goalposts.

### *Implementation*

- the actual problem arises at the grassroots level where preparation, motivation, capacity and availability of logistical and material resources are lacking and the implementation of SNC might even be resisted at that level by some other education systems.
- More significantly, it is the teachers who implement the curriculum by delivering pedagogical knowledge in the classroom where the children and teachers have close interaction during the process of teaching-learning.
- before implementing the SNC, it would be better to launch capacity-building programmes for teachers, principals, administrators and parents at provincial and district levels to give them a proper orientation regarding SNC dynamics.
- Allocation and mobilisation of financial and material resources are equally important in the entire process. Otherwise, like previous curriculum reforms and policies, the existing status quo will prevail in schools, and the SNC will remain a dream.
- it appears that the PCTB regards a good dollop of religion and patriotism, even in language subjects such as Urdu and English, an important benchmark to judge the textbook quality. As

things stand now, no textbook can be published or prescribed for any public or private school without an NOC from the PCTB. Not only are the private publishers expected to conform to the shoddy standards used in the model textbooks, but there is also a lengthy three-tiered review system in place to get the NOC.

- Right now, the greatest concern for all serious educationists is that some of the most clueless government functionaries might hold the power to damage the future of education in this country.

### Impact of Covid

- With the rise of the Covid-19 pandemic, perhaps a silent pandemic that followed in its footsteps was the havoc that would ensue on the provision of education across the globe. Educational ecosystems struggled to rise to the occasion and ensure timely and appropriate provision of education to cope with the lockdowns that were implemented almost uniformly across the world. Some countries were better equipped to deal with the crisis owing either to a limited population or to a sound technological base already in place which was swiftly mobilised to deal with the distance learning modalities that had to be adapted. But others like Pakistan had a wider problem to deal with. An already flailing economy to cater to a population of over 200 million, with 24.3% of the said number living under the poverty line, only about 15% having access to the internet, and only about 43% possessing a smart phone, it was difficult to devise a strategy that could help curb the educational crisis that was building up in the country.
- Consecutive school closures meant that students were deprived of the learning flow that had persisted before the said closures. The government truly stepped in with a diverse set of initiatives, often also in partnership with other institutions within the Pakistani educational ecosystem. Distance learning using technological innovation, herewith termed EdTech, was rapidly adapted to in a way that guaranteed access. There were two spectrums on which these initiatives played out. Considering the limited access to the internet within Pakistan, low-tech initiatives, too, were adopted to cater to a wider expanse. In terms of the low-tech initiatives, TeleSchool and Radio School were launched for students across the nation. While internet access only covers about 15% of the population, roughly 70% of the population has access to a television set and 96% of the population has access to the radio.
- The Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training (MoFEPT), while keeping this in mind, launched the said initiatives in collaboration with Digital Pakistan. The E-Taleem portal on the MoFEPT website has more than just these recorded lectures on show. The portal features digital platforms which the ministry has developed in collaboration with SABAAQ Foundation, Knowledge Platform, and Taleemabad to name a few. These platforms offer interactive games, cartoons, infotainment series, and recorded lectures which have all been designed to help students recover from learning losses accrued during the pandemic.
- It is thus safe to say that the MoFEPT has covered all basis in terms of devising strategies to help combat the lags that have occurred within the system in the wake of the pandemic. Not only have they succeeded in devising mechanisms that impart knowledge efficiently, but they have done so in a way that is interactive and fun. While narratives surrounding inefficiencies of the Pakistani state's response are often found circulating in the media, perhaps it's time to give credit where it is due.

- School enrolment in Pakistan has gone down by two per cent and learning losses have been stupendous. According to ASER, 32 pc children between five and 16 years of age are now out of school. Worse than the falling numbers are the falling learning outcomes. ASER compared the competency of students of grade 5 in 2021 with students of the same grade in 2019. It discovered tremendous losses in their language skills and also in their mathematical ability.

## Solutions

- This is not a new problem, and neither the statistics are new. Every few years, the government in charge creates a new programme to tackle the challenge. There are also programmes led by international NGOs (UNHCR, World Bank, ADB and others) to improve the situation. But somehow the needle does not seem to be moving very much. Frustrated by the impact on the ground, and worried about the most remote areas, there are some promising citizen-led efforts that are also trying to fill the gap through innovative technology based methods. TAKMIL (the acronym stands for Teach a Kid, Make Individual Life), for example, is using solar panels, innovations in digital technologies, and an integrated accelerated curriculum to reach isolated communities. Working in remote communities is logistically and financially hard. To date, TAKMIL team has created 25 schools that have started educating nearly 1,500 children.
- Some possible solutions to these could be subsidised school fees, interest-free loans, education grants and scholarships to sustain and revive Pakistan's education sector. Financial institutions can play a vital role by providing fee loans with flexible repayment schedules aligned with cash flows of parents' business activities. Moreover, special scholarship programmes or quotas for girls would prove fruitful in increasing re-enrolment rates. Additionally, adoption of public schools by the private sector for a high-quality education system must be considered by the government to utilise the barren infrastructure and enable access to much-needed quality education for all.
- Ehsaas Education Stipends programme under which monetary incentives will be provided to attract girls and boys to school. In a country where literacy rate is only 59%, slightly above 71% males are literate, a mere 47% females are educated, and 18.7 million children of school-going age are out of school, the stipend programme will encourage parents to get their boys and girls enrolled in school. Considering the low female literacy rate and the significant role that educated women play in the good upbringing of children, girls will be paid better scholarships in terms of money than boys at the primary, secondary and higher secondary levels. The minimum requirement for entitlement to the scholarships will be up to 70% attendance, and the money will be paid to mothers.

## Political culture of pak

Antony lieven book points

## Polarization

- 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.

- THE quality of political discourse in our country has plunged to a new low. In the current climate of toxicity, lawmakers, ministers and prominent politicians don't think twice before uttering profanities, striking one another and using disgusting language be it on the floor of the National Assembly or on the set of a TV talk show. The remarks of Minister Ali Amin Gandapur at an election rally in Azad Kashmir this week fall into this category of shameful discourse. Mr Gandapur's vitriol and derogatory labels for Zulfikar Ali Bhutto and Nawaz Sharif show how far our political leaders will go to discredit their opponents. In our highly polarised political environment, criticism is no longer constructive. It is personal and nothing is off limits. Political opponents treat each other like enemies, and deliberating in good faith is increasingly becoming a rarity.
- The government must realise the cost at which this polarising politics will come. By using such tactics, and viewing politics as a blood sport, our leaders are letting down the people instead of rendering the public service that is required of them. Such antagonism against political rivals will promote intolerance within society as well, something we witnessed in the Daska by-election. With a general election scheduled in two years, the leaders of all political parties should know that hateful rhetoric and toxic speeches can trigger political violence.
- Decency must return to politics, otherwise our already polarised society will continue its descent into political chaos. The ruling party must take the lead in setting the tone for mature politics, and base criticism of its rivals on substance rather than resorting to name-calling and personal attacks. It cannot continue to laud and reward such behaviour. By deploying these tactics, politicians appeal to their voters but do little to solve their problems. Healthy debates and criticism are hallmarks of a democracy. Sadly, there is no sign of either in our political discourse. Our political leaders should correct themselves before we reach a point of no return.

#### *Effect on Parliament*

- 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.

- 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.
- 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.

#### *How Parliament should be?*

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.

#### *Illiterate electorate*

- 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.



## Political Finance

- 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.

## Constituency politics

- 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.

## FATF

- The Financial Action Task Force (FATF) is a global watchdog that develops policies for curbing money laundering and financing of terrorism (ML/TF). It sets standards and guidelines for all countries to adopt, as well as monitors and evaluates countries on their performance. The aim is to promote countries to adopt FATF Recommendations and in doing so, preserve the integrity of the global financial system.<sup>2</sup>
- The FATF and its regional bodies regularly monitor countries' AML/CFT frameworks. The FATF conducts peer reviews of each member on an ongoing basis to assess levels of implementation and provides analyses of each country's system for preventing criminal abuse of the financial system. These evaluations, called Mutual Evaluation Reports (MERs), review how well a country's AML/CFT frameworks fulfill the FATF requirements (Technical Compliance), and broadly, how well these frameworks are working to protect against ML/TF risks (Effective Compliance). The criteria that the FATF relies upon to conduct these evaluations comprise of 11 Immediate Outcomes to measure Effective Compliance, and 40 Technical Recommendations to measure Technical Compliance. Currently, the FATF is holding its Fourth Round of AML/CFT Mutual Evaluations.
- Countries that are not up to the par in terms of the FATF's standards are subject to further scrutiny and evaluations until they satisfy the FATF requirements. The FATF places such countries into two categories –Jurisdictions under Increased Monitoring" (the 'grey-list') and "Non-Cooperative Countries and Jurisdictions subject to Call to Action" (the 'black-list'). Being placed on the 'grey-list' has significant reputational and financial implications for a country, such as being subject to harsher conditions when pursuing international loans and increased scrutiny while conducting transactions through the global financial system.
- Countries on the grey-list are encouraged to work together with technical working groups within the FATF body, such as the International Cooperation Review Group (ICRG), to identify and resolve

issues in their AML/CFT regimes. Countries often work together with FATF-style regional bodies and the ICRG to create workable Action Plans to improve any deficiencies.

- The FATF, along with its regional bodies such as the Asia Pacific Group (APG), then regularly conducts assessments and evaluations of countries on the grey-list. Eventually, countries that improve their performance are allowed to exit the grey-list and are removed from increased scrutiny.
- Countries on the black-list are not considered part of the global financial system, and all matter of transactions, whether with other countries or at the individual-level, are effectively banned. This provides countries on the grey-list an impetus to improve its compliance with the FATF standards and exit the grey-list.
- 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.

## Pakistan and the FATF

### *Why placed on the grey list?*

In 2018, the FATF placed Pakistan on the 'grey-list' – citing 'structural deficiencies' that resulted in failure to effectively target TF/ML.<sup>3</sup> In 2019, the Asia Pacific Group's Mutual Evaluation Report (MER) provided a detailed assessment of the nature of these deficiencies. Some of the core reasons for being grey-listed included:

Lack of necessary legal frameworks to target TF/ML; Lack of coordination amongst governmental actors and law enforcement agencies; No coherent risk-based assessment tools; No laws/regulations for certain high-risk sectors such as Designated Non-Financial Businesses and Persons (DNFBPs); Lack of mechanisms to promote international cooperation.

Consequently, a 27-point Action Plan was developed by FATF for Pakistan to align its AML/CFT frameworks with international standards.

### *Timeline*

- In 2018, Pakistan was found lacking in its legislation in terms of criminalizing and targeting terrorism financing and money laundering. As a result of these "structural deficiencies", Pakistan was placed on the 'grey-list' – and instructed to improve its legislative frameworks to align with international standards. By October 2019, Pakistan's impressive progress in overhauling and amending its existing laws was acknowledged by the global community, but it was still kept on the grey list as it was fully compliant with only 5 targets on a 27-target plan, with varying levels of implementation on the remaining targets.<sup>3</sup>
- In February 2020, the FATF had declared Pakistan "fully compliant" on 14 points, with varying degrees of compliance on the remaining targets. The AML/CFT watchdog also set a deadline to ensure compliance to the remaining 13 points – ending originally in June 2020, which was later extended to October 2020 in light of the COVID-19 pandemic
- In Oct 2020, the FATF had declared Pak fully compliant on 21 points and partially on 6. In Feb 2021 24 and 3.

- In its last meeting in February, the FATF had urged Pakistan to address three strategically important deficiencies related to investigations and prosecutions of terrorism-financing cases. The FATF also demanded proof and most importantly asked for the effective implementation of targeted financial sanctions against all UN Security Council-designated terrorists. Apparently, the FATF will mainly review progress on these three aspects.

#### *June 2021 plenary*

- The Financial Action Task Force (FATF) announced on Friday that Pakistan will continue to remain on the watchdog's "increased monitoring list", also known as the grey list, till it addresses the single remaining item on the original action plan agreed to in June 2018 as well as all items on a parallel action plan handed out by the watchdog's regional partner – the Asia Pacific Group (APG) – in 2019.
- Announcing the decision in a virtual press conference after the financial watchdog's five-day plenary meeting, FATF President Dr Marcus Pleyer said, "Pakistan has made significant progress and it has largely addressed 26 out of 27 items on the action plan it first committed to in June 2018."
- Pleyer, however, added that the item on financial terrorism still needed to be addressed which concerned the "investigation and prosecution of senior leaders and commanders of UN-designated terror groups".
- 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.

#### *6 more action items*

When asked about the new action plan after the APG evaluation, Pleyer said the plan had "six action items including enhancing international cooperation and demonstrating that assistance is being sought from foreign countries in implementing UN Security Council designations".

He said "this is about demonstrating that supervisors are conducting both onsite and offsite supervision commensurate with the specific risks associated with the non-financial sector."

"It's also about demonstrating that sanctions are applied to all legal persons and arrangements for non-compliance with beneficial ownership requirements; increase in money laundering investigations and demonstrating that non-financial sector is being monitored for compliance with proliferation financing requirements," he added.

#### *Delisting*

- The watchdog's president, responding to a question, said all items on both action plans needed to be addressed and goals fulfilled for Pakistan to exit the grey list.

- Pleyer said even after the last remaining item on the original action plan was addressed, delisting would not occur as there was a parallel action plan that was also given.

#### Steps taken by PAK

##### Background

- 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 26 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.

##### Steps

FATF concern followed by step taken by Pak govt written in Italics format.

- In its evaluations, the FATF analyzes policies that allow for the identification and assessment of ML/TF risks. It also looks at how relevant authorities coordinate action and resources in order to mitigate and counter-act against existing risks. The MER 2019 noted that there were significant gaps in Pakistan's National Risk Assessment (NRA) 2017, including poor methodology, and lack of understanding of core TF risks, particularly in the informal hawala/hundi sector.
- *In 2020, Pakistan incorporated extensive legislative and administrative changes to enhance coordination and application of risk-based approaches. Pakistan has amended the Anti-Money Laundering Act (AMLA) 2010 with key additions such as Section 7A mandating the application of risk-based approaches and conducting Customer Due Diligence (CDD) for all regulated and reporting entities. The National Executive Committee and the General Committee under AMLA have expanded their mandate as well. In our assessment, these actions merit a re-rating of LC under both these indicators.*
- The FATF requires countries to ensure that crimes contributing to money laundering are all accounted for within the schedule of offences. Furthermore, authorities must have powers to freeze and confiscate all property or proceeds of crime. The aim is to ensure that money does not remain available to offenders while ML investigations are underway.
- *In 2020, changes introduced through the AMLA (Second Amendment) Act, 2020 establish guidelines for punishment for money laundering, rendering it a cognizable offence (section 21) and sanctions have been made further strict in terms of both financial penalties and imprisonment*

*terms (section 4). In our assessment, Pakistan is re-rated on Recommendation 3 to fully Compliant, while it retains its Largely Compliant rating in terms of confiscation as minor deficiencies remain.*

- Similar to the ML offence, the FATF is also concerned with the provisions of the TF offence and its application within domestic law. Countries are required to criminalize terrorist financing on the basis of the Terrorist Financing Convention.<sup>7</sup> Furthermore, authorities are required to criminalize financing of proscribed organizations/individuals even in the absence of a link to a specific terrorist act or acts. Targeted financial sanctions (TFS), in line with the requirements of the UNSC Resolutions 1267 and 1373 are to be applied to ensure that no funds are available to any proscribed terrorist individual or organization. Non-Profit Organizations (NPOs) are required to be regulated by authorities to ensure ML/TF risks are accounted for.
- *In 2020, the Anti-Terrorism Act (ATA), 1997 was amended three times to ensure compliance with the FATF regimes, including adding to the definition of persons under section 2 and further increasing fines and imprisonment terms for violations. The addition of Section 11-000 strengthened sanctions and penalties, while entrenching compliance to the United Nations Security Council Resolutions within the ATA framework. All regulators<sup>8</sup> created new regulations with TFS obligations, including harsh penalties for violations. The strict requirements for due diligence also impacts the NPO sector, improving compliance with the FATF recommendations. In RSIL's assessment, Pakistan is re-rated to Compliant for TF offence, and Largely Compliant with the remaining indicators.*
- ML and TF now involve increasingly sophisticated techniques, such as layering, to conceal illicit funds. Therefore, it is critical for the financial sector to apply preventive measures to identify and counter-act against potential TF/ML threats. Apart from the broader banking and insurance sectors, DNFBPs (Designated Non-Financial Businesses and Professions) are also an important area to consider. DNFBPs include lawyers, accountants, real estate agents, dealers in precious metals/stones and trust and company service providers. Traditionally, such individuals are often seen as the gate-keepers of AML regimes, as those with proceeds of crime often seek technical advice on how to park, integrate or otherwise conceal illicit funds. Real estate agents and dealers in precious metals/stones are also high-risk sectors for ML/TF activity. Regulating these professions and integrating a culture of adopting risk-based approaches within this area is crucial.
- *In 2020, major progress was registered to enhance preventive measures, particularly with the passage of the AMLA (Second Amendment) Act, 2020 and all subsequent rules and regulations formed therein. Regulators are now obligated to keep records, conduct expansive due diligence, limit reliance on third parties and have strict internal controls in place when dealing with high-risk transactions or jurisdictions. In our assessment, Pakistan has been re-rated to Compliant or Largely Compliant under most of these indicators. Major new regulations have been introduced in the DNFBP sector. Previously, certain sectors within DNFBPs were outside the realm of regulation. New regulations are now in place, with entities such as the Federal Board of Revenue, the Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP) and Ministry of Law and Justice all providing oversight. Under the Anti-Money Laundering Sanctions Rules, 2020, failure of implementing these laws and regulations will now result in serious penalties. Appreciating these developments, RSIL has upgraded Pakistan's rating on DNFBPs implementing due diligence measures to Largely Compliance. However, there are structural, institutional and cultural challenges to the effective enforcement of DNFBP regulation. In our assessment more work will need to be done in this area*

*in the coming years for a risk-based culture to develop, which is why Pakistan retains its PC rating under Recommendation 23.*

- The FATF includes Beneficial Ownership (BO) in its recommendations. This requires countries to implement transparency mechanisms so that it is clear who retains effective control over a company and other legal arrangements. This is important in countering tax evasion, corruption, money laundering, and the financing of terrorism.
- *In 2020, Pakistan enacted key changes to the Companies Act, 2017 and the Limited Liabilities Partnership Act, 2017 to align better with these recommendations, although minor deficiencies remain. In our assessment, Pakistan is re-rated upwards on each of these categories.*
- Regulators, supervisors, law enforcement agencies (LEAs) and other competent authorities are all required to work in tandem to effectively counter ML/TF threats. It is also important to ensure that authorities are empowered to coordinate effective action on-ground. Importantly, all authorities are required to have mechanisms to levy sanctions, including financial penalties, for non-compliance with AML/CFT rules. Where required, supervisors and regulators should be able to wield a range of disciplinary and financial sanctions in cases of non-compliance, commensurate with the degree of noncompliance.
- *Since Pakistan's grey-listing in 2018, the regulation and supervision of financial institutions has been considerably enhanced through multiple new rules, regulations, and policies. This effort has primarily been led by the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP), the Securities Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP) and the Financial Monitoring Unit (FMU). In 2020, extensive changes were made to the ATA/AMLA frameworks promoting the powers and responsibilities of LEAs and other investigative authorities. The FMU's scope was laid out in detail in the AMLA (Second Amendment) Act, 2020, along with the scope and role of AML/CFT Regulatory Authorities and Self-Regulating Bodies (SRBs) in enforcing provisions therein. Special investigation techniques were legalized under both the ATA and AMLA, allowing for enhanced evidence collection for ML/TF cases. However, more progress is required in gathering, collecting and collation of data and statistics, and further consultative mechanisms need to be integrated for complete compliance. In light of these developments, RSIL has re-rated Pakistan on most of the indicators in this category.*
- The transnational nature of ML/TF offences requires countries to have established and well-functioning mechanisms for approaching authorities abroad to exchange information and evidence in ML/ TF investigations. Multiple international conventions and legal instruments contain provisions recommending international cooperation between countries. Within this ambit, mutual legal assistance (MLA) refers to the concept of countries mutually agreeing to gather and exchange information in an effort to enforce public or criminal laws.
- *Traditionally, this has been a weak area for Pakistan. An MLA specific law did not exist to provide explicit legal cover with recourse being made to antiquated criminal justice procedures which were poorly understood and applied by justice sector actors. In 2020, the passage of the Mutual Legal Assistance (Criminal Matters) Act, 2020 along with the formulation of the Mutual Legal Assistance Internal Rules 2020 has been integral in upgrading Pakistan's MLA architecture and bolstering compliance under this category. This has paved the way for better MLA and it is believed that international cooperation has already improved under the new regime*

### *US response*

- the US has said it supports Pakistan's efforts to meet the global financial watchdog's conditions and acknowledges that this country has made "significant progress" on the original action plan.
- The State Department encouraged Pakistan to complete the remaining actions "expeditiously" in the second action plan.

### *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.
- India's external affairs minister, S. Jaishankar, claimed in front of a gathering of BJP leaders that India had successfully put pressure on Pakistan. A spokesman of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Islamabad has responded to these disturbing claims by saying this had exposed India's "true colours" and "duplicious role". the acknowledgement by the Indian minister not only brings New Delhi's negative role out in the open, it also casts a shadow over decision-making within the FATF itself.
- With Pakistan having made such appreciable progress in its actions, the July 25 decision was rather unexpected. Given this situation, the least that the FATF must do is to take stern notice of the Indian minister's statement and admonish New Delhi for bringing the FATF into disrepute. If a perception is created that countries are settling scores using the FATF platform, then this will adversely impact the credibility of the international watchdog and undercut the mandate that it says it carries.

### *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.
- In the meantime, Pakistan should continue to progress on the remaining, important agenda item and take action against senior leaders of UN-designated terror groups. Pakistan has benefited by strengthening its existing laws and legislating new ones to fulfil FATF requirements and it should ensure effective implementation of these laws. The FATF should also acknowledge Pakistan's efforts, despite the malicious manoeuvring by countries like India, and move swiftly to strike Pakistan's name off the grey list.
- 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.

- 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.
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## HR abuses

- Palestine; Kashmir and India overall; Rohingya Muslims; Uighur Muslims; Syrian; Yemen; minorities in Pakistan, RYK incident
- "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**
- 1% of world population living in other countries; neighbouring or far away; because of conflict and persecution
- Even in COVID when movement slowed worldwide; exodus of people from their homeland increased; UN reported 82 million figure, 3 million higher than last year; highest ever recorded; report mentioned conflicts in Afghanistan, Syria, Yemen and Somalia; eruption of violence in Tigray (Ethiopia) and Mozambique further fuelled the surge
- Turkey hosts most refugees 3.7 million followed by Pakistan 1.4 million; encouraging social justice and cohesion in conflict-ridden countries; international cooperation can tackle growing refugee problem

## Media

- The last few years have seen heightened pressure on media organisations as a whole as well as on individual journalists. The financial and editorial squeeze has had an adverse impact on the industry and also diluted the quality of independent journalism. A large number of journalists have lost their jobs while others have had to endure salary cuts. There have been numerous cases of physical assaults on journalists and hardly any of the perpetrators have been caught by the law-enforcement authorities. For the discerning observer, it is not difficult to recognise a distinct pattern. There is a deliberate and well-considered effort by the authorities to bring the media to heel and curtail space for criticism. All this flies in the face of constitutional guarantees for the freedom of expression. Representative media bodies have done well to reject the proposed regulatory body and they must not back down from this principled position in the face of growing pressure from the information ministry.
- The Supreme Court of Pakistan has summoned senior officials from the interior ministry, FIA and the Islamabad Police to hear their version about complaints regarding the harassment of journalists. The court issued these summons in response to a petition complaining that journalists were facing increasing cases of intimidation at the hands of security agencies.
- While the cases of intimidation of journalists are on the rise, the federal government plans to go ahead with a controversial media regulatory authority whose aim appears to be to further throttle the freedom of expression.



- The government must realise that it is harming democracy by resorting to such tactics to browbeat the media. Prime Minister Imran Khan, who claims to support the media's right to independence, must take note of his information minister's misguided attempt to gag the media. The court should also take notice of these developments and ask the government to explain the rationale behind the proposed body.

## PMDA

- Pakistan Media Development Authority — a euphemism for the Orwellian Big Brother.
- As envisaged by the government, the PMDA will be a one-stop shop regulator for all media — print, broadcast, film, and digital — and headed by a government-appointed bureaucrat. The PMDA will also have tribunals to hear complaints against media organisations, decisions of which can only be appealed at the Supreme Court. The tribunals, headed by chairpersons of high court judge level, will have the power to impose fines of Rs25 million and hand down jail time of up to three years. The PMDA will grant licences to media organisations which will have to be renewed yearly; it will also have the power to seal offices of media houses.
- It also seeks to assume the content regulation powers of the Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA) and regulate digital media as well as over-the-top (OTT) streaming services such as Netflix, etc as well as content creators on YouTube. This is problematic, because the internet is the only place where some independence of thought and ideas finds space, especially when television has become so restrictive in terms of what one can say.

## Reaction

- Groups representing the media including the Pakistan Federal Union of Journalists, lawyers groups such as the Pakistan Bar Association, and civil society groups such as the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan and the Joint Action Committee have all rejected the bill, and rightly labelled the PMDA as “media martial law”. The Digital Media Association has also strongly opposed the draft bill.
- It is important that the government engages stakeholders, especially as the media forms the fourth pillar of the state in a democracy, holding the government and state machinery accountable and playing a critical oversight role where the legislature, executive, and judiciary are concerned. Without the support of media organisations, and with the intention of seeking to expand control over them, the allegations of a media martial law and comparisons to dictator Ayub Khan's tactics are not an exaggeration.
- In the past few years, the government has **withheld advertising to media houses** that have been critical of its policies and exerted pressure to get certain anchorpersons off air. State machinery has also been used to intimidate newspaper hawkers and cable operators from, respectively, distributing newspapers and broadcasting channels critical of government and state policies, and abused the cybercrime law to intimidate activists and independent-minded journalists. Some opposition members have been disallowed by Pemra (and by channels under pressure) from appearing on Pakistani talk shows, and several columnists barred from writing domestically, and labelled traitors when they write internationally. Killing and disappearances of journalists have also taken place with impunity, and Pakistan's media freedom rankings have been sliding consistently, which is an international embarrassment for our democratic credentials.
- **Online censorship** has also seen an uptick, with contradictory statements coming from a government dreaming of a digital Pakistan while at the same time banning TikTok four times when

it is the fastest growing application in terms of usage and connects Pakistanis from all strata. Instead of giving this digital inclusion trend a boost and encouraging digital adoption, the government has opted for moralistic censorship.

- In such an environment, such a proposal will put constitutional rights to **freedom of speech** and press freedom on the back-burner. But Pakistani media and civil society have resisted such moves successfully during dictatorships as well as democratic governments, and this will prove yet another challenge for the state to implement.
- Previously, the same government had unsuccessfully tried to float similar proposals for a **Pakistan Media Regulatory Authority**, and for bringing digital media and OTT applications under the purview of Pemra, both of which failed and were rejected by a large cross section of stakeholders. This proposal is facing similar opposition, but the information minister seems bent on pushing this draconian proposal ahead without consideration for stakeholder feedback.
- Apart from being problematic for the reasons outlined here, it is also important for the government to consider the **economic repercussions**. Increasing media repression will not bode well for **Pakistan's GSP-Plus status**; granted by the EU, this scheme of tariff concessions is contingent on respect for human rights.
- Like the government, **opposition parties** also owe it to Pakistani citizens to move to protect the people's interests that the government is trying to violate by promoting a propaganda model of media regulation. The opposition will suffer further if such a bill that consolidates censorship is passed. The government should learn from the mistakes of political parties that are suffering today due to having passed draconian laws when they were in power, and that are now being abused to persecute them. A case in point is the PML-N, which enacted the Prevention of Electronic Crimes Act in 2016.

#### *Way forward*

- Governments mulling such consolidated censors need to realise that each medium requires specialised knowledge and dynamics, and it is only logical to have independent regulators that are formed through inclusive consultations with all affected stakeholders. Moreover, it is the stakeholders and experts that must have a say in their functioning rather than total control being delegated to state bureaucracy. Advancement in digital media does not mean that it be subjected to the same kind of censorship as traditional media in the past. It means that states now have to give up the fantasy of trying to control the people's thoughts and opinions and their choices of information consumption, instead of seeking to manufacture their consent through a consolidated state censor.

#### *Latin America*

- Throughout the region, economies have been gradually weakening, and populism has been gaining momentum, for quite some time. But the COVID-19 crisis has plunged Latin America into its worst economic recession in a century. By gutting the middle class, the pandemic has increased inequality in what was already the world's most unequal region. Now, one-third of Latin Americans are living in extreme poverty (\$1.90 per day or less, according to the World Bank definition).
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- It might seem inappropriate, even dismissive, to discuss Latin America as a single entity, given the region's vast socioeconomic diversity. But there is considerable overlap in terms of the challenges its countries face.
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- From Chile and Ecuador to Venezuela and Peru, populations are grappling with their national identities. Amid rampant corruption and state capture, Latin Americans lack trust in their institutions – a trend that has contributed to the collapse of traditional political parties and a surge of populist outsider candidates. Democratic backsliding and disillusionment are rife.
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- To reverse these trends, the region needs deep structural change. And it is incumbent on the international community – especially the United States and the EU – to help.
- During the Cold War, Latin America was often treated as a pawn on the global geopolitical chessboard. To a significant extent, this remains the case today, though it is now China, not the Soviet Union, that is competing with the US for influence. In fact, China has worked hard in recent years to re-orient Latin America's trade away from the US, and is now set to become Latin America's main trading partner by 2035.
- And yet, even as Latin America has been manipulated and used by great powers, it has also been an influential global actor in its own right. Accounting for nearly half the delegations at the Bretton Woods Conference in 1944, the region played an important role in laying the foundations of the liberal world order.
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- More recently, Latin America was a driving force behind the adoption of landmark international agreements, from the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development to the Paris climate agreement. And the region is home to many economies that, just a few years ago, were being hailed for their vast growth potential.
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- Between the problematic legacy of foreign intervention in Latin America and the region's vast economic and diplomatic potential, there is no shortage of compelling reasons why the international community, especially the wealthy Western democracies, should be helping it to overcome the cascade of challenges it faces. Yet that simply has not happened.

## Populism

- One new variant of populism might involve hostility toward both costly green policies and vaccination against COVID-19. And it would be driven by a combination of genuine concerns about pocketbook issues and the kinds of conspiratorial lunacy that thrive on the internet.
- Anti-green populism is particularly likely to flourish in the more fossil fuel-dependent economies of Central and Eastern Europe, in response to the European Union's new strategy for reducing greenhouse gases by 55% by 2030. Indeed, the so-called Fit for 55 plan would seem to call for the wholesale remodeling of these economies.
- Consider Poland, which generates 70% of its energy from coal and receives additional supplies through a gas pipeline from Russia. Coal is especially abundant in southern Poland, where it is used to fuel giant power stations that provide industry with cheap electricity.
- If it is to meet EU emissions targets, Poland is going to have to decarbonize more extensively and rapidly than anyone else. The government recently set an ambitious goal of reducing the

proportion of coal in the country's energy mix from 70% to 11% by 2040. But that will have massive implications for mining, which employs some 100,000 heavily unionized and politically influential workers.

- Moreover, with little wind or sunshine in winter, Poland is ill suited for renewable-energy deployment. Instead, it has set its sights on “solutions” like nuclear power and the “Baltic Pipe” gas pipeline – subsidized by the European Commission to the tune of €215 million (\$251 million) – to import gas from Norway via Denmark.
- In fact, France was briefly the epicenter of an anti-green backlash in Europe, with the rambunctious giletsjaunes (yellow vest) protests that began in 2018. Angry citizens who rely on cars to get around their country districts eventually forced President Emmanuel Macron to rescind a new tax on diesel fuel. They had a point, considering that the infrastructure for more expensive electric vehicles simply does not exist in France (or anywhere else).
- Opposition to vaccination is as old as inoculation itself. The English city of Leicester used to be a hotbed of it. In 1885, 100,000 people there attended an anti-vaccination rally, complete with a child's coffin and an effigy of Edward Jenner, the pioneer of smallpox vaccination. Such movements were often based on a fusion of fundamentalist Christianity (which opposed interference in God's work) and suspicion of powers being arrogated by the modern state, which made vaccination mandatory for infants or children entering school.
- Nowadays, any online search of vaccines immediately reveals a disproportionate number of anti-vaccination sites, as well as pernicious guff claiming that the barring of unvaccinated youth from nightclubs is akin to Jews being sent to Auschwitz.
- 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.
- how the rise of populism and reactionary politics in the region and beyond has actually impacted Pakistan's domestic situation?
- 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.
- A second spill over, though less obvious, has been the delegitimization of what one can broadly call the liberal foreign and cultural policy segment in Pakis-tan, 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.
- Finally, a third spill over 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. 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

Columbia in 2009, which wanted a guarantee that the military bases established for their Colombian 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.
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### 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

- **Latest**

- PM said during Gwadar visit considering holding talks with Baloch nationalists; The issue of missing persons is a central point in Balochistan-centre ties; the resolution of this issue is the Baloch nationalist leadership's primary demand; PM appointed Jamhoori Watan Party chief and MNA Shahzain Bugti as his special assistant on reconciliation and harmony in the province, grandson of nawab akbar Bugti, doesn't enjoy the trust of the Baloch leadership, the government should have involved nationalist leaders such as Dr Malik and BNP-M's Akhtar Mengal to show it is serious about the reconciliation process
- The prime minister is correct in linking Baloch grievances to insufficient development in the province. He had announced a Rs600 billion development package for Balochistan
- The PPP government (2008-13) had introduced the Aghaz-i-Huqooq-i-Balochistan package, besides giving concessions to the province in the seventh NFC award. It had also formed a committee for exploring reconciliation prospects.
- The PML-N government (2013-18) followed in the same footsteps and made the reconciliation with Baloch insurgent leaders a clause of the National Action Plan announced in January 2015. When Dr Abdul Malik Baloch was chief minister, he was given the mandate by the top military brass to pursue political reconciliation with all stakeholders. A provincial government delegation even went to Switzerland where Dr Baloch himself negotiated with Brahamdagh Bugti in Geneva and conveyed the demands and reservations of the separatist leader to the military high-ups upon his return. He said it was not difficult to meet these demands, but yet the whole process was halted without any explanation being provided.
- Now the PTI government wants to take the lead in the reconciliation process.
- **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,<sup>24</sup> 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.<sup>26</sup> The ideological beliefs and values provide a benchmark to distinguish between themselves and others.<sup>27</sup> 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.<sup>79</sup> 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 Yadev 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		

## AI/Tech/digitalization

- **era of open-source intelligence (OSINT)** New sensors, from humdrum dashboard cameras to satellites that can see across the electromagnetic spectrum, are examining the planet and its people as never before. The information they collect is becoming cheaper. Satellite images cost several thousand dollars 20 years ago, today they are often provided free and are of incomparably higher quality. Online communities and collaborative tools enable investigative journalists to use this cornucopia of information to solve riddles and unearth misdeeds with astonishing speed.
- Human Rights Watch has analysed satellite imagery to document ethnic cleansing in Myanmar. Nano-satellites tag the automatic identification system of vessels that are fishing illegally. Amateur sleuths have helped Europol, the EU's policing agency, investigate child sexual exploitation by identifying geographical clues in the background of photographs.
- OSINT thus bolsters media and civil society, strengthens law enforcement, and makes markets more efficient. It can also humble some of the world's most powerful countries. The likelihood that the truth will be uncovered raises the cost of wrongdoing for governments.
- Citizens will no longer have to take their governments on trust. News outlets will have new ways of holding them to account. Today's open sources and methods would have shone a brighter light on the Bush administration's accusation in 2003 that Iraq was developing chemical, biological and nuclear weapons. That would have subjected US invasion of the country to greater scrutiny. It might even have prevented it.
- At times the OSINT can go wrong. After the Boston Marathon bombing in 2013 internet users scrutinised the crime scene and identified several suspects. All were innocent bystanders. Or OSINT could be used by bad actors to spread misinformation and conspiracy theories.
- Some warn that OSINT threatens national security — as when, for example, investigative journalists use data from fitness trackers to reveal remote intelligence outposts and radar satellites to locate a country's missile-defence systems. But, if OSINT can tell the world about such things, a country's enemies are already able to know them.

- As OSINT has rendered it almost into a see-through world, the greatest worry, therefore, is the threats to individual privacy.
- A world where many American, European, Chinese and Russian satellite companies vie to sell images is one of mutually assured surveillance. This is a future that open societies would be embracing, if they are wise. Tools and communities that can unearth missile silos and unveil spies are expected to make the world less mysterious and a little less dangerous and media relatively freer and more independent.
- **Zero-click attacks**
- SO, you receive a WhatsApp call from an unfamiliar number. You choose not to answer it. There's another call. You still don't answer. But that's enough for spyware to be installed on your phone, regardless of whether it's an Apple or an Android. The days when attempts to instal malware on your device could be thwarted by not clicking on links or attachments in emails of dubious origin are a thing of the past. Welcome to the world of zero-click attacks.
- If the spyware is sophisticated, it can not only mine all the data on your device and monitor your messages and phone conversations, it can also turn on the camera and microphone without the user's knowledge. In some cases, the hacker can have greater control over the device than the user does.
- That level of sophistication is, thus far, not commonplace. But it has been achieved by the **Pegasus** software that has stirred a storm of indignation across the globe, amid evidence that it was deployed against activists, journalists, and political opponents of regimes friendly to Israel.
- Source: Paris-based journalism non-profit Forbidden Stories and Amnesty International, which have shared the fruits of their investigation with a broad bunch of media outlets, from The Wire in India to The Guardian in Britain and Washington Post.
- NSO Group, the Israeli firm behind Pegasus, has long denied its technology was involved in any way with the assassination of Jamal Khashoggi, but Israeli software appears to have helped the Saudi authorities to track his movements and monitor his communications as well as those of his relatives and close associates.
- Companies that develop and sell surveillance technologies must be held accountable. Moreover, there need to be **licensing terms** that enable companies to withdraw technologies that are abused for purposes other than what is legally permissible and stated by governments as the reason for the purchase of these technologies. There is also a dire need to **implement export controls** for surveillance technology and subject it to scrutiny and human rights due diligence as these are tools of cyber warfare with a grave impact.
- Until such measures are put in place and there are international regulations governing the sale and use of surveillance technology, there needs to be a global moratorium on the sale of surveillance technology, as called for by David Kaye, former UN special rapporteur on the promotion and protection of the right to opinion and expression.
- Surveillance technology grossly violates the right to privacy of citizens. Further, surveillance induces fear in journalists, activists and citizens who are apprehensive about being observed by law-enforcement agencies and governments, and end up not expressing their opinions. This in effect violates the right to freedom of speech, as well as citizens' right to information.
- 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

### *Cybersecurity policy*

- PAKISTAN’S National Cybersecurity Policy has been approved by the cabinet, and it is surprising that Pakistan did not have one up till now.



- The purpose of the policy is stated to be “Inter-departmental coordination and holistic approach to address cybersecurity challenges and their emerging trends on a national level”.
- The focus rightly seems to be on synchronisation of a national cybersecurity effort, which is divided into national, sectoral and organisational levels. The focus of the policy is largely on government-related institutions, though it speaks of the need for cybersecurity best practices to be adopted in the private sector as well, including banking, the health sector, etc. It also mentions the need for public-private partnerships which are necessary for the policy to remain dynamic over time as it is also aimed to be.
- A critical factor in implementing such a policy will be getting the necessary buy-in from government institutions that must take cybersecurity seriously. Issues such as taking shortcuts, not updating anti-spyware and anti-viruses in computers and phones, and thinking of cybersecurity expenditure as unnecessary are some of the impediments that already exist and are likely to continue with a senior bureaucracy that is resistant to change.
- Take, for example, the recent hacking of the Federal Board of Revenue records which took place despite repeated reminders in its third-party audit reports that asked the FBR to take cybersecurity protocols and compliance seriously, including when the current chairperson was a member IT, apart from warnings from others. The financial records of all Pakistani taxpayers were compromised due to resistance to logical advice in an audit. Nadra has been subjected to similar hacking despite being the repository of all Pakistani citizens’ data. Are there any mechanisms for accountability in such cases? None.
- The policy also speaks of “weak enforcement of statutes” related to cybersecurity, which include the Prevention of Electronic Crimes Act [Peca], 2016, and the dated Telegraph Act and Electronic Transactions Ordinance. What this policy fails to explore is that this is a general problem with the overall law enforcement and justice system in Pakistan. The Federal Investigation Agency faces major setbacks when it comes to the implementation of Peca 2016. For instance, its prosecutors do not show up in court, mysteriously lose evidence files, and have limited forensic investigation capacities.
- This is where our law-enforcement agencies require help, which should be in the form of independent forensic laboratories that are free from influence, high in number, and efficient in delivering results while respecting the privacy of subjects of investigation that should be carried out only under a warrant from the court. There is no point bringing in new legislation if there is no capacity for its implementation.
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- The policy also mentions the need to protect the online privacy of citizens, but after proposing a draft data protection and privacy bill last year, the government has made no progress on it despite inviting feedback from civil society which was duly provided in a detailed manner. When there is no data protection bill, how can foreign investors be confident of doing business here? What consequences exist for weak cybersecurity protocols that lead to data breaches, and what legal recourse to citizens is available in case of data breaches?
- The mention of encryption is completely missing from this policy, and Pakistan should move towards ensuring the highest possible encryption protocols for data related to its citizens, as well as for critical national infrastructure that requires maximum security.

- The policy also proposes a Cyber Governance Policy Committee, and this should include a diverse set of stakeholders so that maximum benefit can accrue from existing cross-sector relevant expertise.
- Such a policy cannot be successful without behavioral change, improvement in the overall legal system, inclusion of diverse voices, and cross-sector coordination and collaboration.

### *Updates*

- Pakistan has sent its first shipment of locally manufactured smartphones to the UAE. This is the first of its kind as far as technology-grooming at home is concerned. The most appreciative aspect is that the decision to produce smartphones in Pakistan, through the Chinese auspices, was made in April 2021, and the first batch of indigenous production was ready in August.
- While Pakistan has graduated from being a cell phone importer to an exporting nation, it is time to indulge in mass production. It already ranks 21st in terms of penetration of smartphones. Pakistanis are tech-savvy, and there are more than 100 million hands that are in need of a smartphone. The government already has plans to extend Wi-Fi facilities in tribal areas, Gilgit-Baltistan and far-flung areas of Balochistan. This will lead to more local demand, and help limit imports of such gadgets. It's time to go hi-tech.
- The Government of Pakistan too is alive to the situation and equipping the youth with digital skills to absorb them in the job market. The government plans to train 25,000 educated young persons, particularly from disadvantaged segments of society, in digital skills in order to enable them get online jobs. These youths to be equipped with the required skills will be trained under the **Ehsaas Digital Hunar Programme**.
- In a recently published report by Payoneer, a global payment platform, Pakistan was ranked fourth in the freelancers' market, well above India and Bangladesh. Despite Covid-19, Pakistani freelancers earned \$150m in FY2019-20 (The same year mango exports earned \$104m despite multiple subsidies). This feat was achieved despite Pakistan's ranking in the bottom quartile in the Inclusive Internet Index 2021, published by the Economist Intelligence Unit. There is still no PayPal, proper working spaces or labour rights. The latest Household Integrated Economic Survey reports device ownership as low as 7.4pc for desktops and 6.2pc for laptops in households. The youngsters (mostly women) are making the best of their limited resources in an opportunity-deficient country. Instead of the government recognising their efforts and solving their problems, freelancers face a new hurdle.
- Recently, the FBR detected Rs60.308 billion untaxed foreign income disbursements to 75,615 individuals earned through freelance consultancies, which they are now eager to tax. However, the authorities hardly understand its consequences. In freelancing, no cost is borne by employers as for the most part no office space, medical facility or pension is provided. In the absence of regular job facilities, taxing freelancers' income will lower their payment, which can hurt the incentive and distort the market.
- If Pakistan plans inclusive, sustainable and youth-led economic growth, the authorities must consider the following.
- For starters, the government must actively eliminate all the barriers in the way of PayPal operations in Pakistan. The service is available in more than 200 countries in 25 currencies. If Zimbabwe, Rwanda and Uganda can manage to get PayPal, Pakistan has no excuse.
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- Secondly, while it is naive to ask for tax exemptions, the government must recognise and incentivise individual freelancers (not just corporations) by providing a softer tax scheme to compensate for the anti-tech culture in the country. Until PayPal is made operational and household device ownership increased to at least 50pc, no new taxation on the sector should be considered. If the country's rich can qualify for tax giveaways to the tune of a whopping Rs1.3 trillion a year, then the country can support its skilled youth too. Note that Bangladesh has already exempted tax on freelancing to promote the industry.
- Thirdly, the government should focus on spending less on brick-and-mortar projects which create silos and more on the software of the economy which includes retaining the best and brightest and utilising them for training people.

#### *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 fulfil 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.
- The essence of the stated RCEP objectives is to broaden and deepen integration in the region, building upon existing economic linkages. The coverage of the RCEP includes trade in goods and services, investment, economic and technical cooperation, intellectual property protection, compatibility policy, dispute settlement, e-commerce, small and medium enterprises (SMEs) and other issues like harmonisation of regulatory procedures.<sup>2</sup>
- A large number of empirical studies have explored the benefits of regional economic integration. Brenton et al. (1999) argue that regional economic integration provides an important stimulus to trade. Clausing (2001) and Trefler (2004) examine the welfare effects of Canada-United States free trade agreement (CUSFTA) and find that trade creation outweighs trade diversion and increases the welfare of the partners.

### Pak

- 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.
- Pakistan's trade policy emphasises regional economic integration as a strategy to boost trade and investment for greater prosperity and development. Pakistan adopted its strategic "look Asia" policy in 2003 to establish deeper trade relations with fast-growing Asian countries including ASEAN members. This policy has resulted in signing of free trade agreements (FTAs) with China, Indonesia and Malaysia while negotiations are under way to establish FTAs with Thailand and South Korea.
- While these RTAs have been instrumental in bolstering the volume of bilateral trade between Pakistan and its trading partners, the balance of trade is generally tilted towards the partner countries. Pakistan has been unable to take advantage of improved market access, mainly due to policy weaknesses and lack of export diversification (KCCI, 2013). Moreover, Pakistan pursued a policy of import-substitution industrialisation in the past, which adversely affected the export-oriented sector. {Issues in trade}
- Further, as Pasha (2017) argues, Pakistani currency has been overvalued by 20 percent whereas other developing economies used competitive devaluation of their currencies as a deliberate policy instrument to remain competitive vis-à-vis their competitors in major international markets. Structural issues such as limited access to credit facilities, over-taxation, lack of access to quality infrastructure, and costly provision of utilities have further aggravated the situation for export-oriented manufacturers. As a result, the export sector witnessed an erosion in international competitiveness leading to increasing pressure on the balance of payments.

- Though past RTA's have met with little success in terms of boosting Pakistan's exports, the current trade policy regime promises to address structural weaknesses of the export sector while at the same time seeking to widen global market access. In this context, Pakistan has a strong interest to be a partner in RCEP negotiations as almost all the non-ASEAN countries invited to join the proposed RCEP are direct or indirect competitors of Pakistan's exports to major markets like Malaysia, China, India, Indonesia, Singapore and Australia. The non-ASEAN countries will enjoy major concessions upon joining the proposed RCEP and this will adversely affect Pakistan's exports to the region. It is thus important to ensure that Pakistan maintains preferential trade relations with key trading partners to offset potential disadvantages in market access.
- Pakistan's geostrategic location also makes it an important player in world relationships. To establish seamless connectivity within the RCEP region, Pakistan's geographical location will prove to be a strategic asset for the Asia-Pacific economies. The proposed TIPI-BM (Turkey, Iran, Pakistan, and India-Bangladesh, Myanmar) road corridor and ITI-DKD (Istanbul-Tehran-Islamabad-Delhi-Kolkata-Dhaka) Railway Corridor are under consideration. The TIPI-BM would be Asia's new silk route connecting Central and West Asia with East Asia, with South Asia functioning as a land bridge. The route will be a vital corridor for expansion in trade and transportation. The ITI-DKD Railway Corridor has the potential to become a premier trade corridor for Europe, Central Asia, West Asia, South Asia, and East Asia.
- Furthermore, Pakistan has signed ECOTTA (Economic Cooperation Organisation Transit Trade Agreement) which will be instrumental in providing a range of transit facilities allowing quick transportation to ultimate destinations. Assuming that the agreement will take effect in the coming years, Pakistan's entry into the proposed RCEP can provide the member states with a cheaper and quicker route to the Middle East thus boosting their trade prospects.
- At the sectoral level, while Pakistan can enhance its exports of textiles and madeups, leather products and light engineering, it can be a market for RCEP countries in electric machinery and equipment, mineral fuels, oils and products, basic raw materials, and steel products. Finally, in view of the limited room for further trade expansion with existing PTA partners such as Malaysia and Indonesia, renegotiation of the terms is needed to seek concessions on products that are of high value to Pakistan, such as cotton, made-up textiles and clothing, cereals, leather products, pharmaceuticals and light engineering manufactures. The revised concessions are likely to help Pakistan boost its exports of products in which it has a significant comparative advantage, resulting in the revival of the export-oriented sector, job creation and economic growth.

## 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.

### 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

#### *Somalia*

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

#### *Tigray*

- The continent of Africa and the misfortunes it suffers are usually brushed under the carpet of global affairs and emergencies owing to the Eurocentric narrative the world follows. The latest emergency to be sidelined is the one arising due to the conflict in Tigray, Ethiopia. What started in November as agitations between the Ethiopian government and the Tigray People’s Liberation Front (TPLF) has now left over 400,000 people suffering from famine, and 1.8 million more on the brink of it, in the Tigray region. As per the UN, the situation is only set to get worse, as even though the Ethiopian government has called for a ceasefire, it is unlikely to allow access to humanitarian aid.
- Earlier in March, top Ethiopian health officials had disclosed that the worsening conflict had left millions of Tigrayans homeless and suffering from indiscriminate killings and sexual violence. It

was only days after this disclosure that Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed had finally admitted to the presence of Eritrean soldiers in the region. The soldiers were accused by civilians and the TPLF of carrying out an ethnic cleansing. The same party has now declared the Ethiopian ceasefire a “joke”, for it knows that little will change despite grand claims. Humanitarian organisations like Doctors Without Borders and Human Rights Watch have been decrying the human rights abuses and have even become witnesses of indiscriminate civilian killings. Moreover, they have been constantly denied access to the war-torn region. Now, the UN says it only has enough food for a million people for a month.

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- Yet, despite the issue being raised every now and then by UN officials, the UN Security Council conducted its first open meeting on Tigray on July 2. And even then, some UNSC members believe that the conflict is an internal issue and should be resolved as such. With the cases of malnutrition and killings on the rise, the UN has once again failed to hold leaders — Nobel Peace Prize winners at that — accountable.

## 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 compromised 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.
- 
- 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.
- 
- 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.

### *The BRI and Syria*

More than a merciless decade of conflict has resulted in 90 per cent of the populace living below the poverty line. Severe economic mismanagement, international dictates, a wrecked industrial sector, and afflictions in neighbouring Lebanon have all added fuel to internal discontent in Syria.

However, amidst the despondency, a flicker of hope could be discerned with the Chinese Foreign Minister's visit to Syria on July 17. During meetings with President Assad and his Syrian counterpart, he offered Syria to join multi-billion-dollar BRI. Concurrently he proposed a four-point proposal for solving the Syrian crisis at hand. The proposition included preservation of Syria's sovereignty, prioritisation of the well-being of Syrian people (this comprised unhindered flow of humanitarian aid), a continuation of a firm stance against terrorism, and an inclusive and reconciliatory political solution in line with the UN's 'Syrian-led, Syrian-owned' principle.

Over the years, China has made ventures in Syria, examples of which include a \$2 billion industrial park, several cooperation agreements on trade, and shares in two of Syria's largest oil enterprises — the Syrian Oil Company and Al-Furat Petroleum. Huawei has also avowed to revitalise Syria's nationwide telecoms network.

For Syria, inclusion in the BRI portends numerous benefits. Therefore, the question is: what are the gains for China?

Firstly, Syria represents a passage to the Mediterranean which is a recourse to the Suez Canal. Chinese investments in eastern Mediterranean ports are aimed at reviving the significant Eurasian commercial routes which link China to Europe, Africa, and beyond. Undoubtedly, the inclusion of the Tartus seaport would fortify China's position in the Levant.

Secondly, Syria is advantageously located at the junction of oil and gas pipelines that not only link resource fields in the Arabian Peninsula, Persian Gulf, and Iran with European markets but on a wider scale is at the crossroads of Africa, Europe, the Caucasus, and Central Asia. This fact was accentuated by Assad himself in 2009 when he proposed a 'four seas' initiative in the hope of creating a unified economic bloc comprising Syria, Iraq, Turkey, and Iran — the Mediterranean Sea, Caspian Sea, Black Sea, and the Persian Gulf. With Syria's inclusion in the BRI, China will be placed to regenerate this initiative besides having an easier access to the oil-rich Arabian Peninsula.

Safe to say that apart from being a win-win situation, China-Syria cooperation may be the UN's last hope for amity in the war-torn country, and an answer to the Syrian populace's cry for help.

#### Why should US leave?

- 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.
- 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. Recently In the wake of widespread protests on 25<sup>th</sup> july against the country’s Covid-19 resp-onse and restrictions, Tunisia’s president, Kais Saied, sacked the prime minister and suspended parliament.
- 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 organised 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.
- But the overall lesson for the Arab world — and, for that matter, countries everywhere — is: it's best not to count your springs before they bear fruit.

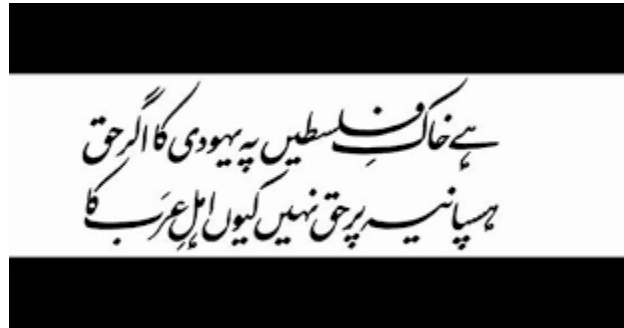
#### *New MID-EAST*

- Diplomacy has gained momentum among bitter foes; cracks have appeared among close friends. Regional powers like Saudi Arabia, Iran, Turkey, and Egypt are recalibrating their foreign policies and restoring relations with estranged neighbors. The United States and Russia have renewed their regional rivalry, and China has entered as a new competitor.
- These shifting geopolitics could make the Middle East the scene of a fierce and truly global competition. But they also could defuse regional rivalries, by bringing together countries that historically loath one another.

- **US** President Joe Biden has made it clear that the Middle East is not a foreign-policy priority for his administration. Whereas former President Donald Trump built an anti-Iran coalition led by Saudi Arabia and Israel, Biden has sought to distance himself from Saudi Arabia, not least by ending US support for the war in Yemen. His administration has resumed diplomacy to restore the 2015 Iran nuclear deal, from which Trump withdrew the US in 2018, and it has kept Turkey and Egypt (two of Trump's favorites) at arm's length.
- US is disengaging from the region's cold wars as it pivots to Asia and China. Across the Middle East, there is a widespread belief that America is no longer a real partner.
- Moreover, while America pulls back, **China** is increasingly making its presence known in the region. In March, it concluded a major agreement with Iran, promising \$400 billion of investment over the next 25 years in exchange for steady shipments of oil and gas. On a tour through Saudi Arabia, Turkey, Iran, the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, and Oman the same month, Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi affirmed his country's commitment to the region's security and stability. In an obvious dig at the US, he said that China will oppose foreign interventions and act as an honest broker in resolving persistent conflicts in the region.
- Wang also dangled the prospect of a Chinese free-trade agreement that would bring tens of billions of dollars in investment opportunities, by linking China's Belt and Road Initiative with local development projects. This kind of economic sweetener resonates widely in the Middle East, where youth-unemployment rates, poverty levels, and other economic indicators were dismal long before the pandemic.
- Under these conditions, it is little wonder that regional dialogue and diplomacy are making a comeback. Most local rulers understand that regime security depends more on satisfying the needs of the population than on sectarian incitement and hatred of the "other." Hence, last April, **Saudi Arabia** and **Iran** held secret talks to discuss how to end the conflict in Yemen, where a Saudi-led coalition has been fighting a war against Iran-backed Houthi rebels since March 2015.
- Saudi Arabia has also reconciled with **Qatar** (which maintains friendly relations with Iran), after having severed all links with its neighbour in June 2017. In a powerful gesture of rapprochement last April, Saudi Arabia's King Salman formally invited Qatar's emir, Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani, to visit his country.
- the Saudis have also normalized relations with Iraq (an Iranian ally), thus ending three decades of mutual estrangement and hostility. And after years of conflict with Syrian President Bashar al-Assad (another close Iranian partner), Saudi officials recently held secret talks with their Syrian counterparts in Damascus, leading to reports that an agreement on diplomatic normalization may be forthcoming.
- Iran, too, may be on the verge of improving ties with its neighbors, particularly the UAE. Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif reportedly plans to visit the UAE soon, after having returned from a diplomatic charm tour through Qatar, Iraq, Kuwait, and Oman in April.
- But most important is the possibility of an **Iranian-Saudi rapprochement**. Although Iran's moderate president, Hassan Rouhani, is on his way out, the hardliner who will replace him, Ebrahim Raisi, says he sees "no obstacles" to establishing diplomatic relations with the Kingdom. A restoration of ties would curtail the civil strife and proxy wars in Syria and Yemen – two of the greatest humanitarian crises in the world today – and also might bring stability to politically and religiously divided countries like Iraq and Lebanon.

- Finally, like Saudi Arabia and Iran, **Turkish** President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan has gone on a diplomatic offensive to mend his country's strained ties in the region, particularly vis-à-vis Egypt and Saudi Arabia. After almost coming to violent blows over Libya last year, Turkey now wants to improve economic relations with Egypt and other regional and global powers.
- These recent regional realignments can be explained by changing assessments of the balance of power and converging interests. America's retrenchment has forced regional powers to attend to their own security by mending fences. Regional leaders increasingly recognize that there is nothing to gain from pouring gasoline on a raging fire, as Trump did. Through international diplomacy led by America, Europe, China, Russia, and Japan, the Middle East can continue on its current path of de-escalation.
- Endless conflict may mark the Middle East's past; but it is not the region's settled destiny.

### Israel-Palestine Conflict



### Updates

#### Start reading updates from last bullet

- In a recent address to the UN Human Rights Council, the **special rapporteur on human rights** in the occupied Palestinian territory, Michael Lynk, said that 'illegal' and 'inhumane' Israeli settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPT) were tantamount to war crimes. The report has stated that Israeli settlements are illegal under the Fourth Geneva Convention which is binding for all countries, signatories or not. As per articles 47 and 48, an occupying power cannot change the demographics of the occupying territory by either dispelling the indigenous population, or by importing its own population. Furthermore, the occupying power is bound to provide the territory with all provisions needed for the inhabitants' welfare. Under this, the UN and member states have recognised Israeli expansion as illegal numerous times before too. Yet, there is no concrete action against Israel, and covert and overt support has always allowed it to carry on with impunity.
- 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 Palestinians 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, 5<sup>th</sup> 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 causalities 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

- The UNHRC report titled "Countering Islamophobia/Anti-Muslim Hatred to Eliminate Discrimination and Intolerance Based on Religion or Belief", released in early 2021, notes an overall rise in Islamophobic incidents around the globe and states that negative and ex parte portrayals of Muslims in the media have contributed to the rise of Islamophobia. In its severe appraisal, it postures that governments around the world should do more to combat anti-Muslim hatred.
- Trump forgets name of Taliban leader, calls him Mohammed. July 25
- **Don't judge a woman by her cover!**
- BY calling for the appointment of a special envoy to counter Islamophobia, American lawmaker of Somali origin Ilhan Omar has raised a pertinent issue at a time when anti-Muslim incidents are on the rise in many countries. In a letter to the American secretary of state calling for creating such a position, the Democratic lawmaker from Minnesota has said it must be recognised that "Islamophobia as a pattern ... is repeating in nearly every corner of the globe".
- Islamophobia has taken many ugly forms across the globe. In Europe and North America far-right groups have indulged in anti-Muslim violence, deadly in some cases, emboldened by demagogues



and populist politicians looking to grab a few votes by demonising the other. Meanwhile in India, Hindu zealots have lynched Muslims for eating beef, knowing they can get away with their crimes as the state is sympathetic to their hateful ideology. Myanmar and Sri Lanka have also seen incidents of mass violence against Muslims, often instigated by extremist sections of the Buddhist clergy.

- Therefore, an effort on the global level against Islamophobia is clearly needed. Instead of the US taking the lead — as it may punish geopolitical enemies such as China and look the other way when friends such as India persecute Muslims — perhaps the effort should be led by the UN.
- Islamophobia has been the most powerful instrument in garnering support for Palestinian oppression within the western world. Arabs have essentially been dehumanised over decades which has led to the justification of ethnic cleansing, expulsion, and racism, all under the garb of defending the “only democracy in the region” from grave security threats.
- When two Muslim women insisted on their right to don a piece of clothing of their choice at their workplaces, they were suspended from their jobs. The women approached the court for having their suspension undone. The court, however, ruled in favour of their employers. According to the ruling, from the European Union’s top court, private enterprises can prohibit the wearing of religious symbols if an employer justifies his genuine need to present a religious, political or philosophically neutral image.
- The latest amongst moves contrary to the spirit of tolerance has been a ruling from the EU’s top court that allows employers to ban female workers from wearing the headscarf while on the job in order to present an image of “neutrality”. While the court has left it up to the judiciaries of the individual member states to determine the “general need” of employers in calling for the ban, the ruling sends the wrong message nonetheless, especially at a time when the far right is gaining ground across Europe. Instead of strengthening European secularism, the ban will fuel divisions based on culture and religion. As a spokesman for the Turkish presidency said, the decision “is an attempt to grant legitimacy to racism”.
- 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?
- 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

- But that isn't even the worst of it. Sweden's V-Dem Institute no longer considers India to be a true democracy, instead calling it an "electoral autocracy". Under Modi, India has seen one of the

world's most visible declines in respect for democratic values. V-Dem actually ranks it worse than Thailand, which saw a military coup in 2014 and where real power is still understood to rest with the military. Modi's rule has been more damaging to democracy than a military coup.

- At June's G7 summit, India joined 11 other signatories, from Canada to South Korea to the European Union, in issuing a joint statement affirming their "shared belief in open societies, democratic values, and multilateralism." The statement identified "politically motivated internet shutdowns" as a threat to freedom and democracy. By this definition, India can no longer be considered a model of democratic values.
- During the devastating second wave of the COVID-19 pandemic, when public services failed, Indians used social-media platforms like Twitter and WhatsApp to crowdsource resources. Indians also used such platforms to organize and mobilize support for protests against controversial agricultural reforms and the discriminatory Citizenship Amendment Act. But the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party deemed this unacceptable.
- the government is attempting to establish more consistent control over how the internet operates in the country, through the Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules, 2021. the Rules grant the Indian government vast powers to suppress content online. This includes forcing tech platforms to remove posts or videos deemed libellous, hateful, deceptive, or in violation of the country's sovereignty and integrity.
- 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.<sup>49</sup> 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 war<sup>91</sup>), 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 Lab<sup>101</sup>), 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 <sup>102</sup> (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.



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Types of Assertiveness

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← greater escalatory potential	<b>Declarative</b> verbal assertions via non-coercive statements, diplomatic notes, domestic legislation and administrative measures, international legal cases
	<b>Demonstrative</b> 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
	<b>Coercive</b> threat or imposition of punishment: may be verbal, diplomatic or administrative, economic punishment, warning shots, physical interference with foreign activities in disputed area
	<b>Use of force</b> 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

- Pakistan was ranked 80th on the Global Food Security Index of 2020 out of 113 countries as it lagged behind almost all South Asian nations barring Bangladesh, and several African countries. This means that Pakistan scored extremely poorly on all indicators or drivers of food insecurity — from food availability, affordability, quality and safety to natural resources and resilience — considered by the GFSI for ranking nations on the index. The Global Hunger Index, which takes into account the proportion of the malnourished population, frequency of child mortality, stunted growth, and height to weight ratios of children, placed Pakistan at 88th position out of 132 countries it surveyed last year. According to the World Food Programme, nearly 43pc of Pakistanis are food-insecure.
- This is linked to the fact that most of these people are heavily dependent on agriculture for a living. That means that food security is inextricably linked to overall government policies meant to alleviate poverty, increase domestic agricultural productivity, curb price inflation and ensure safety of food with regard to agricultural productivity. Thus, improvements in the availability of food are not enough to end hunger and malnutrition; it is equally, if not more, important to ensure that people can access healthy and safe meals if there is to be universal food security and if the widespread problem of stunting and wasting among children is to be addressed. Indeed, Pakistan has a long way to go before it can fully address the issue of food insecurity and hunger. But it can start moving in that direction by tweaking its policies that directly or indirectly impact the ability of the poor to access nutritious meals.

- Despite the fact that the agriculture sector is producing food in a surplus, poor households across Pakistan remain extremely vulnerable to food insecurity due to a lack of access. One cannot undermine the fact that inflation — recorded at a nine-year high at 14.6% in January — is a major factor since it has a direct impact on the purchasing power of poor households. According to a recent survey conducted by the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification, around 3.8 million people are currently facing acute food insecurity. High levels of poverty coupled with a surge in food prices have led to severe malnutrition and stunted growth. Four out of 10 children under the age of 5 are stunted while more than half of children in Pakistan are anaemic. The situation is particularly tragic in rural areas even though agriculture is an important part of the rural economy.
- The commercialisation of food also poses a huge problem. While the rich have complete control of industries, and feudal lords own the land, food resources should first and foremost meet the needs to the people before it is exported for profit or sold at high prices. Furthermore, agriculture remains utterly neglected even though our economy is agriculture-based. While lands are increasingly becoming barren due to climate change, deforestation and pollution, little to no research has been conducted and no serious mitigation efforts have yet been taken.
- In the midst of it all, labourers and peasants remain excluded from the overall process and are instead treated as slaves. They need to be empowered and the government must strengthen labour unions. The problem is complex and requires a systematic well-thought-out plan that would benefit the masses in the long-run.
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- 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

### Hooks

- SHINY new high-rises and sprawling gated communities are a superficial yardstick of 'development', and yet are often touted as a barometer of progress. Real development takes into account the well-being of people, which is an amalgam of several factors. One of them is the very key to life: water.

### 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.
- 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 (NYT)

### *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. 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; 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, Jehlum & 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 Decision<sup>33</sup> and the Kishenganga Arbitration,<sup>34</sup> 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, 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. <sup>7</sup>
- Regarding the relationship between the IWT and CIL, the IWT can be, and has been, interpreted in light of CIL. 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.<sup>39</sup> Pakistan's concerns regarding the IWT and its consistent frustration with respect to unresolved water disputes,<sup>40</sup> 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.<sup>25</sup> 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.<sup>26</sup> 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,<sup>27</sup> 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.<sup>28</sup> Pakistan is also entitled to peaceful means of dispute settlement, if any question, difference or dispute between the two states arises.<sup>29</sup> Furthermore, the IWT cannot be revoked unilaterally, either by, or against Pakistan.<sup>30</sup>
- **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,<sup>49</sup> 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.<sup>50</sup> 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 states<sup>52</sup> who are not parties to a water-sharing agreement would, nonetheless, be entitled to the rights under the convention. <sup>6</sup> The ICJ also held that the principle of community of interests,<sup>57</sup> 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
- **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.<sup>211</sup> At most, Customary International Law imposes an obligation upon states to enter into negotiations, which must be "meaningful."<sup>212</sup> 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 Justice<sup>213</sup> and other judicial and quasi-judicial forums, are subject to the consent of the States agreeing to approach or establish the same.<sup>214</sup> 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

### General

- **Water-related institutions have become bystanders** in the face of long-term critical trends: they have closed their eyes to the changing crops and **expansion of water-intensive cropping, growing urban and out-of-basin usage**, and **altered patterns of monsoons** causing water variability. Also, agriculture has steadily moved from subsistence level to **water-intensive commercial cropping**, draining the country's surface and sub-surface waters. The new **agro-industries influence water decision-making** at all levels. The result? Water prices are static like the fuel needle of a non-moving car.
- With the Indus Waters Treaty, **prestigious engineering marvels have become the key drivers of our water and nation-building policies**. This fascination has dominated our water management approach. **Instead of finding economic virtues in water saving and efficiency, we continue to invest in infrastructure that only help us imagine abundance.**
- The WAA has left it to the Indus River System Authority (Irsa) to figure out how to manage lesser quantities in various months for various crops. The WAA has, however, left two basic questions unaddressed: i) **what if there was no agreement on the construction of new reservoirs**, and ii) **how the growing scarcity would be managed in the interim**. Real life is more complex: the WAA had not envisioned the prospect of a Seraiki province in southern Punjab and the **political importance of providing water through the Taunsa-Panjab canal during acute scarcity**. Also, it was not envisioned that Punjab would lose most of its 9.3 MAF water to India from the Beas, Ravi and Sutlej, leaving about 3 MAF — and that too mostly during the monsoons — to become even less flexible with Sindh in the Irsa meetings.
- Concurrently, Irsa took several last-minute but important decisions that in future can serve as the basis for long-term scarcity management by the provinces. This includes **facilitating early sowing of wheat in Sindh during April and disallowing rice cultivation in the areas between the Guddu and Sukkur barrages**. In fact, long-term scarcity management would require two additional steps. First, **phasing out of paddy between the Sukkur and Kotri barrages**; second, **curtailing direct outlets downstream Guddu, particularly in the upper districts of Jacobabad and Sukkur on the one hand, and Khairpur and Naushahro Feroze on the other**. **Over-consumption there leaves precious little for the districts in the lower regions.**
- The **accord is based only on the principle of historical usage for water distribution**. Punjab and Sindh need to work together to create policy space by exploring such actions as i) **economic efficiency in usage including water trade**, ii) **population size that relies on surface water supply**, iii) **special needs because of droughts**, iv) **environmental flows for the delta and creation of wetlands**, and v) **climate-induced variations in water flows**.
- 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.**

## Heath

- 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**
- 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.
- Food security points
- **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.
- According to the results of tests carried out by the Pakistan Council of Research in Water Resources on underground water in 29 cities, there are 20 cities where water collected from various sources was found to be more than 50pc unsafe for drinking. In three of these urban centres — Mirpurkhas, Shaheed Benazirabad and Gilgit — the underground water, as per PCRWR data, is 100pc unsafe. Following close behind are Multan (94pc), Karachi (92pc), Sargodha (83pc), Bahawalpur (76pc) and Muzaffarabad (70pc), to cite just the top eight in the list. The water was found to be contaminated mainly with arsenic, iron, fluoride and bacteria.
- A report by the Pakistan Medical Association released at the end of last year stated that the poor quality of drinking water is responsible for nearly 30pc of diseases and 40pc of deaths in the country.

## Food security

- 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.

## Agriculture

- 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.

- 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. {can be used in economy too}

#### *Climate's impact on water*

- 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.
- 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.
- 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.
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#### *Scarcity*

- **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
- Per capita water availability has been going down. In 1947, it was 5,600 cubic metres per person; today it is slightly above 1,000 cubic metres. DAWN
- 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 remains one of the top three water-intensive countries in the world. **The Tribune**
- The UN estimates that water demand in Pakistan is growing at an annual rate of 10 per cent. **UNESCO**

- 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**
- 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**.
- 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.
- 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.
- Anyone wanting to witness the results of over-exploitation of groundwater and unregulated construction wreaking havoc on natural waterways need only visit Quetta and its surrounding areas. The once abundant orchards are now few and far between. The iconic Hanna lake presents a picture of desolation for most part of the year.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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.
- As Punjab faces shortage of canal water, farmers also use underground water through tube wells to irrigate their lands. Over the years, the province has seen a quantum jump in the number of tube wells. From 10,000 tube wells in 1947 this number has grown to 1.2 million. A large amount of canal and subsoil water is lost on the way to fields because water is absorbed by muddy watercourses in the absence of brick-paved channels. At present, 11 MAF water is lost due to muddy watercourses and 21 MAF is wasted because of uneven soil. The provincial government has launched a project to brick-lined water channels. The existing irrigation system in the province is inadequate to meet the present challenges. The government has also introduced other measures to conserve water such as drip irrigation technique and levelling land using laser technology.

#### *Economy*

- According to **Indus River System Authority IRSA**, Pakistan loses \$29 billion per annum on unutilised water falling into the Arabian Sea.
- 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
- 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.

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#### *Conflicts*

- A tracking of **water conflicts** maintained by the Pacific Institute for Studies in Development, Environment and Security reports 466 conflicts since 2010.
- 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**

- 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.
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#### *Energy shortages*

- 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.
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#### *Pak-Afghan*

- 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.
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#### *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

- Grey water, another name for naturally recycled water, is the way to go. The first stroke-of-pen reform governments across the country can undertake is to make the construction of grey-water

tanks mandatory for any site plan approval. This means all the water a household consumes with the exception of flush tanks will be stored in grey-water tanks instead of being flushed into sewers. Untreated grey water is not potable but with a few precautions is fine for gardens, lawns and myriad national obsessions like washing cars and driveways.

- Another building control requirement can be rainwater harvesting. This could be very helpful in the areas receiving regular monsoon rains. Simply put, all rainwater drains on the property will flow into the grey-water tank instead of being connected to the sewerage mains.
- Prime Minister Imran Khan has announced that his government would build 10 dams in the near future to counter the threat of a looming water crisis in the country. The construction of new dams is imperative especially in view of the erratic rainfall patterns, induced by climate change, the country has been experiencing in recent years. In some years, there is scanty rain while in others there is excess of it and a large amount of which flows into the sea. Also, our rivers receive around 80% of water inflow within three to four months. All this makes a strong case for increasing the number of dams in the country. Dams will prevent water from ending up in the sea, and the water thus saved will be available for irrigation and domestic purposes and for generating clean electricity.
- The first question that arises whenever the need to increase the green cover, especially in urban areas like Karachi, is broached is 'but where will the water come from?' The answer again is grey water. However, this time around it requires some treatment process albeit natural. A sewage treatment plant (STP) using the reedbed method with a capacity to turn 100,000 gallons of wastewater into reusable water costs around Rs3 million. The cost for producing 100,000 gallons of treated water daily would come to around Rs5,000. This water is perfectly suitable for various purposes including gardening and construction.
- The PM is optimistic that the construction of Mohmand and Bhasha dams would greatly help overcome shortage of irrigation and drinking water and add to power generation. A sufficient quantity of irrigation water would increase food production and save the precious foreign exchange now spent on import of food grains. The construction of new dams would also create many jobs. The Tennessee Valley Authority of the US, set up in 1933, as part of the programme to overcome the effects of the Great Depression, is a good example of the multiple benefits accruing from dams. Projects launched under the Authority controlled floods, helped improve irrigation, increased electricity generation and created huge job opportunities.
- 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.
- 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

- Define Ind-Pak adversarial relationship in context of IWT and how it gets politicized? Why Turkish-Armenian case and Great Ethiopian Renaissance Dam are successful?
- History of punjab as a largest canal-based irrigation system under British , what happened after independence, how india used it a strategic weapon and road to IWT. What India started doing in 80s? what was the strategy behind india's construction of dams, hydroelectric projects and water storages? What Modi said after Uri attack? How india is using IWT as a bargaining chip against pak? What has pak asked to reduce tensions? What NYT told regarding india's projects in Kashmir?
- Why Indus is important? Why is storage required? What is the persistent source of friction with India? How lowering in water discharge by Indus river to the sea is affecting ecosystem?
- Discuss salient features of IWT. Discuss IWT in the light of ILAW.

- Way forward regarding IWT?
- Why water related institutions have become bystanders? Which fascination has dominated our water management approach? WAA has left which two basic questions unaddressed? Real-life issues? What imp decisions IRSA has taken? How WAA can be fixed?
- How are CC and pollution exacerbating the water crisis? Water crisis and effect on economy?
- Effects of water shortages on Indus delta? Consequences of depleting mangrove forests? What is IMF, WB and G7 warning about?
- Difference btw haves and have-nots. Discuss importance of Hindu Kush Himalayas (HKH) for South Asia.
- How water scarcity is a serious threat to pak's 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 alternating civil and military rule suggests that neither the civilians nor the military have been in a position to provide suitable governance to the country. This is borne out by the fact that each time a civilian government is booted out, the public has welcomed the military with garlands, and each time the military bows out and democracy is restored, the same public has equally welcomed the politicians with garlands. Ultimately, it is the public that is left dangling, in an elusive search of a leader who could ameliorate their problems.
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- My 4 Lessons from the book, 'How Democracies Die'
- I have been reading a very interesting book, 'How Democracies Die by Steven Levitsky, Daniel Ziblatt'. The book was written by the Harvard professors in the aftermath of Trump's election into the Presidency.
- 1-The democratic decay of a country is a slow and gradual process. Democracies corrode and erode over the years and die a slow smothering death.
- Relevancy in the context Of Pakistan: History is evident to the fact that the democratic process in the country has been disrupted many times by the thunderbolts of Martial Laws and interventions by non- democratic forces. Every disruption in the democratic process, weakened the process of democratic evolution in the country. Consequently, we are left with an eroding democratic structure.
- 2- Incompetent political leadership which is voted into the office by ignorant masses is mainly responsible for democratic death of a country. Political incompetence is a greater threat to democracy than dictatorship.
- Relevancy in the context of Pakistan: unfortunately, Pakistan hasn't been lucky enough to be blessed with competent political leadership (exceptions aside). This is mainly because of weaker Local Government institutions. LGs are said to be nurseries of democracies and in their absence where is the nascent political leadership supposed to get experience and exposure?

- 3-Democracy is all about institutions. Stronger the institutions, stronger the democracy and weaker the institutions, weaker the democracy.
- Relevancy in the context of Pakistan: Our accountability mechanism is rot, judiciary is overburdened, the Election Commission is resisting modernisation and Civil Service is in serious want of reforms. Consequently democracy in the country has been subdued by the non-democratic forces.
- 4-Greatest threats to democracies are internal, not external.
- Relevancy in the context of Pakistan: Democratic project in Pakistan cannot be usurped from external interventions ( through wars or other means). The greatest threat to democracy in Pakistan lies in form of extremism, illiteracy, lack of national cohesion, weak institutions, sectarianism and terrorism. These are all internal threats.
- 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.

## Energy Crises

### Issues

#### *Absence of coordinated planning and policy formulation*

- The story of Pakistan's energy sector is symptomatic of virtually all sectors of the economy. Pakistan's policy-makers have been remarkably adept in articulating the overall objectives for energy policy within a national development context. The problem is not what the objectives are but how they can be achieved.
- The New York Times, as early as April 2010, quoted a Pakistani senior official as saying, "There is nobody in Islamabad who is working on a coherent, integrated plan. The discussion just keeps going in circles."
- Weyand's (2007) energy review for USAID correctly singled out the absence of integrated planning as the main shortcoming, but needed major follow-up work on precisely how to address the issue.

- Getting the policy fundamentals right is critical. In a negative policy environment, a positive initiative tends to generate a negative effect, rather than simply no effect. A glaring example of this is the recent devolution of authority and responsibility of economic management from the center to the provinces, together with the transfer of concomitant financial resources. On the face of it, devolution is an excellent policy initiative for a host of reasons, not the least of which are increased ownership by the beneficiaries; more meaningful and relevant service delivery and development schemes based on client-oriented assessments; and the resultant gains in efficiency and productivity. However, in stark contrast to expectations, the overall initiative is bogged down by a variety of issues, which has all but stymied progress. Among these are issues such as poor governance, insufficient provincial capacity, and gross inadequacies in the planning and provisioning of financial resources. As a result, the system is in a state of flux, and the delivery of services, particularly in health and education, is in jeopardy, further exacerbating an already unacceptable state of affairs.
- In the light of overwhelming evidence, analysts unanimously agree that the absence of coordinated planning and policy formulation is a fundamental drawback to Pakistan's energy sector. This does not apply to Pakistan alone. Many developing countries are affected to varying degrees by this constraint, and have begun to voice their concerns and seek assistance to address the issue. The analytical mechanism to achieve this is **integrated energy planning and policy formulation (IEP)**, which requires a supportive institutional structure at the policy level.
- We address four sets of issues. The first deals with policymakers' preoccupation with commercial energy—energy for consumers connected to national grids and billed for services—and the consequence of neglecting non-commercial forms. The second set addresses an interesting dynamic that arises from a combination of two characteristics: (i) an alarming and growing energy deficit, and (ii) the perception of abundant unexploited resources. The third set deals with the circular debt issue that has paralyzed many energy-related enterprises and severely curtailed power supplies despite ample installed generation capacity. This issue brings to light the fallacy of relying mainly on short-term, stop-gap solutions while paying little attention to the inherent systemic problems that have been building up over decades. The fourth set of issues consists of examples of lost opportunities and of how things would have been different had IEP been in place.

#### *Unchecked Expansion of bureaucracy*

- Another reason that the early efforts did not succeed was the unchecked expansion of the bureaucracy. On an overall basis, Pakistan's bureaucracy today supports 61 federal ministers and ministerial-level advisors,<sup>5356</sup> many based on party patronage. This bloating also affected the energy sector. Instead of moving toward a streamlined structure and a consolidated ministry of energy, responsibility for the sector was fragmented even further among new and existing agencies, thus adding to the complexity and confusion.

#### *Fragmentation of the sector*

- for instance, The Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Resources is responsible for the oil and gas subsectors and the coal subsector. Coal exploration and development, however, are managed by the Pakistan Mineral Development Corporation through leases granted to the private sector and administered by the provincial governments.
- As for regulatory bodies, the Oil and Gas Regulatory Authority regulates petroleum product distribution, including compressed natural gas (CNG) for vehicles, sets safety standards, and

equalizes prices across the country. The National Electric Power Regulatory Authority is charged with ensuring fair competition and consumer protection.

- While regulatory bodies should be independent of line ministries, they could at least be under one administrative cover with clear links between them, even physically under one roof if possible, to facilitate coordination. Thus, responsibility for the energy sector is highly fragmented and, in some cases, there are significant overlaps, neither of which is conducive to IEP.

#### *Shortfalls in implementation*

- A review of the energy objectives through several of Pakistan's five-year plan cycles reveals that the objectives are well thought out and clearly stated.<sup>13</sup> The overall objective is to develop the sector to support an expanding economy. To accomplish this, a number of subsidiary objectives are stipulated, which are summarized in three groups as follows. The first is to enhance energy supplies by developing indigenous resources, importing energy at competitive prices to meet deficits, expanding delivery infrastructure, and improving energy efficiency and reliability. The second is to improve energy security by relying more heavily on indigenous resources, thus reducing import dependence, and by diversifying energy supplies to manage risks and external shocks. The third is to strengthen the sector's long-term viability by gradually shifting the government's role from that of owner to policymaker and regulator, encouraging the private sector to own and run the country's energy enterprises through appropriate incentives, such as attracting foreign and local private capital using competitive means. Consumer orientation would be achieved through an emphasis on service provision. Pro-poor interventions would promote affordable energy for the underprivileged. Due emphasis would be given to upgrading environmental protection measures in the production and utilization of energy. The above vision is in stark contrast to what is actually occurring in the sector. The disconnect can be attributed in part to persistent shortfalls in implementation performance.
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#### *Distribution*

- 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.'

#### *Significant reliance on imports*

- A significant amount, about a third, is imported in the form of oil and coal, although the country has vast indigenous reserves of coal and considerable exploration prospects for petroleum. Oil



imports, which meet around 80 percent of Pakistan's crude oil and products requirements, cost upward of \$12 billion annually. Some 60 percent of coal requirements are imported. The dominant consumer (40 percent of the market) is the industrial sector. The transport sector consumes 30 percent and households around 22 percent, with the remainder going mainly to the agricultural and commercial sectors.

#### *Neglect of non-commercial energy*

- Basic reliable data on non-commercial energy is scarce, but this is primarily due to the low priority it is accorded—a vicious cycle under which non-commercial energy sinks even further into oblivion in the eyes of policymakers. However, if non-commercial energy is factored in using whatever rough data may be available, the supply matrix looks radically different. Topping the supply list by a wide margin are biofuels (mainly fuelwood and other biomass), followed by natural gas, oil, hydropower, and coal, in that order.
- There are three main reasons why energy analysts and policymakers in many developing countries, including Pakistan, tend to ignore non-commercial energy. The first reflects policymakers' overwhelming concern with economic growth. In this respect, the pervasive neglect of non-commercial energy seems understandable, even if not justifiable. Commercial energy is a primary driver of economic growth and, on the face of it, deserves to be the focus of attention. This is particularly so when policymakers are confronted with the urgent need to regenerate stagnant or declining growth rates, as is frequently the case in Pakistan. Yet, there is a critical shortcoming in this reasoning. While commercial energy does drive national growth, the concomitant neglect of non-commercial consumers contributes directly to poverty, which bogs down national output over the longer term.
- Some may argue that national growth eventually helps alleviate poverty through a trickle-down effect, and early empirical data supported this assumption. Subsequent work, however, shows that growth alone would not be sufficient to reduce poverty, and that adequate distribution measures would also be needed.
- The current working model for poverty alleviation supports economic growth with two important provisos. There must be adequate incentives to deploy the growth in productive channels, and there must be appropriate social protection measures to equitably distribute wealth. Both these conditions, which require a longer-term vision, are largely ignored in Pakistan. Immediate pressures seem to drown out any serious long-term vision, let alone putting the vision into practice. Thus, Pakistan continues to live from crisis to crisis.
- Perhaps more than simply a neglect of the poor is the preoccupation of vested interests with protecting their own turf—a factor clearly seen at both the macro- and sector level. This tendency has persisted throughout Pakistan's history. It is a continuation of the colonial legacy when even vast development initiatives, such as the Indus basin irrigation system, were put in place by the British as a means of securing colonial rule rather than promoting people's wellbeing. The prevailing regulatory and legal systems ensured that the economic benefits would be channeled largely to the rulers and their proxies. Essentially, the only difference is a change of beneficiary from colonial rulers to the country's rich and powerful.
- Steps to include non-commercial subsectors within the same consolidated energy ministry would be an essential follow-up. There are no indications that this is in the offing, signaling once again the government's short-term concerns with spurring economic growth, and once again neglecting



the poor. About half of the energy use in Pakistan is in the form of non-commercial energy. Its neglect, therefore, completely distorts the picture. Its inclusion will inevitably lead policymakers to consider radical changes in priorities.

- At the supply end of the energy chain, the neglect of non-commercial energy is manifest in poorly regulated and unenforced practices that squander resources and deplete the resource base. In particular, forestry resources are harvested well in excess of levels at which the resource remains sustainable; in fragile ecosystems, they can be permanently destroyed. The main drivers seem to be increasing fuelwood needs, the expansion of land for food and cash crop production, and the notorious lumber industry.
- To what extent is the damage caused by the recent devastating floods in Pakistan attributable to an act of Nature and to what extent has it been exacerbated by the hand of man? The clearly visible denudation of forests over the years has caused a major displacement of the topsoil, increasing siltation in the rivers and canals that make up Pakistan's vast irrigation system. This, in turn, has impacted the system's efficiency and placed undue burden on its maintenance.

#### *Growing deficit*

- A large and growing energy deficit despite the apparent abundance of unexploited energy resources often leads to an interesting policy response, which further exacerbates the situation.
- The energy deficit is the difference between the demand for primary energy and its indigenous availability, the latter constrained by limits on exploration and exploitation, transmission and distribution infrastructure, financial resources, physical access, and human capacity. Planning Commission figures, even though missing noncommercial energy, amply demonstrate the extent of the issue.<sup>23</sup> Factoring in noncommercial energy would make the picture even bleaker.
- A brief review of the individual sources of energy reveals that, while the country is endowed with a large energy potential, not all of it is currently financially or technically exploitable. The main energy resources in Pakistan are made up of depleting fossil fuels and renewable forms. Fossil fuels are in the form of petroleum (oil and gas) and coal. Renewable resources consist of hydropower, solar power, wind power, and biofuels, the latter made up of fuelwood, agricultural residues, and biogas.

#### *Fossil fuels*

- For petroleum, the prospective area (sedimentary basin in geological terms) is significant, totaling some 830,000 square kilometers. Probable reserves for oil are estimated at an impressive 27 billion barrels. Of this, 965 million barrels of oil had been confirmed (proven) through mid-year 2010 and 659 million barrels produced, leaving 306 million barrels of proven reserves yet to be recovered. The corresponding figures for gas are equally impressive.
- Key factors in increasing the level of proven reserves—and therefore the likelihood of enhancing recovery—include the level of exploration activity and its success rate. Drilling density in Pakistan is low—about a fifth of the world average—and, in contrast, the drilling success rate is impressive—over seven times the world average. Putting these facts together, it does not take much to surmise that, with increased exploration activity, the prospects of enhancing proven reserves and, by extension, the chances of increasing oil and gas production are sound. The expansion of exploration activity is becoming increasingly challenging, particularly as such activity is undertaken by international oil companies funded by their own risk capital and utilizing their own personnel.

- Probable coal reserves in Pakistan are extremely large, totaling 186 billion tons. Among these, the Thar deposit, containing 175 billion tons, is ranked as the world's fifth largest find. Proven reserves stand at 1,980 million tons. At the present rate of production, the reserves will last well over 400 years. The bulk of the deposits are of poor quality with high sulfur, ash, and moisture content. Moreover, much of the coal is situated in remote areas where, again, security is a concern. Its exploitation would, therefore, require expensive excavation, treatment, and transport infrastructure. For these reasons, Pakistan's demand exceeds current production levels and is topped up with imports. Under these conditions, further exploration does not seem to be a priority unless deposits of higher quality coal are discovered. The main emphasis would be on identifying and introducing the appropriate technology to clean the coal (to mitigate environmental concerns) and reduce exploitation and infrastructure costs. This is a challenging prospect, but one which must be pursued as a possible alternative to continued imports.

#### Renewable

- Pakistan is also endowed with considerable—and largely untapped—renewable energy resources. Its hydroelectric potential for large and medium plants stands at 41,700 megawatts (MW). Only 16 percent (6,600 MW) has been harnessed to date. Solar energy potential remains unexploited.
- if only a quarter of one percent of the land area of Balochistan were covered with solar panels of 20 percent efficiency, the photo-voltaic energy generated would meet the country's total electricity needs.<sup>2932</sup> Pakistan's wind energy potential also remains virtually untouched. The USAID Renewable Energy Lab, on the basis of a study of wind regimes, estimates this potential to be around 41,000 MW.<sup>3033</sup> However, a word of caution is needed here. Admittedly, with continuing research and development, the feasibility of generating large quantities of solar and wind power is dramatically improving. However, there is a long way to go before these sources can compete with existing well-established technologies based on the major commercial fossil fuels.
- The juxtaposition of the above two contradictory characteristics of Pakistan's energy situation—prohibitive and growing deficits on one hand and seemingly abundant resources on the other—leads to an interesting dynamic among policymakers. It induces an overwhelming sense of urgency that drives politicians and other policymakers to promote the exploitation and development of all forms of energy available, with insufficient regard for cost implications. Many countries, including Pakistan, have at one time or another reacted in a similar fashion—sometimes even for political reasons—to demonstrate visibly to the electorate that “corrective” action is being taken. In a cash-constrained situation, such as in Pakistan, this is prohibitively expensive.
- Among energy specialists, there is a common adage that while these forms of energy are “free,” since they are constantly renewable and abundant, they are certainly not cheap. We mentioned earlier that the cost of power generation from these sources, while rapidly improving with intensified research and development, is still relatively high. Compared with nuclear power generation, which in itself is an expensive option, solar power is around 30 percent more expensive and wind power about 60 percent. A concrete example is that of the Cape Project—the first major wind power project in the United States. As of the end of 2010, despite support from subsidies, the project had not been able to secure buyers for half its available output. Even for the half that was secured, the agreed tariff was twice the level of conventional fossil fuel

sources.<sup>3134</sup> If a project like this does not work for a country with the resources available to the United States, how can one reasonably expect it to work for a less wealthy country such as Pakistan? Another drawback is that wind and solar generation schemes are generally small-scale and would not, therefore, effectively bridge the immense deficits that Pakistan faces.

- 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. As a result of power shortages in the industrial sector alone, the loss to the economy was over \$3.8 billion in 2009—about 2.5 percent of the gross domestic product (GDP). Half a million jobs and exports worth \$1.3 billion were lost—and this is only a small part of the overall problem.

## Circular Debt

### *What it is?*

- THEY say the road to hell is paved with good intentions. The aphorism is particularly relevant to Pakistan where the existing economic mess is largely of our own making. Politicians promise people stuff they can't afford. This leads to growing subsidies, rising loans and widening budget deficits. spurts of such debt-fuelled growth gives people a temporary and false sense of prosperity. However, any operation run on unsustainable cash injections in the form of subsidies, tax breaks or outright bailouts blows up sooner or later.
- 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*

- For policymakers operating in a crisis mode, there is a strong temptation to inject government capital as the most effective short-term solution, to get the monkey off their backs, so to speak.
- Relieving the pressure has the effect of relegating the underlying systemic issue, i.e., the high and unaffordable cost of power delivery, to the back burner. The systemic issue has many facets: Slow or stalled reform measures, deteriorating maintenance standards, inadequate management and organizational structure, declining plant utilization and efficiency, suboptimal load dispatch, high system losses, and poor bill collection performance. System losses are unacceptably high at 25–30 percent of net generation; most of these are attributed to “nontechnical losses,” a euphemism for theft. Consumer payment arrears stand at a prohibitive 30 percent of the amount billed. Again, while precise figures are difficult to obtain, a significant portion of the latter is also attributable to questionable practices.<sup>3235</sup> This underscores the need to address, across the board for the economy as a whole, the issues of poor governance and corruption to which scant attention has been paid throughout the country's history. The situation has now reached a point where it cannot be ignored by the ruling establishment. At the level of the energy sector, the prohibitive power system losses and unacceptable outstanding billings are a strong testimony to this state of affairs.
- Financially and operationally unviable, the power system is constrained to rely on government bailouts and subsidies. Given the government's own cash-strapped situation, this inevitably adds to the fiscal deficit, promotes deficit financing and depletes scarce reserves, eventually eroding the value of the rupee. Of course, without addressing the underlying operational problems, circular debt continues to spiral.
- 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.

## Solutions

### *Capacity building*

- Capacity building is the core function of the development process and the *raison d'être* of the international development community. Today, state-of-the-art analysis by key development institutions such as the World Bank Institute indicates that, in order to be effective, capacity must be built concurrently at three levels.
- The most disaggregate level is the development of the individual's relevant skills and knowledge base. However, once trained, the individual can only be of benefit if she or he works in an appropriate organizational or institutional structure that directs the use of these skills toward attaining the organization's goals. Otherwise, the trained individual will revert to business as usual or move on to where his or her talents are better utilized.
- Hence, the second level is the institutional level. In the private sector, institutional capacity is the ability of organizations to deliver needed goods and services at defined productivity levels. In the public sector, it is the capability of institutions to deliver services equitably, balancing efficiency and effectiveness.
- The third level is the policy environment in which the institutions function— this, in turn, provides the requisite incentive structure and governance for institutions to operate efficiently. The combination and mutual compatibility of the three levels are essential prerequisites for building capacity for sustainable development.

### *Integrated approach*

- In many developing countries, including Pakistan, energy planning is carried out and policies formulated largely on an ad hoc, crisis-driven, subsector basis. For instance, plans for the petroleum, electric power, or coal subsectors, and of other energy subsectors such as fuelwood and other renewables, are prepared largely independently of each other. By virtue of its high profile and visibility, the electric power subsector often gets the lion's share of attention. This inevitably leads to serious distortions in the policy framework in areas such as pricing and subsidies, which favor this subsector at the cost of others as well as of the overall economy
- Even more harmful are the distortions introduced by preferential treatment accorded to commercial forms of energy over non-commercial energy, often with drastic consequences for the poor and, eventually, for the growth of the economy as a whole. In times when energy is cheap and supplies abundant, a disaggregated approach might not have serious consequences. With rising international oil prices, significant fluctuations in relative fuel prices, and acute energy shortages, the approach fails. Integration becomes vital.
- In a nutshell, IEP harmonizes the policies and plans of the energy sector to meet national socioeconomic objectives, while ensuring close coordination and consistency between each of the energy subsectors. It is part and parcel of the overall economic planning process with which it is closely coordinated. IEP develops a coherent set of energy policies in key areas such as: the energy requirements to fuel national growth while meeting environmental targets; the optimum mix of fuels; conservation measures; measures to diversify and increase energy security by reducing dependence on foreign sources; meeting the energy needs of the poor; saving foreign exchange; reducing the trade deficit; and raising sufficient revenues to finance continued sector development.
- Introduced globally in the 1970s, IEP is a means of integrating energy sector plans and policies with national objectives while ensuring close coordination between each of the energy subsectors. Tried and tested the world over, IEP develops indigenous capacity to optimize the sustainable exploitation and utilization of energy within existing resource constraints in the short, medium, and long term. It is critical that policymakers in Pakistan tackle on an informed basis both the urgent and long-term problems facing the sector, and replace the primarily crisis-driven approach that has hitherto dominated the scene.
- IEP was successful in transforming energy planning in many developing countries, although its principles were well known and had been successfully applied in developed countries much earlier. In each country, IEP was customized to suit local conditions. In the early 1990s, with the **breakup of the former Soviet Union**, IEP suffered a reversal, largely motivated by the international development community's reluctance to encourage any form of central planning. It was believed that the growth of the free market would determine appropriate policy choices. The IEP nomenclature was largely dropped, and its principles, while not entirely eliminated, were expected to re-emerge through free market reform. In hindsight, this was, at best, a premature assumption since the free market would take a long time to mature.
- Ironically, the former Soviet Union's newly independent states, while assimilating market reform principles to varying degrees, retained the essence of integrated energy policy formulation. Today, many other countries that dropped IEP are regretting their mistake.
- Where energy development has been successful, three characteristics of IEP were maintained: (i) coordinated analysis, (ii) policy-level institutional arrangements supporting close coordination,



and (iii) a strong emphasis on implementation. The institutional level was configured either as a separate energy ministry or an integrated energy department within a central ministry—both approaches advocated by IEP. Examples include Belarus, Bulgaria, Cambodia, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Indonesia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Malaysia, the Philippines, Poland, Romania, Russia, Slovakia, Tajikistan, Thailand, Turkey, Uganda, the Ukraine, Uzbekistan, and Vietnam. Two of these countries, Turkey and Kazakhstan, with integrated line ministries and successfully implemented policies, are good models for Pakistan to follow. Interestingly, Pakistan was well ahead of most developing countries in the early 1980s before it, too, dropped the integrated approach.

- IEP was introduced in Pakistan, albeit partially and briefly, in the 1980s, but could not be sustained due to the increasing fragmentation of policy-level institutions. The good news is that the analytical base for IEP can be rapidly revitalized. The first steps to a supporting institutional structure can also be put in place quickly as an interim measure, prior to broader changes to reverse the fragmentation of institutions, which can be phased in gradually to avoid disruption.
- at least a noteworthy start in the right direction has been made toward forming a ministry of energy. However, the potential merger of the Ministry of Petroleum and Ministry of Water and Power, significant as it is, is a very small first step and, by itself, will not yield the desired results. Changing and streamlining the structure of policy institutions is a prerequisite for successful policy formulation. Successful implementation and rapid follow-up on subsequent steps is now a policy imperative. Delay will lead to disappointment, inevitable unraveling, and demise, as we have seen all too often in Pakistan with many well-meaning policy initiatives.
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### *Conclusion*

- It is vital to reintroduce IEP in Pakistan, and this time comprehensively. Policymakers can then move beyond defining where Pakistan needs to be to how to get there. Every crisis presents an opportunity. Given the high level of both domestic and international attention to Pakistan's energy problems, now is the time for action, to build on the momentum of recent initiatives to consolidate the sector. Starting with the skills available in Pakistan and with the political will to launch the structural changes, IEP could be put in place relatively quickly, paving the way for the recovery of the energy sector and thereby for the economy as a whole.

### *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.

#### Lost opportunities

- The downward path of the energy sector is strewn with policy reversals, delayed or stalled reforms, bureaucratic red tape, and missed opportunities. Worsening security concerns have aggravated the situation over the last decade.
- Four international oil companies were engaged in exploration in Pakistan in the early 1980s. It is standard practice for such companies to put at risk their own capital for exploration, with the expectation that, once a discovery is made and commercial production begins, their expenditures can be recouped through profit-sharing or production-sharing agreements with the government. Drilling costs were substantial due to the need for deep wells, often through challenging high-pressure zones. However, as discussed earlier in the paper, Pakistan's success ratio had been impressive and the prospects of discovery were reasonable. It was therefore difficult to understand why a major oil company on the verge of a potentially significant discovery suspended its drilling operations, revoked its concession, and decided to leave the country. The more serious impact of this pullout was the negative signal the action conveyed to at least ten other companies that were ready to embark on exploration activities in Pakistan for the first time with their own risk capital. Had these companies come forward at that time, the energy situation today could well have been entirely different.
- Among the many reasons for the pullout, two most clearly serve to illustrate the penalty cost of poor policies and delayed action. The first was the reluctance and inflexibility of a government agency to correct an obvious anomaly in the tax structure, which resulted in double taxation and thereby severely eroded the cash flow prospects of the oil company—especially detrimental when the company was incurring unusually high drilling expenses under difficult geological conditions. The second reason was the prevailing pricing policy under which the well-head price of oil and gas was established through a process of negotiations with the government after commercial discovery. The uncertainty this caused was apparently enough of a disincentive for a company deploying risk capital in costly drilling operations to pull out at the very threshold of success. Pakistan's policymakers at the time failed to understand that it was competing with other countries throughout the world to attract scarce exploration risk capital. As a consequence, it needed to make its pricing regime as attractive as possible since the size of the deposits was perceived as modest. The strongly gas-prone nature of Pakistan's geology was an added disincentive, as oil exploitation was and still remains more profitable than natural gas for a number of reasons, including marketability and infrastructure costs. The above is a prime example of foregoing long-term benefits in favor of immediate financial gains (through double taxation) and perceived gains by maintaining a lack of transparency (by not establishing up-front the post-discovery pricing regime). IEP would have certainly exposed these shortcomings and their impact in terms of the immense cost to the economy of pursuing prevailing policies.



- example that even more starkly emphasizes the impact of lost opportunities occurred in the first half of the 1990s, and concerns the search for export routes for Central Asia's very substantial surplus energy resources. As the euphoria in the new Central Asian states of recently won independence gradually gave way to the pragmatism of economic collaboration, they began to work together on options for exporting their surplus untapped energy, mainly in the form of oil, natural gas, and hydropower. The capital-intensive and high-return infrastructure projects needed to harness and transport the energy were ideal for private sector financing. The Central Asian states gave serious consideration to the vast energy-starved region of South Asia, for which the major portion of the most economic route passed through Pakistan. The resulting access to ports on the Indian Ocean for extending exports beyond South Asia was an added attraction. Establishing an energy corridor would have promoted trade in other goods and services between the connected countries. The security situation in the region had not yet begun to deteriorate. Although the Central Asian authorities and international consortia made several attempts to start negotiations with Pakistani authorities, progress was elusive. The response in Pakistan, both from official channels and the private sector, was lukewarm at best, and completely overshadowed by the aggressive enthusiasm of competing interests. One cannot help but wonder how things might have turned out if the South Asian trade corridors had been established. The revenues from the trade as well as from wheeling energy across the region would have benefited Afghanistan and Pakistan immensely. The additional energy supplies would have fueled the economies of Pakistan and Afghanistan as well as India. The resulting interdependence would certainly have alleviated the escalating discord in the region and may even have changed the course of history.

## 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
- 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.

#### *Pak's love for the IMF*

Pakistan's formula for economic growth is as flawed as it gets: borrow foreign currency-denominated loans, build some large-scale infrastructure, get a minor growth spurt in the process, and wait until this growth spurt fades so we can repeat the process again.

This is what the previous government did. And, the one before that. It could have worked if, while borrowing to build infrastructure, it did not ignore the underlying constraints to growth and productivity.

Because they did not do that, Pakistan has ended up with an increasing level of debt, a balance of payment crises, and a government struggling to keep the growth spurt going. When these challenges become dire — Pakistan often ends up getting a loan by the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

This time is the 22nd occasion we have been loaned capital by the fund since 1958. And, if our public discourse and policies remain the same, we will without doubt keep knocking at IMF's door every few years (or some other lender for that matter).

The logical argument made by analysts in Pakistan here is that the government needs to bring meaningful reforms to our economy. So, in due course, we are in a fiscally sound enough condition that we do not require bailouts like the ones we get from the IMF.

This is a perfectly accurate demand. But, it often masks the political causes to our economic despair. The problem with talking about the economy divorced from politics is that we end up with superficial reforms.

This is because any meaningful reforms are impossible if the political structure does not allow them. For this to change, our public discourse needs to take a holistic overview of our institutions. This is a contribution to that end.

#### *It's not economics, stupid. It's politics*

The political institutions, I'd argue, are more important in determining our prosperity. As Acemoglu and Robinson argue, those who control the political power determine economic institutions. So, if political power (which in turn determines the political institutions) is controlled by a small, extractive elite, they will set up economic institutions which benefit them, not the majority.

If the elite benefit from an economy underpinned by clientelism and patronage rather than a well-functioning competitive economy, they will choose the former. It is important to remember that there is plenty of profit in poverty. It just happens to be controlled by few.

Now, look at Pakistan. Our political economy is defined by an embedded culture of rent-seeking and patronage.

This means we have a system which grants profits to certain players in our economy unfairly, hence undermining the central principle of efficient market allocation — fair competition — and creating a wrong set of incentives for businesses.

Our manufacturing sector is rife with examples of rent-seeking practices. For example, Pakistan's automobile sector is dominated by a handful of Japanese manufacturers known for selling low-value cars while making a considerable profit. Despite this, Pakistan provides them with extensive trade barriers to protect them from foreign competition.

Direct evidence of our political structure influencing economic outcomes comes from a paper by Asim Ijaz Khwaja and Atif Mian. They show that politically connected firms in Pakistan receive loans from government banks in Pakistan at lower rates despite defaulting more than non-politically connected firms. This is evidence of unaccountable political power translating into inefficient economic allocation.

#### Focus on political discourse

What may seem to a passerby as a country which continues to choose poorly thought-out economic policies, sees rampant corruption and a failure to establish a productive industrial base, are in fact symptoms of the political institutional structure which benefits a narrow extractive governing elite at the cost of everyone else.

Our economic failure is a symptom of our collective political choices. Once we can allocate political power more fairly, we can make better economic outcomes.

Tweaking institutions at the margins does have some impact. Hence, the IMF's stabilisation programme will provide some macroeconomic stability. The stock market might recover, the fiscal deficit might get narrower. Taxes might increase a bit, so will inflation.

And, in due course, we will issue a statement saying goodbye to the IMF for few years. Before repeating the process again and again.

But, if the new government wants to break this cycle and make a sincere attempt at reforming Pakistan into some sort of an egalitarian, prosperous nation, it needs to start by looking at political power and the political institutions which rise from them, as they are the real constraints to our growth.

Even if it can make marginal changes on the economic front, they would not unlock the kind of transformative shift we need for widespread prosperity.

#### Unpopularity/issues

People have protested against the International Monetary Fund (IMF) in country after country that has borrowed from it, be it Argentina, Ecuador, Egypt, Greece, Jordan, Kenya, Nigeria, Pakistan or Tunisia. The placards held by the protesters often accuse the IMF, the global lender of last resort, of promoting debt imperialism and worsening economic inequality.

Why is the IMF so unpopular even though one of its key functions is providing its "resources to member countries in need"?

### Free markets fundamentalism

Much of the bitterness against the IMF comes from the conditions it attaches to its loans. These conditions stem from free markets extremism: cutting down the role of the government because of an unshakeable belief in the supremacy of markets. “Free markets may not be perfect but they are probably the best way to organise an economy,” reads the tagline of an article on finance and development on the IMF’s website — summarising the problematic mindset criticised by many over the years.

Over the years, the notion of free markets has been the subject of a great deal of critique. The late Mahboobul Haque, a Pakistani economist and finance minister, who earned widespread respect for his work on human development, articulated his practical observation as follows: “Markets are not very friendly to the poor, to the weak, to the vulnerable, either nationally or internationally. Often we act as if markets are free. They are not. I have seen that in my country. The markets are often the handmaiden of powerful interest groups, and they are greatly affected by the prevailing distribution of income.”

### Unfair adjustments

Sovereign debt is replete with spillover costs (or externalities) including inter-generational injustices. Debt is contracted at the hands of the ruling elite but it is paid back by generations of ordinary citizens through the nose. It is because of the injustice in debt-financing that the IMF is facing protests by the Kenyans for approving \$2.34 billion three-year financing for Kenya.

The IMF’s adjustments do not address the economic injustice inherent in the current political economy of the indebted country. Inevitably, it is what hurts the people at large that gets done — such as a rapid devaluation — rather than what may discomfort the ruling elite, such as bringing the untaxed rich in the tax net.

The people of Pakistan would probably have been thankful if the IMF conditions required the government to take immediate and decisive action against those evading taxes in different sectors such as real-estate, tobacco, and sugar. The IMF’s conditionalities could have drawn loud cheers if they required the government to go after those who have been transferring billions and billions abroad by using fake bank accounts opened in the name of the poor.

A call for help through the Stolen Assets Recovery initiative to its rich member-countries where Pakistan’s ill-gotten wealth finds a home, estimated to be far greater than the IMF’s \$6 billion loan, could have seen praises for IMF trending on Pakistan’s social media. But no such luck.

Instead, the IMF has required Pakistan’s government to take steps like raising the energy tariff. The dramatic increase in the price of natural gas shocked users and resulted in a jump in the price of naan across Pakistan in 2018. The statement of the IMF’s executive director included in the latest country report rightly describes food inflation in Pakistan as “a matter of considerable concern at present” (p. 102). However, the report doesn’t explain how it would address this considerable concern when the IMF’s conditions are an underlying cause.

According to the 2019-20 survey on social and living standards by the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics, 16.4 per cent of the population reported moderate to severe food insecurity — that’s nearly 35 million people, close to the entire population of Canada. This is many more people than can be covered by cash interventions like BISP or Ehsaas.

The ground reality in Pakistan for some time is that the pre-existing price level of food items, and not just further inflation, has been making people's life difficult. Had the IMF cared about the vulnerable Pakistanis, to which its report makes several references, it would have come up with a different set of conditions focusing on the tax evaders and the corrupt, whether individuals or entities. As the poet Habib Jalib would ask, "Charagar dardmandon kae bantae ho kiyoon?" (Why do you pretend to be the healer of the hurt?)

#### Plutocracy

When people say democracy, they tend to mean a one-person one-vote system to elect their leaders. But unlike its parent, the United Nations, where the General Assembly uses one-country one-vote, the IMF is a shareholders' plutocracy. While there are 190 members of the IMF, the richer countries have most of the voting power that elects its 24-member executive board including its managing director. The US alone has a voting share of more than 16pc, giving it veto power over major decisions at the IMF because they require more than 85pc vote.

The US and Europe have an informal agreement that the head of the IMF will be a European acceptable to the US and the first deputy managing director will be a US national. It goes to show that the IMF is not walking its own talk of good governance, liberalisation and competition. This parochial agreement led to the election of a managing director in 2007 — the consensus European nominee despite a questionable reputation — who earned global notoriety for crass sex scandals. His predecessor was sentenced to four-and-a-half years in jail in Spain for embezzlement, while his successor was found guilty of negligence by a French court.

#### US influence

Critics have long argued and researchers have substantiated that the political alignment between a country and the US, which may be gauged by the voting pattern at the UN General Assembly, influences IMF's lending decision.

The one who pays the most to the piper may call or, if he so desires, interrupt some of the tunes. In July 2018, the US secretary of state warned that any potential bailout for Pakistan should not provide funds to pay off Chinese lenders. "Make no mistake. We will be watching what the IMF does," he said in an ominous message because he could.

#### Not accountable

Despite its layers of governance, the IMF has particularly weak accountability. Its website mentions that it is accountable to its member countries, but that doesn't mean much when the power is concentrated in the hands of a few. Its website immediately goes on to say that the IMF is scrutinised by many including civil society and academia. In fact, this is scrutiny that applies to any high-profile institution; it is not accountability.

The IMF is known to make costly mistakes in its prescriptions. In a paper published in 2013, an IMF chief economist stated that "stronger planned fiscal consolidation has been associated with lower growth than expected." This was an implicit confession that a key assumption underlying the IMF's fiscal austerity in Europe in the wake of the global financial crisis was wrong. The IMF, however, does talk a fair deal about learning from mistakes. That is, when the IMF conditionalities result in grave consequences for millions of people from a borrowing country, the decision makers at IMF may learn from the experience. Whatever this is, it surely is not accountability.

### Culturally alien

There is no reason to doubt the integrity of the nearly 2,700 employees at IMF who reportedly come from as many as 150 countries. To do so would be both wrong and distasteful. The problem is the free-market indoctrination of IMF's decision making, which is culturally alien to a poor country like Pakistan, and an organisational design that does not give voice to those suffering from IMF's conditions.

### Serves itself

This we-care-but-we-don't approach shouldn't come as a surprise because the objective of the IMF conditions, in its own words, is to get its money back: "These policy adjustments are conditions for IMF loans and serve to ensure that the country will be able to repay the IMF."

### Summary

In sum, the IMF subjects the people already hurt by the failures of their governments to more hurt by the failures of the markets. It is not due to ignorance but because of how the IMF works that people in borrowing countries have no love for the IMF.

### Reforms

- While the IMF routinely prescribes shock therapy to its borrowers, its own reform of its governance and capital moves at a snail's pace. Its 2010 reform agenda, which was initiated in 2008, was finally reported as put into place in 2016. The voting share of the US, its dominant member, was maintained at above 16pc. While the IMF labelled the change as historic, independent observers saw the voting reforms as having little to no impact. Despite an unenviable record of internal reform, the IMF, which is nearly as old as Pakistan, demands that Pakistan implement a wide range of substantive adjustments within 39 months.
- Amid the ruins of World War II, as the victors debated the contours of the new economic world order, John Maynard Keynes proposed an 'International Clearing Union' which could confiscate rich countries' persistent trade surpluses and offer them to poorer ones, thereby making sure that the gains from trade would accrue to all nations. The US delegation, however, was in no mood for sharing its reserves or power with anyone. The US proposal for an 'International Monetary Fund' sought to maintain the supremacy of the US dollar by making it the sole currency convertible into gold.
- This IMF-directed international economic order has not really worked for the developing countries judging by the lack of convergence between rich and developing countries' living standards. Some economists have shown that it would take most developing countries between 170 and 200 years to catch up with the living standards of the US provided these countries grow two per cent more than the US every year. This was before Covid-19.
- In order for the IMF to make tangible value addition in the lives of those residing in the developing world, the time has come for some serious reforms. The institution would perhaps need to be redesigned in order to be made more representative as well as more accountable with respect to its policies.
- Recently, and under pressure from the developing countries, some efforts have been made for reforming the IMF. For starters, IMF is in the process of issuing a historic stimulus of around \$650 billion. However, the IMF is planning to allocate this stimulus or Special Drawing Rights (SDRs) on the basis of existing quotas and not on the basis of need.

- According to this formula, Pakistan would get about \$2.8 bn, where the US would rake in about \$113bn. Against the backdrop of massive economic devastation in developing countries, the IMF needs to not only increase this stimulus to at least \$1tr, but also distribute it on population and reverse quota basis, meaning that bigger countries with smaller quotas like Pakistan would obtain a significant share of these SDRs.

## 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.
- 
- 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?
- 
- 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.
- 
- 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.
- 
- 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.
- 
- 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 fact is that in the past five years, the cost of electricity generation has gone up 76 per cent against a 39 per cent increase in the average tariff. According to Sakib Sherani, head of Macro Economic Insights, the power sector has cost \$82 billion in lost GDP between 2007 and 2020 and lowered the rupee per-capita GDP by almost one-quarter.
- 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
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## 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 4<sup>th</sup> 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.<sup>20</sup> 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

## Cpec impact on economy

- Launched in 2015, the first phase of CPEC focused on infrastructure. The largest part of the investments went into setting up power generation plants and building highway infrastructure. After the formation of the PTI government, work continued at full pace on the infrastructure projects which had been initiated.
- 
- In addition, new infrastructure projects were started with a particular emphasis on the western alignment of CPEC which connects the most underdeveloped regions of Pakistan with Gwadar and the major urban centres of Pakistan.
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- In addition, linked to the new government's emphasis on clean energy, the power projects based on hydel energy like Azad Pattan and Kohala were progressed instead of imported thermal energy projects. Gwadar development has also seen significant progress.
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- The new international airport is under construction, the connection with national power grid is in advanced stages of completion, dams for increased water supply have been built, Eastern Expressway is nearly complete and a number of socioeconomic projects for the people of Gwadar and nearby areas are being implemented.
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- The second phase of CPEC is aligned to these very objectives. To accelerate industrialisation, it was decided to set up special economic zones (SEZ) under CPEC in each province. The first of these became operational in Faisalabad in early 2020.
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- This SEZ has attracted a number of investors and is expected to grow rapidly. The second SEZ has been set up in Rashakai in Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa and was inaugurated by the prime minister recently.
- 
- The unique thing about Rashakai is that the developer of this SEZ is a Chinese company and it is responsible for marketing this SEZ to Chinese and other investors. It has already attracted foreign investors and the first of these projects is under construction in Rashakai and expected to start production next year.
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- The third SEZ which is expected to become operational is in Dhabeji in Sindh. The Sindh government is in the advanced stages of finalising the developer for this SEZ.
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- China has not just made progress in industrial and technology sectors but has also achieved great progress in the agriculture sector. That has been one of the foundations on the basis of which China has lifted more people out of poverty than any other nation in world history in a remarkably short period of time.
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- Similarly, Pakistan cannot lift its people out of poverty unless it is able to increase the productivity of its agriculture. The agriculture Joint Working Group under CPEC was set up last year after an MoU was signed in March 2020.
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- Exciting work under the CPEC umbrella has started in the field of agriculture also. Cotton being vital to Pakistan's export economy, one of the first projects in this domain, has been started for high quality cotton seed production and field experiments are ongoing.
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- Large pieces of land in different provinces have been identified for collaborative investments by Chinese and Pakistani companies for different high value crops as well. Some areas in Balochistan, particularly the land near Mirani Dam, is being looked at for largescale dairy farming. Research collaboration between Chinese and Pakistani research institutions is being discussed.
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- This injection of new vitality and global connection for our agriculture research effort is absolutely vital for our agricultural transformation.
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- A JWG for science and technology had already been set up last year. It is extremely encouraging that both the Chinese and Pakistani sides have agreed to start a new working group for information technology.
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- The potential in this field is limitless and the agreement to form the information technology JWG under CPEC is the most exciting new development in the march towards increasing collaboration between China and Pakistan in the economic sphere.
- Board of Investment (BOI) secretary expressed that considering the unique opportunity for Pakistan to relocate Chinese manufacturing base, BOI has developed a dedicated Pakistan China Business-to-Business (B2B) Investment Portal in collaboration with the China Council for International Investment Promotion (CCIIP) for both Pakistan and Chinese companies, which will enable matchmaking of prospective businesses from both countries interested in investing in Pakistan to enter into joint ventures.
- unlike the first phase of CPEC based on a Government-to-Government (G2G) framework, the second phase now pertains to Business-to-Business (B2B) and people-to-people (P2P) ties. Therefore, key players from both sides must be taken on board to jointly initiate meaningful steps to attract Chinese sunset industries to Pakistan.

## SEZs

- Pakistan has been focusing on developing SEZs to facilitate industrialisation in the country. Initially, the focus was directed towards cluster-based industrial development<sup>21</sup> 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.<sup>22</sup> 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.<sup>24</sup> 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.<sup>25</sup> 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.<sup>27</sup> 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.<sup>3</sup> 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.

### Tax Structure

Taxes are involuntary charges levied on individuals or corporations and enforced by a government entity—whether local, subnational or national—in order to finance government activities. As such, the prime objective of the taxes is revenue generation. However, for sustained stream of revenues, the tax policy also needs to be growth facilitating. These dual objectives can only be achieved if the tax policy reduces the deadweight loss resulting from imposition of taxes, and help transactions grow. Higher number of transactions is associated with higher economic growth and more employment. Increased growth enhances the taxable capacity of the economy and therefore generate sustainable streams of revenues.

Unfortunately, this has not been the case in Pakistan. The objective of the tax policy is reduced to only to collecting more revenues to achieve illusive targets of Tax— GDP ratio and to reduce fiscal deficit. Growth facilitation has not been the priority. Increasing the tax-to-GDP ratio even at the cost of violating the basic principle of taxation—fairness, certainty, efficiency, and convenience—has become the cornerstone of policy. Consequently, the tax structure has taken the shape of an exploitative and antigrowth design that kills transactions. The amplified share of indirect taxes in total collections, the increase dependence on withholding taxes accompanied by compliance cost, and the use of tariff for revenue generation instead of a trade facilitation instrument are some of glaring examples of a tax structure that would go for short-term revenue gains by sacrificing long-term growth.



### *Facts*

Pakistan ranked 161st among 190 economies for “paying tax” indicator in the 2020 Doing Business Report. The low performance for this indicator is due to the complex tax system and high tax compliance costs (The World Bank Report, 2019).

### *Legislative tax structure*

In Pakistan, resource mobilisation takes place at the federal and provincial government levels. Main taxes are broadly differentiated in direct and indirect taxes (with surcharges included in the indirect taxes). As per the constitution of Pakistan, the taxes for collection for different tiers of the governments are defined as shown in Table 1.

Level of Government	Direct Taxes	Indirect Taxes
Federal Government	Income Tax	Sales Tax
	Corporation Tax	Excise Duty
	Wealth Tax	Import Duty
	Property Taxes	Export Duty
		Gas and Petroleum Surcharge
Provincial Government	Land Revenue	Foreign Travel Tax
		Sales Tax on Services
		Stamp Duty
	Urban Immovable Property Tax	Motor Vehicle Tax
	Tax on Transfer of Property	Entertainment Tax
	Agriculture-Income Tax	Excise duty
	Capital Gains tax	Cotton fee
	Tax on Professions, trades and callings	Electricity Duty

*Source:* The Constitution of Pakistan; Fourth Schedule-legislative List.

### *Composition*

The share of indirect taxes (and surcharges) has been more than share of direct taxes in the consolidated (federal and provincial) revenue resources. This put excess burden on the economy as indirect taxes create distortion in the resource allocation. As of fiscal year 2019-20, the ratio of direct taxes in the total taxes is 32 percent out of which 70 percent are collected in a withholding basis (which defies the Direct Tax claim).

### *Taxation principles*

A good tax system need to be least distortionary, has ease of collection, doesn't discriminate and is politically acceptable. Most experts are of the view that Pakistan's tax policy is not based on these well-known and clear principles.<sup>2</sup> Ad-hoc tax revenue enhancing measures through SROs and mini-budgets have developed a complex tax system that confounds principles of rational tax policy. FBR sets an ambitious target and to chase that number arbitrary measures are taken which create uncertainty that eventually kills transactions. These unrealistic targets cannot be achieved without enhancing the taxable capacity of the country; instead these are stifling the economic activity.

Frequent changes in policy and rates make the environment very uncertain especially for potential investors. The reliance on indirect taxation and withholding regimes increase the compliance cost for the tax payers (especially business). Similarly, excessive documentation requirements increase transaction cost. Together, these make the tax policy inefficient and inconvenient



### *Excessive Withholding Regime*

As an extractive practice FBR has been able to switch burden of collection to those doing transactions and can be forced to collect withholding taxes on behalf of FBR. About 70 percent of tax revenue is collected through withholding tax agents such as banks, utilities, telecom etc. placing the burden of collection on these businesses and increasing their business costs (Figure 1). While these withholding taxes may provide an easy source of collection for Federal Board of Revenue (FBR), they make the tax system incredibly complex for the taxpayers. This also questions the role of FBR as a tax collecting authority.

if these taxes are not levied, businesses would reinvest them to expand, then the overall impact would be more economic activity resulting in even more tax collections than that forgone. But unfortunately, while policies are made, no one notices the loss to economic growth and job creation due to these adverse tax measures.

### *Tariff as Instrument of Taxes or Trade Policy*

Openness is important for growth but in Pakistan there has been a policy of protection and that too on the basis of setting higher tariff. This has barred businesses to become competitive and rely on perpetual government assistance. Protectionism, especially for the manufacturing sector, is the standard policy of the government. Manufacturers enjoy exemptions and concessions on the import of these items which if imported by others are liable to duties etc. The local manufactures neither developed their capacity nor upgraded technology to bring in quality for their captive market.

### *Inefficient Tax Planning*

Increasing the number of filers has also become an obsession with FBR. Limited research is available on data of filers. Often the ones filing are actually not paying significant taxes along with it. To increase the number of filers, for the last couple of years, FBR has developed numerous discriminatory taxes to segment filers from nonfilers. From bank withdrawals to asset purchases non-filers are penalised through such transaction taxes. The Revenue collection has not increased but the distortion in transactions and asset prices have slowed down investment and the economy. The acceptance of transaction taxes and presumptive taxes from non-filers reduces the pressure to file. Overall distinction based on filer and non-filer through rate differential has not worked, rather it has established a premium for being non-filer.

### *Way forward*

There is a clear need to have a transaction-facilitating policy rather than having one that kills transactions. The economy is shrinking because of this policy of suspicion on all transactions. Some measure that should make the policy growth-facilitating are as follows:

- A tax system must be simple and clear.
- It should not seek to tax different goods and services differently to allow all consumer and investment decisions to be based on market realities.
- Tax rates and policies should be stable and not changing in minibudgets every few months forcing all to speculate on tax policy.
- Those withholding taxes that contribute only meagerly but have higher cost of collection (compliance cost) should be abolished.
- The culture of SROs should be completely abolished.
- Tax expenditure are forgone revenues due to exemptions, concessions, and preferential treatments to particular industry, sector, or activity. Research is needed to assess which industry need such exemption and why? And for how long? Whether those that have been given these exemptions/concessions have achieved the desired results such as jobs creation and economic growth.

## 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 (2-3<sup>rd</sup> 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.
- 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.
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### 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.

### Rent-seeking

While people pay their taxes, they expect to receive services in return. This is a very rational expectation. Whereas, when a government levies taxes, even if not pronounced, it by default agrees to return the money in the form of services. This is a basic principle of taxation.

As opposed to taxation, rent-seeking is another practice that some governments adopt. It is a technical term which is widely used in different contexts. While introducing this label, Anne Krueger in her article, "Political Economy of the Rent Seeking Society", considered corruption and bribery in government as rent seeking. Other political economists define it as people's lobbying of a government to grant them subsidies and financial privileges that would ultimately enhance their personal wealth. But in pure economic terms, rent seeking refers to a situation where an entity seeks to gain without reciprocal contribution.

When a government levies taxes without reciprocating through improved services, the government may be called rent-seeking. In Pakistan, the current PTI government since its inauguration in 2018, has been stressing more on improving revenue through taxation — a great idea as it aims to break the long-lasting tradition of tax evasion in the country. Moreover, the objective stated by the government to improve tax-

bases is to lessen the country's dependence on international financial and monetary institutions. This is also a fair argument, but is not enough.

If the government is broadening the tax base, and levying more taxes, the taxpayers expect some visible improvement in services delivered. While the government announces an annual increase in tax-based revenue, it does not reflect on the condition of services delivered.

Beginning with policing services, reports of the police mishandling citizens persist. Although budget figures have been raised for the education and health sector, no visible improvement is noticeable. It is also hard to claim that citizens' experience of interaction with government service providers has changed at all.

This is an area of policy that needs consideration. Vigilant monitoring systems are necessary. The Pakistan Citizen Portal is a good example but it's not sufficient to cover the broader shortfalls in service delivery.

As a Pakistani citizen, one can understand that the government's wealth is not increasing through taxation, for a good amount of taxes goes to debt repayments. But the expectation of citizens to have improved service delivery, nonetheless, stands valid.

Along with focusing on increasing tax revenue, which is a good approach, the government should also focus on improving service delivery, at least for taxpayers. In a nutshell, while the government is levying taxes, it needs to deliver on services too, otherwise, taxation would become rent-seeking.

#### *Low Tax-to-GDP ratio*

- In today's world, taxes are levied by almost every government, except for a few resource-rich countries. The purpose of taxation is primarily to raise revenue for the government. Tax revenues support government expenditures which are in terms of service delivery. The types of services governments provide against the taxes vary, ranging from policing to health and education.
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- 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.
- The intervention of parliamentarians across the political divide on behalf of the tax delinquents and equating tax notices with harassment will weaken the already feeble writ of the tax machinery, which is reflected by the majority of people ignoring tax notices. It also amounts to encouraging a culture where people, especially powerful business lobbies and big farmers, either don't have to pay their taxes or can get away with paying a meagre sum. In a country where 3m people file their tax returns and where the tax-to-GDP ratio of close to 10pc remains one of the lowest anywhere, parliamentarians are sending the wrong message by supporting tax evaders.

- **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 polities regarding eco 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; eco-soc consequences; on eco front, rising no. of poor people causes less investment in edu and health, negative impact on future productivity and eco prosperity, poverty reduces demand for goods and services, leads to eco stagnation; on socio sphere: eco 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 eco 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.

#### Trade deficit

- PAKISTAN'S trade deficit expanded by almost 33pc to \$30.8bn during the last fiscal from \$23.2bn a year before because of a hefty growth in imports. This was expected because of the poor wheat, sugar and cotton harvests last year. The rapid increase in machinery imports as a result of the availability of substantially subsidised long-term finance for new investments and the replacement of outdated technology is another factor pushing imports. In addition, rising global commodity prices on the back of a surge in demand as the world limps towards some kind of normalcy has also contributed to an increase in the import bill.
- In comparison, the nation's exports have grown by just 18.2pc to \$25.3bn from \$11.4bn. The nation's exports remain less than 8.5pc of GDP calculated to be around \$296bn. This compares with Bangladesh's exports that constitute more than 15pc of its GDP.

- The mounting trade deficit can be a major challenge for the country's feeble external sector. Imports are anticipated to increase even faster during this year while exports are unlikely to keep pace with them. That is likely to put pressure on the State Bank's meagre foreign exchange reserves. Last year, the Covid-19 pandemic had provided a cushion to the external account as we saw unprecedented growth in remittances sent home by Pakistanis working abroad because of restrictions on international travel, which helped the central bank finance surging imports and reduced the pressures on the country's balance-of-payments position.
- What will govt do? Increased import duty

#### 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 "**Trans-Afghan**" 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).
- Pakistan and Uzbekistan have signed **Agreement between Uzbekistan and Pakistan on Transit Trade (AUPTT)**. The AUPTT would give access of Pakistani seaports to Uzbekistan and offer the access to all five Central Asian States for Pakistani exports. This would help in enhancing trade

and regional connectivity and open doors for increasing Pakistan's exports to Uzbekistan, while harnessing the potential of a \$90 billion market in Central Asia.

- **The Quadrilateral Traffic in Transit Agreement (QTTA)** (معاهده چار طرفه ترافیک گذرگاه) is a transit trade deal between China, Pakistan, Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan for facilitating transit traffic and trade. In February 2017, Tajikistan expressed interest in joining the deal. A similar desire to join the agreement was expressed by **Uzbekistan** (to lessen their dependence on Bandar Abbas) in May 2020[2] The initial work on this road project was initiated in 1995.
- The road project is related to the China Pakistan Economic Corridor, which aims to provide China and Central Asia access to Pakistani ports. After the development of Gawadar Port in Balochistan province of Pakistan, development of this route became more lucrative particularly for Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan. For Pakistan its importance has recently increased following frequent border closures with Afghanistan over political hostilities and security issues.
- The strategic importance of this project was reduced when Afghanistan offered Pakistan access to Central Asia via the Afghanistan–Pakistan Transit Trade Agreement. However, in recent years, Afghanistan insisted that India be included in their bilateral transit trade as a condition for allowing Pakistan access to Central Asia, even threatening to cut off the agreement if it was not reciprocated. Pakistan's tensions with India made such an arrangement difficult. The QTTA provides Pakistan an alternative gateway to Central Asia by completely circumnavigating Afghanistan. It would use the Karakoram Highway which connects Gilgit-Baltistan to China's Xinjiang region, which links to Central Asia.
- **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 18<sup>th</sup> amend and 7<sup>th</sup> NFC Award failed to mitigate inequities across provinces. **HDI**
- Solution: 18<sup>th</sup> 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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## Tourism

- Tourism can be a multi-billion dollar industry in Pakistan provided there is awareness and policy on the part of stakeholders to promote the culture of tourism. A country's image and reputation is judged on the basis of its capacity to provide basic facilities to tourists, particularly foreigners.
- When India and China can earn more than \$20 billion from tourism and various European countries like Switzerland, France, the UK, Italy and Greece can fetch several hundred billion dollars from tourism, why cannot Pakistan, a country blessed with enviable natural beauty?
- Pakistan can certainly take meaningful steps to attract tourists. But, merely by passing statements on transforming Pakistan as a hub of tourism will not make sense unless the government takes practical steps to create a culture of tourism which would require a mindset of local people, tour operators, hotels and officials attached with the ministry of tourism.
- When one talks about the culture of tourism it means four major requirements.
- First, the attitude and behavior of those who are supposed to provide guidance and facilities to tourists.
- Second, adherence to hygiene and cleanliness at restaurants, eateries, washrooms and hotels at tourist spots. Unfortunately, with a few exceptions, there is absence of hygiene and clean environment for tourists, which creates a very bad impression for both local and foreign tourists.
- Third, availability of affordable accommodation and food is essential for creating a culture of tourism in Pakistan. During summer and winter tourist seasons, there is no check on the part of concerned authorities to prevent hotel owners who take advantage of the situation and charge excessive amount from tourists.
- Finally, the absence of tourism culture in Pakistan has much to do with corruption and inefficiency on the part of tourism departments in various provinces of the country who are either irresponsible in their duties or lack proper training on providing maximum facilities to tourists at affordable prices. It is a pity that unlike India, China, the UAE and Sri Lanka, where there is a culture of tourism, one can observe the absence of proper work ethics and pursuance of a professional approach to attract foreign tourists.
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- Pakistan is blessed with beautiful tourists as well as historical and religious sites where tourists from abroad visit in large numbers. The north of Pakistan is known for its peaks, glaciers, lakes and forests where not only homegrown tourism can flourish but millions of tourists from abroad can also be attracted. Likewise, the historical sites of Taxila and Mohenjo Daro can be a big draw for foreign tourists. The deserts of Tharparkar in Sindh and Cholistan in Punjab, as well as the coast of Pakistan, particularly in Balochistan, also have the potential to attract local and foreign tourists in large numbers.
- If the government and other stakeholders are interested in promoting tourist industry and homegrown tourism, they must make sure that adequate facilities are provided. Policy decisions to promote the culture of tourism must take into account three major requirements.
- First, the major tourist destinations like Swat, Naran, Gilgit, Hunza and Skardu must be monitored by the respective tourist departments and ministries that tourists visiting such places are provided with best facilities at affordable prices. Acts of cheating and overcharging for accommodation and meals must be eradicated. It seems, 'tourist mafias' in collaboration with officials deny tourists opportunities to enjoy their holidays.

- Second, it is a matter of shame that the government of Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa has utterly failed to improve tourist infrastructure including roads. For instance, Naran is a major tourist spot and tourists who visit that place make sure that they also go to the legendary lake Saiful Muluk. But, it is shocking that there is no road from Naran to that lake and tourists are left at the mercy of ‘jeep mafia’ who subvert efforts to construct a good quality road. There is a nexus between hotel mafia and the government which results into the exploitation of tourists. The K-P government must implement its policy decision to promote local and foreign tourism instead of being involved in corruption with ‘jeep and hotel mafia’.
- Third, if the government projects that Pakistan will earn Re1 trillion from tourism by 2025, in that case hectic efforts should be made both at federal and provincial levels to create the culture of tourism by taking measures which have been highlighted above. When there was civil war going on in Sri Lanka from 1983 till 2009 and foreign tourism plummeted, the government encouraged local tourism which tried to bridge the gap in income from foreign tourism. Pakistan needs to promote homegrown tourism and take practical steps to provide safety, security, better hygienic, infrastructure and accommodation facilities so that both local and foreign tourists can be pulled in.
- 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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## Electoral Reforms

- 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.

## Major issues

- 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.

## Voter lists

A crucial proposed reform is that Nadra, instead of the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP), should prepare the voter lists. Which of the two entities, Nadra or ECP, is technically better positioned to prepare the voter lists? Obviously, Nadra! All CNIC holders being eligible voters, Nadra can generate the list with a click using its CNIC database. The opposition would not let Nadra have the role. Reasons: first, Nadra is an executive arm of the government, therefore can be influenced by the political party in power; second, the Constitution empowers only the ECP to prepare the voter lists. However, the Constitution was framed in 1973 when CNICs and even Nadra did not exist and holding an identity card was not compulsory to be a voter. Times have changed. The fourth industrial revolution is underway, and nations that refuse to benefit from technology would stand doomed.

Can we have something which satisfies both the government and the opposition? Yes. Let Nadra prepare and publish the preliminary voter lists. Objections to the list may be filed with the ECP. Any new voter proposed by the ECP should be added and issued a CNIC after required due diligence by Nadra, if the person does not hold one. The ECP and Nadra are already actively collaborating to induce people to obtain CNICs. The final list should be signed by both the chief election commissioner and chairperson Nadra. If the PTI, PML-N, and PPP consent, the legislature would have the numbers to amend the Constitution for involving Nadra in developing the voter lists.

The number of registered voters stands at 115 million as per the ECP's annual report of 2020. Reportedly the number reached 119m by mid-June 2021. Extrapolating from the population figure of 2017, Dr. Nayab of the Pakistan Institute of Development Economics estimates that the population aged 18 and above now stands at 137m. Thus around 18m (137 minus 119) people eligible to vote are not registered as voters. Should we let them remain disenfranchised? If not, does the ECP enjoy the capacity and have a system in place to register these 18m as voters by 2023?

However, registering around 18m new voters can disturb the political calculus of the parties based on biradari, clan, and dhara — all essential components of dynastic politics. The desire to hold safe ground, even if it fails to yield an absolute majority, could underlie the opposition to let Nadra prepare the voter lists. On the ECP's part, the opposition to Nadra's role only reflects the usual bureaucratic phenomena — the greater the functions, the greater the power, the prestige, and maybe the consequent benefits.



## Overseas voting

- A KEY electoral issue these days relates to voting by overseas Pakistanis. Legally, they can vote even now if in Pakistan as voting is a basic civic right under current laws not lost even by dual citizens. The Supreme Court has also asked the state to facilitate overseas voting.
- Objections on the issue are also invalid and largely reflect xenophobia. Some say since they don't pay taxes, they must not vote. No law limits voting rights to only taxpayers and such a law will make innumerable resident voters ineligible. Also, taxes are paid for availing state services. If they don't pay taxes, they also don't avail state services. However, they are a major source of remittances that reduces our yawning external deficit and could also become a major source of investment, charity, technical expertise and policy ideas based on their exposure abroad. So the focus here is on how to facilitate voting abroad to enhance their interest in and contribution to Pakistan.
- Research by the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance shows that a big majority of electoral states, nearly 115 states and territories, allow overseas voting. More than half are developing states.
- The modality of voting is a key issue. The options include postal, electronic or physical voting. most states, especially developing ones with more issues of rigging, use physical voting. This is a security-wise safer though logistically harder option. It may reduce turnout somewhat in large countries like the US where Pakistanis live in dozens of smaller cities beyond the larger ones with consulates. It will also involve getting host countries to give permission for such voting which could be tricky to obtain in Gulf states. But these are logistical issues that must be sorted out. As technology and security improve, other options could be used later.
- Another issue relates to who can vote. Some states restrict it to diplomatic staff, eg India, and others by the number of years the overseas citizens have been abroad. But most states allow all their citizens to vote. Legally and practically, it makes no sense to restrict such voting as the purpose is to enhance the links of overseas Pakistanis. Thus, it makes sense to cast the net widely, though the net may at least initially cover only countries with large numbers of overseas Pakistanis due to logistical and safety reasons.
- Overseas voting has its clear benefits but also entails high costs and security and logistical challenges. So it requires proper planning and implementation to ensure smooth voting. All this entails time. Thus, there must be no urgency to implement it hastily driven by the 2023 electoral calculations of different parties. The guiding force must be the clear wisdom emerging from the global experiences of dozens of states which had a phased introduction of the system over several election cycles.
- Overseas Pakistanis, as the term goes, can be broadly classified into three categories. The first are Pakistan Origin Card, or POC, holders who have surrendered their Pakistani nationality but are facilitated by the Pakistani government through this card for travel and other purposes. The second category is those who hold the National Identity Card for Overseas Pakistanis, or NICOP, many of whom are dual nationals. This card enables these individuals to travel with ease to Pakistan. The third category are those who are working abroad but retain their Pakistani nationality. These three categories need to be discussed separately in respect to provision of voting rights. Those people who have surrendered their Pakistani nationality, pay taxes in their country of residence and are eligible voters in the country they are now citizens of, may not have a very strong case for being enfranchised as Pakistani voters. The dual nationality holders have

also taken an oath of allegiance to another country and therefore a case can be made against their qualification to vote in Pakistan. Prime Minister Imran Khan is on record as having opposed allowing dual nationals to vote in Pakistani elections when he was in the opposition. Those Pakistanis, however, who retain their nationality and are working abroad have the strongest case to be allowed to vote in Pakistan. These are weighty matters and legislators should debate them thoroughly before deciding what to include in the electoral reforms bill that will become law after the revised draft is adopted by the two houses of parliament.

## Governance

- Governance is Reconciling individual interest with national interest ~**Tariq Banuri**
- 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.
- <https://tribune.com.pk/story/2292296/time-to-put-our-own-house-in-order>
- Something remarkable is happening in Pakistan and no one is talking about it. All 41 ministries have set 15,000 outcome-oriented performance targets for the next two years, which will be reviewed quarterly by the Prime Minister. About 2000-man hours have been spent on this in the last few weeks alone and the climax of this is to come as each minister publicly signs a performance agreement with the PM. This isn't a smokescreen; this is a paradigm shift on accountability in a way Pakistan's hasn't seen before.
- That is the fundamental conundrum at the heart of Naya Pakistan's governance goals and performance agreements appear to be one answer. These are the kind of performance agreements that are used in developed countries such as the UK and New Zealand. Here's how the process works: Each Ministry prepares first draft of their goals and presents to a Review Committee who makes sure that the goals are outcome-driven and not process-driven. The final draft is shared with PM Office and feedback is discussed with ministries. A final agreement is then signed by PM and Minister. Quarterly reviews are then held, including summaries reviewed by the PM personally, to make sure delivery for government's agenda is on track or corrective action is taken.
- 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. {covid FACT}
- 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.

## Public policy

- THE framing, advocacy, implementation and oversight of public policy is a primary governmental responsibility. One would think that with all the institutional machinery and resources at their disposal, governments would shoulder this responsibility to good effect, yet globally, governments of all ilk find this a heavy cross to bear. Pakistan is no different.
- The circuitous and circular path Pakistan's policymaking takes is even more worrying. is akin to running on the treadmill: you expend energy, believe you have covered distance, but you are actually in the same place. This 'treadmill policymaking' and the suspended reality it represents, vitiates the effort and expenses made, and the public expectations raised.
- The ongoing moves to shred the 18th Amendment and NFC Award, and the persistent schemes for disembowelment of autonomous local governments, are just a few examples of this treadmill policymaking doctrine. It also foments institutional inertia, kills initiative, and shuns innovation. Economy struggling? IMF-bailout time, plus calling in more favours from friends. Institutions failing? Twiddle with their structures, rather than their functions, even though it did not work the previous 10 times. Exports uncompetitive? Renew and exp-and crutches such as GSP-Plus. SOEs haemorrhaging even more heavily? Patch them with even more subsidies. The list goes on.
- This treadmill effect of never moving forward; deploying rusted ideas on repeat; focusing on process rather than outcomes; and the inability to keep pace with the dynamic contexts in which public policy is framed, is a betrayal and violation of public trust.
- If citizen's aspirations, potential and expectations are to be addressed, leveraged and met, Pakistan's policymaking has to untether itself from security-focused narratives and wriggle out of the yoke of the technocrat; link to more progressive, people-centred agendas; create more spaces for civic engagement; practise more cooperative federalism; and its political leaders need to stop playing the same anthems on loop. Sounds like a wish list, but a start has to be made. It is time to get off the treadmill.
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## KP example

- 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.

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## Judicial reform

- COUNTLESS litigants in Pakistan do not live to see property disputes decided in their lifetimes. According to a study conducted a few years ago by the Supreme Court, a property suit — from the time of its filing until the appellate forums rule on it — takes nearly 30 years to conclude. Not surprisingly, the glacial pace at which such cases proceed perpetuates terrible injustice against weaker members of society, especially women. In the light of this reality, a parliamentary committee on Tuesday did well to clear an amendment to the Code of Civil Procedure which stipulates that judges must decide cases of moveable and immovable property, including those involving women's inheritance rights, within one year. Further, the appellate court must give its verdict within 90 days.
- According to the Supreme Court's most recent fortnightly case disposal report, there are 51,852 cases pending in the apex court, while the total backlog in the country's courts amounts to approximately 2.16m. One way to reduce the pendency rate is to appoint more judges. There are 3,067 judges presiding over the caseload in the district and high courts, while 1,048 positions are yet to be filled; the apex court has 17 judges, with two judges' positions vacant. These vacancies must be filled as soon as possible. Moreover, as was done during former Supreme Court chief justice Iftikhar Chaudhry's tenure, double shifts can be instituted for judges to hear cases. In May 2019, the apex court began hearing cases through video link connectivity for the first time; this method must be scaled up from its present limited use. Civil proceedings, which comprise the major portion of the courts' backlog, can be expedited if the judiciary sets its mind to it.
- Although "judicial reform" would seem to be an obvious positive step, it is, in fact, problematic.<sup>30</sup> The official idea, supported in the last decade by large infusions of aid from the Asian Development Bank and others, has been to improve the efficiency of the courts, through better infrastructure, better training, and increased staffing, with improvement measured in the reduction of the enormous backlog of pending cases. Other aspects of the system, including improved legal education, have not been touched. Although the superior judiciary has reason to see itself as highly qualified, the same is probably not true of the lower courts.
- The increase in judicial activism, including, in particular, the emergence of public interest litigation in the mid-1980s, and within that the now routine use of *Suo moto* powers, is seen by some as the essence of reform but by others as the emergence of a new antidemocratic claim on political power.
- the critics argue, the court is in effect sending a signal that filing a case in the normal way and waiting in the queue for it to be decided is a second- best way of getting justice.
- Hence, despite the *Suo motu* notice of the Mukhtaran Mai gang rape case, which received much attention, the Supreme Court has repeatedly had to intervene in other rape cases that came up later because of the lack of any macro-level change in the overall system in place. This is because the *suo motu* proceedings never actually addressed the institutional issues that required the Supreme Court to bypass the normal judicial processes in the first place.
- Hence, *suo motu* actions should not be celebrated as a victory for the rule of law, but rather be seen as an implicit admission of the judicial system's lack of capacity and inability to provide swift justice as envisioned under the Constitution. If more people viewed the exercise of such powers in this light, we would be less jubilant and more worried with every successive *suo motu* notice

being taken. It seems that the increasing use of such powers reflects nothing but the ever-increasing gap between the demand for justice and the judiciary's ability to deliver it.

- 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.
- 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.
- 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.

## Blasphemy

- 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.
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## Child abuse

- 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.
- WAKING up nearly every day to a new case of child abuse, violence and murder makes one wonder: who is to blame? Maybe it is my paediatric community that has been unable to guide parents, or maybe it is our society that frowns upon sex education and life skills as one way of bringing down the incidence of rape and murder. Or perhaps it is the parents who think their reputation in the family and community is far more important than the mental health of their child. Or perhaps it is our government for whom the enforcement of laws is never a priority.
- The increase in the number of cases of child abuse is also due to the absence of proper systems to handle these cases, poor law enforcement, court rulings that do not follow policy, no guaranteed punishments for rapists, poverty, unemployment, lack of population control efforts, uninhibited access to inappropriate material via social media, little attention to mental health, no lessons in the curriculum on how to keep physically safe, and finally their taboo nature in a conservative society.
- We must register speedy FIRs and implement fair court judgements besides carrying out exemplary punishments and activating the Zainab Alert law. After the recent case in Karachi of the sexual abuse and murder of six-year-old Maham, police boasted how they had arrested the culprit within 72 hours. In fact, she could have been saved if the matter had been registered and a search team dispatched immediately after the father reported his daughter was missing. Those critical five to six hours when no one tried looking for her decided her fate.
- Parents must be alert at all times. One cannot emphasise enough that the predator is always nearby and often someone very close to the child. In fact, 80 per cent of the time, the abuser is someone known to the child.
- children these days possess smartphones, and they watch (and understand) everything. It is easy to see how parents are ready to abdicate their roles of supervision and guidance and leave it to social media to 'educate' the child. At the other end, as a society, we still consider it immoral to talk to our children about this topic in all its aspects.

- Educational institutions should step forward to do their bit to safeguard their students. A significant chunk of a child's day is spent in school and a few impactful lessons can make a huge difference in his or her life. Add safeguarding and life skill lessons to the curriculum. Make child protection committees in schools and pledge to take the responsibility of keeping children safe in schools. Madressahs should also follow these rules. We can only curtail child abuse by taking positive steps, and not by pointing fingers.
- Finally, our society needs to know that when we indulge in victim blaming, prevent schools from educating our children about these matters, and do not speak up when abuse is happening in front of our eyes, we are indirectly helping these predators.

## Post-covid Global world order

The outbreak of Coronavirus is an unprecedented event, which has and will continue to have profound impact on how the world functions. While it is too early to make definitive conclusions, following are some of the likely future trends:

### Decline in Globalization

The pandemic may further diminish the support for globalisation, which was already being eroded post-2016, after Brexit and ascendancy of Donald J. Trump as the President of the US. It is less likely that the world would return to the idea of mutually beneficial globalisation that defined the early period of Twenty-first Century. Globalisation, in the form of increased travelling and economic interdependence, has played a major role in the rapid spread of the virus around the world. States may become insular in outlook, leading 'to [possible] shifts in political and economic power in ways that will become apparent only later.'<sup>2</sup> But, it is still too early to say as 'this is not yet the end of an interconnected world. The pandemic itself is proof of our interdependence.'<sup>3</sup> For instance, the World Health Organization (WHO) was able to timely 'internationalize' the spread of the virus by bringing it to the global community's attention,<sup>4</sup> though Trump continues to hold it responsible for late and inaccurate response. Unlike the past, China too alerted the international community about the virus in a timely manner, which was consistent with the 2007 revised requirements of the WHO. China also made public the genome of the Coronavirus as early as January 9, 2020, which gave a head start to the global experts to develop tests for the virus.

### Acceleration in Govt Intervention and Power shift from West to East

Looking at current trends such as travel bans, limited medicines, and protectionism, the pandemic may strengthen the state and reinforce nationalism. Governments have adopted emergency measures to manage the crisis, and many will be loath to relinquish their new powers when the crisis is over. COVID-19 may also accelerate the shift in power and influence from the West/Euro-Atlantic to the East. South Korea and Singapore have responded well, and China has reacted effectively after its early mistakes. The response in Europe and the US was slow and desultory by comparison, further tarnishing the aura of the Western brand.<sup>6</sup> This means that in future, citizens would rely more on national governments to protect them against bio-threats/emergencies than international help/guarantees. Also, there will be greater demand by the global community to spend more on health at the national and international level.

### Intensification of Sino-US Fallout

According to Jonathan Stromseth, great power rivalry and competition between the US and China will continue. This has been evident in the aftermath of the COVID-19 spread with China resorting to damage control by sending medical supplies and teams to Southeast Asia, Europe and Africa, with some terming



its actions as 'politics of generosity.'<sup>8</sup> Furthermore, many Chinese Ambassadors were summoned by their host countries with allegations of spreading false information. On the other hand, the US has used the pandemic to put renewed pressure on China for obfuscating facts about the spread of the virus. US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo scuttled a communiqué after other world powers refused to use the term 'Wuhan/Chinese Virus' and stopping funding to the WHO for being easy on China.<sup>9</sup> With President Trump in campaign mode for the upcoming presidential elections, it is most likely that he will continue to up the ante against China to appease his constituents.

#### Deterioration of Traditional Alliances and the US Role in Global Affairs

The pandemic may further deteriorate and even finish whatever was left of the transatlantic relationship between the US and the European Union (EU). Since the outbreak of the pandemic, there has been little to no cooperation between the two sides. In fact, as mentioned above, the G-7 ended up not issuing a statement because of Trump administration's insistence on calling out the 'Wuhan/Chinese Virus.' Even within the EU, there have been open complaints of lack of a common EU strategy for the fight against the pandemic. The pandemic and the lackluster role played by the US globally will significantly diminish its credibility. Despite being the world's greatest economic and military power, the US was unable to play a leading role in setting the agenda on how to deal with the spread of the virus, nationally and globally. In contrast, other smaller countries like South Korea, Taiwan and Singapore have been more effective in their response. International cooperation may remain shaky too as the COVID19 pandemic has shown that global powers - China and the US - remain economically interdependent and strategically competitive. This international competition instead of cooperation would be the 'new normal' in post-COVID19 era. China-US cooperation and G-20's response in a video summit in March fell short of desired momentum, fuelling fears of de-globalisation and insularity.

#### Strengthening of China's Role in Global Affairs

The COVID-19 pandemic may further strengthen and reinforce China's standing and leadership role in international affairs. As the US starts to lose its credibility as a true global leader, China-centric globalisation might become palatable for the world. A lot will depend on who comes out of the crisis as the winner and with a vaccine to cure the world. Furthermore, even if China is able to come out of this crisis, it will have to do some major damage control for acting effectively at the start of the pandemic. In addition, a decisive factor would be the state of the Chinese economy and how it fares in a decisively dismal global economic outlook. Even though the Chinese economy was slowing down even before the virus outbreak, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) has projected a positive growth for China this year, which is a good omen.

#### 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.
- Lately, the Pakistani government has announced its decision to terminate 23 BITs. It claims that doing so will not only protect it from further financial exposure in case of disputes with BIT-protected companies but will also allow it to reclaim space for the public interest.

## Space

- 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.

## Accountability

- 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.

- 63 clauses of Magna Carta boil down to a single commandment: No ruler stands above the law.
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### New provinces Pak studies

- 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.

### UN

THE Charter of the United Nations was drafted and approved in 1945. Its stated objectives are to prevent war, forced occupation, and promote global justice. However, the UN has not been able to fulfil its mandate. Since its creation war, famine, illegal occupation, and inequity between nations and classes have increased. This failure of the UN is built into its structure.

Five members of the Security Council can, and have consistently, vetoed resolutions against injustice, occupation, and war. These five nations are the richest and/or most powerful nations on earth. All five of them are also major manufacturers of small and large arms and all of them are exporters in the global market. The purchasers of these arms are by and large countries that suppress their people, like Saudi Arabia, or seek to impose their will on the region in which they exist, like India. When not directly involved, they develop proxies to destabilise the region. The guns and ammunition manufactured by these powers have been used in Yemen, Syria, Libya, various regions in Africa, and, for the last 40 years, in Afghanistan. They have killed women and children indiscriminately and justified it as collateral damage. They have been

used to take away Palestinian land and give it to Israel through massive military aid of \$18 billion yearly that they provide to the Zionist state.

In addition, it has been well established that some of these countries smuggle arms to warring factions in their zones of influence through a network of contractors (60 per cent of this trade is from the US and 25pc from Europe). Global spending on the manufacture of arms is \$3 trillion of which 39pc is America's share. China's share is 13pc and UK, France, and Russia, collectively, add up to 8.8pc. This also shows the imbalance in power within the Security Council.

Thirty-seven per cent of all arms export is from the US, 20pc from Russia, and 16.7pc from the other members of the Security Council. Meanwhile, Israel is also becoming a major manufacturer of arms and its exports between 2016 and 2020 increased by 59pc. This has major implications for the Middle East. The big importers of arms, on the other hand, are Saudi Arabia (11pc), India (9.5pc), Egypt (5.8pc), UAE (3pc), and Pakistan (2.7pc).

These figures give us some idea of the interests the members of the Security Council have in promoting a state of war. Their economies are heavily dependent on arms production and sale and this has expanded phenomenally from \$95bn in 2017 to \$3tr in 2020.

The figures also point to the fact that the UN is all but dead and survives only because it has become a part of the larger global system to maintain the present status quo of which a proliferating arms economy is an integral part.

The UN employs 37,000 permanent staff and has an annual budget of \$3.231bn (2021 figure). This does not include its special programmes like peacekeeping (last year's budget for peacekeeping was \$6.58bn) or projects related to famine relief. Much of this expense is provided by the five powers. For instance, the US contribution to UN expenses is 22pc of the UN's total budget. To add insult to injury, these five powers and their allies are collectively known as the 'international community'.

The UN has a close working relationship with international financial institutions (IFI) whose political and economic agendas, such as neoliberalism and global trade treaties, it promotes despite being discretely critical of them at times. Enough has been written about these organisations, in the case of Pakistan as well, to show that they are not interested in development but in creating dependence and pushing their loans. The World Bank, the Asian Development Bank and DFID combined employ 23,857 full-time staff and have a combined budget of \$5.4bn. In addition, both the UN and these agencies support thousands of NGOs and consultants in developing data, evaluating programmes, and implementing small and medium projects that serve the various programmes that they promote. This huge bank of human resources, the power it creates, and the interests it generates, collectively manage to prevent the UN from dying formally. They are happy to keep it on a ventilator so that they can also survive.

There is a need for a global network of organisations and individuals to be created, nurtured, and formalised to push for UN reform or/and to non-violently agitate collectively against injustice to prevent the consolidation of an anti-poor status quo. If this does not take place, there will be many more Palestines, leading to global anarchy, and we will watch helplessly.

## Questions

- What are stated objectives of UN charter? Has UN been able to fulfil its mandate? How military-industry complex of P5 has rendered UN ineffective? How financial institutions has helped UN to survive?

## 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 risen 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,".

## 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.
- The 2015 COP21 summit in Paris did not seek a binding international treaty that would impose policies on countries. Accordingly, the approach enshrined in the Paris climate agreement allowed for countries to declare their own voluntary emissions-reduction goals – Nationally Determined Contributions – and climate policies, with the understanding that these would become more ambitious over time.

#### *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.
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- 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.
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- [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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## China

- China is stuck between a fossil fuel-dependent past and a future powered by renewable energy. The country today generates 53% of the world’s coal-fired power. At the same time, it is the world’s leading manufacturer of, and market for, solar panels, wind turbines, and electric vehicles. Whether China can free itself from its decades-old addiction to coal will determine not just its own environmental future, but also – and more crucially – Earth’s prospects in the face of the gathering climate crisis.
- The largely coal-fueled “economic growth at all costs” policy had brought great prosperity, but the collateral damage to the country’s air and water had grown unacceptably high. Environmental advocates called for “building an ecological civilization,” in which nature and humankind would find a harmonious balance. And when President Xi Jinping assumed power in 2012, he immediately took up the cause.
- In quick succession, the Chinese government declared a “war on pollution,” drew up separate air, water, and soil action plans committing \$1 trillion to environmental cleanup, closed inefficient coal plants, and invested hundreds of billions of dollars in renewable-energy development. It also made domestic manufacture and sales of electric vehicles a high priority, and devised a nationwide carbon-trading system.
- Worryingly for China and the planet, that forward momentum now appears to have shifted into reverse. Coal consumption, which had decreased each year between 2014 and 2016, has since risen steadily. The same is true of carbon-dioxide emissions, which increased by 1.5-1.7% even during the pandemic-induced slowdown in 2020. ([carbonbrief.org](#))
- Worse, this increase is only the beginning. The Chinese government has approved construction of an additional 36.9 GW of coal-fired power capacity, bringing the total under construction today to 88 GW. And proposals to build another 158.7 GW are in the pipeline, putting the total new capacity now under consideration at 247 GW – more than the United States’ total installed amount of 233.6 GW.
- What explains China’s apparent return to its coal-addicted ways? For starters, the protests in Hong Kong, the trade war with the US, and the coronavirus pandemic have shifted policymakers’ focus away from environmental reform. So, too, has the slowdown in China’s GDP growth and the



rise in unemployment. The government has been more interested in stimulating traditional, energy-intensive industries like steel, iron, and cement, while provincial leaders have embarked on a spree of construction of coal-fired power plants.

- Furthermore, the recent US-China trade war has heightened Chinese concerns about energy security, given that the country imports 70% of its oil needs and 40% of its gas requirements.
- US disengagement from the Paris Agreement under President Donald Trump probably weakened China's commitment, too.

## 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.
- The IEA has proposed a roadmap for getting the global energy sector to net-zero emissions by 2050. The IPCC report also charts several pathways to creating a net-zero world. Unfortunately, the world's largest historical emitter, the United States, is not following any of them.
- Consider the \$1 trillion infrastructure bill that the US Senate just passed. It was supposed to include a number of climate-related provisions, such as creating a clean electricity standard, funding zero-emissions public transit, building a national electric-vehicle charging infrastructure, and establishing a Civilian Climate Corps. But over months of contentious negotiations, those provisions were largely removed, resulting in a policy that, if passed in the House, would support outmoded fossil-fuel energy and transportation systems.

- Senate Democrats are hoping to make up for this loss with a \$3.5 trillion budget plan, which would support climate action and significantly expand the social safety net. But the bill itself has yet to be written; that is a job for congressional committees. And many elements of it – particularly with regard to climate – are likely to be lost or watered down as it works its way through each committee.
- This does not bode well for US Democrats, who rely on the electoral support of younger voters, for whom climate change is a high priority. If Democrats lose power – say, in next year’s midterm elections – the chances that the US will take effective action to protect the planet will be further diminished. Even now, pressure from the fossil-fuel industry lobby and from Republicans is so strong that US President Joe Biden’s administration has not only failed to curb petroleum production on public and tribal lands, but has approved over 2,100 drilling permits.
- The US has the technology and resources to create a modern, clean-energy economy. It simply lacks the political will. This has far-reaching implications. As the world’s largest economy, with the highest per capita CO2 emissions, the US is vital to the success of COP26.

## Effects

- Ferocious fires have been raging in different parts of the world. In North Africa, wildfires in the Kabyle region of Algeria have claimed at least 65 lives. In Greece, the country faces a “natural disaster of unprecedented proportions” according to Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis, as around 600 wildfires are causing devastation “in all corners” of the country. Fires have also been spreading in Italy’s southern regions, Multiple fires have also destroyed large swaths of pine forests in southern Turkey over the past couple of weeks, spelling disaster for the country’s tourism industry. Siberia — the region known for its merciless winters — has not been spared either. the fires burning in Siberia are reported to be bigger than those burning in many countries combined. On the other side of the world, the Dixie Fires in northern California have burnt down over 900 buildings as firefighters brace themselves for more blazes and destruction. A shocking heatwave in the Pacific northwest turned parts of Canada, of all places, into a cauldron.
- Life-threatening floods are hardly a novelty in the subcontinent, but they are rather rare in Germany and Belgium.
- Hurricane Elsa’s appearance in the Caribbean July 21, far before the usual onset of the Atlantic hurricane season, reminds us of what awaits the world’s small island developing states (SIDS) in the years ahead.
- The vulnerability of small island nations to global climate change was highlighted in a statement issued by Mohamed Nasheed, the former president of the Maldives, an island state at great risk from the expected rise of sea level because of global warming. “While not all are affected, the tragic events in Europe are a reminder that in the climate emergency, no one is safe, whether they live in a small island nation like mine or a developed Western European nation.”
- Days before Europe was hit by floods, a European weather agency issued a warning based on detailed weather models. It was predicted that Germany and some of the neighbouring countries will see river surges not seen in 500 or even 1,000 years.
- Human-induced climate change is already leading to rising sea levels and more intense hurricanes, floods, droughts, forest fires, heat waves, and crop failures. The land areas of several Pacific Island countries have already shrunk, pointing to the possibility that their populations eventually will need to migrate elsewhere. In the Maldives, where fresh water has always been scarce,

groundwater sources are under continual threat from rising sea levels and changing rainfall patterns. And in the Caribbean, high-intensity hurricanes, such as the three that hit in 2017, not only cause death and destruction but also leave countries with massive recovery bills and heavy debts.

- 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 CO<sub>2</sub>), 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 EU would apply the CBAM irrespective of the exporting country's per capita income, and without regard for the principle generally agreed in Paris that developing countries need more time to adopt higher carbon prices or their equivalent. It is pushing ahead despite the fact that most developing countries cannot readily mobilize the large upfront financing necessary for large green investments.
- Another recent proposal comes from senior staff at the International Monetary Fund, which envisions international carbon price floors (ICPFs), differentiated by national income levels. While the authors do not frame ICPFs explicitly as an alternative to CBAMs, they argue that agreed minimum but differentiated carbon prices would reduce the pressure for border-adjustment schemes and be more in keeping with the voluntary spirit of the Paris agreement.

- An ICPF arrangement could at first involve just a few large emitters. For example, according to the IMF, if a “climate club” of just six participants could agree on minimum prices of \$75 per ton of carbon dioxide for the US, Canada, the EU, and the United Kingdom as high-income countries, \$50 per ton for China as a high middle-income country, and \$25 per ton for India as a low middle-income one, this, in addition to current policies, “could help achieve a 23% reduction in global emissions below baseline by 2030.”
- It is not at all obvious, for example, whether India would agree to a price floor of \$25 per ton of CO<sub>2</sub>, or whether that price would be acceptable to the US and the EU. Although some countries might adopt them, ICPFs should rather be interpreted as shorthand for a package of climate policies where the level and timing of ambition differ according to a country’s stage of development.
- [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

### *IPCC 6<sup>th</sup> assessment*

- the IPCC assessment suggests that at the present rate of greenhouse gas emissions, the 1.5°C threshold will be crossed within a couple of decades. It may well be much quicker than that though. The bigger — and now seemingly inevitable — dangers lie beyond that level, stretching to the devastating possibility of 4.4°C by the end of the century.
- Based on more than 14,000 scientific studies, this is the most comprehensive report on the subject to date. The very first line of the report summary reads: “It is unequivocal that human influence has warmed the atmosphere, ocean and land.”
- There is still time to prevent catastrophic global warming, but it will require reducing carbon dioxide emissions 80% by 2030 and 100% by 2050. And while United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres has called the latest report a “code red for humanity,” an effective response remains far from guaranteed.
- This “gap between rhetoric and action,” the International Energy Agency (IEA) warns, “needs to close if we are to have a fighting chance of reaching net zero by 2050 and limiting the rise in global temperatures to 1.5°C.”
- If they (GHGs emissions) are cut too slowly, the kinds of heat waves, droughts, heavy rains, and flooding experienced this summer will become more frequent. More catastrophic outcomes, such as abrupt, irreversible changes in oceanic circulation, cannot be ruled out.
- [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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## Solution

### *Prosecuting Ecocide*

- As proliferating disasters starkly demonstrate, severe damage to the environment is a crime against everyone. Rather than leave it to regulation by individual states, the International Criminal Court should recognize “ecocide” as an international crime.
- The last time a new international criminal offense was introduced was after World War II. The Nuremberg and Tokyo Charters added crimes against humanity to the existing war crimes and crimes against peace (“aggression”), enshrining the idea that certain acts are so egregious that, whoever the immediate victim may be, they concern us all. Soon after, in 1948, a particular crime against humanity – genocide – was incorporated in a new treaty.
- The panel, convened by the Stop Ecocide Foundation (on which we served), defined the crime as follows: unlawful or wanton acts committed with knowledge that there is a substantial likelihood of severe and either widespread or long-term damage to the environment being caused by those acts.
- 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.
- The world is reaching a breaking point. The rich are vaccinated; the poor are not. The rich pour out greenhouse-gas emissions; the poor suffer the consequences. The rich enjoy soaring capital gains; the poor lose their jobs and livelihoods. Yet our fates are intertwined in the end. Pandemics and global environmental crises do not respect national borders. The rich world’s own future interests require justice, decency, and a global financial strategy that recognizes and addresses the pressing needs of vulnerable states and peoples.
- There are three main ways that rich countries can – and should – help offset the damage they have wrought. First, they should put more capital into the multilateral development banks. Second, rich countries should tax their fossil-fuel industries to help cover the rising global costs stemming from their fossil-fuel production. Third, rich countries should tax their billionaire class, especially now that its wealth has soared to unimaginable proportions.
- 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>
- The Special Assistant to PM on Climate Change has recently floated the idea of trying to get all major political parties in Pakistan to sign an environmental charter. There is no significant commitment to the environment within the manifestos of mainstream political parties. Our ruling parties also tend to undo most innovative initiatives launched by their predecessors. It is thus a good idea to develop consensus on a long-term environmental vision for the country.
- Pakistan as the country had the pleasure of hosting the World Environment Day 2021 on 5<sup>th</sup> June. Theme: ecosystem restoration
- <https://tribune.com.pk/story/2291963/climate-imperialism-is-coming>

## *Issues*

- Like most of the world, Pakistan too is facing adverse impacts of the uncontrolled greenhouse emissions, with the agriculture sector — mainly cotton cultivation and livestock rearing — bearing the brunt. The textile and leather industries are badly hit by this situation. The two sectors provide livelihood to more than 15 million families and have a significant role in keeping the economic engine going. Unfortunately, the cotton and leather output has been falling over the years due to the effects of climate change in the form of declining availability of freshwater, the ever-rising temperature and abrupt changes in rainfall patterns, and also because of official neglect of the cotton sector. All this is affecting the supply of raw materials to the textile and leather industries resulting in decreasing incomes for cotton and cattle farmers, leading them to give up growing cotton and rearing cattle.
- While the IPCC report has issued an ominous warning for the global community, it forecasts for South Asia are particularly troubling. Overall, South Asian countries are predicted to see increasingly hot weather, longer monsoon seasons, alongside severer droughts over the next 20 years, as global warming increases by around 1.5 degrees Celsius.
- India and Pakistan are ranked high on the list of countries most vulnerable to climate change in the coming decades. This inevitable climate change also has the potential of becoming a 'threat multiplier' in an already extremely dangerous and tense part of the world.
- Depleting glaciers and reduced river-flows into the Indus can exacerbate the likelihood of conflict between India and Pakistan. Upper riparian China could also be dragged into this conflict as Tibet is the source of not only the Indus but also the Brahmaputra which flows to India and then into Bangladesh. Climate change also has the potential of worsening domestic grievances within these countries, including Pakistan, where provincial water rights remain an issue of contention.
- Without adequate measures put in place to deal with climate change, this growing crisis is likely to exacerbate mass climate-induced migration. These migrant flows can in turn trigger further destabilisation, placing unbearable pressure on already burgeoning megacities and causing refugees to flow across national borders, from Bangladesh into India, and from Afghanistan into Pakistan.
- PAKISTANI urban planners have failed miserably to plan safe and livable cities for us. Instead of serving as engines of growth, our cities are holding us back from economic development. They are fast becoming Pakistan's climate hotspots, unprepared for urban flooding and heatwaves and other climate-induced disasters with poor urban infrastructure and rarely enforced building codes. Yet, cities have the gravitational force to attract the poor from rural areas, making Pakistan the most urbanised country in the region with an unmanageably high population growth rate. The quality of life of the 75 million urban residents is snowballing towards free fall.
- None of Pakistan's provincial capitals has a master plan to guide its development. Karachi's several master plans since 1951 have remained unimplemented drafts. Lahore's master plan, ambitiously named Vision 2050, has been wrought with jurisdictional fights for decades without seeing the light of day. Peshawar and Quetta, despite a push from successive governments have also failed to develop their city's visions.
- In the absence of any climate-compatible development, this growth has increased inequities and vulnerabilities. A unique nexus has emerged that defies all political parties and civil and military bureaucracies, as we have recently witnessed in the case of Rawalpindi's Ring Road. In fact, the

ring roads that were supposed to steer planned growth, have become a code word for elite capture by land grabbers and real estate tycoons.

- See steps to be taken for this issue.
- This pattern of urbanisation has marginalised residents, particularly the poor, women, children and the elderly, by restricting their mobility and adding to their climate vulnerability. The provincial political leadership, instead of providing vision, has left our cities' future in the hands of real estate developers.
- 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.
- Prime Minister Imran Khan in August inaugurated “the world's biggest” Miyawaki urban forest in Lahore. Another 53 Miyawaki forests are being developed in different parts of Lahore to create sinks for carbon as well as for better pollution abatement in the city. All have been geo-tagged to monitor their growth and development.
- [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.
- Pakistan's first locally manufacture electric bike under the Jolta EV technology project. About 7,500 new motorcycles are sold in Pakistan daily and almost 2 million are manufactured every

year. According to recent studies, an electric bike produces 90% less emission than a standard motorcycle — this will prove to be significant.

- 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*

- It is still possible to avert the worst of climate-induced disasters through adequate mitigation policies and measures. Many regional countries, including our own, are trying to contend with climate change by initiating massive reforestation drives and other relevant mitigation measures. Yet, enforcement and lack of sufficient funding remain pressing challenges.



- Despite recent attention paid to environmental issues by our political leaders, India is still ranked 168 out of 180 countries in the 2020 Environmental Performance Index (EPI). Pakistan is ranked 169 on this same ranking. Researchers at Yale and Columbia universities, who formulated this EPI ranking, maintain that India and Pakistan have a long way to go in terms of accelerating their decarbonisation agenda to address worsening air quality.
- Building the capacity of local governments and local communities to become more resilient to varied climate threats may be receiving more recognition now but building effective capabilities on the ground is not easy. Building resilience will take concerted efforts, and an unflinching commitment, which is immune to political manipulation or sabotage.
- Moreover, it is at the regional level where cooperative efforts to contend with climate change must be urgently ramped up. Countries in our region need to stop shifting blame for our environmental woes on neighbouring states. Instead, it is vital to adopt a more holistic approach towards management of shared environmental assets including trans-border estuaries, rivers, and even the air which people in adjoining countries must breathe, no matter how militarised or contested their political borders are.
- Concerted efforts are needed to bring some sanity to this real estate gold rush and set a direction with consensus by engaging key stakeholders. The provincial planning departments together with the Planning Commission can perform this function jointly through an umbrella PC-1 that brings the federating units together to agree that city master plans in Pakistan will include the following components:
  - First, cities should be water secure. Since cities do not have the right to water from the Indus and can get water only from their provincial share, it is critical for cities to identify and protect their catchment areas, inject rainwater to recharge their aquifers and use rooftops, parks, playgrounds and greenbelts to serve this purpose. Absorbing every drop is critical to developing sponge cities.
  - Second, cities should steadily reclaim and protect urban water bodies to curtail urban flooding by negotiating their banks as public parks and urban forests. Water bodies are critical to blunt the spikes in temperature during heatwaves, that are projected to increase in severity and frequency.
  - Third, cities should plan for low or near zero emissions by promoting public transportation and technological transformations to reduce commuting.
  - Fourth, plan for equity and inclusion by provisioning seven essential functions for residents within 15-20 minutes: living, working, commerce, healthcare, education, entertainment, and access to public transportation. This can serve as the backbone of the urban economy. The notion of the 15-minute city is gaining traction in political and planning circles because it deals with the neglected scale of planning that is localised to the neighbourhood level. This return to local ways of life through walkable neighborhoods is particularly suitable for Pakistan where the emphasis on walkability and accessibility is essential for women, children and the elderly who have historically been left out of urban planning.
  - Finally, how cities will be governed, managed and resourced should be clearly articulated in over 200 urban master plans that are presently being developed. We must know what will be the accountability mechanisms and what climate change-specific considerations will be addressed in the master plans.
- 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

- Adam Smith, the founder of modern economics, argued that the pursuit of private interests – profits – will invariably promote the common good. That may be true in some situations, but obviously not always. Just as banks' pursuit of profit led to the 2008 financial crisis, it was Purdue and other pharmaceutical companies' greed that produced the opioid crisis, and Texaco's support of the Franco regime that helped the fascists triumph in the Spanish Civil War. This litany of perfidy could easily be extended. But among the worst abuses committed by greedy corporations today is childhood slavery.
- six Malian former child slaves were seeking compensation from nestle and Cargill under US tort laws for their sufferings. The US Alien Tort Statute, the court held, cannot be applied "extraterritorially," because that would amount to an extension of US law beyond US boundaries.
- Of course, the US operates extraterritorially all the time, such as when it punishes foreign companies for violating its sanctions against Iran. The difference in this case was that it was American companies (or those working on their behalf) who were being called to account.
- In the absence of any accountability, US corporations have little incentive to change their behavior abroad.
- 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)

## Gilgit

- Sar Zameen e Bai Aayeen (land without constitution)
- On Mar 9<sup>th</sup> 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
- THE government's plans to accord a provisional provincial status to Gilgit-Baltistan are progressing steadily and the law ministry has finalised the proposed legislation. The draft of this constitutional amendment bill proposes a provincial assembly for GB as well as representation of people from GB in parliament in Islamabad. It also proposes that the Chief Court of Gilgit-Baltistan may be abolished and replaced with a high court, while the Supreme Appellate Court be either abolished or re-established like the Supreme Court of Azad Jammu & Kashmir. If it is abolished then the jurisdiction of the Supreme Court of Pakistan may be extended to GB. The Election Commission of Gilgit-Baltistan will also be merged with the Election Commission of Pakistan and its chairman will be made a member of the ECP if this constitutional amendment is adopted.
- However, every care must be taken to ensure that the text of the amendment is legally watertight and does not in any way dilute Pakistan's position on Kashmir. It may therefore be prudent to have the law vetted by international legal experts as well as diplomats who will be required to defend it at foreign forums if a challenge does arise. The amendment should also be debated thoroughly in parliament and at all public forums before it is put to vote and adopted.
- If passed by a two-thirds majority in parliament, GB would likely be given the status of province through an amendment in Article 1 of the Constitution. But will this amendment resolve GB's chronic issues?
- Since the independence of Gilgit on Nov 1, 1947, and the end of Dogra rule, Pakistan has administered the region through the centre, initially by imposing the colonial-era FCR and setting up a ministry for Kashmir and the Northern Areas. Dogra forces captured and annexed Baltistan in 1840 while later after the Treaty of Amritsar, Gilgit was also captured. However, other small kingdoms beyond Gilgit remained independent and never came under Dogra subjugation. Hence maintaining that the entire Gilgit region was part of Dogra's Kashmir state is historically debatable. The locals also argue that Baltistan and Gilgit were taken through force and hence cannot be considered a part of Kashmir.
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- However, in the early period of the Kashmir dispute, Pakistan merged the region of GB with Kashmir to gain more votes in a possible UN plebiscite on Kashmir. Hence Pakistan's international position is that Kashmir as of Aug 14, 1947, included GB, and that the issue will be decided later. This makes GB itself a disputed territory between India and Pakistan. This also resulted in the lack of representation of GB lawmakers in the national legislature. GB until 2009 was governed through the centre. In 2009, a reform order transferred some powers to elected representatives. But a parallel system of federally appointed civil servants is still intact; they enjoy more powers and resources. The locals argue that their assembly and lawmakers are not empowered in policymaking and financial matters.
- For representation of GB in the national legislature, Articles 51 and 59 of the Constitution also need to be amended. But representation is not the only concern. Access for GB's lawmakers to all constitutional bodies like the National Finance Commission, National Economic Council, Council of Common Interests, the Indus River System Authority, etc will be pivotal. People also want the complete transfer of administrative, financial, and legislative powers from the centre to the (future) province, in keeping with the 18th Amendment.
- How legislators will deal with Article 257 which relates to accession of the state of Jammu and Kashmir to Pakistan and to what extent the proposed bill will transfer the powers to GB remains to be seen. Constitutional expert Dr Syed Jaffar Ahmed says that "going beyond our present position on GB might affect Pakistan's international position on Kashmir issue".

#### Constitutional framework

- The status of GB has been changed and upgraded gradually since creation of Pakistan. Various reform packages like Northern Area Council 1970, Legal Framework Order 1947, Northern Area Legal Framework Order 1994, and Supreme Court Order 1999 were adopted by successive governments to improve the administration to accommodate the local population. In this regard, the major step was taken in September 2009 when Northern Area Legal Framework Order 1994, replaced by new reforms package Gilgit Baltistan Empowerment and Self Governance Order 2009 (GBESGO 2009) signed by President Asif Ali Zardari was offered for giving them maximum administrative internal autonomy. Northern Areas was renamed as Gilgit Baltistan. Under this order, rules of procedures can be formulated by the GB Assembly. In their own jurisdiction, assembly and council entrusted to legislate upon internal matters.
- In 2018, PML(N) government by annulling PO 2009, announced a new Gilgit Baltistan Reform Order 2018. Under the new order, all powers exercised by the GB council, including passing legislation regarding mineral, hydropower and tourism sectors, have been shifted to the GB Assembly. the name of the Gilgit-Baltistan Legislative Assembly had been replaced with the Gilgit-Baltistan Assembly. All powers exercised by the four provincial assemblies under Schedule IV of the Constitution of Pakistan had been entrusted to the GB Assembly.
- Addressing a press conference on Monday, GB Law Minister Aurangzeb Khan and Adviser on Information Shams Mir said the new order was protected by the Constitution of Pakistan, which provides political, administrative, financial and judicial powers to GB.
- However, a large number of residents of the region along with the combined opposition in the Gilgit-Baltistan Legislative Assembly (GBLA) rejected the order and said that GB should be declared a part of Pakistan instead of being administered through presidential orders.

- As a result of widespread protests against the order, The court had restored the GB Empowerment and Self-Governance Order 2009 in the region. The government had, in turn, moved the SC against the GB Appellant Court's order and demanded that GB Order 2018 be restored. Chief Justice of Pakistan Saqib Nisar, heading a three-judge bench, restored the 2018 ordinance and said that it was the government's responsibility to ensure that the people of GB are treated the same as the citizens of any other part of the country.

## 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 Féin 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

If there has been one lesson from Afghan history, it is that no outsider has been able to dominate it for long. This is what the British learnt in the nineteenth century, the Soviets in the twentieth and the US in the twenty-first.

### Background

- Times magazine cover statement Dec 2001 "The Last Days of The Taliban"; Soviet invasion; President Reagan hosted Mujahideen in White House; declared 'moral equivalent' to the founding fathers. CIA, Uni of Nebraska and Jihad;; The Bear Trap ref that to Americans "Afghanistan was more acceptable as red (communist) than green (Islamic)"; Washington Post article's regarding US afghan policy (imposing democracy and free market eco on an ancient, tribal society that was unsuited for either)
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### Peace Plan process

- **Agreement:** Delisting of Taliban from UNSC Sanctions List 1267; reduce troops to 8600 in 135 days and Complete (US & NATO) till May 1, 2021; Afg soil will not be used for any foreign aggression (ISIS, AL-QAEDA)
- **Flaws:** Afg govt wasn't taken in confidence, assurances given by Taliban were enough for US to ink an agreement with them; US failed to seek guarantees from Taliban that after the American military withdrawal they would not forcibly occupy Afghanistan, including its capital Kabul; US getting rid bcz of material and physical losses instead of insuring peace and stability in the form of an intra-Afghan agreement seeking commitment from all the local stakeholders, including Taliban, for a ceasefire; a caretaker government mandated by the UN Security Council; and guarantees of adherence to a democratic political process.
- it would have been better had a Doha-II been reached with Taliban and other stakeholders in Afghanistan, including the Kabul regime, for agreeing on a peace architecture with Afghan groups committing to refrain from use of force to occupy territories in the aftermath of withdrawal of foreign military. three interrelated components of power-sharing: accommodation through comprehensiveness and commitment from Western actors to avoid Iraqi result.
- Moscow hosted extended 'troika' meeting on Mar 18; US, Russia, China and Pakistan called on Afghanistan's warring sides to reach an immediate ceasefire.

- **Antony Blinken letter to Ghani:** 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.
- Taliban refusal to attend istanbul summit following extension in withdrawal date 9/11; breach of Doha agreement; for Taliban peace means more gains than lost: intl recognition, legitimacy, exchange of prisoners, removal of UN sanctions
- 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.
- Biden admin tactical error: announcing withdrawal date just a few days before a planned Istanbul conference on Afghanistan, it undercut peace diplomacy.
- The two-day talks between the Afghan High Council for National Reconciliation and the Taliban ended without a major breakthrough in Doha. Both sides at the end issued diplomatic statements without a tangible outcome, however agreeing to carry forward the dialogue.
- July 2021 The most recent diplomatic exchange took place in the city of Tianjin, where the Chinese government had invited members of the armed movement for talks. Earlier, a Taliban delegation was in Iran to talk peace with the Afghan government, with the Iranian foreign minister playing host, while peace talks between both sides were also hosted by Russia.
- Clearly a concerted effort is needed by the international community to press both parties to negotiate seriously before time runs out and a fully blown civil war erupts. So far diplomatic efforts aimed at promoting this objective have been fragmented with different countries initiating separate efforts towards this aim. This is illustrated by recent talks hosted by Iran and earlier by Russia
- the extended Troika plus Iran can collectively exert pressure on the Afghan sides to accelerate efforts for a political settlement. In so doing, both incentives (international legitimacy, delisting and future assistance) and disincentives (withholding recognition, assistance) should be laid out to goad the two sides towards serious negotiations, underlining that time is now their common enemy.
- Extended troika (US, Russia, Pak, China) met in Doha aug 11, 2021; convergence of interests; seeking to develop a regional consensus on the Afghan conflict

#### Pakistan factor

- **Pm op-ed in Washington post:** wrote about our losses (70k lives 150b dollars in eco while us provided only 20b; tourism and investment dried up; targeted as collaborator leading to terrorism against our country from ttp and others, us drone attacks (sovereignty; as pm said in parliament will uk allow us to attack there?); promoting eco connectivity and regional trade key to lasting peace and security in afg, if us couldn't win war from unside afg after 20 years, how from bases in our country? Earlier in an interview to HBO (PM said Absolutely NOT)
- **PM visit to Uzbek:** The prevailing Afghan situation dominated the discourse at a regional conference titled 'Central and South Asia Regional Connectivity: Challenges and Opportunities' held in Tashkent. As Afghan President Ashraf Ghani repeated his customary criticism of Pakistan's "negative role" in the Afghan peace process during his address; on his turn, Prime Minister Imran Khan hit back hard and put the record straight. He stressed that no country had tried harder than Pakistan to convince the Taliban for talks.

- Afghanistan was also main talking point btw PM and Uzbek president earlier. In 1990s two countries were supporting opposite sides in Afghan imbroglio which caused bitter relationship with new-born state. Presently both countries do not have any favourites and stress on Afghan led and Afghan owned solution.
- **Ghani interview to German Publication Der Spiegel:** US now plays minor role, question of hostility/peace now in Pak hands; blamed Pak operated organized sys of support for the Taliban saying Taliban's decision-making bodies like Quetta, Miran Shah and Peshawar Shuras are all named after Pakistani cities
- **Afghan NSA remarks:** Hamdullah Mohib in May in Nangarhar province used derogatory lang for Pak, Pak responded by handing over a demarche to Afg ambassador
- **US centcom chief:** Gen MCKenzie remarked country most affected after US withdrawal is Afg; unconstrained refugee flows, possibility of new terrorist attacks could ramp up
- **Quetta attack:** consider timing (First: FM Qureshi and Iranian President Rouhani inaugurated Pishin-Mashad crossing along Pak-Iran border to bolster trade; this new commercial gateway will bring benefits to the Balochistan's citizens reducing smuggling routes; displeased New Delhi which activated Indian sponsored assets; Second: two weeks after the US chargé d'affaires for Pakistan, Angela Aggeler, visited Gwadar to explore Pak-US investment opportunities; Third: strategically timed and calculated coinciding with a high-profile delegation visit involving the Chinese ambassador, Nong Rong
- **UN report feb 2021:** govt army stated multiple times terrorist infra of TTP uprooted from Pak found refuge in Afg; in 2020 Pak permanent member to UN presented a dossier claiming that TTP and other anti-Pak groups were being reunified at the behest of India; UN report confirmed this
- **Border fencing:** because of terrorist activities and as a contingency plan to prevent or at least minimize the negative fallout of the civil war in Afg. Pakistan has sought to mitigate this danger by fencing much of the border, sealing illegal crossing points, increasing border posts, strengthening the capacity of the Frontier Corps, upgrading training of law-enforcement personnel, enhancing technical surveillance and stationing regular troops there.
- **TTP threat:** TTP leader Noor Wali Mehsud surfaced recently to announce in a CNN interview that his militant group will continue its "war against Pakistan's security forces" and its aim is to "take control of the border regions and make them independent".
- **NAP:** after Aps attack national consensus to root out terrorism and extremism resulted in 20 point NAP; not only talked about 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. Time to take action on every point.
- **Refugees:** At one point, Pakistan hosted over 4.5 million Afghan refugees. According to the UNHCR, 1.4m still live in Pakistan with over 300,000 in Karachi alone.
- Pakistan has hosted millions of Afghans seeking refuge on its soil for the past four decades, as stability has eluded this country's western neighbour. According to Interior Minister Sheikh Rashid, Pakistan's borders will not be opened for refugees. Instead, the country will follow the 'Iranian model', where refuge seekers will be housed in camps along the border. While that kind of containment of the refugee population was possible in Iran, it may not work in Pakistan with the same tribes straddling the border.

- The following proposals are on the table: (1) Convince the international humanitarian agencies to make camps for the displaced persons on the border with Pakistan but on the Afghan side (2) By keeping them on the Afghan side, let the international organisations give them the status of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) and not refugee status (3) Allow them inside Pakistan but keep them confined to designated camps (4) Block them from coming into Pakistan regardless of the situation (border fencing, patrolling).
- The more realistic assessment is that once the refugees start to converge in the tens of thousands, it would be extremely difficult for Pakistan to block them. Another aspect: impossible to figure out who is genuine refugee and who may be TTP or other terrorist.
- However, while Pakistan should do all it can to help Afghan civilians fleeing conflict in their homeland, 'solutions' should not be thrust on this country. In this regard, a senior US State Department official recently told journalists in Washington that "it'll be important [for Pakistan] that their borders remain open". The comment comes on the heels of a statement by Pakistan's national security adviser who, during his trip to the US, reiterated state policy when he said that arrangements for Afghan civilians fleeing conflict should be made "inside their country". Moreover, the US has also suggested that Turkey play host to Afghan refuge-seekers. Ankara has not reacted positively, with Turkish officials saying the US plan to use third countries will spark a "great migration crisis" while also rejecting the "irresponsible decision taken by the United States without consulting our country".
- **CIA chief visit to ISB:** 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; pak refused; didn't met PM; pak didn't want to be the bad guy aiding and abetting in the slaughter of people; us has always betrayed after achieving its goals; read us pak relations;
- 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
- 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; convinced Taliban to come to the negotiating table; it cannot dictate terms to them; Trump too realised country importance after his initial diatribe against it; pak provides easy access to the afghans; tens of thousands straddle Pak's border without a visa for business and jobs; pak is food basket of afg and is its largest trading partner for export; pak provides afg shortest transit route; Karzai referred both as 'Siamese Twins'.
- **Major achievement for pak:** peace and stability in afg; return of afghan refugees; end to terrorism, etc, resumption of normal business activities, BRI, access to CARs
- **Recent attacks:** whether via IEDs or direct fire — on Pakistani security forces (Johar Town Lahore & near Quetta airport). Shaikh Rashid 88 % of the border (Durand Line) has been fenced which should enhance security.

- **India's opportunity?** My assumption is that our current Afghan policy shift will give huge advantage to India on our western front. Taliban's motivation has a history — it has been more monetary than ideological and so their various factions have thus far been easily manipulated. It is not their belief in regressive social customs which is a cause for concern because these customs can only be encouraged and promoted if they come to power. Nobody is coming to power in Kabul soon, as power is what will be contested for a long time under an environment of a civil war. What is of real concern to Pakistan is the Indian role of fomenting separatism and violence in Pakistan through Afghanistan.
- The Indians had their officers in civilian clothes helping and fighting along with the separatists in East Pakistan. What is it that stops them from executing a similar strategy against Pakistan through Afghanistan? India has already developed an infrastructure in Afghanistan from where it can influence and exacerbate our domestic fault-lines. Many Afghan leaders of Pashtun background have already been cultivated by Indians to challenge Pakistan's interests in the past and many briefcases full of money are likely to exchange hands in coming days as well. Indians will most likely engage in the dual policy of publicly condemning Taliban and privately cutting deals with their various factions.
- Indian shift in Afghan policy will now have clear drivers and they will be: adopting a conciliatory approach and establishing financial linkages with Taliban; increasing interaction and building relationships with all Taliban factions; ensuring Taliban support Indian development work in Afghanistan; keeping Pakistan politically marginalised in Afghanistan; increasing their influence in Pashtun dominated provinces and promoting Indian goodwill there; hiring military mercenaries on Pak-Afghan border; funding anti-Pakistan Afghan groups and utilising them to create strategic discomfort for Pakistan on the western front; and bogging down Pakistan's military on the western front.
- The choice Pakistan is making is based on the bitter lessons it has learnt for following an Afghan policy which has been very unpopular with many scholars and strategic thinkers in the past. The Indian approach will be more opportunist and based on its geopolitical rivalry with Pakistan and China. In the great game which will now be fought in the Afghan colosseum, the most crucial and stand-out factor will be seeking Afghan Taliban's support. Without such support establishing economic connectivity with Central Asia will remain uncertain.
- If we have learnt from our mistakes and reviewed our Afghan policy then we cannot allow this policy to fail now. (READ india in regional impacts section)
- **Proxy warfare:** Sanction Pakistan is a Twitter trend that is being supported by some of these frustrated Afghan and Indian minds.
- **Taliban our friend?**
- In February 2001, Lt Gen (retd) Moinuddin Haider, the then interior minister of Pakistan, made an unusual visit to Kabul. There he presented a list of sixty Lashkar-e-Jhangvi absconders, including Riaz Basra, the notorious founder of the group. Intelligence reports had indicated, and Islamabad was convinced, that these absconders had taken refuge in the country. Their presence was denied by the Taliban but as there was an ideological convergence between the two, the Taliban would not have handed them over in any case.
- What interests did the Taliban purportedly serve Pakistan, apart from being a massive drain on resources, an international liability and radicalising influence at home? It refused to resolve the



Durand line issue. It regularly disregarded Islamabad's pleas to show respect for human rights or to moderate its ways, resulting in the constant international marginalisation of Pakistan.

- Recently, as the Taliban expanded their sway, reports have emerged of the TTP terrorists living in territories controlled by their ideological Afghan twins. This has given birth to a host of questions. Why have the Taliban not taken any action against them? Why have Pakistan's 'brethren' not expelled or handed them over? Could they do that if their control over Afghanistan is complete? The relationship between the TTP and the TTA (Afghan Taliban) has been a source of the good-Taliban-bad-Taliban binary for long. But the truth is that the TTA has never publicly disavowed the TTP. They say nothing and leave it to the obscurity and confusion artists to sow doubts in the minds of the public about the evidence before them. Today the TTA is not in power and even then, it is not ready to help in bringing Pakistan's public enemy number one to justice. What is the chance that it would once it came to power? None at all, if the Riaz Basra and Lashkar-e-Jhangvi episode cited above is any proof. They are ideological twins and this time the TTA promises to return to power emboldened by the 'defeated a superpower' lore. This time it will be far more stubborn in its conduct.
- there is the added danger that the Taliban will seek to extend their writ to much of Pakistan. If so, it would be hard to miss the irony, as it was Pakistan's provision of a sanctuary to the Taliban for so many years that allowed it to wage war. Now, in a modern-day version of Frankenstein, it is possible that Afghanistan will become a sanctuary for taking the war to Pakistan – potentially a nightmare scenario, given Pakistan's fragility, large population, nuclear arsenal, and history of war with India.

#### Realism or Liberalism

- Pull-out is demonstration that states act on realism not idealism. US entered in first place for security leaving for security not democracy, human rights, etc!

#### Why US left?

- more than 2,300 US military lives lost, tens of thousands of US wounded, countless Afghan casualties and more than \$2 trillion in taxpayer money spent.
- **US view:** Primary obj-> degrade the threat of terrorism against US and allies; accomplished decade ago; Al-Qaeda capabilities are a fraction of what they used to be; threat from afg smaller than various parts of Africa and ME; in Somalia for instance, al-shabab's territorial and governing power are steadily increasing and the group retains a strong allegiance to al-Qaida; US veterans of such unending wars are prime recruits for right wing militias in the us and threat to public safety, democracy, rule of law; capitol bill attack was manifestation of this
- Now, threats from China, an aggressive Russia, North Korea, and Iran — as well as zoonotic pandemics — are more important strategic priorities
- **History of un-ceremonial and abrupt withdrawal:** left Saigon (South Vietnam's capital) in 75 in haste, 93 abandoned peacekeeping operations in Somalia; always goes for escapist option recent example is afg
- **Soviet withdrawal:** result of third-party mediation by UN, the Geneva accord of April 14, 1988 was guaranteed by the Soviet Union and the US, with Pakistan and the Soviet-backed Kabul regime as signatories
- That is because the mission was fatally flawed from the outset. It was a fool's errand to try to turn Afghanistan into a centralized, unitary state. The country's difficult topography, ethnic

complexity, and tribal and local loyalties produce enduring political fragmentation. Its troubled neighborhood and hostility to outside interference make foreign intervention perilous.

- Against a backdrop of decades of economic discontent among US workers, recently exacerbated by the devastating impact of the pandemic, voters want their tax dollars to go Kansas, not Kandahar.

#### Afghan Security Situation after withdrawal

- The report of the Special Inspector for Afghan Reconstruction says no trained personnel in afg air force for maintenance of aircrafts, dependent on the personnel of resolute support for this, necessary for some men to stay back beyond sept 11; recent Taliban victories illustrate this point without air force reining Taliban in is difficult;

#### Civilians

- The US' mission statement confirmed reports of the Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission (AIHRC), which were issued last month. As many as 33 assassination incidents were reported in the southern Afghan province of Kandahar after Taliban insurgents overtook a crossing point with Pakistan. The commission believes that the recent targeted attacks come as a kind of warning from the Taliban for everyone to fall in line. The attacks targeted religious scholars, tribal elders, civil society activists, journalists, and human rights defenders. The United Nations Security Council condemned what is called deliberate attacks on civilians in Afghanistan. It also declared its opposition to restoration of a Taliban rule in Afghanistan.
- The magnitude of terror is limitless as even poets, historians and comedians are not spared. The gruesome murder of a well-known Afghan comedian, popularly known as Khasha Zwan, and the brutal killing of renowned Afghan poet and historian Abdullah Atifi are some recent examples.

#### ISIL-KP

- attack on school 80 girls and gunmen attacked maternity ward in Dasht-i-Barchi area, a neighbourhood populated by the Shia Hazara community; 10 mine workers in Baghlan province.
- 100 people reported dead in the Daesh claimed terrorist bombings outside Kabul's airport. "We will not forgive, we will not forget. We will hunt you down and make you pay."

#### Taliban

- Some Afghan Air Force (AAF) pilots have absconded. And all this is happening while Allied troops are still there; Afghan government soldiers have abandoned their posts without any fight. In some cases, the soldiers have joined the insurgents. The Taliban now control the main border crossing with Tajikistan, a main trade route.
- Afghanistan's territory comprises over 400 districts, including the capital cities of the 34 provinces. In January 2018, the Taliban controlled only 14 districts, while the Afghan government held sway over approximately 120 districts and the rest of the territory was contested. Over a year ago in February 2020, when the US signed the peace agreement with the Taliban, the Taliban had won close to 80 districts, while the Afghan government's position remained unchanged. After the announcement of the withdrawal of all US forces in April, 2021, the Taliban are now in control of almost 150 districts, as the Afghan government retreats, desperately trying to hold on to its 80 districts. Since May 1, 2021, the Taliban have swept through large parts of Afghanistan at an alarming pace (80 out of the 160 districts, taken in less than 60 days) and have captured areas that were not in their control, even at the peak of their power in 1999 — areas to the north of

Kabul, traditionally held by the Northern Alliance, dominated by ethnic Tajiks and Uzbeks, when they ruled over 90% of Afghanistan. **Reason:** absence of American air power which forced the Taliban to retreat in the past.

- But the Taliban forces have achieved their most symbolic, if not the most important, victory in southern Kandahar province as they establish their control over Panjwai district. The region, which is the birthplace of the Taliban movement, has also been the venue of fierce battles against Nato forces for more than a decade. It fell to the Taliban hours after the Americans vacated the Kandahar military base.
- The capture of Panjwai has helped the Taliban consolidate their hold over the southern Pakhtun-dominated areas. It has put Kandahar, the second biggest town in Afghanistan, under siege. The Taliban now claim to have control over 150 out of 460 districts. Most of them have fallen to the insurgents in the last one month after the withdrawal of the residual US forces began.
- While consolidating their military and diplomatic gains, the Taliban have also sought to secure the support of communities it had fought in the past in order to present themselves as a national movement. The Taliban had traditionally relied on ethnic Pakhtuns, but made a clear shift to recruit members of other ethnic groups with a view to expanding their area of influence; inducted several tajik and uzbek commanders in its ranks, giving them more operational autonomy ; non-pakhtuns now constitute a quarter of the Taliban leadership council; inducted shia hazaras to present themselves as multiethnic, multisect force to make them politically acceptable. As an example, the Taliban appointed a Shia ethnic Hazara as its shadow district chief before the intra-Afghan peace talks
- 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.
- In his message before Eid ul Adah the Taliban’s supreme leader Hibatullah Akhundzada declared that in spite of military gains he “strenuously favours” a political settlement. In similar vein, a Taliban spokesman told CNN that “a military takeover is not an option” for them.
- Meanwhile, Tajikistan’s border service reported that 134 Afghan servicemen had received asylum at the crossing. Another 53 Afghan border troops and local militiamen retreated from a Taliban onslaught in Afghanistan’s Shortepa district by crossing into Uzbekistan; and on July 5, more than 1,000 Afghan soldiers reportedly fled across the border from Badakhshan Province into Tajikistan.
- The group now controls border crossings and main trade routes with all neighbouring countries, denying the Afghan government a major source of income from custom duties and transit fees.
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#### *Afghan govt*

- increased its reliance on regional militias; us intel report says Ghani govt in Kabul could collapse within 6 months of withdrawal; although Biden assured Ghani and Abdullah during their visit to DC of continued US financial, political and moral support, that may not be able to save Afghanistan from the looming civil war; The U.S. has spent a stunning total of \$2.26 trillion in total, Washington has poured over \$143 billion in nation-building on a massive scale, Of that, \$88 billion went to

training, equipping and funding Afghan military and police forces. Another \$36 billion was spent on reconstruction projects, education and infrastructure like dams and highways, the SIGAR report said. Another \$4.1 billion has gone to humanitarian aid for refugees and disasters. The campaign to deter Afghans from selling heroin around the world cost over \$9 billion. the Afghan leadership and warlords have been extracting financial benefits without offering much in terms of political stability after the fall of the Taliban; 'rent seeking' approach and dumping the blame on Pak for supporting Taliban and causing instability; utterly failed to improve socio eco conditions, rampant corruption, no accountability, has been a narco state, Afghan drug lords earn USD 5 billion from opium and heroin smuggling which 'benefits' the who-is-who of Afghanistan, including top government officials

- Internal rivalry btw Ghani and Abdullah; forming of parallel govts; intl community has given de jure recog to Ghani govt evident when the diplomatic corps in Kabul attended the oath taking ceremony of Ghani; Abdullah has value amongst non-pashtun warlords; he leads the High Council for National Reconciliation, which is expected to lead the intra-Afghan peace talks with the Taliban; Ghani worsened the situation by holding a peace deal hostage to convince americans to stay
- Ghani's plan: presented in Heart of Asia Conf; three phase peace plan; first: a consensus on political settlement and intl monitored ceasefire; two: presidential election; three: building a constitutional framework, reintegration of refugees and development for Afghanistan moving forward.

#### *New mujahideen*

- anti-taliban elementws have grouped themselves under this banner fully equipped with necessary fire power professing an alliance with Kabul and signalling a clear return to the territory-based warlord-ism 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".

#### *India*

- Several news outlets have now reported that India has been flying weapons to Afghanistan under the guise of evacuation flights for diplomatic staff in the country. This is concerning on many levels, but most of all the uncertainty of whom these weapons are meant for. Legitimate shipments to support the Kabul government would not have to be 'secretly' flown in. That leads to the concern that the weapons could be destined for anti-Pakistan terrorists based in Afghanistan.

## Daesh IS-K

BORN in blood, fuelled by revenge and sustained by hubris, the 'War on Terror' left nothing but shattered nations and lost lives in its wake. The occupation that began with the whine of B-52 bombers and the rout of the Taliban ends with the death of dozens at the Kabul airport, the names of whom will be added to the butcher's bill of this 20-year conflict along with all the victims, mostly faceless, mostly uncounted, that are the legacy of what was called the 'Forever War'.

Daesh entered Afghanistan in 2015, with former TTP fighters flocking to their banners along with disaffected members of the Afghan Taliban and a smattering of fighters from the alphabet soup of militant groups that operate in Afghanistan. Setting up their base in the eastern province of Nangarhar, the IS-K, while distinct from its parent group in Syria, also operated along the same lines of almost exclusively attacking civilian targets with the aim of causing high casualties and just this year they claimed responsibility for bombing a girl's school in Kabul, an atrocity that claimed the lives of 90 people, mostly children.

For the Taliban, the IS-K presence is intolerable as it poses not just a physical but also an ideological threat and so over the past several years we have seen many instances of the Taliban taking on the IS-K. Furthermore, the Taliban are close to Al Qaeda which in turn is a bitter rival of Daesh. For the US, the Taliban in this particular case are the lesser of two evils as unlike Daesh, they do not have an expansionist, internationalist agenda.

While IS-K does not possess the wherewithal to pose an existential threat to the Taliban and has in fact seen its capabilities greatly degraded over the past few years, it certainly possesses the ability to stage deadly attacks across Afghanistan, especially at a time when the Taliban are stretched thin trying to consolidate their hold. Ideologically, it is now presenting itself as the 'true' resistance to the West and accusing the Taliban of allowing 'spies' and 'crusaders' to leave Afghanistan under a deal.

Whether this tack will succeed in increasing recruitment is an open question, and will largely depend on what attitude smaller militant groups adopt towards it.

## Taliban takeover

### Hooks

- Afghanistan has a well-deserved reputation for being a political graveyard as well as a real one. The former UK Prime Minister Harold Macmillan, drawing on the experience of three fairly disastrous interventions by British imperial forces from India in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, once said that the first law of politics was not to invade Afghanistan.
- BORN in blood, fuelled by revenge and sustained by hubris, the '**War on Terror**' left nothing but shattered nations and lost lives in its wake. The occupation that began with the whine of B-52 bombers and the rout of the Taliban ends with the death of dozens at the Kabul airport, the names of whom will be added to the butcher's bill of this 20-year conflict along with all the victims, mostly faceless, mostly uncounted, that are the legacy of what was called the 'Forever War'.
- The dizzying speed of these developments reinforce what **Lenin** once said: "There are decades when nothing happens; and then there are weeks when decades happen!"
- On the eve of the 20th anniversary of 9/11, the Afghanistan debacle has evoked memories of Cambodia and Vietnam 1975 or Iran 1979, where the departing American ambassador announced somewhat bitterly: "Till yesterday, we were ruling this country!"

- The hats have fallen in Kabul. Afghan President Ashraf Ghani has left for greener pastures, as his administration melted down like a house of cards. The United States' dream to conquer and rule Afghanistan is now an embarrassing footnote of history. The security apparatus that Washington and its allies raised at the cost of billions of dollars withered away before firing even a single aerial shot. So much so for strategic alignment of a superpower in Southwest Asia, whose credentials will surely be questioned by saner elements in the American establishment!
- The magnitude of the United States' failure in Afghanistan is breath-taking. It is not a failure of Democrats or Republicans, but an abiding failure of American political culture, reflected in US policymakers' lack of interest in understanding different societies. And it is all too typical.
- The terrorist takeover of Afghanistan, following President Joe Biden's precipitous and bungling military exit, has brought an ignoble end to America's longest war. This is a watershed moment that will be remembered for formalizing the end of the long-fraying Pax Americana and bringing down the curtain on the West's long ascendancy.
- At a time when its global pre-eminence was already being severely challenged by China, the United States may never recover from the blow this strategic and humanitarian disaster delivers to its international credibility and standing. The message it delivers to US allies is that they count on America's support when they most need it at their own peril.
- This is not the first time the US has dumped its allies – or even the first time in recent memory. In the fall of 2019, the US abruptly abandoned its Kurdish allies in northern Syria, leaving them at the mercy of a Turkish offensive.
- when faced with a real enemy, the overfed Afghan army and security forces exercised their democratic rights. They voted, with their feet.

#### *Legitimacy*

- almost more than half of the resources required to operate the new state that is now theirs to run are met by donor countries that are announcing a suspension of these aid flows one by one. Without these resources they cannot pay government salaries, especially those of the Afghan National Defence and Security Forces (ANDSF). They will learn that without a functional financial system, without a central bank, and without foreign exchange reserves, they cannot make the payments on the electricity they import from their neighbours. Then they will discover the massive debt-servicing obligations of the state they have just captured, and the freezing of the \$7bn in programmed donor support for 2021.
- This is why the Taliban are so keen to acquire international legitimacy. Despite the fact that they control all the provincial capitals, they have not yet declared their emirate to be the government in Afghanistan and are continuing to negotiate a transfer of power from the former state authorities, notably the High Peace Council in Doha. Without international legitimacy they cannot unlock the reserves or reactivate donor funding lines. And without these they can only fall back on their earlier model of taxing smugglers to generate revenues. But that model cannot give them the resources that the state they have captured requires.

#### *Taliban 2.0*

- **“Conquering the world on horseback is easy; it is dismounting and governing that is hard” - Genghis Khan.**
- The Taliban are in the global spotlight. They will be judged for their deeds, and not words. “We will not allow anyone to use our lands to target anyone, and we do not want to harm others,”

Baradar outlined his would-be administration's external relations. The Taliban leadership has to keep that pledge, and this is what is demanded of them by the international community. There is no room for installing a 1996-like regime, as international recognition won't be forthcoming if Taliban resorted to whipping of women, implementing Islamic laws by force, and penalising minorities and non-Muslims.

- It is hoped that decades of trial and error have taught the Taliban the way to run a civic administration, which is free from prejudice. China, Russia and Turkey have reposed trust in the Taliban by not evacuating their embassies.
- There has certainly been some positive move from the Taliban leadership to calm down the fear of reprisal. A general amnesty has been announced and government employees including women have been asked to return to work. They have also been assured that there would be no restriction on female education. These declarations are quite reassuring. But there are still apprehensions about the implementation of these solemn pledges.
- A Taliban commander being interviewed by a female anchor on a local Afghan TV channel may have been good optics, but it remains to be seen how much freedom of expression will be allowed under a new Islamic dispensation. It nevertheless indicates a refreshing change from the previous Taliban administration's ban on TV and even photography.
- Preserving Afghanistan's press would be a major sign that Taliban 2.0 is taking a different tack. It is one of the country's greatest success stories. From having no independent media under the previous Taliban regime, the country has gone on to boast more than 170 radio stations, over 100 newspapers and dozens of television channels.
- But developments suggest that Afghanistan's press, for many years the freest in South Asia, will be among the Taliban's first victims. According to Nai, a media advocacy group, at least 30 media workers have been killed, wounded or tortured since the start of the year, and that's before the Taliban took control. Fifty-one media outlets have also closed over the past four months.
- Afghan journalists are going into hiding, quitting the profession, erasing their online profiles, fleeing the country — or trying to. Their situation has been deteriorating since the Taliban began making territorial gains earlier this year. A UN report in February indicated that attacks and threats against journalists were becoming more targeted.
- Over the past two decades, Afghanistan's media emerged as a barometer of public opinion, serving as a conduit between people and their government. Popular call-in radio shows created a discursive culture. If Afghans cannot voice their grievances through this medium, they may turn to more aggressive means.
- This should have been a key area where Pakistan could influence the Taliban for the better. Sadly, our own track record on media freedom makes it difficult to make a compelling argument. Indeed, the Taliban may be imitating our censors in their use of terms such as 'religious values' and 'national security' to keep journalists guessing, and increasingly self-censoring. In an ironic twist, could our strategic need for a free, independent media in Afghanistan inspire us to improve our own position on press freedom?
- The Taliban are making reassuring statements in their desire for international legitimacy and recognition. The country's fragile economic situation must weigh significantly in their calculation especially as dollar reserves are dwindling while the IMF has suspended funding. Without international assistance and trade the economy would simply collapse.



### *US position*

- US PRESIDENT Joe Biden has made a futile attempt to paint his Afghanistan policy as a success by arguing that America had not gone into the war 20 years ago for nation-building. In a speech that came after a deluge of criticism on the humiliating withdrawal of US personnel from Kabul in the wake of the Taliban takeover of the capital, Biden laid the blame for the fall of Afghanistan on the regime of Ashraf Ghani.
- Why Biden thought a hasty troop withdrawal was a good idea is something of a mystery, not least given the quality of his advisers and his own international experience. The most plausible explanation is that Biden believed following Trump down this dishonourable path could recover some of the working-class support that the Democrats had been losing to Trump's isolationist populism.
- When Biden told the world in February that "America is back," many assumed he meant the US would lead an alliance of open societies determined to stand up for the rule of law and an international order promoting peace and prosperity. But if "America is back" instead means that the US is returning to isolationism, the result will be bad for everyone, including Americans. (US history isolationism)
- "Pakistan acts as an arsonist and poses as the fireman. They should suffer diplomatic and economic isolation. Pakistan should be faced with a future that looks like North Korea." This was the measured reaction of previous US national security adviser Lt Gen HR McMaster in response to the recent carnage in Afghanistan.

### *China*

- China's interests will be aided by the Taliban's defeat of the world's most powerful military. The exit of a vanquished America creates greater space for China's coercion and expansionism, including against Taiwan, while underscoring the irreversible decline of US power.
- An opportunistic China is certain to exploit the new opening to make strategic inroads into mineral-rich Afghanistan and deepen its penetration of Pakistan, Iran, and Central Asia. To co-opt the Taliban, with which it has maintained longstanding ties, China has already dangled the prospect of providing the two things the militia needs to govern Afghanistan: diplomatic recognition and much-needed infrastructure and economic assistance.
- Afghanistan sits at the crossroads of all energy, trade and transit corridors in an era of geo-economics. An average of \$1,100 billion poured in by China in Central Asia, South Asia, Middle East and Africa depends on peace in the landlocked state. This inevitably is the future lifeline of Kabul's economic and defence viability. Thus, sustainable relations with all in the region and beyond are sine qua non for ensuring prosperity. Taliban should creed to German strategist Hans Morgenthau's theory of realism: "All nation-states are motivated by national interests." Taliban too should broker ties on interdependence.

### *Pakistan*

- The possible advantages that Pakistan is looking at are: (1) Kabul will not have a pro-India regime with an intelligence service like NDS actively promoting instability in Pakistan; (2) Peace in Afghanistan would mean reduced pressure of refugees coming into Pakistan, and possibly at a future date a return of some of the nearly four million Afghan refugees currently in Pakistan; (3) Pakistan could open up a land route to Central Asia and beyond and push forward its geoeconomic agenda; (4) Pakistan could also try and settle its TTP problem once and for all if the Taliban regime



is willing to cooperate in all aspects; (5) a peaceful western border would enable Pakistan to focus more on the continuing threat from the eastern border.

- There is of course a downside even to the upside. The fears of scapegoating by the US and other Western nations remains real even though it has not picked up momentum. However, handled deftly, and with greater support from China and Russia, Pakistan can push back if such a campaign is orchestrated. If the Taliban behave, and do the right things, the prospects of a Western blowback against Pakistan can diminish significantly.
- In this fluid period Islamabad must stay in lockstep with the international community and coordinate closely on the issue of formal recognition. There is no advantage in going it alone. Diplomatic engagement is in any case continuing and so is cross-border trade. Islamabad is also extending help in intra-Afghan talks aimed at a political settlement. But its involvement should not go beyond this in line with its stated policy that it should be an Afghan-owned and Afghan-led process. Our security forces should also step up border surveillance as a fluid situation can encourage cross-border attacks from militant groups based in Afghanistan that Kabul has yet to act against and on which Islamabad should secure ironclad guarantees.
- Above all, the government should speak less on an evolving situation and with one voice. There is no reason to sound triumphal, be spokespersons for the Taliban or to keep obsessing about the past. It is the future that should concern us and what is most consequential for the country — whether peace will return to Afghanistan after decades of war, strife and foreign interventions.

#### *Reasons behind Quick takeover?*

- an over-confident US went to war with Iraq, instead of stabilising and strengthening Afghanistan. The US shifted attention to Iraq, fighting a war of choice because of Bush's ideological foreign policy fixation, when he labelled Iraq, Iran and North Korea as part of the 'Axis of Evil', although none of these countries had anything to do with 9/11; and, in fact, Iran had actively cooperated with the US in the removal of the Taliban regime.
- the much-debated question as to why a 20-year Western project ended in chaos and a political and military collapse. Varying answers have been offered. A key explanation lies in the fact that no dispensation imposed by foreign military intervention outlasts the departure of its patron. This has long been a lesson of history. A 21st-century version of a colonial-style 'civilising' mission lay in ruins as the final act of a project plagued by strategic flaws and tactical misjudgements from the very start. What was imposed on Afghanistan by the US-led coalition was a war of retribution — for 9/11 — and not one defined by consistent or realistic objectives.
- US self-inflicted defeat and humiliation have resulted from a failure of political, not military, leadership. Biden, ignoring conditions on the ground, overruled his top military generals in April and ordered all US troops to return home.
- It seemed that in Iraq and in Afghanistan, the focus was on recruiting and training people but not on building institutions. Hence, corruption was endemic and career progression and accountability missing
- Partly, those training created forces dependent on their resources rather than what was possible indigenously — the US military developed a model in which its air support was a crucial factor for the Afghan forces. Hence as the widely read Wall Street Journal story on the quick collapse of the Afghan forces pointed out, once the American forces pulled out along with their airpower, the

Afghan forces in far-off outposts could no longer hold on as supplies ran out. And this is one reason, says the story, the soldiers found it easier to surrender than to fight.

- More importantly, institution-building was missing entirely as the soldiers were being trained — deliberately or otherwise — by the international forces. For there was constant talk of low morale — an easy term to bandy about but a complex one to unpack. It is linked to all that a professional outfit brings — merit, a sense of purpose and identification (which is inculcated in the institution) and a relationship with society. All this was missing in Iraq when the US-trained military collapsed in the face of the IS assault, and now in Afghanistan. Consider this quote from a paper on the Iraqi army: “If the hallmark of professionalism is trust, the Iraqi army in 2014 did not have it: the people did not trust it and its members did not trust each other.”
- Biden’s calamitous troop pull-out without a transition plan to sustain the Afghans’ combat capabilities unleashed a domino effect, with 8,500 NATO forces and some 18,000 US military contractors also withdrawing and leaving the Afghan military in the lurch.
- But not all the blame can be laid at the door of the outsiders.
- Ashraf Ghani and others around him in Kabul didn’t do much to win over their countrymen. If the north, which had evaded Taliban influence the last time, fell quickly it was partly due to its troubled relations with Kabul. Just recently in Badakhshan, government troops fired on protesters demanding water and electricity, reported the Washington Post. In Mazar-i-Sharif, in 2017, a governor was fired by Ghani, a move which nearly led to an armed conflict between the local militias and federal troops.
- Afghanistan’s acting defense minister, General Bismillah Khan Mohammadi, defended the military, tweeting, “They tied our hands from behind and sold the country. Curse Ghani and his gang.”
- The fault lines and fissures were multiple, but the presence of the superpower had papered over all of it. Once the forces’ withdrawal was finalised, there was a widespread — inside Afghanistan as well as internationally — sense of the inevitability of a Taliban takeover. Perhaps this simply convinced or hastened everyone to give up the fight rather than opting for resistance.
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### 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:** Xinjiang region; talks with Taliban; investment mining project in logar province; BRI; China refuses to and will not militarily involve itself in Afghanistan. That is a clear Chinese policy. But what when Chinese investigators themselves find clear evidence to prove that Indian RAW, together with Afghanistan’s NDS, is targeting and killing Chinese workers and engineers employed on CPEC projects in Pakistan? While warmly receiving the Taliban leaders July 2021, Chinese officials also emphasised the need for a negotiated political settlement of the Afghan conflict. The Taliban leaders were also reportedly told by Beijing to make a clear break from the East Turkestan Islamic Movement, which is a UN-designated terrorist outfit seeking an independent state for the Chinese Muslims living in Xinxiang. The Chinese authorities have already conveyed their concern to the Taliban about the possible scattering of East Turkestan Islamic Movement (ETIM).
- **US:** strong central govt in Kabul with well-equipped and well-trained national security force

- **Russia:** Central Asian states and their security is a Russian worry as they are under Russian sphere of influence and many people from these states seek legal or illegal jobs in Russia. When compared to the demographic projections of Russia which suggest that by 2050, Russia's population may still decrease by 20% or more, the Russians know that they will continue to have to rely on the working hands of migrant workers from the Central Asian States for foreseeable future. Therefore, Russia cannot afford Talibanisation or any kind of radicalisation to infiltrate mainland Russia through these states and contribute to its destabilisation.
- During their June 16 Geneva summit, Russian President Vladimir Putin reportedly offered US President Joe Biden the use of Russian military bases in Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan in order to coordinate actions vis-à-vis Afghanistan. The Kremlin's motives, of course, are not altruistic. Russia wants to prevent the United States from building its own bases in the region.
- Among Afghanistan's neighbors, neither Iran nor China will allow US bases on their territory under any circumstances. Pakistan has also resolutely rejected the idea. The Biden administration must now decide whether to cooperate with Russia and its allies in Afghanistan. Putin's proposal may give America the chance to save face and shore up its shaky international reputation following its hasty withdrawal.
- **Iran:** more focused on Iraq and Syria, reached an understanding with Taliban, close contacts with Tajiks, uzbeks(Persian card) and hazaras(shia card); shares Russia view regarding IS and US collab;
- **KSA:** sees conflict through the lens of ME conflict like Iran; financial assistance, promote wahabi islam
- **History of Indian role:** supported Mujahideen in 92 because In 1992 Indian hands were full. Rajiv Gandhi was assassinated in the previous year and PM Narasimha Rao had come to power. India in early 90s understood the after-effects of employing coercive means for political purposes (against Sikhs and in Sri Lanka) and thus preferred a policy of engagement which it preferred to execute in Afghanistan. India's greatest supporter, the Soviet Union, had also disintegrated and this had a negative effect on Indian economy (against 3% Indian annual growth Pakistan's economy at that time was growing at 5-6% annually). all it could do was undertake a policy of conciliation in Afghanistan. History recalls that policy as 'Rao doctrine'.
- main goals to achieve under this doctrine were: deal with anyone who is in power even if they were Mujahideen; not to involve in the internal affairs of Afghanistan and never support or arm any group in Afghanistan; support people to people contact; and retain India's diplomatic mission in that country. Another factor was not to view Afghanistan just in the South Asian context but also in the Central Asian one.
- India also believed that staying in Afghanistan would help in reaching out to the Central Asian States and it would be easier seeking their support for Kashmir in the UN. Most importantly, while Pakistan wanted India out of Afghanistan, Indian focus was on its ability to stay, stick and survive. Narasimha Rao was a reformer and many considered him as the father of economic reforms in India and even the first budget of his government presented in 1991 is hailed by many as one that laid the foundations of modern India. Indian policy in Afghanistan was thus polite and calm and non-interfering.
- When year 1996-97 came, Indian economy was growing at the rate of 7.5% annually courtesy PM Rao's opening up of the economy. So, when Taliban took over Afghanistan in 1996, India was in an entirely different political and economic mood. In 1996, Taliban had taken over; President Najibullah was murdered; situation in Kashmir had worsened; and Narasimha Rao had departed.

India took a U-turn in its Afghan policy. The key aspects of this policy were: don't recognise the Taliban regime as a legitimate government. have no diplomatic presence in Afghanistan (from 1996-2001 no Indian diplomatic presence there); and increase its covert assistance and presence in Afghanistan.

- For the following five years (1996-2001), also termed a period of India-Afghanistan diplomatic black hole, India together with Russia, Iran and Central Asian States provided covert military and financial support to the United Front against Taliban which was considered as Pakistan's proxy by all these states. This Indian act of covert interference in the internal matters of Afghanistan is hardly ever acknowledged or condemned by the outside world.
- An additional import dimension added to the current Indian policy in Afghanistan is India's capital investment there. There was no Indian capital investment in Afghanistan throughout the 90s and up to 2001; and with the Taliban likely takeover now, India's capital investment as well as strategic gains are likely to suffer a huge loss.
- **Present:** only country which will be upset of the US drawdown; may lose leverage in Afghan governmental machinery, including media houses to malign pak; its afg policy has always been pak-centric; afg voted against pak's membership in UN; soviet invasion of afg, ascension of Taliban brought pak and afg closer; india uses history to drive wedge; its consulates in Kandahar and Jalalabad are serving as bases for espionage activities; TTP is supported by NDS and India; prime motive: to divert pak military resources along the afghan border; using afghan soil to stir trouble in Balochistan and tribal areas; Jadhav case
- India clearly realises that the cost of no engagement with Taliban was a strategic blunder so while Pakistan may take a backseat with its relations with Taliban, the Indians would do everything they can to jump into the driving seat to redefine their relations with them in the atmosphere of diplomatic void that Pakistan's new-found Afghan policy may create.
- If Indians are already friendly with the United Front leaders and with the Kabul government, why should there be any harm adding Taliban to that list? It is not as if this will be a new strategy; the Indian diplomats in Afghanistan have already been cultivating this relationship with the new generation of Afghan Taliban for quite some time now. While Afghanistan is dependent on external military and financial support, the Taliban's case is quite different. If Pakistan really lives up to giving up its 'interventionist Afghan policy' then from where will Taliban find their food and fodder? Is Pakistan's security establishment ready to hand over Pakistan's biggest political asset in Afghanistan to Indians on a plate? For our PM to have an Afghan policy rethink is good but were its repercussions and spillover effects really deliberately debated?
- **Ideal scenario:** Pak, Ind and Afg cooperative relationship benefits entire landmass of South Asia, Central Asia and the ME; security dilemma; zero-sum games

#### Afterwards

- EU can contribute; health agriculture sectors, institutional reforms; if US cuts down financial help other major players must China and Russia have to monitor security situation too; composition of govt must be inclusive all ethnicities, Taliban need to win support from 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. Avoid civil war scenario; stakeholders must discourage spoilers; women's rights: taliban's diplomatic success will depend on this issue; UN role for rehabilitation and development work should be sought.

- If process fails: return to 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; civil war; 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.
- the two likely scenarios for Afghanistan post US exit seem to be a Taliban takeover or civil war. For Pakistan in particular, both options situate it between a rock and a hard place. Civil war could lead to a new refugee crisis that will inevitably strain Pakistan's already struggling economy. The Taliban in power, on the other hand, could embolden other extremists and militants in the region, threatening both stability in Pakistan and the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor.
- For Russia and China, a wider civil war in Afghanistan could mean destabilisation of their Eurasian Economic Union and the BRI projects, respectively
- **US options:** 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 mid-air refuelling. 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 re-provision of Shamsi airbase.

## Questions

- What times magazine cover said in 2001? Title given by President Reagan to Mujahideen and where? What do americans think of Afg as mentioned in The Bear trap book? What Washington post article said about US foreign policy regarding Afg?
- Discuss Details of Doha accord and its flaws and what could have been done instead by US. What happened in extended Troika? What Antony Blinken said to Ghani in letter and why Taliban refused to attend Istanbul summit? What was Biden's admin tactical error?
- What PM Khan wrote in op-ed in Washington Post and said to host of HBO tv? What Ghani implied in his interview to German pub Der Spiegel? What were Afghan NSA remarks and Pak response? US CENTCOM chief about Pakistan? Discuss Quetta attack and its timing importance. UN report of feb 2021 confirmed what? What is Pak's contingency plan in case of civil-war in afg? Briefly explain NAP and its importance. Purpose behind CIA chief visit to ISB. What were the consequences in past for giving bases to US? What is Pak's known position regarding peace in afg and where it has discussed this? Importance of pak for afghanis? What would be major achievements for pak? What attacks in Lahore Johar Town and near Quetta airport suggest? What should be real concern to Pak keeping Indian role in afg in mind? What India could pursue in absence of Pak intervention in afg? What will be pak policy regarding refugees?
- Was US war in afg realist or idealist? Why is US leaving? Critically analyse. Compare it with Soviet withdrawal and its own past experiences in Vietnam, etc.
- What does report of SIGAR says regarding afghan air force? Manifestations of IS-KP in afg? Updates of taliban offensive and reason behind govt forces failure. Taliban's new intra and

international diplomacy? Afghan govt role in this whole scenario and Ghani peace plan? Who are new mujahideen? What is India doing in Afg?

- What would be regional impacts and ideal scenario after withdrawal? What could be afterwards scenario? In case of civil war? What are US options and over the horizon support? what are the two likely scenarios after withdrawal?

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## Clash of civilizations

- 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.

## Globalisation

- the western world order has mutated into a control mechanism not by colonising territories but through domination and manipulation of international institutions.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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.

### Atlantic Charter

- 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.
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## G21?

- To be sure, since the early post-World War II era, multilateralism has worked mainly through the United Nations system. With 193 member states, the UN offers the singular, indispensable venue for creating and implementing international law. Though the UN is frequently undermined by the unilateralism of the United States and other major powers, it remains essential for global survival.
- But the G20, too, has come to fill a critical role. Representing the world's 20 largest economies, it enables more flexible and quicker problem solving. And while the G20's decisions do not have the force of international law, they can and do support corresponding UN processes, such as on climate change and development finance.
- Another talking shop is the G7, which was launched in 1975 to bring together the world's highest-income economies. The Group of Eight (G8) was an inter-governmental political forum from 1997 until 2014. It had formed from incorporating the country of Russia into the Group of Seven, or G7, and returned to its previous name after Russia was disinvited in 2014. ... In 2017, Russia announced its permanent withdrawal from the G8.
- Soon thereafter, the G20 was created to play that role. It emerged first in 1999 as a gathering of finance ministers, and then evolved into a meeting of heads of state and government in response to the 2008 financial crisis. Since then, the G7 has become increasingly unrepresentative and incapable of decisive action.
- The current G20 comprises 19 national governments plus the European Union. (Since France, Germany, and Italy are G20 members in the EU, they are in effect represented twice.) The EU's inclusion in the group was a masterstroke. Because the EU coordinates economic policies across its 27 member states, the European Commission, its executive arm, can credibly speak for the bloc on economic issues of global concern.
- The G20 therefore represents 43 countries (27 EU members plus 16 non-EU countries) with just 20 leaders at the table. While those 43 countries constitute just 22% of UN members states (by a raw count), they nonetheless include about 63% of the world's population and 87% of gross world output. Though the 43 countries represented at the G20 table don't speak for the other 150 UN member states, they account for enough of the world's people and economic activity to have a solid basis for deliberating on global challenges.
- But by excluding almost all of Africa, the group vastly underrepresents Africa and the world's low-income countries. The AU's 55 countries (more than one-quarter of UN members) are home to 1.4 billion people (17.5% of the global total) and \$2.6 trillion in annual output at market exchange rates (almost 3% of world GDP). All told, Africa currently has roughly the same population as China

or India, and an economy that would come in eighth – just behind France and ahead of Italy – in a country ranking.

- The G20's sole African member, South Africa, has the 39th largest economy in the world, the smallest among the G20 member states. The GDPs of Nigeria and Egypt are actually larger than South Africa's, but they still are not in the world's top 20. As a result, African leaders outside of South Africa have been invited to the G20 only as observers.
- The key to the G20's effectiveness is that it achieves a very high and representative coverage of the global population and economy with a modest enough number of leaders at the table to enable speed and flexibility in deliberation and decision-making. Including the AU would satisfy both criteria: vastly increased representation with just one added seat at the table. The group suddenly would represent 54 more countries, 1.3 billion more people, and \$2.3 trillion more output, with just ten minutes added to a round-of-table discussion.
- A new G21 could then tell other aspirants to seek representation through similar regional delegations – such as ASEAN for the 661 million people in those ten southeast Asian countries, or a similar grouping for Latin America.
- One day SAARC?

#### 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

- <https://tribune.com.pk/story/2308858/unparalleled-belt-and-road-cooperation>

#### Background

- 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.

- 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.
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#### Resemblance with Marshall Plan

- 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.

#### UN support

- 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.

#### India's Reaction

- 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, Kyaukpyu 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.

#### West reaction

- 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.

#### Africa

- 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.

#### Central Asia and Russia

- 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

- 5<sup>th</sup> 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 Kequiang 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.



- **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
- his 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.
- 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.
- Recent Dattu attack to sabotage....
- 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.
- 
- If CPEC can boost Pakistan's industrial productivity, exports, and job creation, it should be a game-changer. It actually is.

#### *Debt trap?*

- 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.
- 
- 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.
- 
- 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.
- 
- 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.

#### Sri Lankan port of Hambantota

- Prime example given to illustrate china's debt trap; As the story goes, Beijing pushed Sri Lanka into borrowing money from Chinese banks to pay for the project, which had no prospect of commercial success. Onerous terms and feeble revenues eventually pushed Sri Lanka into default, at which point Beijing demanded the port as collateral, forcing the Sri Lankan government to surrender control to a Chinese firm. The Trump administration pointed to Hambantota to warn of China's strategic use of debt: In 2018, former Vice President Mike Pence called it "debt-trap diplomacy"
- **Facts mentioned in The Atlantic detailed report**
- It was the Canadian International Development Agency—not China—that financed Canada's leading engineering and construction firm, SNC-Lavalin, to carry out a feasibility study for the port. The Canadian project failed to move forward, mostly because of the vicissitudes of Sri Lankan politics. But the plan to build a port in Hambantota gained traction during the rule of the Rajapaksa Brothers. They promised to bring big ships to the region, a call that gained urgency after the devastating 2004 tsunami pulverized Sri Lanka's coast and the local economy.
- Sri Lanka's government approached the United States and India; both countries said no. But a Chinese construction firm, China Harbor Group, had learned about Colombo's hopes, and lobbied hard for the project. China Eximbank agreed to fund it, and China Harbor won the contract.
- This was in 2007, six years before Xi Jinping introduced the Belt and Road Initiative. Sri Lanka was still in the last, and bloodiest, phase of its long civil war, and the world was on the verge of a financial crisis. The details are important: China Eximbank offered a \$307 million, 15-year commercial loan with a four-year grace period, offering Sri Lanka a choice between a 6.3 percent fixed interest rate or one that would rise or fall depending on LIBOR, a floating rate. Colombo chose the former, conscious that global interest rates were trending higher during the

negotiations and hoping to lock in what it thought would be favorable terms. Phase I of the port project was completed on schedule within three years.

- In Hambantota, instead of waiting for phase 1 of the port to generate revenue, Mahinda Rajapaksa pushed ahead with phase 2, transforming Hambantota into a container port. In 2012, Sri Lanka borrowed another \$757 million from China Eximbank, this time at a reduced, post-financial-crisis interest rate of 2 percent. Rajapaksa took the liberty of naming the port after himself.
- By 2014, Hambantota was losing money. Realizing that they needed more experienced operators, the Sri Lanka Ports Authority SLPA signed an agreement with China Harbor and China Merchants Group to have them jointly develop and operate the new port for 35 years.
- Of the \$4.5 billion in debt service Sri Lanka would pay in 2017, only 5 percent was because of Hambantota. The Central Bank governors under both Rajapaksa and Sirisena do not agree on much, but they both told us that Hambantota, and Chinese finance in general, was not the source of the country's financial distress.
- There was also never a default. Colombo arranged a bailout from the International Monetary Fund, and decided to raise much-needed dollars by leasing out the underperforming Hambantota Port to an experienced company—just as the Canadians had recommended. There was not an open tender, and the only two bids came from China Merchants and China Harbor; Sri Lanka chose China Merchants, making it the majority shareholder with a 99-year lease, and used the \$1.12 billion cash infusion to bolster its foreign reserves, not to pay off China Eximbank.
- **Strategic importance**
- Yet Hambantota's location is strategic only from a business perspective: The port is cut into the coast to avoid the Indian Ocean's heavy swells, and its narrow channel allows only one ship to enter or exit at a time, typically with the aid of a tugboat. In the event of a military conflict, naval vessels stationed there would be proverbial fish in a barrel.

#### *Issues*

- For one, transparency and accountability have been sacrificed because details of the projects have not been shared, there is no public bidding or even announcement. Since there is no transparency, issues such as cost efficiency, economic feasibility and viability, environmental concerns are likely to be ignored that could lead to serious economic and environmental issues later on.
- As a result of lack of transparency, reports about large-scale corruption have started emerging almost immediately after the project got off the ground. For example, two of the four highway projects of the 'Western route of the CPEC' in Balochistan, inaugurated by the prime minister in December 2015 with much fanfare, were awarded to the second lowest bidders instead of the lowest ones, causing a loss of over Rs 650 million. The reasoning for rejecting the lowest bidder has been unsatisfactory.<sup>32</sup> There are also reports about CPEC projects being billed at much higher costs than originally planned due to Chinese companies not following competitive bidding processes.
- Some of the Chinese demands include granting tax exemptions to interest income earned by Chinese banks that lend to projects in Pakistan; special protection from exposure to the circular debt in the power sector through a revolving facility funded by the government; exemption of insurance income from tax; settlement of payments in dollars; exemption from taxes on machinery imports for infrastructure and other projects; purchase of equipment only from

Chinese suppliers and their installation by Chinese labour. Negotiations on these and other issues have been inconclusive so far. Decisions on such issues will determine where the real costs and benefits of the investments lie. If they are not negotiated properly, Dawn warns, the country can be left saddled with payment obligations that will become known only when it is too late.

- the main issue in the energy sector is not generation but productivity, distribution, line losses and poor governance. Further investment in generation will not solve the long-term issues plaguing the energy sector though they may give the impression of doing so in the immediate term. To operationalize the investment, Pakistan will have to make crucial reforms in the energy sector.
- Fifth, for Pakistan to truly benefit from such a massive investment, it will have to upgrade its own absorption capacity by bringing the education sector up to scratch so that skilled and semi-skilled workforce can be employed in these projects.
- Sixth, the emphasis in the energy sector is on thermal power projects based on both Thar coal and imported coal, and LNG. It is universally accepted that thermal power is far more expensive than hydropower. The emphasis, therefore, should have been on the latter.
- Seventh, the economic corridor will be viable if it is used. The Lahore– Islamabad motorway is a case in point. Though it has been in existence for the last twenty years there is very little industrial development along its route and neither has there been any value addition to agriculture. If anything, it has only benefited the elite, enabling them to travel between Lahore and Islamabad quickly. Will the highways under CPEC meet the same fate?
- Unless the smaller provinces, especially Balochistan and KPK, are given a sense of ownership, the CPEC may actually damage Pakistan rather than be the game changer it is billed to be. An ominous warning has been sounded: ‘It would do us well to remember that investment in East Pakistan was also considered unsafe for security reasons. What are the planners of today driving the smaller provinces to?’
- Thus, while CPEC could enormously benefit the Pak economy, expectations need to be tempered with realism, especially where financial issues are concerned.

#### *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.
- Read Indian concerns from [BRI](#)

#### *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

- It is not surprising that China's BRI has become a major cause of concern for America. It is evident that the project is not just about infrastructure development; one of the major objectives of the initiative is to turn Eurasia into an economic and trading centre, breaking the domination of the American-led transatlantic regime.
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- It is also a manifestation of changing geopolitics and the realignment of forces, reflecting a move to shift the centre of gravity of trade to the East and establish China's predominance in global politics. The fact that the project has attracted so many countries has further raised American concerns. Now the American-led G7 countries seek to counter China's growing influence by offering developing nations an infrastructure plan that could rival China's Belt and Road Initiative.
- 
- Washington's move to contain China has further hardened Beijing's stance. In a defiant speech at the centenary celebrations, President Xi warned that foreign powers will "get their heads bashed" if they attempt to bully or influence the country.
- 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.
- As always, the ultimate onus lies on Pakistan to map its needs, clarify its values and priorities, and participate in international initiatives so as to serve public needs.

#### Analysis

- 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.
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- 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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- 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.

## IPS

### Updates

- Vice President Kamala Harris sought to fortify the image of the United States as a credible ally by offering a sharp rebuke of China during an address in Southeast Asia Aug 2021. Her effort comes as the White House faces growing questions about its reliability as an international partner amid continuing violence in Taliban-controlled Afghanistan.
- "In the South China Sea, we know that Beijing continues to coerce, to intimidate and to make claims to the vast majority of the South China Sea," Ms. Harris said in Singapore. She added that China's "unlawful claims" had continued "to undermine the rules-based order and threaten the sovereignty of nations."

### Abstract

The term 'Indo-Pacific' was first coined by the Japanese Prime Minister, Shinzo Abe, in his speech delivered to the Indian parliament in 2007 which was later adopted by the US as a strategic vision in the last phase of Obama's tenure. In the past few years, Indo-Pacific has become part of the US strategic policy and it is characterised as a 'priority theatre.' The Trump administration repeatedly described it as a single, geostrategic region in which the rising powers will play and compete to gain supremacy in the geostrategic



and the geo-maritime arena. The rise of the Indo-Pacific Strategy (IPS) has come in time of an increasingly complex geo-economics and geostrategic security environment. More so, it showcases the US' reliance on regional and extra-regional countries in the form of allies, the Quad countries, as well as regional countries such as Sri Lanka, Maldives, Bangladesh, and Nepal to tackle shared challenges in the area. The following paper will explicate the aims and objectives of the US' IPS and its central policy overtures towards South Asia. It will also study the implications (strategic and political) of this policy and its stern posturing in the region, especially towards Pakistan.

### Explanation

The IP, in recent years, has become the most prominent and consequential region for the US and its strategic, economic and security calculus. The concept of the IP came into parlance in more recent years in the US. The significant shift from the Asia pivot to the Indo Pacific came in the US administrations during the second tenure of President Barrack Obama. The birth of the term "Indo-Pacific" came with the growing influence of China across the globe which the US started to see as a threat and challenge to its global position.

Hillary Clinton in her article published in November 2011 highlighted the importance of the Indo-Pacific, calling it the key driver of global politics and the next arena of the US' interest and investment.<sup>8</sup> The article highlighted the new change in the US strategic thinking towards the Pacific. The stretch of water from the Indian Ocean to the Pacific runs through the busiest and vibrant energy and trade corridors. Unlike the Pacific, the Indian Ocean is home to four of six maritime chokepoints, the Mozambique Channel, Strait of Hormuz, Bab el-Mandeb and the Strait of Malacca.<sup>9</sup> The US in its effort to ensure its sovereignty in the South China Sea and to curtail the expansion of China has joined hands with nations like Australia, India, Japan and South Korea. For US, the main objective of such a strategy is to bolster strategic and economic partnership to limit China's flexing.

In 2017, President Trump announced America's vision for a 'free and open Indo-Pacific' at the APEC Summit in Vietnam and ensured its commitment to a free as well as safe and secure region that benefits all nations.<sup>10</sup> The US' NSS and the NDS documents articulate Washington's vision to not only win in the IP region but to also compete and deter its adversaries. To achieve this goal the Trump administration set out a vision that required a combined effort of joint forces with the support of US' allies in the region. Similarly, to complement the dominance through force, the US decided to increase its investments in the region with the help of its allies which in return ensured an approved a balance of power in the IP and further helped sustain the US' influence in the region.

For the past few years, the US has been remained proactive with its engagement in the Indo-Pacific with a massive US\$1.9 trillion in two-way trade (US Dept of State). In its strategic documents, Washington has repeatedly referred to the IP as 'free' and 'open' from any single power and a region in which all nations can exercise their sovereignty.

The values that the US plans to champion under the strategy include: independence and sovereignty for all the nations, resolution of disputes through peaceful means; free and fair trade, investment and connectivity, observance of international law and freedom of navigation plus overflight.<sup>14</sup> While the strategy talks about 'free' and 'openness' in the region, its language and posture boldly criticise China's ambitions in the region. The strategy paper calls China a 'Revisionist Power' which is trying to assert itself to achieve 'more expansive political, security and economic interests.'<sup>15</sup> Other components of the strategy

include; multilateral engagements, bilateral partnerships, economic prosperity, infrastructure, energy, digital economy, human development, governance, peace and prosperity. The Indo-Pacific is a critical building block for the emergence of a new kind of geopolitical reality that is meant to curtail and overshadow China's growing role and influence across the globe.

### Role of Quad

In September 2019, the US held its first ministerial meeting with Australia, Japan and India, at the Quadrilateral Consultations later known as the Quad group.<sup>16</sup> The Indo-Pacific vision laid down by the US aligns closely with the Quad's policy on the Indo-Pacific region, for example, Act East Policy by India, Japan's Free and Open Indo-Pacific concept, Australia's Indo-Pacific, Taiwan's New Southbound Policy and South Korea's New Southern Policy.

The Quad relies on a matrix of trilateral and bilateral relationships; it has convened more than three trilateral and six bilateral strategic dialogues and numerous military engagements and working groups at the ministerial level.<sup>17</sup> Besides collective Quad consultations and engagements, the US is proactively involved at a bilateral level with the Quad countries to preserve its interests in the Indo-Pacific. Washington is separately involved with Japan, Korea, India, Taiwan and Australia to strengthen its hold and dominance not only in the region as a whole but also to retain its preeminent position as a military partner of choice in each of the Quad countries.

China is already establishing its maritime territory in the South and East China Seas. Its concurrent rise and rapidly changing dynamics of the region has made the construct of the Quad, for the US even more important. China's decision to stand up is being felt globally, especially by the US as it considers the region to be a major geopolitical factor in determining its rise and dominance. Beijing, on the other hand, has embarked upon not just a physical construct, but a mental construct to challenge the US hegemony. It has deployed means to overcome state-on-state confrontation and geostrategic manoeuvring in the South and East China Seas. To get back at China's flex, the US and its Quad partners are engaging in multifaceted naval exercises and trying to increase their footprint in the maritime activities to push back China. Since 2007 the US along with Quad members have heavily engaged itself in carrying out the Malabar exercise designed upon the framework of the exercise that existed between the US and India – an attempt to bite back at China. Nonetheless, the Malabar drill turned out to be futile as Australia soon after the naval exercise backtracked and made its intention clear to not participate in future exercises.

### India

India's political leadership had long visualised relations with AsiaPacific. A few months prior to its independence, Jawaharlal Nehru presented the idea to create an all-Asia platform at the Asian Relations Conference in New Delhi in March 1947.<sup>1</sup> In his book *The Discovery of India*, Nehru referred to the importance of Asia Pacific: 'though not directly a Pacific state, India will inevitably exercise an important influence there. India will also develop as the centre of economic and political activity in the Indian Ocean area, in Southeast Asia, right up to the Middle East. Her position gives an economic and strategic importance in a part of the world which is going to develop in the future.'

### Politico-eco activities

India has established political relations with countries of Southeast Asia, Northeast Asia and Oceania, and is a member of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN),<sup>3</sup> ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF),<sup>4</sup> and ASEAN Defence Ministers Meeting Plus Eight Forum (China, Japan, the Republic Korea, Australia, New

Zealand, India, the United States (US) and the Russian Federation).<sup>5</sup> It is also part of various regional infrastructure projects like Bangladesh-India-Myanmar-Sri Lanka-Thailand Economic Cooperation (BIMST-EC)<sup>6</sup> and Myanmar-Thailand-Laos-Cambodia-Vietnam (Mekong Ganga Cooperation-MGC).

#### Strategic interests

India is involved in regional naval exercises like Malabar (with the Japanese and American navies)<sup>8</sup> and SIMBEX (with Singapore).<sup>9</sup> India's interest in the region is also to safeguard the Sea Lines of Communications (SLOCs, Annex 1) as its trade traverses from Russian oil fields of Sakhalin (North Pacific Ocean) to Mangalore (Southern India) via Malacca (Southeast Asia)<sup>10</sup> (Annex 2). To ensure the safe passage of its oil and trade supplies, India has established the Far Eastern Command (Andaman and Nicobar Islands).<sup>11</sup> In May 2016, India repositioned a guided-missile frigate-INS Karmuk to the Islands.<sup>12</sup> It also funds the 'Tripartite Technical Expert Group-TTEG' which administers the Malacca Strait<sup>13</sup> (Annex 3). Thus, India's Eastward move entails strategic interests as well as political gains.

#### Position on South China Sea

India has also been vocal on political issues, in particular, it has supported the Philippines and Vietnam on the South China Sea issue. The Delhi Declaration, adopted at the India-ASEAN Commemorative Summit in January 2018, reiterated 'ASEAN-India common stance on the South China Sea.' The Declaration called for peaceful resolution of the dispute in line with the UN Convention on the Law of the Seas (1982) and an early implementation of the South China Sea Code of Conduct.

By allying with ASEAN states, India is trying to emerge as a reliable security partner in the region. India's political overtures might be welcomed by Southeast Asian countries and US allies in the region (in particular Australia and Japan), however, its interference in the South China Sea and exploration of hydrocarbons (Indian state-owned Oil and Natural Gas Commission Videsh Limited has signed an agreement with Petro-Vietnam to explore hydrocarbons)<sup>22</sup> might provoke resentment from China.

The Chinese Foreign Ministry has expressed reservations over New Delhi's involvement in South China Sea affairs: As for oil and gas exploration activities, our consistent position is that we are opposed to any country engaged in oil and gas exploration and development activities in waters under China's jurisdiction. We hope foreign countries do not get involved in the South China Sea dispute. (Indian Express)

#### Collaboration with US

On the geopolitical side, India is a strategic partner of the US as the latter's 'pivot to Asia' and 'rebalance strategy' in the region. This also gave rise to a significant increase in the strategic as well as defence collaboration between the US and India, as New Delhi was seen as the only capital in the region for Washington to police against China. The term Indo-Pacific categorically highlights the increased and weighty role of India, not only in the Indian Ocean but also in the Pacific and the South China Sea — an expanded geographical reach. Washington is investing in India to strengthen it against not only China but also other Pacific nations and regional powers such as Australia and Japan. The October 2020 Ministerial dialogue between the US and India and the signing of the Basic Exchange Cooperation Agreement for Geospatial Intelligence, also known as BECA, has heightened India's position in the Indo-Pacific. The agreement comes in a backdrop of major regional developments; India's standoff with China at Ladakh, its falsely claimed airstrike at Balakot and growing anti-China stance in the US.

Relations between New Delhi and Washington continue to move in an upwards trajectory and develop further in the realms of bilateral defence cooperation and economic development. However, in contrast,

but not surprisingly, relations between China and India continue to decline. The US sees a strong India as a vital and more critical part of its Indo-Pacific strategy. The inaugural, 2+2 Dialogue between the US and India further enhanced their economic and defence corporation. Both countries in 2018, became a signatory to a bilateral Communications Compatibility and Security Agreement, (CCSA).<sup>23</sup> In 2019 both held their first major joint military exercise that included all three of Indian forces; Army, Navy and Air Force, an event expected to become an annual exercise.<sup>24</sup> With a major power shift, India is not only leading the US strategic goals in the region, it is also attempting to establish its own dominance.

## ASEAN

Similarly, Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) is situated at the geographical centre of the US' IPS; hence it maintains an important gravity for the success of the US's policy. 2018 witnessed US\$271 billion worth of US investments in ASEAN, as it remained one of the top destinations of the US investments in the Indo-Pacific region, more than the US's FDI in Japan and China combined.

## Implications and challenges for Pakistan

For Pakistan, the Indo Pacific is a framework that has the potential to bring both economic and strategic challenges. It would be singularly challenging with growing overwhelming congruities in the US and India's common strategic interests, particularly vis-à-vis China. American support to build up India as a counter to China confronts Pakistan with a threat. The US is using its Indo Pacific strategy to counter China's massive Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) while at the same time it is busy advertising BRI as a 'predatory project'.<sup>25</sup> There are few if any similarities between the two: the BRI is a multi-dimensional economic project that spans several continents and involves scores of countries and which has strategic implications; the IPS is principally a strategic project with some economic elements.

This also sheds light on the frustration that exists in Washington with regards to the growing Chinese influence and its growing strategic footprint across the globe. Islamabad's and Beijing's growing strategic relations have remained irksome for both the capitals in India and the US. To meet this challenge Washington sees India as a natural partner in South Asia. In 2018, Washington accredited India as a major defence partner, allowing a new phase of agreements with specific defence sales authorisations. The birth of the new phase of the US and India relations was given an impetus with Islamabad's and Beijing's strong relations and the development of the CPEC, giving China access to the warm waters of the Indian Ocean. A larger, stronger India is seen by Washington as an impediment to China's ambition to expand itself into the Indian Ocean.

## Challenges

- Given the on-going Pakistan-US and Pakistan-India tensions, there is an inherent difficulty in promoting a positive Pakistan vision around the globe.
- The new phase of the militarisation of India is amongst the most significant challenge that Pakistan will face. This will also lessen India's desire to settle any dispute through peaceful means.
- The increased role of India will increase its weight in the Indian and the Pacific Oceans, making it eventually a two-ocean power like the US and China giving it a position to maintain some kind of control over the water-ways. This can in return give rise to new conflicts in the region not just between Pakistan and India but also between India and China.
- In the long term, the IP would endorse a strategic concept that could easily polarise the region and force states to choose sides which will be a problem for Pakistan as it shares equally important ties with China and the US.

- A greater Indian role in the IP can threaten Pakistan's maritime interests. Moreover, a strong Indian presence and nuclearpowered submarines and bases can easily target Pakistan's strategic assets.

#### *Recommendations*

- Since both Pakistan and China are also focused on economic development, Pakistan, along with China, should start manoeuvring to become partners in the IP strategy.
- With regard to countering the IPS in the longer run, Pakistan must develop a workable policy entailing special emphasis on creating and sustaining a network of partners with an enhanced web of bilateral and trilateral and multilateral relationships.
- Utilise Pakistan's economic potential to collaborate within the IP framework, by offering its ports in Gwadar and the CPEC project to trade through Pakistan to Central Asia.
- Concurrently, strengthen and develop military capabilities to tackle emerging challenges. Among other measures, Pakistan requires to develop naval outreach capabilities, as well as missiles with the required ranges.
- Similarly, Pakistan can enhance its engagement at a bilateral level with the countries involved in the IP strategy, such as the ASEAN nations, Japan and Australia.
- In doing so Pakistan can make itself useful and eligible for new alliances outside its present rim of preferences and comfort. Failing to do so, Pakistan will entangle itself in the geopolitical, strategic and economic crossfire of different countries.

#### *Implications for Region*

- 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.
- 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.
- **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. 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.
- Even though the idea of IPS reflects Washington's desire to buttress a fraying US-led rules-based international order under a perceived threat from regional power shifts, the strategy is particularly aimed at countering China's rise and its massive, multi-pronged connectivity project – the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). The IP is at its early stages and largely talks about economic development which may seem a lucrative proposition in the short-term. Nonetheless, the military aspect of it in the long-term cannot be ignored, particularly in the realm of maritime cooperation that could build up to reshape the geopolitical realities and trading routes. The Trump administration also signalled its intention to engage closely with the IP by committing to new investments and strategic initiatives and economic cooperation with Japan, India and Australia. The resumption of the Malabar military exercise by the Quad in 2017 is not merely a symbolic manifestation, but a developing aspect plagued by the growing rivalry and confrontation between Washington and Beijing, in which India plays a pivotal role. India could become the new American 'policeman,' with one major difference: the policing would encompass a wide swath of Asia and Oceania that could trigger a new wave of conflicts in the region. It is not hard to see that engaging these countries in the IP region aims at maintaining America's dominance in the international arena as the sole superpower.
- The Indo-Pacific strategy was undertaken by the Trump administration in which India's role, increases exponentially may further destroy the concept of strategic security in South Asia. The already increasing role of India with regards to the international security paradigm has emboldened New Delhi to isolate any kind of regional framework that can lead to peace in the region. This may further deteriorate relations between Pakistan and India and the fragile balance of power. The US support for India may also further lead to a tag war between the two competing giants — China and the US

## 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.



- When Robert Schuman, the former French foreign minister, presented a plan on May 9, 1950, to establish a single authority for controlling the production of steel and coal in France and in the then West Germany, that plan became a basis of the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) 1952, European Economic Community (EEC), 1957,2 and European Union, 1993. The 1963 Franco-German Treaty of Peace and Cooperation, signed by the then French President Charles de Gaulle and the West German Chancellor Konrad Adenauer, paved the way for regional connectivity in travel, capital, goods and services in Europe. It was the forward looking approach of the European leaders which paved the way for eliminating restrictions on the free movement of people, goods, services and capital.

### 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 (Dr 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

- Even if the world can muddle through this pandemic without an effective system of global governance, it cannot necessarily muddle through the next one – or through other problems like climate change that also require global solutions. If we do not learn this lesson, our species deserves to become extinct. Commerce and communications may now be global, but governance is not. If we want to continue living in a global economy, we need to develop an effective system of global governance.
- Although the first compulsory seat-belt laws met with strong objections when they were introduced 50 years ago, nobody bothers to complain about such a common-sense rule anymore. In mandating vaccination against COVID-19, governments today can offer the same basic justification for protecting both individuals and society.
- Don't misunderstand me. I strongly support laws requiring drivers and passengers in cars to wear seat belts. Nevertheless, these laws are paternalistic. They coerce us to do something for our own good. They violate John Stuart Mill's famous principle: "the only purpose for which power can be rightfully exercised over any member of a civilized community, against his will, is to prevent harm to others." The fact that the coercion is for the individual's own good is "not a sufficient warrant."
- [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.](#)
- It is the pandemic of job losses in most developing countries of the world, including Pakistan, and this is no less serious than the pandemic that is causing a dreaded illness and death on a large scale. A survey conducted by the government has revealed that 27.31 million workers—around half of the country's total workforce — have been affected by the ongoing coronavirus pandemic. Of these, 37% of the workforce either lost their jobs or could not get another job. Of all the provinces, Khyer-Pakhtunkhwa has been hit the hardest where 55% of the working population either lost jobs or saw a drop in their incomes. Around 12% of the workforce experienced a drastic decrease in their incomes.
- Many left cities and towns after the pandemic-induced lockdowns were imposed leaving their jobs and small businesses that they ran there. Forced by these circumstances, workers who had been earning sufficient to support their families and themselves returned to their native places where many of them are now earning a fraction of what they had been making in their jobs in cities. Those who worked in factories are now working as farmhands in villages. Those engaged in small businesses were compelled to close their shops because the shut shops did not bring in income but the rent had to be paid. There are jobless workers who had to spend money on the

treatment of family members who suffered from Covid-19. Many met these expenses by obtaining loans from others.

- Three factors played imp role in curbing covid: state capacity (health infrastructure, etc); social trust (btw citizens and govt and among citizens); political leadership
- India, Brazil, and the US are the top countries with the highest Covid casualties in the world. All had leaders which had one attribute in common — Modi, Bolsonaro, and Trump were masters in the game of populism. They all denigrated minorities, catered to their base, treated science as fiction, and insisted they alone had the keys to the 'truth'. It was only when the death toll started to mount that the shine of their 'truth' started to wean off. Alas, it has been too late and millions of families are now without members.
- 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.
- 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.
- Vaccine nationalism is becoming another serious challenge. The way different regions of the world are refusing to accept vaccines produced by a potential rival as a legitimate cure will only compound and exacerbate our collective suffering. The West seems reluctant to accept vaccines produced by China and Russia. The eastern parts see a propaganda campaign against the western vaccines which due to the interconnectivity of the world swiftly reaches the western societies and destroys serious efforts to combat the virus. This sorry state of affairs cannot go on forever or it



will destroy the world in ways we have not even imagined. In the 1920s and 30s, when the world had so much paranoia, some of the worst political elements emerged on the stage and destroyed millions of lives and scarred countless generations. In this age, even a remote semblance of the emergence of such a phenomenon will have a disproportionately bleaker impact owing to the presence of far superior technology. Unaffordable.

## Pakistan

### *Challenges*

#### Poor Health Sector Capacity

The COVID-19 outbreak has exposed the high incidence of social inequality in Pakistan. Government spending on health is 0.8 per cent of GDP,<sup>18</sup> while the WHO recommends a minimum spending of 6 per cent of the GDP.

There is a need of complete overhaul of the health sector and capacity building of medical professionals. The tug-of-war between the Pakistan Medical Commission and the newly restored Pakistan Medical and Dental Commission (PMDC) has rendered oversight, of the health sector and medical education, ineffective. A Charter of Public Health is needed in order to ensure that successive governments do not jeopardise access to quality public health in Pakistan.

#### Disconnect btw federal and provincial govts/ governance crisis

The COVID-19 outbreak in Pakistan and lack of a cohesive, well-coordinated early response has reflected governance gaps in the face of an unprecedented threat. From the very start, there has been a lack of coordination between the federal and provincial governments, which has led to an inopportune blame game between the federation and the provinces. Also, lack of involvement of local governments has hampered outreach to communities for provision of timely healthcare and relief. The government needs to display better understanding of dangers of exponential spread of pandemic along with a corresponding preventive strategy.

The COVID-19 crisis tested the post-18th Constitutional Amendment crisis management ability of the state. There was palpable lack of coordination between the provinces and the centre. In the beginning, absence of a coherent strategy made it difficult to chart out coordinated activities to contain the pandemic. This led to instances of uncoordinated initiatives by the provinces and federal government. In early March, the Sindh government initiated lockdown, quarantine and provision of medical services.<sup>22</sup> On the capacity building front, the provinces were not provided timely guidance and leverage to procure necessary critical care and personal protective equipment for healthcare professionals. The availability of updated data/statistics about health care facilities was also a weak area where the federal government and provinces did not share essential information with each other.

#### Digital literacy and divide

Unfortunately, digital literacy rates remain lopsided across the country, as nearly half of country's female population is illiterate (49.2 per cent).<sup>30</sup> The issue of literacy is closely linked to textual, technical and conceptual literacy elements of Digital Literacy.<sup>31</sup> The first two are linked with how users interact with digital devices, and conceptual literacy relates with purposeful use of the Internet.

People with the weakest digital access have been hit hard in the current pandemic. This is particularly true as students with no Internet access and digital devices found themselves unable to continue their educational activities. People living in rural areas and towns, particularly those in middle age bracket, lack

digital literacy and are more prone to economic isolation. People also have little familiarity with use of digital platforms for ecommerce and financial transactions. The lockdown severely hampered people's ability to continue transaction of goods and services as a result.

#### Exacerbation of Socioeconomic Conditions

The lower income stratum of society continues to face greater hardship due to

the lockdown. Unequal access to public goods is a major problem since the poor have far less access to quality healthcare, education and jobs, hence, are more prone to the shocks of an unprecedented pandemic. Pakistan's ranking on the Human Development Index (HDI) is 152 out of 189.

As per a media report by Dawn, which cited the Economic Survey of 2019-20, with partial restrictions in place nearly '1.4 million jobs will be lost,' which constitutes '2.2 per cent of the employed work force.' In terms of wage losses, this will translate into PKR 23.6 billion.

The government initiated disbursements of PKR 12,000 per family to 12 million families under a total programme budget of PKR 144 billion.<sup>32</sup> Out of this, almost 7 million families were new beneficiaries covered under the COVID-19 Emergency Cash Programme.<sup>33</sup> The Ministry of Poverty Alleviation and Social Safety now plans to upscale this programme to PKR 203 billion in order to cover an additional 5 million families taking the tally of beneficiary families to 17 million.

Corporations and services sector that were forced to keep their business operations shut had to lay off their staff.<sup>39</sup> Despite ordinances by different provinces, it was hard for the government, in the absence of access to financial assistance to labour, to ensure that staff was not laid off.

#### National Crisis Management Strategy

National emergency/crisis response institutions appeared dysfunctional at the beginning of the crisis. The timely warning and desired preparation was found wanting, chiefly due to effete and slow response by the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) and Ministry of National Health Services, Regulation and Coordination. There was no health risk assessment and management entity/organisation within the Ministry. Due to lack of timely sensitization, the sense of urgency in border control and capacity building of hospitals was missing. The need for an updated national database for healthcare infrastructure has emerged as a prime need. The NDMA, that was supposed to act as the focal organisation for disaster response, had to be subsumed in a hastily formed 'National Command and Operation Centre (NCOC).' A need has emerged, therefore, of an organisation that can plan effectively for all disasters in peacetime and be able to respond to emergencies in crisis situations.

#### Opportunities

##### Regional Health Security

The COVID-19 pandemic has opened up the possibility of regional health security cooperation in South Asia. Political differences need to be put aside to forge a common and a synergetic regional response to future health emergencies. The South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) needs to be reinvigorated to combat health and climate change-induced crises.

##### Creation of Database of wage Earners

An evident lapse that needs to be corrected is the government's inability to update the record of daily wage earners. As per local television media, many wage earners in rural areas of Sindh, Punjab, Balochistan, and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa have not had access to rations or financial support from the

respective provincial or federal governments. The state should update its record on wage earners by having a centralised digital database prepared through joint efforts of the National Database and Registration Authority (NADRA), Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) and recently formed Ministry of Poverty Alleviation.

#### Reforming Health Sector

Critical importance should be given to indigenous manufacturing of ventilators, radiology equipment, and PPEs. Special concessions for manufacturing units in the under construction Special Economic Zones under the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) need to be provided.

The current public health focus on sanitation needs to be used to strengthen the national health infrastructure. There is a need to invest more on public health, hygiene and medical facilities. The management structure at public health institutions needs to become efficient and corporate- oriented in its execution. Investment in adequate infrastructure building needs to take place to cater for additional in-patient and surgical departments, including placement of specialists at public hospitals at district and tehsil levels. Quality assurance at public health units must be robust and stringent with zero tolerance for violations. Developing a comprehensive public health policy with focus on building up of industrial capacity can create dividends for private investors to pour in resources and build indigenous industrial capacity to cater for the local market and increase share of medical exports.

Modern technology like 5G Spectrum should be integrated with telemedicine to enhance responsiveness and outreach of healthcare.

The current crisis has also shown that there is a clear linkage between the quality of health systems and the economy. The top three countries on the Global Economic Sustainability Index (last calculated in 2014) were Singapore, Hong Kong and South Korea and all three countries shared one common feature - they had the best performing healthcare systems. This explains the reason why they managed the current crisis so effectively. This is something that Pakistani policymakers need to be cognizant of.

#### Prospects for Biotech and Biomedical Investment

There is scope for attracting investment in biotechnology and biomedicine in Pakistan. This may lead to a gradual transition towards an innovation culture in the country. Medicine, bioengineering and biosciences have the potential to flourish given Pakistan's strong human resources. For doing so, the Foreign Office (FO), Pakistan Atomic Energy Commission (PAEC), Special Plans Division (SPD), National University of Sciences and Technology (NUST), NDMA, National Institute of Health (NIH), amongst others, need to be consulted for devising a robust policy on an institutional setup to encourage research and development culture in Pakistan. Vaccine research for infectious diseases should be conducted under properly equipped laboratories that meet biosafety levels 3 and 4 as per international standards.

#### Establishment of Prevention and Disease Control Centre (PDCC)

Pakistan should establish an autonomous Prevention and Disease Control Centre (PDCC) dedicated to study of epidemiology, infectious diseases and disease control/prevention. The Centre must be responsible for undertaking and funding research, development, innovation and conception of policy for health departments across the country. This may be achieved by decoupling the area from NIH and placing it under the PDCC. The Centre should work under the MoNHSRC as an autonomous institution, and engage with multilateral institutions, keeping abreast of global research on disease prevention and control.

## RELATIONS

### Pakistan foreign policy

#### Current

##### *PM Sri Lanka's visit*

- 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.

## Key Pillars of foreign policy of Pak

### Foreign Policy

- Foreign policy should be based on following factors
- ① National Interest first and before anything else. Morality, Religion and Ideology comes later
  - ② Must be based on win-win rather than zero sum

### Key-Pillars of Foreign Policy of Pakistan

- ① Security and territorial Integrity  
Achieved by Alliances
  - Security driven alliances • Economy based Alliances
- ② Ensuring safety and security of strategic Assets
  - Domestic and External threats • Negative Propaganda
  - Foreign Pressure How to tackle?
  - Modernize Security System • Develop diplomatic cloud with friendly countries • close relationship with IAEA
- ③ Social-Economic Development
  - bilateral economic relations (trade, investments)
  - cooperation with institutions (IMF, World bank, WTO)
- ④ Just and Fair resolution of Kashmir issue
  - UN resolution • Kashmir is a disputed territory
- ⑤ Developing close relations with major neighbours
- ⑥ Avoiding global and regional isolation
- ⑦ Playing an imp role in global peace and development.

### Challenges to Pak's foreign policy

Pakistan's social fabric is composed of a myriad thread that are fraying from within owing to a plethora of external and internal challenges. The tangible manifestation of these challenges, brewing both within home, regionally and internationally, can be seen from the foreign policy front.



What are the current challenges to Pak's FP?

① Ensuring Peace in Afg

- Hum apnay border pay sakoon chahaty hain
- Pak-US relations improve krnay hain

② Managing Current Situation in Kashmir

- Kashmiri resistance ka ilzam India hum par lagaye ga
- World ki attention leni hai Kashmir issue par
- India is 3<sup>rd</sup> biggest country with purchasing power

③ Navigating a balanced FP towards Middle East  
Iran-Saudi Conflicts

④ Repairing a broken relationship with US

- Financial System pay US ka control hai
- Pak is in dire need of loans (Dams-World Bank-US)
- US is largest export market for Pak
- Afghan Issue • Coalition Support fund stopped
- politically pressurize (FATF grey list)
- Visit of PM say kuch behtari hogi hai that alone because of Afg issue
- Strategic partnership not possible
- US sees us through Afghan prism
- Our relations are narrowed by Afghan lens
- He wants us to do more for counter-terrorism
- Denuclearization
- Our relations are transactional (temporary and need based)
- We have to revise our relations with US



How US sees India  
Strategic partner → long-term and multi-dimensional interest

- As a common law based democracy (ideological affinity)
- market based economy with largest middle class
- Counterweight to China

### ⑤ Reverse Economic Diplomacy

- Bridge Current account deficit (How? Credit loans (Short term challenge).
- To get access to European Market, South East Asia like Malaysia, Increase exports and eliminate trade deficit, attract foreign investments (long-term)

### ⑥ Strengthening Pak's Strategic Partnership with People's Republic of China

- A lot needs to be done to take it to its existing potential
- There are some reservations from both sides

#### Pak's reservations

- Same strategic partnership like US-Ind
- Take our side in every matter
- Deals that were struck in 2014 were more favorable to China
- We will renegotiate (Abdul Rezaq Dawood)



Free trade agreement favors China (Pak exports 13%)

### China's Reservations

- Security Situation
- Pak's weak credentials as a strategic partner

### ⑦ Managing Aggressive India

- Cannot afford conflict. Cannot sell out key interests
- Despite aggressive attitude of India, Pak have spread goodwill gestures
- Warmonger → Rising economic power, Relations with US, GULF, regional hegemon.

#### What to do?

- Made world realize such attitude of India could lead towards nuclear confrontation
  - Convince US to mediate
  - gain support from friendly countries. Should not close doors for peace and talks
- Example: We haven't close Kartarpur corridor despite India's actions.

### *Image problem*

At the foremost, Pakistan's foreign policy suffers from an image problem whereby the impression of Pakistan is one of a country constantly knocking on the doors of donors, whilst being unable to tackle the problems cropping up in its own backyard. Of these issues, one that continues to upset foreign countries is that of nuclear proliferation; in 2004, the AQ Khan network was discovered and it was allegedly supplying nuclear technology from Pakistan to North Korea, Libya and Iran. This created a lot of complications in Pakistan's relations with the international community because this is a kind of cardinal sin - one which contributed to the deterioration of Pakistan's image. Moreover, another issue that plagues Pakistan's image, and consequently acts as a challenge to its foreign policy, is that of terrorism. Pakistan needs to do more in order to hold various factions of terrorists accountable, and merely enacting legislation in order to comply with FATF's action plan is not enough. The grey listing by FATF due to financing of terrorism and money laundering is a major hurdle for Pakistan's foreign policy, as it hampers Pakistan's credibility in the international arena, particularly with respect to issues such as Kashmir. Furthermore, other issues which plague Pakistan's image are oppression of religious minorities, women and opposition parties, frequent curbs on the media, previous military takeovers and unbalanced civil-military relations, encroachment of the judiciary on the domains of the executive and legislature, frequent political crises etc.

### *Economic mismanagement*

Another issue of Pakistan's foreign policy is the country's internal economic mismanagement and corruption, which have seeped into all contours of the country's fabric and impact all citizens, irrespective of whichever rung of the socio-economic ladder that they hail from. A country's economic might acts as a gravitational force in the international arena, as can be evidenced from the blind eye that the global community, particularly the OIC, has turned towards Indian atrocities in Indian-Occupied Jammu and Kashmir. Resultantly, Pakistan's foreign policy is crippled because of its economic dependence on countries such as China, America, UAE and KSA. It is postulated that CPEC's future impact will have tangible reverberations on our foreign policy, whereby we will have to do China's bidding and align our foreign policy goals with that China, even if they might not suit our interest in the long run. Moreover, economic mismanagement discourages foreign direct investment, tourism and exacerbates internal economic problems, such as a balance of payment crisis. This feeds into other factors such as curbing of the rights of opposition parties and constant political upheavals, all of which amalgamate to deteriorate Pakistan's image abroad.

### *Afghan debacle*

With the impending US withdrawal from Afghanistan, Pakistan is faced with the challenge of making inroads with the local Afghan populace, or are more tilted towards India. It is postulated that Pakistan will also suffer from being blamed for any backlash that might result from the US withdrawal, which seems imminent due to a lack of a proper monitoring mechanism in place for a post-US Afghanistan. America has a penchant for levying the blame on Pakistan when unrest brews within this region, and with the current shift of American foreign policy towards India, it will not be farfetched to presume that Pakistan will be blamed for anything that can, and will, go wrong in Afghanistan.

### *Lack of regional integration*

Moreover, there is a blatant lack of regional integration within South Asia, as can be evidenced from the almost defunct SAARC and ECO, which acts as a hurdle for Pakistan's foreign policy. India casts a formidable shadow across many states in South Asia, such as Nepal, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh, making it

difficult for Pakistan to improve trade and tourism relations with its own neighbours. The 1971 split of East and West Pakistan has also left a bad aftertaste within Bangladesh and continues to act as a major hurdle in the normalization of relations between Pakistan and Bangladesh.

### *Recognition of Israel*

Furthermore, the increasing shift in the Middle East towards recognition of Israel poses a challenge for Pakistan's foreign policy as it is alienating us from countries whom we previously considered our allies. KSA and the UAE have extended foreign relations with Israel, and Pakistan's failure to follow suit has resulted in UAE stopping the issuance for visas to Pakistanis etc. In the future, this coldness in relations with countries where hundreds of thousands of Pakistanis currently live and work, and send remittances from, which prove extremely problematic and will increase the linkage of India with Gulf countries. Therefore, it can be ascertained that Pakistan is plagued with numerous challenges, both externally and internally, that hamper its foreign policy.

### *Countering Islamophobia*

- Ever since he took office in 2018, Prime Minister Imran Khan has been very vocal against rising Islamophobia and the grave global consequences of this trend. His drive to curb Islamophobic progression can be seen at the forefront of Pakistan's international engagements. An enprint of this year is evidence of this where high-level meetings during tours of Egypt, Iran, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, and Turkey have all had an exclusive focus on how to curb anti-Muslim rhetoric and crime.
- In the backdrop of this year's nationwide protests (in April) against France trying to justify the publication of sacrilegious caricatures of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), PM Khan summoned OIC ambassadors to his office on 3<sup>rd</sup> 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.
- The deadly attack in Canada further fueled his resolve and he has been tirelessly highlighting the need for cumulative global action to counter growing false narratives against Muslims as well as pushing for a resolution against Islamophobia at the UNGA.
- In 2019, Pakistan proposed a six-point plan at the UN directed at countering racism and religious hatred. The then Pakistan ambassador to the UN, Maleeha Lodhi, also highlighted the need for legislative tools to address the issue. Concurrently, in the same year's OIC meet, PM Imran underscored the necessity of having an anti-Islamophobia strategy, upbraiding all ideas that link any religion to terrorism.
- During a passionate 50-minute speech in the UNGA in 2019, Imran highlighted the global impact of anti-Muslim sentiment and called attention to how Islamophobia is being used as a tactical weapon by India to subjugate the Kashmiris and delegitimise their struggle under the banner of 'Islamic terrorism'.
- In 2020, he wrote letters to Muslim leaders where he advised addressing the knowledge gap regarding Muslim sentiments, particularly in non-Muslim countries. He also wrote a letter to Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg to take down Islamophobic content. At the 2020 Shanghai Cooperation Organisation conference, he again underscored the need for bridging gaps between all faiths. This year, March 15 was observed as the International Day to Combat Islamophobia as a result of Pakistan's proposal at the OIC last year.
- After PM's visit to SL, SRI LANKA has in a welcome move reversed its order that mandated all those dying of Covid-19 be cremated.



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### Foreign policy of early days

- 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
- 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 and 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 Shershah was the first head of state to visit Pakistan, Turkey aware of the history of support by South Asian Muslims and their admiration for Kemal Atatürk 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.

### Strategic Vision

- 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 Arabia, 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 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 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.

#### From Geopolitics to Geoeconomics

- 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.
- 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.
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#### 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.

- 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.
- 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.

#### *Analysing this shift*

As summarised on a government website this 'dialogue' outlined a 'new' policy direction that involved prioritising economic security, changing the "narrative of geopolitical contestation to geoeconomic cooperation", increasing "Pakistan's economic footprint globally" and promoting "regional connectivity". The foreign minister stated several times since that the government is working on transforming the country's "geopolitics to geoeconomic policy".

If these assertions mean that Pakistan will henceforth subordinate its geostrategic aims to strengthening its economy and reorient foreign policy to serve the country's domestic economic interests and promote growth and prosperity, then it is a welcome shift. However, any policy shift must have substance and

clarity otherwise it remains a declaration of intent. As these official statements have yet to be elaborated or specify the means by which the policy is to be pursued, the 'shift' is, for now, a desire not a strategy.

Conceptual and operational clarity is essential before announcing a policy change as is its timing. It is questionable how geoeconomics will be separated from geopolitics as the two are interrelated. Moreover, at a time when Pakistan is confronted with more than one geopolitical storm — regional and global — how exactly will the country negotiate geopolitical challenges while pivoting to geoeconomics? Afghanistan is at an inflection point facing the growing danger of descending into chaos with serious ramifications for Pakistan's security. Relations remain tense and unpredictable with India which continues on a repressive course in occupied Kashmir with demographic changes and further bifurcation of the state looming, which is bound to further inflame the situation. US-China confrontation is casting a shadow over the region posing a challenge for Islamabad that wants to avoid getting into its crosshairs but may find that a tough balancing act. Thus, geopolitics and Pakistan's security dilemmas cannot be wished away by declarations alone. A new strategy or policy shift has to be matched to reality.

### *Understanding Geoeconomics*

What is really meant by geoeconomics? The international literature on this is instructive. There is little agreement on how to define geoeconomics with the term used in different ways. Definitions include the geostrategic use of economic power, using "economic tools to advance geopolitical objectives", achievement of foreign policy outcomes by economic, not military, power projection, and "use of economic instruments to promote and defend national interests, and produce beneficial geopolitical results". Some see geoeconomics as a form of statecraft that deploys geopolitical power and leverages geography to achieve economic ends.

Edward Luttwak, a US strategic thinker, first forged the term geoeconomics in 1990 in the Cold War's aftermath. He argued that commerce was displacing military power as a tool for countries to deploy with geoeconomics emerging as an "admixture of the logic of war with the methods of commerce". Building on previous scholarly works, the book *War by Other Means* by Robert Blackwill and Jennifer Harris contributed to the global debate on the rising role of geoeconomics in the international arena by examining the means adopted by the US, China and others to accomplish foreign policy goals. More and more states they wrote "are waging geopolitics with capital, attempting with sovereign checkbooks and other economic tools to achieve strategic objectives that were in the past the stuff of military coercion or conquest".

In a recent book titled *Geoeconomics and Power Politics in the 21st Century*, one of its writers points out that geoeconomics has not entirely replaced military means of statecraft. Both instruments coexist and are deployed by countries depending on what they consider appropriate for the challenges they confront. The book emphasises that in making use of economic tools the factors that count in geoeconomic strategies include markets, resources, and ability to control and direct investment to compete effectively.

Almost all the recent literature identifies China as the world's leading exponent and "practitioner of geoeconomics". With ample justification. China's Belt and Road Initiative is the biggest and most ambitious geoeconomic enterprise of this century. Encompassing over 70 countries and engaging 138 states it aims to build land and maritime networks involving infrastructure, power projects and telecommunications to promote trade and resource flows, achieve economic integration and boost economic growth and development. In Africa and Latin America, Chinese influence has expanded through targeted investments giving it unprecedented strategic outreach.



Geoeconomics has been successfully pursued not just by big powers but smaller and medium-sized countries too. The crucial and obvious requirement is domestic economic strength and resources. Does Pakistan have the economic attributes regarded as prerequisites to pursue a geoeconomic policy? The most fundamental requirement is a strong economy. With an economy perpetually burdened by crises in public finance caused by chronic budget and balance of payments deficits, Pakistan has yet to seriously address these structural problems to achieve sustainable growth. A narrow tax base and failure to mobilise domestic resources has inevitably meant growing indebtedness and reliance on frequent IMF bailouts. A limited and undiversified export base plus lack of innovation has also prevented the country from becoming a player in global markets and economy.

Therefore, if Pakistan wants to pursue a geoeconomics policy in any meaningful way it has to transform its economy, ensure a stable political environment and reorder its internal priorities and budget allocations. Economic power and capability cannot be 'borrowed' or 'imported' from outside but built at home by undertaking long postponed structural reforms. The essential ingredients of a strong economy are internal.

If by geoeconomics the government means leveraging the country's location to become a regional hub that vision has been projected by every government since the 1990s. It was never realised because of regional geopolitical tensions and the country's weak economic fundamentals. And that too requires a strong economic foundation including efficient and attractive markets.

No country can talk its way into effecting a policy shift. Unless it is backed by substance and reflects reality it remains a vision on paper, not in practice.

#### Vision East Asia

- Pakistan's Vision East Asia policy aims at strengthening trade/investment ties with ASEAN region. Over the years, Pakistan has attained Sectoral Dialogue Partner SDP status with ASEAN (the SDP status does not entitle to participate in all important East Asia Summits).
- Pakistan has Free Trade Agreement (FTA) with Malaysia and Mutual Recognition Agreement with Indonesia. Pakistan also offers scholarships in education to students of ASEAN countries, in addition, under the ASEAN-Pakistan Cooperation Fund (APCF) workshops/training courses are organized. However, to win over the support of ASEAN members for Full Dialogue Partner FDP status, Pakistan needs to engage the regional countries politically as well as economically. People-to-people contacts also need to be encouraged.
- ASEAN-Pakistan merchandise trade currently stands at US\$ 6.181 billion; Pakistan's exports to ASEAN are US \$ 0.993 billion and imports from ASEAN are US \$ 6.181 billion. Pakistan so far has not been able to secure FDP status with ASEAN, the prime opponent is Singapore.
- To break the impasse in Pakistan-East Asia relations, enhanced bilateral interaction, high level exchange with ASEAN countries, Japan, South Korea and Oceania (Australia, New Zealand) need to be planned.
- Students, professionals and artistes should be sent to this region to enhance people-to-people contacts. The Buddhist sites in Pakistan can be a source of attraction for the East Asian countries.
- Economic cooperation and efforts to sign FTA with Singapore, Indonesia, Thailand, Vietnam, Brunei, Philippines should be pursued. With enhanced economic ties, Pakistan can mould the ASEAN opinion in its favour and win over the support for FDP status.

- Pakistani diaspora living in ASEAN countries and local entrepreneurs need to be mobilized to attract investments for Pakistan.
- Foreign Secretary Sohail Mahmood has said that Pakistan is pursuing a consistent 'Vision East Asia' policy to strengthen its partnership with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) in all spheres.
- The foreign secretary expressed these views in a keynote address at the Experts Dialogue on 'Pakistan-ASEAN: Shared Future and the Way Forward', co-organised by the Embassy of Indonesia and the Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad (ISSI) JULY 2021
- He specifically stressed the importance of forging closer cooperation in political, economic, security, tourism, education and socio-cultural domains. The official highlighted the range of steps taken by Pakistan to foster multifaceted engagement with ASEAN and the commitment to deepen trade and economic linkages with its member states.
- He maintained that this was in line with Pakistan's economic diplomacy outreach and consistent with the leadership's emphasis on geo-economics. He further encouraged ASEAN member countries to consider investment in Special Economic Zones of CPEC.
- The secretary also underlined the importance for Pakistani business community to see how mutually-beneficial collaboration could be achieved by engaging with the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP), recently concluded by ASEAN and its key trading partners.
- He reiterated Pakistan's commitment to continue working towards upgradation of its relationship with ASEAN to the level of a Full Dialogue Partner.
- The official further emphasised the importance of hard and soft connectivity between Pakistan and ASEAN, including in transportation, communication and cyber domains, between the ports, and among its populations.

#### *Indian ties with East Asian states*

- India's "Look East Policy", initiated in 1991 focused on cultivating economic interaction with the ASEAN states. The policy has been pursued by successive Indian governments. India has FDP status with ASEAN, is member of ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), and regularly participates in ASEAN Summits.
- Geopolitical developments during this period saw the Gulf War, which inadvertently led to 'economic recession and an acute balance-of-payments crisis for Indian economy.' Hence, steps into the ASEAN region were taken to explore new avenues of economic and trade opportunities, and deter fiscal fallouts.
- China's proximity to Southeast Asia also prompted India to engage with the region.<sup>25</sup> China has emerged as a regional power in Asia-Pacific, and as an active player in South Asia (by building seaports in Myanmar, Bangladesh, Pakistan and Sri Lanka)
- On the domestic front, engagement with Southeast Asia was linked to the development of India's Northeastern states (Arunchal Pradesh, Nagaland, Mizoram, and Manipur share land border with Myanmar, and maritime boundaries in the Bay of Bengal with Myanmar, Thailand and Indonesia).<sup>27</sup> The idea being that through connectivity and economic links, these areas would be exposed to development.<sup>28</sup> However, over the years, these regions have not benefitted from India-ASEAN economic cooperation. This could be termed as the 'weakness of India's Look East Policy.

- India's exports to ASEAN in 2019-20 were worth US\$31.49 billion while its imports from the bloc reached US\$55.37 billion.
- On the bilateral front, Singapore is one of the top sources of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) to India.<sup>37</sup> Indonesia provides 60 per cent of India's coal imports.
- Other than 'economic and trade tracks',<sup>39</sup> India has also been enhancing defence and security cooperation with the Asia-Pacific. Former Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh at the ASEAN-India Commemorative Summit in New Delhi in 2012 called for maritime cooperation to ensure freedom of navigation and safety against transnational threats.
- Prime Minister Modi has renamed India's "Look East Policy" as "Act East Asia Policy", signaling India's growing interest in the region. It points towards India's trans-regional aspiration and envisioning a larger political role globally. The 'Act East Policy' indicates that India wants to have an 'active' and 'prominent strategic role' in Asia-Pacific.
- India's future engagement with the countries of Southeast Asia, Northeast Asia and Oceania will largely be determined by the 'security dynamics' and 'geopolitical convergences'.<sup>101</sup> China's political standing in Asia-Pacific and beyond cannot be underestimated. The China-ASEAN trade (USD 380 billion),<sup>102</sup> Regional Comprehensive Partnership (RCEP),<sup>103</sup> and the BRI<sup>104</sup> are reflective of the country's economic strength and global outreach.
- Latest Indian-Asean summit and its theme

### Conclusion

- Southeast Asia's strategic significance coupled with the region's economic progress makes the region an attractive site for global players. Pakistan, being well aware of the region's economic prowess launched the 'Vision East Asia' policy to establish trade links with East Asian economic heavy weights. Over the years, Pakistan's Vision East Asia policy has not made concrete gains. The lack of political will along with a weak economic profile make Pakistan a less important political player. In order to exploit the economic potential of ASEAN, Pakistan needs to revisit its policy, look towards the region with vigour and through intensive diplomatic activity, build deeper political and economic ties.

### MENA

The Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region<sup>1</sup> has provided Pakistan with both challenges and opportunities throughout its turbulent 73-year history. Ranging from strategic alliances, estrangement, institutional cooperation and 'special relationship' statuses, Pakistan's relations with MENA states have formed a pivotal feature of foreign and diplomatic policy since 1947. Whilst the nature of the challenges and opportunities have diversified and transformed over the decades, recent geopolitical strife in the region, and the domestic conditions in Pakistan, have facilitated new predicaments in Pakistani strategic thought vis-à-vis the MENA. This paper seeks to analyse Pakistan's approach to contemporary regional geopolitical crises, which include the on-going conflicts in Yemen and Syria, the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC)-Qatar dispute and broader regional antagonism such as Saudi-Iran tensions, which have 'posed considerable challenges for Pakistan's foreign policy.'<sup>2</sup> Whilst the MENA region is often dubbed as a source of stability for Pakistan, characterised by reliable strategic partnerships and entrenched economic and military cooperation with the Gulf and Arab states, recent crises have tested Pakistan's ability to remain a trusted partner while remaining committed to its national interest. Considering these contemporary quandaries, the common narrative observed and espoused within Pakistani academia,

political circles and media publications is the notion of 'neutrality' – whereby Pakistan's approach to the region is said to be characterised by a non-interventionist stance towards its conflicts.

#### *Neutrality-cum-Balancing*

Neutrality, as a theoretical concept in International Relations discourse and in its most basic format, refers to a 'condition through which a state declares non-involvement in a conflict or war and indicates its intention to refrain from supporting or aiding either side.

Pakistan's policy cannot be described as consistently 'neutral', as external and internal political influences have shaped Pakistan's response in various contexts. As such, aside from implementing an observable policy of neutrality in some cases (such as the GCC-Qatar crisis), a policy of balancing can also be observed in other cases (such as the Yemen conflict) – whereby Pakistan has attempted to appease regional actors with whom it shares cordial relations with, whilst ensuring that bilateral relations with opposing actors are not affected in an attempt to navigate the complex regional balance of power. Hence, this paper has coined the term 'neutrality-cum-balancing' to best portray Pakistan's practical conduct in various crises. Neutrality-cum-balancing provides a fresh perspective on Pakistan's MENA policy, ultimately demonstrating that there exists an oscillation and occasional fusion between conducting a balancing act and pursuing a neutral approach to crises.

the concept of **parity** (or difference) provides a key indicator of Pakistan's approach to MENA conflicts. Where bilateral relations between Pakistan and the two conflicting actors are similar (limited parity), a policy of neutrality is more likely to be preferred in order to maintain the level of bilateralism between Pakistan and each respective actor. Therefore, Pakistan would exercise restraint from becoming involved or choosing sides in that conflict. For example, if a crisis is initiated between Actor A and Actor B, and both Actors A and B have cordial and entrenched bilateral ties with Pakistan and, therefore, reduced parity between them, the government will likely pursue a policy of neutrality to sustain ties with both Actor A and Actor B. Here, bilateralism is prioritised in order to achieve national interests as damaging bilateral ties with actors that drive Pakistan's political-economy is not desirable – even if the actors are involved in a 'moral wrong.' Historic examples include India's Cold War non-alignment, where non-intervention in Soviet Union-United States (US) conflicts was observed to maintain cordial relations with both blocs to for the sake of national interest. This paper uses the example of Pakistan's conduct towards the GCC-Qatar crisis since 2017 to validate this argument. Pakistan's swing towards neutrality is highly observable in this case due to the limited parity between Pakistan-Qatar relations and Pakistan-Saudi (and co) relations, and country's interests in maintaining close relations with both blocs for wide-ranging political, economic and military motivations. On the contrary, where a greater degree of parity is evident i.e. the relationship between Actor A and Pakistan is perceived as being greater in value and importance than the relationship between Actor B and Pakistan, a policy of balancing is likely to be preferable. This is because the influence, demands and expectations of Actor A require a response or involvement from Pakistan, whilst it also remains in the national interest to maintain ties with Actor B, despite being of lesser value. Therefore, all efforts are made to appease Actor A whilst reassuring Actor B, resulting in a strategic balancing act. This is especially desirable when the (lesser) relationship between Actor B and Pakistan holds enormous strategic value, such as territorial borders, shared security threats or opportunities for growth in bilateral issues.

#### *Saudi-Yemen War*

As neutrality implies the absence of one state aiding another, this cannot be observed in Pakistan's 'neutral' approach to the Yemen war. Rather, to preserve Pak-Saudi relations, a series of assurances and

commitments have been agreed indirectly aiding Riyadh in Yemen. First, Pakistan agreed to send more troops to be stationed in Saudi Arabia for 'border security' measures,<sup>38</sup> insisting that these troops would aid already stationed troops to defend holy sites and conduct military training and exercise as normal – contrary to speculation that these troops would aid the Yemeni war. Second, the Pakistani leadership has remained committed to providing diplomatic and moral support to the Saudi cause. Most notably, former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif stated 'Pakistan does not abandon friends and strategic partners'<sup>39</sup> and that 'any threat to Saudi Arabia will evoke strong reaction from Pakistan.

Pakistan's decision to join the 'Islamic Military Counter Terrorism Coalition (IMCTC)', a Saudi-led coalition, sparked further controversy. The Coalition has been branded as a Sunni military alliance, as it excludes Iran and Iraq,<sup>42</sup> despite being mandated to consolidate Muslim cooperation on counterterrorism. To further undermine Pakistan's neutral position, former Pakistani Chief of Army Staff (COAS) General Raheel Sharif was appointed to lead the IMCTC. The covert support for Saudi territorial integrity and diplomatic support for the Saudi aims in Yemen, as well as joining the IMCTC, have undermined the parliamentary resolution prescribing complete neutrality. Pakistan should therefore be labelled a 'non-belligerent' rather than 'neutral' in the Yemen conflict, as even ad hoc neutrality has not been adhered to. Non-belligerent actors may support a faction in a conflict, but do not take part directly through military means. Similarly, Pakistan has supported notions of Syrian sovereignty, but remained a non-belligerent in the Syrian war. Overall, Pakistan's attitude towards the Yemen conflict cannot be termed as neutral. Rather, Pakistan has aimed to balance its relations with the Saudis and its progressing relations with Iran by fusing notions of neutrality and balancing.

As Pakistan committed itself to indirectly aiding the Saudi cause in the Yemen war ideologically and materially, the Iranian leadership expressed major concern towards this development. In April 2015, Iranian Foreign Minister Jawad Zarif insisted Pakistan reject any Saudi appeals to join the coalition in Yemen, as this would exacerbate the Iranian belief that the 'Sunni states' are conspiring to isolate Shia Iran.<sup>45</sup> As a result, Pakistan initiated a delicate balancing act to appease both states. Vis-à-vis Iran, Pakistan 'neutralised to appease' – ensuring that the proclaimed policy of neutrality would be enough to appease and satisfy the Iranians. After all, Pakistan did not join the Saudi coalition to fight in Yemen and has done everything in its diplomatic power to ensure that joining the Islamic military coalition was not to target Iran.<sup>46</sup> Through diplomatic initiatives, Pakistan has been able to renew trust with the Iranians. For example, during its inaugural summit, Raheel Sharif insisted that the IMCTC is 'not against any country or any sect.'<sup>47</sup> Within Pakistan, many public diplomatic measures were taken to convey Pakistan's approach towards the IMCTC – emphasising that the organisation is a coalition of willing rather than a formal alliance. To Iranian relief, Saudi Arabia was unable to influence Pakistan's decision to withdraw its ambassador to Syria as a protest against the Iranian-backed Assad government – rejecting the claim of Saudi suzerainty over Pakistan.

Ultimately, Pakistan's attempts to use its neutral official policy and diplomatic channels to balance Saudi-Iran tensions prove the oscillation and fusion of neutrality and balancing.

## Palestine

- 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

### New Quad

The international community carefully observes the new quadrilateral diplomatic platform dubbed the ‘New Quad’ encompassing Pakistan, the US, Afghanistan and Uzbekistan which rivals the conventional Quadrilateral arrangement between the US, Japan, Australia and India.

The New quadrilateral diplomatic platform strategically synergises with Pakistan’s Vision of Central Asia, it’s multilateral regional foreign policy, the Islamabad Security Dialogue, CPEC and the BRI-New Silk Road.

The distinguishing feature between the conventional Quad with the new Quad is that the latter aspires for geo-economic centred regional connectivity in Eurasia through the Tashkent-Kabul-Peshawar railway network whereas the conventional Quad is a Thucydides trap, keeping checks on China in the Indo-Pacific deploying Cold War era zero-sum geo-strategy.

The New Quad helps Pakistan lure Foreign Direct Investment (FDI). The New Quad calculatedly shields Pakistan from disproportionate economic dependence on Beijing in the future by encouraging both superpowers (China and the US) to constructively engage in mutually beneficial competition in the newly emerging Silk Road Economic Belt. A Belt integrating South and Central Asian markets with Ground Lines of Communication (GLOCs) producing a win-win for Pakistan, its citizens and consumers.

Obviously America will carry on nurturing preferential rapport with India, however this will neutralise if more US businesses invest in Pakistan as their headquarters gaining unrivalled access to Central Asia via the New Silk Road Economic Belt, the BRI.

The New Silk Road Economic Belt can fully connect the US via Pakistan through to the Central Asian Republics (CARs) of Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan and Kazakhstan. Markets worth \$100 billion with lucrative power and energy sectors are home to 72 million consumers. The US capitalising trade with the CARs boosts its own revenues. This New Quad can eventually also evolve into a security and intelligence bloc.

The geo-economic thrust of regional connectivity lies in Pakistan’s positively influencing America through the New Quad’s role in securing the Tashkent-Kabul-Peshawar railway network inducing American economic participation in the CARs simultaneously appeasing Beijing and Moscow.

Washington won’t officially endorse CPEC due to realpolitik as BRI offers Beijing direct access to the Indian Ocean Region and sea lines of communication (SLOC). Though Washington can get used to CPEC and fully benefit from Pakistan’s Chinese-constructed infrastructure to facilitate its own financial self-interests in the CARs.

The New Quad strategically assists Pakistan to assert a broader balance with America’s South Asian strategy reconciling American and Chinese interests. Islamabad must constructively incentivise Washington to restore balance in its South Asian strategy given Washington’s India pivot. The safest way to accomplish this is via geo-economics. The birth of the New Quad highlights an ongoing failure for Washington and New Delhi to reach a trade deal despite years of negotiations.

The involvement of Pakistan and the US in the New Quad helps the former balance great superpowers in light of the New Cold War between Washington and Beijing. Islamabad balances relations by diplomatic



multi-tasking: intelligently preserving its rapport with Beijing (through CPEC); and brokering new energy and defence agreements with Moscow like the Tashkent-Kabul-Peshawar railway network and the Russia-Pakistan Pakstream North-South gas pipeline. Pakistan thereby influences Washington via geo-economics to reconsider a regional foreign policy reset.

Such realities facilitate positive contributions by the US in institutionally rebuilding Afghanistan. The New Quad is a good omen for Kabul, a geostrategic nerve-centre bridging South and Central Asia. However, the government in Kabul should conduct less politicking and engage in non-duplicitous diplomacy with Islamabad, especially after recent bilateral setbacks and diplomat recalls. New Delhi, increasingly sidelined in Afghanistan, has nothing to apprehend as long as it relinquishes its zero-sum politics and 'spoiler' status.

### Pandemic foreign policy

A post-Covid world order is emerging. The US hinted it would require all international visitors to be fully vaccinated; the UK transport secretary said full vaccination would likely be a travel requirement "for evermore". The Covid apartheid described by the WHO is becoming entrenched. The world is split between a broadly defined 'West' awash with vaccines and booster shots, where travel and normal life are starting to resume, and a 'developing world' struggling to catch up, while facing prospects of political, social and economic isolation.

In this context, discourse on pandemic foreign policies has focused on vaccine providers, not recipients. Much has been written on the power of vaccine diplomacy, and the race between the US, China and Russia to win friends and satellite states in exchange for vaccine supplies. There is an emerging consensus that vaccine providers should not over-securitise their pandemic foreign policies, emphasise multilateralism and link vaccine diplomacy with climate change.

There are fewer views on how vaccine recipients — countries like Pakistan reliant to varying degrees on the largesse of vaccine-producing powers — should frame pandemic foreign policies. The topic deserves more attention.

To start with, vaccine-receiving countries should closely monitor the vaccine diplomacy tussle between greater powers, and exploit the competition not only to procure the best vaccine supply and travel agreements, but also in service of broader foreign policy goals.

A key goal should be to avoid becoming beholden to one country. A good pandemic foreign policy should pursue engagement with multiple potential influencers. Pakistan should seek a vaccine deal with one power, discuss increased foreign investment to boost laboratory capacity with another, and investigate licences for medical production facilities with a third. Such a multipronged effort will help balance foreign policy considerations and diversify alliances while taking advantage of new themes in pandemic-linked diplomacy.

### Publicly articulation of foreign policy and Populist politics

- Sometimes what matters in foreign policy is not what you can accomplish but what you can avoid.
- FOREIGN policy is serious business and rightly described as a country's first line of defence. Policy formulation and policy articulation both require careful thought and judgement. How policy is publicly articulated can make it more or less effective and impact on relations with other countries. In diplomacy it is essential to know when not to publicly say something and when to

speak. Words have consequences, intended or unintended. Words on foreign policy can affect — for good or ill — Pakistan's diplomatic relations, how the world sees us and international opinion.

- These considerations seem to have been ignored in foreign policy statements and interviews by the government's top leaders, causing unnecessary confusion and slip-ups, which are unhelpful for the country. For a start, too many PTI ministers, whose portfolios are unrelated to foreign affairs, voice public views on international issues often at variance with what their colleagues are saying.
- Another aspect to enunciation of foreign policy by the government has to do with its populist politics and the seemingly irresistible compulsion to play to the public gallery. This phenomenon is also evidenced in other countries where populism holds sway. Of course, it is important to explain policy to the public and build national consensus on foreign policy goals and initiatives. But that is quite different from making bombastic or provocative pronouncements aimed only at the local audience, which have direct implications for Pakistan's ties with other countries.
- Another tendency of some ministers is to publicly criticise, even castigate, an otherwise friendly country or multilateral body when they are not supportive of Pakistan's position. At times an assessment reached in in-house discussions — that should stay in-house — is publicly voiced. An example is public criticism of the OIC not long ago. The question is whether a public attack, rather than privately conveying misgivings and mounting pressure, will urge an organisation or country to change course? Or will a public rebuke further reinforce their position?
- The most recent case in point concerns a multilateral body, FATF. This is not to say that disagreement with statements or reports should not be voiced but it must be done in a purposeful and measured way.
- The tone of foreign policy statements sends important signals abroad. Whining is not a strategy. Whining about a decision or lack of international response on an issue of importance to Pakistan will not change the minds of others. But it will expose the country's frustrations and vulnerabilities to its adversaries. Moreover, a constantly complaining tone is self-denigrating and tiresome for others. Whining only advertises weakness and does nothing to enhance Pakistan's reputation. Even worse are statements that give an impression of playing victim — a helpless target of 'international conspiracies' or unfair policies of others. Again, such sentiments even if justified, are best raised in private because playing victim shows a lack of self-confidence.
- Public enunciation of foreign policy in a coherent, confident and dignified way is an essential part of statecraft. It should not be made subservient to populist politics or scoring political points at home at the cost of jeopardising Pakistan's important relationships with other countries or indeed with multilateral organisations.

## Pak-India relations

### History

### Current

- Johar town Lahore attack near residence of Jamaat-ud-Dawa chief Hafiz Saeed; one of the most wanted men of India, accused of being the mastermind of parliament's attack; NSA said Pakistan has concrete evidence of Indian involvement



- Even with a living proof like Kulbhushan Jadhav, we have failed to convince the world about the Indian involvement in terrorism activities in our country which have been happening with a rather growing frequency for the last couple of years. We have the Indian spy, who was a serving commander in the Indian Navy, in our custody for more than five years — since March 2016 to be exact. It seems as if the concocted and misleading Indian version — that “Jadhav, a retired Indian Navy officer running a cargo business in Iran, had been abducted by the Pakistan security forces” — is selling more globally. This is what reminds us of our power potential in the diplomatic world which is guided by national (read commercial) interests rather than what is wrong and what is right.
- 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.
- the Brussels-based organisation EU DisinfoLab published an investigative report titled Indian Chronicles, which revealed a staggering network of misinformation and propaganda against Pakistan.
- The report exposed an operation that took place over 15 years in 116 countries, featuring more than 500 fake media outlets and a dozen fake NGOs. This network endeavoured to push a pro-India and anti-Pakistan narrative in the European Union and the United Nations.
- 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 (5<sup>th</sup> 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>

#### Indian FP regarding Pak

- 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

#### What is wrong with India?

- 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.
- Read [Hindutva](#)

#### Power of strong economy

- 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.

#### Can Pak trust US?

- 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.

#### How should Pak negotiate with India?

- 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.
- 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.

#### Why India agreed for a dialogue?

- 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 signalling 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.

- The paradigm shift in Pakistan's foreign policy towards geo-economics emerged earlier this year at a time when backchannel diplomacy with India yielded restoration of ceasefire at the Line of Control.
- However, the process stalled soon afterwards as India failed to take steps towards restoration of Kashmir's statehood by revoking its actions of Aug 5, 2019.

#### 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

#### Kashmir

- The situation on the ground and the unilateral and illegal actions of the occupying Indian forces demonstrates that a project to erase the Kashmiri identity is underway in IIOJK. This includes forced demographic change through arbitrary alterations in a century-old domicile law.
- In addition to demographic change, the Indian government has passed a law to diminish the use of the Urdu language — which has been the official language for the last 131 years in the region. Muslim names of public spaces are also being changed while an effort to artificially decrease the representation of Muslims through forced delimitation is another attempt to diminish the unique identity of Kashmiris.
- The altered demographics and a reconfiguration of electoral constituencies are expected to allow Hindu-nationalist politicians to realise their longstanding goal of installing a Hindu chief minister in IOK. Under the smokescreen of electoral redistricting, New Delhi is using gerrymandering to politically neuter the region's Muslim majority.
- Today, there is one Indian soldier for every eight Kashmiris. Thousands of political leaders, teachers, activists, journalists and students remain incarcerated in prisons across India under draconian laws and trumped up charges. Many Hurriyat leaders are in frail health and their families fear for their safety.
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- For Pakistan, Kashmir was and is the 'unfinished agenda' of Partition. It was the 'K' in the acronym Pakistan. As Bhutto wrote: 'If a Muslim majority [region] can remain a part of India, then the raison d'être of Pakistan collapses ... Pakistan is incomplete without Jammu and Kashmir both territorially and ideologically.'
- 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 47<sup>th</sup> 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.

## Dispute

The state of Jammu and Kashmir was one of some 500 quasi autonomous princely states which exercised varying degrees of internal autonomy on the basis of treaties and agreements made during the period of colonial penetration, and recognised Britain as their suzerain. The British Indian Independence Act of 1947 affirmed the lapse of British suzerainty over the states. Theoretically, the states regained their sovereignty. The rulers of some of the larger ones nourished ambitions to independence but they did not receive much support. The British secretary of state for India announced, 'We do not, of course, propose to recognise any states as separate, international entities. Earlier, on 25 July 1947, Governor General Mountbatten had advised the princes to accede to Pakistan or India, and in doing so, he told them: 'You cannot run away from the Dominion government which is your neighbour any more than you can run away from the subjects for whose welfare you are responsible. This advice was consistent with the principle underlying the Partition Plan of 3rd June.

On the basis of this principle the Indian National Congress had insisted on the partition of the provinces of Assam, Bengal and Punjab. (All the princely states except Hyderabad, Jammu and Kashmir and Junagadh followed the principle of partition and acceded to India or Pakistan. The Nizam of Hyderabad aspired to independence, but his state was invaded and occupied by India in 1948. When the Muslim ruler of the Hindu-majority state of Junagadh announced accession to Pakistan on 15 August 1947, the Indian government protested, arguing that the decision by the ruler was 'in utter violation of the principles on which partition of India was agreed upon and effected.'" Pakistan

## Legal position of Indian occupation

- India's long-held view that the Kashmir issue would be resolved bilaterally as decided in the Simla Agreement had been in conflict with Article 103 of the UN Charter. The said article stipulates, "In the event of a conflict between the obligations of the members of the UN and their obligations under any other international agreement, their obligations under the present Charter shall prevail."
- Revocation of Kashmir's special status is India's attempt to argue over Kashmir's status as a disputed territory. It, however, doesn't have any legal value as according to Article 25 of the UN Charter, India is still bound to carry out decisions of the UNSC which rejected India's unilateral actions in its August 16, 2019 consultative meeting on Kashmir.
- 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.

#### Steps taken by Pak

- On 6 August 2019 the Pakistan Foreign Office issued a statement stating, "As a party to this international dispute, Pakistan will exercise all possible options to counter the illegal steps." It called the revocation a "unilateral step".[1] On 6 August 2019, after a commanders meeting, Pakistan's army chief said that Pakistan Army stood by the Kashmiris in their just struggle to the

very end and that the army would "go to any extent" to support the people of Kashmir.[2] An emergency joint parliamentary sitting of the National Assembly and the Senate to discuss the situation was called.[3] On 7 August, the joint parliamentary sitting passed a resolution to condemn India's move and called it "illegal, unilateral, reckless and coercive attempt to alter the disputed status of Indian administered Kashmir as enshrined in the UNSC resolutions".[4]

- On 7 August, a meeting of the National Security Committee decided to downgrade Pakistan's diplomatic relations with India. Pakistan's High Commissioner to India was recalled and the Indian High Commissioner to Pakistan was expelled.[5] The next day, Pakistan's Minister for Railways Sheikh Rasheed Ahmad suspended the Samjhauta Express train service[6] and the Thar Express.[7] The Ministry of Information and Broadcasting decided to ban all cultural exchanges with India, including banning the screening of Indian films and dramas inside Pakistan.[8] On 9 August 2019, Pakistan formally suspended a large part of its trade relations with India and banned all exports and import to/from India.
- On 11 August 2019, Prime Minister Imran Khan compared the Indian government to "Nazis".[12][13][14] He accused that India was attempting to change the demography of the Muslim majority Kashmir through ethnic cleansing.[12][13][14] Pakistan's foreign minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi issued a statement on Tuesday 13 August 2019 that he had written a letter to the president of the United Nations Security Council with a request to convene an emergency meeting of the council to discuss India's "illegal actions that violate UN resolutions on Kashmir".[15] The foreign minister also called for circulation of the letter among members of the Security Council
- Pakistan's official Twitter handle announced that PM Khan had directed all diplomatic channels to be activated to "expose the brutal Indian racist regime and human rights violations." [21] Pakistan Foreign Minister Makhdoom Shah Mahmood Qureshi addressed an emergency meeting of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC). The foreign ministers of the OIC Contact Group on Kashmir later released a statement expressing its concerns regarding the situation in Kashmir and asking India to "rescind" the actions it had taken.[22] Islamabad made numerous attempts to get the UNSC to hold a discussion on Kashmir, but was unable to make progress until China stepped in. As a permanent member of the council and an ally of Islamabad, Beijing requested a "closed consultation" on Kashmir.[23] That the UNSC would be discussing the Kashmir question for the first time since 1965 was a victory in itself, according to Pakistan, which projects itself as a champion for Kashmiri rights.[24] Before the UNSC meeting, reports stated that Imran Khan had spoken to US President Donald Trump, taking him "into confidence" regarding the meeting. Ultimately however, Pakistan and China failed to get the international community to support their stand on Kashmir. No unanimous statement in favour of Beijing and Islamabad emerged from consultations at the UNSC, and the move to censure India fell through.
- Since then, Pakistan has continued in its efforts to construct a narrative of India being an aggressor in Kashmir by forcing the region into a lockdown. Islamabad's ambassador to the US has gone so far as to link Kashmir with the US-led peace process in Afghanistan, stating that Islamabad may be forced to redirect troops from the Afghan border to the Kashmir frontier.[25] The intention behind such statements is to provoke a reaction from Washington, which is desperate to strike an exit-deal with the Taliban. Imran Khan's opinion piece in The New York Times criticised the GoI and called the removal of Article 370 "illegal." [26] It discussed the "nuclear shadow hanging over South Asia" and how Pakistan was pushing for peace while India had rejected its overtures.

Islamabad has also suggested that the changes in Kashmir have brought about a “humanitarian crisis” that threatens the stability of the region.

- In 2020, media reports started emerging of preparation for Pakistan's pro-Kashmir campaigning on 5 August well before the date.[18][19] Prime Minister Imran Khan came out with a "18-point plan" for commemorating the anniversary which includes mention of the Inter-Services Intelligence.[20] This includes a media trip to Pakistan-administrated Kashmir, and one for the United Nations Military Observer Group in India and Pakistan who will also be given a white paper. Pakistani news channels will cover the "Black Day" and logos will be modified accordingly while newspaper will carry relevant material. All Pakistani embassies will also hold protests.[21] Outreach to Kuala Lumpur, Ankara and Beijing is also in the plan.[20] Imran Khan will also make a live speech from Kashmir on the occasion.[22][23]
- On 4 August, Pakistan's government released an updated political map which included Pakistan's territorial claims on Jammu and Kashmir, Ladakh, the Siachen Glacier, the eastern banks of Sir Creek, as well as Junagadh and Manavadar in India's Gujarat region. The map also annotated Ladakh's boundary with China as "frontier undefined", whose status would be formalised by "the sovereign authorities concerned after the settlement of the Jammu and Kashmir dispute." The map was adopted for official use throughout Pakistan.[24][25] The government renamed the Kashmir Highway, which runs through Islamabad, as Srinagar Highway.[26][27] On the occasion of the one-year anniversary of the revocation of Kashmir's special status, Pakistan also observed 5 August as Youm-e-Istehsal ("Day of Exploitation") nationally. Rallies and seminars were arranged to express solidarity with Kashmiris
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- Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi on Aug 4<sup>th</sup> 2021 wrote letters to the UN Security Council and the UN Secretary General, drawing their attention to “unlawful steps” being taken by India after the annexation of the disputed region of Kashmir to strengthen its “colonial hold” on the territory.
- These actions include changes to the demographic structure and electoral boundaries in the occupied territory for “further marginalisation of Kashmiri Muslims” and “suppressing their demand for freedom”.
- “All such measures by India in IIOJK [Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir] are violations of international law, including the UNSC resolutions and 4th Geneva Convention, and, are ipso facto, legally and materially, null and void,” he maintained.
- “This latest letter from the foreign minister is in continuation of Pakistan’s regular communications since August 2019 to keep the United Nations fully apprised of the grave situation in IIOJK, and to remind the Security Council of its responsibility to secure a peaceful and just settlement of the Jammu and Kashmir dispute in accordance with its resolutions,” FO spokesman Zahid Hafeez Chaudhri said.
- Pakistan on Saturday welcomed the UN's reiteration that its position on Indian occupied Kashmir remained unchanged and it continued to see the valley as disputed territory, according to a statement issued by the Foreign Office (FO).
- The statement came days after UN Secretary General Spokesperson Stephane Dujarric clarified during a news briefing in New York that the UN's "position on Kashmir is well established and has not changed". The clarification followed a claim by India’s UN Ambassador TS Tirmurti that the disputed state was now an “integral” part of India.

- A 12-member delegation of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation's (OIC) Independent Permanent Human Rights Commission (IPHRC) visited the Line of Control (LoC) in Aug for first-hand account of the situation along the heavily militarised dividing line in the disputed Himalayan region of Kashmir. During the visit, the OIC-IPHRC members interacted with the victims of ceasefire violations, members of village defence committees and civil administration officials.
- Speaking on the occasion, the delegation members said the situation in Kashmir was serious and needed immediate attention and action on the part of the international community. "After listening to the victims, this problem, this violation by the Indian government is real and it's not being punished by the international agencies," said Ahmed Azam from Malaysia.
- Underscoring the significance of the visit in the wake of India's Aug 5, 2019 move, Dr Saeed Mohamed Abdullah of the UAE said that India's decision was dangerous and violated human rights of "our brothers and sisters in Jammu and Kashmir". He also expressed concern over India's attempt to change the demography of the territory under its occupation.
- Dr Haci Ali Acikgul of Turkey also spoke about the hellish conditions in India occupied Kashmir and said the United Nations Security Council resolutions offered a proper solution to the Kashmir issue in the shape of a plebiscite. However, he regretted, India was not recognising the right to self-determination of Kashmiri people and despite the lapse of more than seven decades was avoiding talks for the plebiscite.
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## International reaction

### China

China's response to the changes in Kashmir focused on its concern over Ladakh becoming a Union Territory. It called the move "unacceptable," claiming that it would directly "impede China's sovereignty." [28] China's statements suggest that its opposition to the removal of Article 370 is driven by a fear that it would further complicate its boundary issue with India, [29] in light of the 740-km LoC in J&K.

However, China soon revised its statement, stating that the Kashmir issue should be resolved bilaterally in a peaceful manner and that both sides must avoid any action that could escalate tensions in the region. [30] During a China–Pakistan meeting in Beijing, the Chinese foreign minister said the solution should be in accordance with the UN Charter and relevant UNSC resolutions. [31] On Pakistan's insistence, China called for a private meeting to discuss Kashmir at the UNSC.

### Turkey

The biggest diplomatic salvo from Turkey came at the 74th UN General Assembly, where its prime minister raised the issue. Erdogan criticised the restrictions imposed in the Valley, calling it a virtual blockade with eight million people being disallowed from stepping out of their homes. He called for a resolution of the problem through dialogue. [48] Immediately after the statement, Imran Khan thanked the Turkish president for taking a stand on the issue. In retaliation, PM Modi cancelled his planned trip to Turkey. India then halted a US\$2.3-billion contract to Anadolu Shipyard, a Turkish company, which was building vessels for the Indian Navy. [49] At the UN, PM Modi landed a diplomatic punch on Turkey by conducting a series of meetings with the heads of states of Cyprus, Armenia and Greece—staunch rivals of Turkey. Moreover, India condemned Turkey for invading northern Syria and expressed concerns over "humanitarian and civilian distress" in Kurdish areas.

These moves, however, may not be enough to deter Ankara. Days after India's diplomatic response, the speaker of the Turkish parliament noted that it was the country's duty to stand "with Pakistan on Kashmir issue."

#### *Malaysia*

Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir Mohammad stirred the hornet's nest at the UN General Assembly with his remarks on the Kashmir lockdown and the abrogation of Article 370. His statement was perhaps the most critical and damning, after Imran Khan's. Mahathir said that despite the UN resolutions on J&K, "the country has been invaded and occupied."

Addressing a press conference at the UN headquarters, Mahathir snubbed Modi, stating that he had suggested to the GoI to resolve the issue through "negotiations" and not by "invasion." [55] Some reports have also suggested that India intended to retaliate by curbing trade relations with Malaysia; already, the Solvent Extractors' Association of India has requested its members to refrain from purchasing palm oil from the country.

Mahathir, however, has refused to withdraw his comment despite the high stakes involved, considering India is Malaysia's biggest buyer of palm oil. "We speak our minds, and we don't retract or change."

#### *KSA*

Read [Power of strong eco](#)

After a meeting between Saudi Crown Prince Mohammad Bin Salman and India's National Security Adviser Ajit Doval, reports in the media suggested that Saudi Arabia had conveyed to India that it understands the latter's "approach and actions in Jammu and Kashmir." [59] Riyadh's support came despite Imran Khan's visit to Saudi to seek the backing of the Arab heavyweight. Days after the revocation of Article 370 and the bifurcation of J&K, Saudi and India signed a US\$15-billion deal. [60] Earlier, Saudi Arabia had taken a restrained position, calling for peaceful settlement of the issue. [61] However, India's growing economic power helped tilt Saudi Arabia's stance on J&K. Not only is India a big market for Saudi oil, but both countries also continue to expand their economic relationship. In 2019, Mohammad Bin Salman announced that he expected investment opportunities of more than US\$100 billion in India over the next two years.

#### *UAE*

The UAE has stood with India on J&K, with the UAE Ambassador to India calling the constitutional changes an internal matter and expressing hope that the decision would reduce regional disparity. "We expect that the changes would improve social justice and security and confidence of the people in the local governance and will encourage further stability and peace." [63] Days later, a more balanced statement was issued by the UAE Ministry of Foreign Affairs, perhaps to assuage the concerns of Pakistan, calling "for maintaining peace, security and stability in the region." [64] The UAE's support to India comes in the aftermath of a deepening strategic and trade partnership between the two countries. India is the UAE's second-largest trade partner and the bilateral trade was around US\$60 billion in 2018-19. (MEA INDIA)

India's own investments in UAE stand at US\$55 billion. Further, the UAE conferred the highest civilian award, "Order of Zayed," on PM Modi, celebrating the ties between the two nations and sending a strong message to Islamabad.

### *Russia*

The Russian foreign affairs ministry referred to provisions of the Simla Agreement and the Lahore Declaration for a political resolution of the issue.

At the UNSC closed-door meeting on J&K, too, Russia supported India's position and maintained that no statement be issued after the proceedings of the session.[74] In keeping with its historical tradition, the country has stood by India and supported it at the UN.

### *US*

The abrogation of Article 370 initially evoked a muted reaction from the US. However, the country has since become more critical. In the week following the announcement by the government, Washington confirmed that it was "closely observing" the events in J&K and that it urged "all parties to maintain peace and stability along the Line of Control," while noting that the Indian government's actions were "strictly an internal matter." [75] The spokesperson for the State Department noted that the US was "concerned about reports of detentions and urge respect for individual rights and discussions with those in affected communities." [76] While some Indian media houses reported that the GoI had briefed the US about their plans regarding J&K a few months before the official announcement, senior White House officials denied the claim. [77]

In September 2019, several senators expressed concerns about the situation in Kashmir in a letter to President Trump. Thereafter, former Democratic candidates for President, Bernie Sanders and Elizabeth Warren, publicly criticised India's actions on the campaign trail and asked for the lifting of the communication blockade in J&K. [78] In October 2019, the US House of Representatives' Committee on Foreign Affairs held a hearing on human rights in South Asia, with a focus on J&K. Representatives of the US government who testified at the hearings, Alice Wells and Robert Destro, found a balance in their testimonies, supporting the "rights of Kashmiris to peacefully protest," while condemning the actions of terrorists. Highlighting the detention of political leaders, they "urged the government to balance its security priorities with respect for human rights." [79] In November, US lawmakers held another congressional hearing on J&K before a human rights commission, demanding the release of detainees, permission for journalists and lawyers to access the region, and the lifting of the communication blockade.

During PM Imran Khan's visit to Washington in July, President Trump offered to mediate between India and Pakistan, claiming that PM Modi had requested him to do so—a claim that India denies. [81] Since then, Trump has reiterated his offer to be an arbitrator between the two countries. The offer fulfils Pakistan's desire of getting a third-party to mediate on the issue. However, the official US policy has always been one of non-interference. In November 2019, a bipartisan resolution was introduced in the House of Representatives, urging India to end the communications shutdown. [82] While the resolution does not have the force of law, the fact that it was introduced by Indian-born Democrat Pramila Jayapal is likely to attract global attention, causing further damage to India's image.

### *UK*

In the context of the Indian government's actions in J&K, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office stated that it was following the developments closely. On 15 August 2019, Independence Day celebrations by Indians in London were marred by protests outside the High Commission.

The British parliament remains divided over the issue, with many calling for a moratorium on the GoI's decision while others have praised it, believing that it would pave the way for economic development in

J&K.[85] While a group of Muslim members of parliament of Pakistan-origin called the removal of the article an “orchestrated coup,” others wrote strongly worded letters in support of the Indian government.

In September, the UK’s Labour Party passed a resolution that supported “international intervention in Kashmir” and calling for UN-led referendum for the “humanitarian crisis.” many have viewed this as the party failing the Indian community en masse, with reports of messages circulating in social media, urging British Hindus to not vote for the party in the future.

#### *European nations*

In September 2019, at a European Parliament plenary debate on the Constitutional changes in India, the EU High Representative for Foreign Policy and Security Policy, Federica Mogherini, called for the lifting of restrictions and maintaining the rights and fundamental freedoms for Kashmiris.

Chris Davies, Member of the European Parliament for North West England was invited to visit Kashmir Valley but was reportedly uninvited after he said he will only go to Kashmir if allowed to “travel freely”.

“I am not prepared to take part in a PR stunt for the Modi government and pretend that all is well. It is very clear that democratic principles are being subverted in Kashmir, and the world needs to start taking notice. “What is it that the Indian government has to hide? Why will it not give journalists and visiting politicians free access to speak with local people?” Chris Davies said.

In December 2019, the EU’s Ambassador to India expressed concern regarding the situation in Kashmir, stating that freedom of movement and normalcy must be restored.

The Foreign Minister of Finland, Pekka Haavisto, who holds the rotating presidency of the Council of EU, voiced his concern over the prolonged detention of politicians and the safety of the region. Moreover, he called for UN observers and diplomats to be allowed to travel to Kashmir to assess the situation.[93] Several news reports have stated that during Angela Merkel’s visit to India in November, the German Chancellor had said that the situation for the people in Kashmir was “not sustainable and must improve.”

Other European nations, such as Sweden, have also found the situation in Kashmir “worrying.” Swedish Foreign Minister Ann Linde has urged the Indian government to “lift the remaining restrictions” and restore “free movement and communication opportunities.”

#### *Implications for India*

Hours after the announcement was made in August 2019 from Parliament, the GoI mobilised its foreign missions to work with respective governments to ensure that the Kashmir narrative remained positive and to remind countries that the matter was “internal” to India. PM Modi and the External Affairs Minister (EAM) focused on assuring the world that the changes in Jammu and Kashmir are well-intentioned and deserve a chance, despite short-term pains.[96] The EAM travelled extensively through countries in Europe and Southeast Asia, addressing concerns about Kashmir. A special MEA team met with key stakeholders and the members of the UN HR Council members to explain India’s position and clarify negative statements coming from Pakistan. Indian National Security Adviser Ajit Doval and Petroleum Minister Dharmendra Pradhan undertook a tour of West Asian countries: the UAE, Saudi Arabia and Qatar. Prime Minister Narendra Modi personally spoke to US President Donald Trump and other leaders. During a visit to Switzerland, President Ramnath Kovind found that the “situation in Kashmir” had been put on the agenda by his hosts.[97] Some visiting heads of state, such as German Chancellor Angela Merkel and Swedish Foreign Minister Ann Linde, openly condemned the government while on Indian soil.



So far, the diplomatic fallout of the move has exceeded India's worst expectations. The Kashmir issue has undoubtedly been internationalised—not in the traditional sense whereby resolutions from UN or other multilateral bodies seek a change of the status quo, but in a manner that has kept Kashmir in the spotlight. While this kind of global attention on the region is unprecedented, it does not necessarily mean that India's friends and allies have shifted their position. Despite the constitutional complexity of the decision, most nations have accepted the new reality of Kashmir, albeit with a note of deep concern regarding human rights and India's management of the situation. Thus, India has managed to control the spiralling of the narrative, limiting it to reasonable criticism from various countries. Other than Pakistan, no country has sought a rollback of the abrogation of Article 370. To be sure, however, the Kashmir decision has indeed had a negative impact on India.

But it is not just Pakistan that has been speaking up about the dismal situation in occupied Kashmir. Human Rights Watch has spoken of India's "harsh and discriminatory restrictions on Muslim-majority areas" of the held region while Amnesty International has also criticised India's ham-fisted approach in IHK. Moreover, several members of the European Parliament have urged the EU to take note of the "humanitarian situation" there. In a letter to the European Commission president, they have expressed "grave concern" over the situation in occupied Kashmir while slamming the arbitrary detentions and the misuse of antiterrorism laws by India.

First, India's "brand value" and its international standing has taken a hit. Across the globe, the international press has been extremely critical of the revocation of Article 370 and dismemberment of the state of J&K. American media houses such as The New York Times, The Washington Post and The Wall Street Journal have been highly critical of the Modi government vis-à-vis Kashmir (as they have been on other political developments in India such as the passing of the Citizenship Amendment Act). These publications have produced reports and editorials accusing the Indian government of being a threat to the democratic fabric of the country.[98] In the United Kingdom, too, news organisations have been critical. The Daily Mail called Kashmir a "disputed region,"[b] while the BBC reported on the alleged human rights violations in the region, perpetrated by the Indian Army, and the detention of political leaders and activists.[99] Other news organisations, such as Al Jazeera and certain media houses in Europe, have also chosen to take an openly anti-India stance. Many in India, including the government, have rejected the reportage of international journalists with harsh rejoinders, labelling the media houses as "left-wing fringe." Be that as it may, it is evident that New Delhi has failed to mobilise the global public opinion in its favour, despite garnering a fairly positive response from most national governments.

Second, India's narrative on Kashmir has been negatively affected. Until August 2019, India had control over the portrayal of the Kashmir conflict, which focused on the problems of Pakistan-sponsored cross-border terrorism. Globally, Pakistan was considered the primary aggressor in Kashmir and the root of most problems in the region. This was a diplomatic achievement for India. However, the manner in which the constitutional changes were implemented in Jammu and Kashmir has provoked criticisms against India's flawed management. While Indian allies such as the US continue to push Pakistan to tackle the terror groups operating on its soil, India has now also come under fire from its closest allies. Indeed, after the Pulwama terror attack in February 2019, and the retaliatory Balakot airstrikes conducted by India, global attention on Kashmir had already increased. The conflict triggered the fear of escalation between the two nuclear-armed countries. With Pulwama and Balakot in the backdrop and Pakistan's nuclear sabre-

rattling, the decisions of August 2019 only stoked this further. Consequently, there has been a possible re-hyphenation of India and Pakistan in the eyes of the US and other European powers. Analysts say that this is something that Indian diplomacy will have to resist.

Third, the newfound global attention has increased the possibility of the Kashmir issue being exploited by nations with deep interests in the region, particularly the US. President Trump's repeated mediation offers on Kashmir are a form of arm-twisting, mostly to appease Pakistan. In the future, several nations may attempt to use the Kashmir dispute to leverage certain concessions. For example, the Swedish delegation to India, sent to pitch its fighter aircraft Gripen, expressed concerns over Kashmir in a transparent attempt to leverage India into a deal.

Fourth, the GoI's August 2019 decision has led to politicking on the Kashmir issue in the US, the UK and other European countries. While the right-wing or conservative parties across the world have maintained a favourable view of the Modi government's constitutional changes in Kashmir, India has lost the bipartisan support and consensus it previously enjoyed in the UK and the US. Fortunately, the defeat of the Labour Party in the general elections in December 2019 has averted a potential clash with a Labour government, who had planned to intervene in Kashmir.

Finally, India's longstanding position that Kashmir is an internal matter has come under question through the country's own diplomatic moves, e.g. the visit of European parliamentarians and ambassadors to Kashmir. If India truly considers Kashmir an internal matter, why does it require third-party approval? The answer to this perhaps lies in the subtext of the various statements issued since August 2019, most of which have sought a bilateral settlement of the Kashmir issue between India and Pakistan. The poor state of the bilateral relationship between the two countries; the bleak possibility of any dialogue; and the likelihood of increased militancy, agitations and protest, ensure that Kashmir will remain on the global radar for the foreseeable future.

### 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
- As neighbours, they must develop peaceful and cooperative ties for their own security, prosperity and progress. It is in this context that former prime minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee said, "You can change friends but not neighbours."
- the time has come to reimagine the LoC as a 'Line of Connectivity and Cooperation'. The history of the post-World War II era conclusively shows that countries prosper when regions prosper, and when they give priority to "geoeconomics over geopolitics" — that is, by building links of physical, digital, trade, economic, cultural and people-to-people connectivity. South Asia is the world's most populous region; yet, it is also the least integrated, and has the largest number of poor people. We can make it a region of prosperity for all by jointly implementing ambitious connectivity projects, which, as is self-evident, are unthinkable without cooperation with China.

This also means that India should not be suspicious of CPEC but see it as an opportunity which could lead to connectivity of the whole of South Asia, benefiting India as well.

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## Pak-China

### History

- It is indeed a unique relationship between a communist giant and an Islamic country, between a godless one and God-fearing one. Continued commonality of interests has bridged differences in language, culture, history and ideology. For China, Pakistan continues to be the hub of its South Asia policy; for Pakistan, China is the Pole Star in its national security strategy.
- Irrespective of the nature of the government in Pakistan – civilian or military – and irrespective of the party, there is a basic understanding that the relationship with China is sacrosanct.
- Till recently, China's interest in Pakistan was not bilateral per se but a combination of three interrelated stakes that had more to do with its regional interests. The first was the mutuality of interests with Pakistan vis-à-vis India. The second was the spillover of terrorism and Islamic radicalization from Pakistan and Afghanistan into Xinjiang, adversely impacting the eight million ethnic Uighurs. Third, China's growing economic stakes in Afghanistan, including the \$3.5 billion copper-mining contract at Mes Aynak near Kabul. Pakistan's motivation has been to use 'borrowed power' from China to balance its inferiority with India. To this end, it has seen in China a friend that would bail it out politically and militarily. The new bilateral economic element in the relationship is the China–Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) that has been billed as a game changer.
- The Pakistan-China relationship dates back to the 1950s when Pakistan was one of the first states to recognize the People's Republic of China and the first Muslim one to do so. However, it was only in the 1960s, especially after the 1962 Indo-China war, that the relationship started taking off. The first sign of this was the two countries resolving their boundary issue in Kashmir. A high point of the budding Pak-China relationship (as also of the Pak-US relationship) was Pakistan facilitating the secret visit of US Secretary of State Henry Kissinger to China in July 1971.
- In the China–Pakistan Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation and Good Neighbourly Relations signed in April 2005, both countries agreed that 'neither party will join any alliance or bloc which infringes upon the sovereignty, security and territorial integrity' of either country, while simultaneously positing that both parties 'would not conclude treaties of this nature with any third party'. Further, neither shall allow its territory to be used by a third country to jeopardize the state sovereignty, security and territorial integrity of the other and each country will prohibit, on its own soil, the establishment of organizations or institutions which infringe upon the sovereignty, security and territorial integrity of the other.
- There are a host of examples where China has served as a key ally for Pakistan. Some of these include providing diplomatic support to Pakistan's position on Kashmir in the United Nations; vetoing proposals in the UN that were harmful to Pakistan, and lobbying against bringing a proposal to the UN Security Council (UNSC) that would hurt Pakistan's interests.
- 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} Recent example: UN session on Kashmir after aug 5 incident

- Earlier, China had even vetoed Bangladesh's entry into the UN since it regarded it to be a rebellious province of Pakistan. In 1972, during Bhutto's trip to China, a joint communiqué strongly condemned India's 'naked aggression' and 'occupation of Pakistan's territory'.
- China's overt support to Pakistan peaked during the 1965 Indo-Pak war when Chinese premier Zhou Enlai reportedly assured the Pakistanis that China was prepared to put pressure on India in the Himalayas 'for as long as necessary'. The US and Pak book
- On its part, Pakistan has refrained from taking up the issue of the persecution of Muslim Uighurs in China, though it has been very vociferous about the status of Muslims in other areas like the Rohingyas and the Kashmiris. Equally, it has ensured that the issue was not taken up during the OIC (Organizations of Islamic Countries) meetings, which was acknowledged by China too.
- 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.
- Even more than the political, the key element of the Pak-China relationship has been, and is, defence cooperation – conventional weapon supplies and nuclear cooperation (civil and military). For China, militarily equipping Pakistan has been a low-cost option to keep India bogged down and threatened with a potential two-front war. By 2013, Pakistan had emerged as the largest recipient of Chinese arms export, indicating a drawing down of reliance of the Pakistan military solely on Western sources.
- Chinese JF-17 Thunder fighter aircraft; J-10 medium-role combat aircraft, F-22P frigates with helicopters, K-8 jet trainers, T-85 tanks, F-7 aircraft, small arms and ammunition. China has also helped Pakistan build its heavy mechanical complex, aeronautical complex, and several defense production units. 9 Moreover, unlike the US, China has never cut off supplies of weapons, or imposed sanctions on Pakistan.
- On the civil side, China helped Pakistan build two nuclear reactors at Chasma in 1990s, before joining the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG). It signed a deal in 2009 to build two more under the 'grandfather' clause – namely, that these two new reactors were part of the earlier deal (for Chashma 1 and 2) which China had already declared as part of its commitments when it joined the NSG.
- Trade-deficit: The primary reason for trade between Pakistan and China being at a low ebb is that Pakistan's exports to China are basically low-value raw material and commodities since it is not in a position to export high-tech goods. This, together with minimal people-to-people contacts, detracts from the high-sounding epithets of the political and military relationship.

#### What Pak can learn from China

- 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.

- Although Mao Zedong has been recently viewed very critically by his own people, there could be no doubt that the ground for China's quick rise was laid by him soon after he and the communist party took control of the country on October 1, 1949. His three moves had a lasting impact on the country. The first was to bring the status of women on a par with that of men. In 1965, I saw many old women who could barely walk because of small and stunted feet as a result of foot-binding, a common practice in the country among the well-to-do segments. Small feet were one aspect of women's beauty but the real reason was to drastically reduce their mobility. Mao banned the practice; those who continued the practice were severely punished. {Use this in gender studies too}
- The second major contribution was to bring universal education to all of China, to the country's cities and the remotest villages. No one was to remain illiterate, unable to read and write.
- The third important part of Mao's drive to develop the Chinese human resource was to bring universal healthcare to the citizenry.
- These three actions brought the Chinese population to the level at which the people could take the next step towards modernity, both economic and social. Mao made several mistakes; some of them cost millions of lives. But there cannot be any doubt that he laid the ground for China's rapid transformation.

## 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

- 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.
- 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".
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- 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 pre-emptive
- 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
- 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.
- 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' America's hopefully for the right reasons this time.
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#### History

##### Consequences

- Pakistan cannot afford to alienate the West and the US because the cards are clearly stacked against Pakistan. For one thing, without funding from the US and multilateral agencies like the IMF and the World Bank, Pakistan's economy would be seriously affected. FATF, recent child soldier list

- almost 40 per cent of Pakistan's exports are directed to the West just as most of the foreign assistance and investment comes from these countries. Third, even though China has become the main supplier of weapons, the Pakistan military continues to be heavily dependent on the US for weapons and spares.

### Pak-Afghan relations

- <https://tribune.com.pk/story/2303315/pakistans-afghan-problem-1>
- Afghanistan is one of the few countries of the world whose every frontier divides peoples speaking the same language and belonging to the same ethnic group or tribe.

### Pak Afg trade

- South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation-Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SAARC-CCI) President Iftikhar Ali Malik said on Sunday that Pak-Afghan bilateral trade has a vast potential of \$8 billion to \$10 billion annually, which can be achieved easily. Malik said Afghanistan was a good market for Pakistani products and legal trade would also help to eliminate the menace of smuggling, which had since been hitting Pak economy hard.
- He mentioned that Afghanistan imported electrical goods, steel, cement, bricks, clothes, Kinnow (citrus fruit), bananas and other edible items from Pakistan, while Afghanistan exported fresh and dry fruit to Pakistan.

### Pak FP regarding Afg

- 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.
- 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
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### Irredentism

- When Maharaja Ranjit Singh crossed the Indus and captured Peshawar, the Durrani winter capital, and its surroundings in 1823 from the Afghans, little did he realize that he was to change the

course of history of the region forever. Very much like Caesar crossing the Rubicon, there was no turning back once the Sikhs established themselves on the west bank of the Indus. The British inherited Ranjit Singh's empire that included Peshawar and pushed it further westwards, demarcating their boundary with Afghanistan via the 1893 Durand Line. Pakistan, in turn, inherited the British possessions in 1947 and the stage was set for the events that had, and continue to have, a fundamental impact on Pakistan and the region.

- Afghanistan was the only country that opposed Pakistan's membership to the United Nations on 30 September 1947 on the grounds that treaties with Britain lapsed when a new state, Pakistan, was created. As such, for Afghanistan, the Durand Line that demarcated the border between Afghanistan and British India after the Second Afghan War ceased to exist. In any case, the Afghans considered the 1878 Treaty of Gandamak and the Durand Agreement of 1893 as unjust agreements imposed on them by Britain, which they were forced to accept after a military defeat.
- successive Afghan governments have not given up the possibility of the independence of these areas if they could not be reincorporated into Afghanistan. In 1949, Afghanistan formally repudiated any formal status for the Durand Line in a Loya Jirga (grand national assembly). Thus, Afghanistan has not reconciled to the loss of what is today Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (earlier NWFP) and the northern part of Balochistan or almost 20–25 per cent of present-day Pakistan
- For its part, Pakistan treats the Durand Line as a settled fact, especially after King Amanullah Khan confirmed it in 1919 following his defeat by the British. However, Pakistan has always been insecure about the lack of its acceptance by Afghanistan. The insecurity is real given the common Pakhtun population straddling both sides of the Durand Line and about 20–25 per cent of Pakistan's territory being vulnerable to any Afghan revanchist designs.
- Pakistan's policies towards Afghanistan are, therefore, geared to get an Afghan government accept the sanctity of the Durand Line as the international border so that no ambiguity is left as far as its western borders are concerned.
- The policy of securing the border has two objectives. One, a strong government in Afghanistan would be dangerous as it could try and recover Pakhtun territories lost to the Sikhs and inherited by Pakistan via the British.
- The second objective is based on Pakistan's perception about India. Pakistan views its relations with Afghanistan not merely in a bilateral context but in a South Asian context too coupled with the perceived relationship that the US has with India and Pakistan. A nightmare scenario for Pakistan would be for India to encourage the revanchist claims of a strong and friendly (towards India) Afghanistan. This Indo-Afghan alliance would catch Pakistan in a vice-like grip with a hostile India on the east and a hostile Afghanistan on the west. For this reason, Pakistan has determined that India must not be allowed any space in Afghanistan.
- **Strategic depth**
- A term frequently used in Pakistan is 'strategic depth' to describe the motivation of its policy towards Afghanistan. The concept, as noted in an earlier chapter, was based on the reality that several of Pakistan's population centres were close to the border with India. Coupled with a flat terrain it provided a scary scenario in military terms. Hence, geographical space or depth was sought in Afghanistan. Even before the creation of Pakistan, the Cabinet Mission Plan of 16 May 1946 had stated clearly: 'The two sections of the suggested Pakistan contain the two most vulnerable frontiers in India and for a successful defence in depth the area of Pakistan would be insufficient.'

- The only time that Pakistan has felt relatively secure about its western border as also about its Pakhtun population was when the Taliban were in power in Kabul between 1996 and 2001. However, no Afghan government, not even the Pak-sponsored and backed Taliban government, has accepted the legality of the Durand Line though, of course, they did not raise any irredentist claims either.
- Ironically, it was Pakistan that served as the strategic depth for the Taliban. Many of their leaders, their families and even foot soldiers sheltered across Pakistan, and their war wounded were extended medical help as their forces faced a US-led onslaught.

## Civil War

## Bonn Agreement

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## Pak-Russia

- 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.
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- Pak Stream Gas Pipeline, a joint Pakistan-Russian project that had been suffering from delays since 2015, has had its 'Head of Terms' construction agreement signed. Under the new deal, Pakistan will have a 74% share in the pipeline, with the rest going to Russia. The first agreement for the project was signed in 2015, but was never implemented, partly due to the risk of running foul of US sanctions on Russia. But in May, an amended agreement was signed to jumpstart the deal.
- However, while the new pipeline will surely help ease supply shortages once it is fully operational, maintaining its viability is a separate issue. Pakistan still lacks a legal framework to recover the price of imported gas from domestic consumers and is currently selling LNG to the commercial sector with heavy subsidies, causing a double hit to the national kitty. Meanwhile, the power sector, which in theory could easily recover the cost of imported gas, has been reluctant to do so because of the sensitivity of price increases. The end result is that gas subsidies have led to a build-up of about Rs100 billion in circular debt in the last three years.
- 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.

## Pak-KSA

### Intro

Ties between Islamabad and Riyadh have evolved over time, becoming one of the strongest regional alignments deeply rooted in shared religious, social, political, and security interests. Both countries have enjoyed cordial ties for the most part of their history – an alliance that has survived government and leadership changes in both states. It is a mutually beneficial relationship.

### Causes of fissures in Ties

A number of different creases have begun to appear upon the fabric of Pakistan-Saudi Arab ties. For instance, relations between Pakistan and Saudi Arab have been growing increasingly complex since 2015, when the Pakistani parliament banned the Pakistani military from participating in the war in Yemen. Moreover, the military conflict in Yemen is not the only region that has caused disputes between Saudi Arabia and Pakistan. In February, Pakistan had expected Riyadh to support it in dealing with India over the Kashmir crisis - which has since resulted in renewed clashes between India and Pakistan. In particular, Pakistan had requested a supportive meeting with the Council of Foreign Ministers of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC). After Saudi Arabia turned down the request, Pakistan repeated its demand, which in turn resulted in Riyadh calling in a \$1 billion loan. Consequently, Pakistan repaid the loan with a new loan - but this time, coming from China.

Moreover, this blatant lack of support emanating from the OIC reached a tipping point when Pakistan's foreign minister, Shah Mahmood Qureshi, angered Saudi Arabia with a threat to hold a meeting of Muslim countries on the Kashmir issue outside the ambit of the Organization of Islamic Countries (OIC) that is led by Riyadh. Furthermore, Saudi Arabia has significant investments in India, which is also a major buyer of Saudi oil. This explains Saudi Arabia's dwindled support for Pakistan's stance on Kashmir and its increasing ties with India. It is also imperative to highlight that it seems with the growing nexus between Saudi Arabia and other Middle Eastern nations with Israel, Pakistan is going to be sidelined by Saudi Arabia in the near future. Pakistan views the emerging politics in the Middle East mainly through the prism of Kashmir. It tends to lean more on the side of Iran, Turkey and Malaysia which have openly supported her against Saudi Arabia, UAE and others which are taking a more balanced stand, appreciating India's sensitivities. India will not only be the biggest buyer of Saudi crude in future (given China's slowing economy and

declining population) but can help Saudi Arabia, UAE and others greatly (along with Israel and the US) in achieving their vision of rapid economic development.

### Conclusion and Way forward

The current diplomatic spat between both nations will likely irritate rather than disrupt relations. Pakistan will routinely promote Saudi Arabia's role in the Muslim world despite ongoing diplomatic tensions regarding Kashmir. Pakistan believes that Riyadh has an interest in maintaining the relationship, as it can project its influence onto the world's fifth largest population (which is mostly Sunni). Pakistan will allow the kingdom to do so while simultaneously ensuring a strong relationship with Iran due to Pakistan's large Shia minority. Moreover, it can be postulated that Pakistan will seek to position itself as a potential mediator between Iran and the Saudi Arabia, as regional tensions deepen despite Islamabad's rejected efforts. Thus, despite this diplomatic bump in the road, the Pakistan-Saudi Arabia relationship is unlikely to significantly worsen in the near future.

### General

- 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.

## US-Russia relations

- In 2014, Russia annexed Crimea and launched an (unofficial) military offensive in eastern Ukraine. The United States and the European Union could not remain passive in the face of such blatant violations of international agreements, so they responded sensibly. As a result of severe financial sanctions, the Kremlin stopped its offensive after having seized only 3% of Ukraine's easternmost territory, far less than what Russian President Vladimir Putin had envisioned on April 17, 2014, when he advocated taking all of southeastern Ukraine to re-establish "Novorossiia."
- The sanctions have had the intended economic effect. Whereas Central and Eastern Europe's GDP has grown by 3-5% per year since 2014, Russia's has stagnated. With a combined 2020 GDP of about \$48 trillion against Russia's GDP of \$1.5 trillion, the West's comparative advantage clearly lies in economic and financial sanctions. IMF
- Russia is a declining power and China a rising one. The US must appreciate the unique nature of the threat that Russia poses. As the world sadly discovered in 1914, on the eve of World War I, a declining power (Austria-Hungary) can sometimes be the most risk-acceptant in a conflict. Today, Russia is in demographic and economic decline, but retains enormous resources that it can employ as a spoiler in everything from nuclear-arms control and cyber conflict to the Middle East. The US therefore needs a Russia strategy that does not throw that country into China's arms.
- Geopolitics of energy is defined as "the effect that location of resources has on the politics of the states".
- the very idea of becoming a military power before becoming an economic power cost Russians the disintegration of their Soviet Empire. Have the Russians and the Chinese learnt these lessons? Their current collaboration and the handling of the regional geopolitics under the great banner of concept of regionalism suggest that they have.

- Russia's pivot east is not territorial expansionism but economic, political and energy expansionism with clearly defined strategic intent and strategic aims. The goal of the grand pivot Asia-Pacific is to contain China but Russia's pivot east is meant to cooperate and collaborate with it. Put it simply — China needs energy and Russia needs markets and both will draw benefit from this mutual collaboration.
- President Putin's geostrategic and energy alignment is very much clear. Russia cannot solely depend on selling its gas to Europe in future and for that purpose and to ward off and circumvent US sanctions, its energy alignment is pivoting east. This means that oil and gas pipelines will not run only from east to west but from west to east as well — towards China.
- China became the largest energy consumer of the world when it overtook USA in 2009. Despite being the 8th largest producer of oil in the world (3.8 million barrels per day), the huge economic boom China has experienced meant that it could not sustain the surge in its economy without importing oil and gas from outside world. Following this realisation, China in 2014 signed a \$400 billion deal with Russia for provision of Russian gas for next 30 years. As a follow-up to this in December 2019, the 1,800-mile-long 'Power of Siberia pipeline' constructed at the cost of \$55 billion started providing Russian gas to China.
- **Geneva meeting:** According to press accounts, Biden handed Putin a list of 16 areas of critical infrastructure — including energy, health, information technology, financial services, chemicals, and communications — that he said "should be off limits to attack, period."
- After the meeting, Biden disclosed that he asked Putin how he would feel if Russian pipelines were taken out by ransomware, as the US Colonial Pipeline was in May by criminals operating from Russia. This would be very costly for Russia's economy, which depends heavily on pipelines to export its natural gas. In other words, Biden was implying a deterrent threat if Russia continued to violate the voluntary norms prohibiting attacks on civilian infrastructure and use of its territory for harmful purposes.
- Unlike the US, which established a Cyber Command (USCYBERCOM) in 2010, Russia has never formally admitted to having offensive cyber capabilities. Both countries penetrate each other's networks to gather intelligence, but it is sometimes difficult to draw a line between espionage and preparing the battlefield. That is why the US complained earlier this year about the Russian attack on the American firm SolarWinds, which is said to have infected at least nine major government agencies and more than a hundred significant corporations.
- 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.
- U.S. waives sanctions on Nord Stream 2 as Biden seeks to mend Europe ties;
- 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.

#### Why Russia is a problem for West?

- a recent RAND study put it; Russia is “a well-armed rogue state that seeks to subvert an international order it can no longer hope to dominate.” In other words, having lost control, it is seeking to sow chaos.
- Russia’s strategy entails, first, intervention in ongoing conflicts to support governments or militant forces hostile toward the West. In Syria Assad Regime, in Libya its mercenary contractors, such as the Wagner Group, support rebel General Khalifa Haftar
- The second pillar of Russia’s grand strategy is arms sales. In Southeast Asia, Russia is selling weapons to Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, and Vietnam. In the Middle East, where the United States is withdrawing, Russia has effectively opened an arms bazaar. In 2017, the United Arab Emirates purchased over \$700 million worth of Russian weapons during the International Defense Exhibition and Conference. Egypt has also increased its purchases of Russian arms over the past decade. After the Biden administration temporarily suspended arms sales to Saudi Arabia at the beginning of this year, the Kingdom looked to Russia.
- Russia’s proliferating arms deals partly reflect the fact that it needs the money. After all, its economy has been crippled by Western sanctions and the COVID-19 crisis. But Russia has also signed military cooperation pacts with 39 countries (as of early 2020), which suggests that its motives are not merely commercial.
- The third pillar of Russia’s global strategy – which harks back to Soviet tactics during the Cold War – is support for former colonies in pushing back against their “imperial masters” and those masters’ liberal world order. For example, in a meeting with his Sierra Leonean counterpart in May, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov recalled that “Russia, and the Soviet Union, made a decisive contribution to supporting the battle against colonialism” there. Today, Lavrov continued, Russia believes in “an African solution to African problems,” and supports developing-country demands for greater representation on the UN Security Council. While that commitment has yet to be backed up by action, the declaration clearly aims to distinguish Russia from the Western countries that resist reform.
- Russia is also pushing anti-colonialist narratives in Latin America. According to EUvsDisinfo, the Spanish-language social-media accounts of the Russian state-funded news sources RT and Sputnik have more than 26 million followers. Among the stories the Kremlin is peddling is that the US is blocking delivery of Russia’s COVID-19 vaccine, Sputnik V, to Latin America. Now, the Russian News Agency (TASS) has announced plans to launch a free Spanish-language newsfeed. It claims it is responding to numerous requests for “news reflecting the Russian point of view” in the local language.

## US-Europe

- Trade relations with China and Russia are differentiated across Europe. Zero-sum games and staunch loyalty cannot be guaranteed. This was reflected in the Biden administration's waiving off of sanctions on an under-construction gas pipeline between Russia and Germany in order to avoid a rift with Berlin during the G7 summit.
- 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 1<sup>st</sup>, 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

### Early tensions and History

- 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
- 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.
- Formal relations July 1971 secret visit of Kissinger to China
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### Democracy and internal affairs

- The United States defines democracy and freedom in terms of electoral politics and individual expression, for example, whereas China defines them in terms of social security and economic development. Washington will have to accept these divergences of opinion rather than try to impose its own views on others.
- From other major powers, meanwhile, Beijing expects treatment based on equality and mutual respect, as illustrated by its assertive retaliatory sanctions strategy. When the Trump-administration imposed sanctions on 14 high-ranking Chinese officials over the disqualification of some Hong Kong lawmakers, China took revenge with sanctions on 28 American officials, including then Secretary of State Mike Pompeo. Likewise, Beijing quickly retaliated against British and EU sanctions over the Xinjiang issue. On both of these matters, the Chinese government considers any sanctions or criticism of its policies as interference in its internal affairs.
- boycotted barley sales from aus over covid origin investigation; threatened uk of 'consequences' over Huawei scenario

## Human Rights

- 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.
- Global responsibility includes the responsibility to be held accountable. The US and NATO initiated and perpetuated a devastating war in Afghanistan for two decades, following a 'strategy of moving goal-posts'. Now they are abandoning the country without any peace plan in place. (AFG)
- Are they not answerable for their irresponsible behaviour? Instead, the ICC investigators have been sanctioned by the US for daring to investigate alleged war crimes in Afghanistan.

## Xinjiang

- **China's stance:** 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.
- **US 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

## Critical analysis

- 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?

#### *Anchorage Episode*

- 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.

#### *Tech rivalry*

- In defence equipment and technology, China is trying to build a solid manufacturing and R&D infrastructure and has made huge strides but would still take few years to be close to the US or even some of the European countries. It has to be seen as to what extent China would benefit by procuring Russian military hardware and technology.
- The latest President Biden's policy of cracking down on Chinese apps and adding several Chinese companies to the US investment blacklist reflects how wary the administration is of their penetration and dominance in the US market.
- 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.
- 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.
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#### *Cyberwarfare*

- As the digital sphere takes over more and more of people's lives, cybersecurity will become more important than territorial security. Already, the digital economy is growing rapidly as a share of major powers' GDPs making it an essential source of national wealth. The race for leadership on 5G and 6G telecommunications networks will increasingly shape the contest, and for the time being, China seems to be in the lead. By February 2021, Chinese companies, including the



technology giant Huawei, accounted for 38 percent of approved 5G patents, compared with around 17 percent for U.S. companies. (In other areas, however, American digital platforms remain ahead of their Chinese counterparts, and U.S. digital platforms account for some 68 percent of the global digital economy in terms of market capitalization, compared with just 22 percent for Chinese companies.)

### Military power

- Beijing seeks to turn the People's Liberation Army into a world-class fighting force ready for war at any moment, emphasizing quality over quantity, cyber-capabilities over conventional prowess, and artificial intelligence-based weapons systems over individual combat skills. Yet the PLA's mission will remain one of deterrence, not expansion. China's military lacks experience: the PLA has not been involved in a shooting clash since 1989 and has not fought a real war since 1979. As a result, Beijing remains wary of direct military confrontations and will continue to reject military alliances, which could drag it into an unnecessary war. For the same reason, China has been careful not to let territorial conflicts in the South China Sea and on the Sino-Indian border escalate into live-fire clashes.
- US has nearly 20 times the number of nuclear warheads as China; 11 nuclear powered aircraft carriers which China has 2; 2000 modern fighter jets compared to Chinese 600; 800 overseas bases China has 3; China spends \$250b on its military which is third as much as the US; Brookings Institute says that China military outlays fall well below NATO's 2 percent minimum; Britain had adopted a "Two-Power" standard in 1889 - i.e. her fleet was to be larger than the fleets of the next two powers combined.; US military spending is larger than next 10 countries put together, 6 of which are Washington close allies; America intelligence budget alone of 85 b dollars is much larger than Russia's total defence spending and US never wondered that this type of spending can be seen by other countries as worrying or threatening. Fareed Zakariya CNN

### Economy

- 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
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- 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.
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- Beijing will also seek to reduce its exposure to U.S. financial sanctions, including by promoting the use of the renminbi in foreign trade and investment. Last year, it started trials of a digital currency in a handful of large cities, an innovation that could one day allow China and its business partners to conduct international transactions outside SWIFT, the financial messaging system, which is under de facto U.S. control and a major source of American geopolitical leverage. China will, of course, not turn inward altogether: the Belt and Road Initiative, Beijing's massive global infrastructure campaign, will continue.
- 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%.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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.
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#### *Wrong moves*

- Chinese authorities are now using the full force of regulation to strangle the business models and financing capacity of the economy's most dynamic sector.
- At first, it seemed as if the authorities were concerned about a one-off personnel problem when they sent a stern message to the irreverent Jack Ma, founder of Alibaba, the world's largest e-commerce platform. Ma's ill-timed comments at a Shanghai financial forum in late October 2020 about the "pawnshop" mentality of the bank-centric Chinese financial system crossed the line for China's leaders. Early the following month, a record \$34 billion initial public offering for Ant Group, the behemoth fintech spinoff of Alibaba, was canceled less than 48 hours before the scheduled listing. Five months later, Alibaba itself was fined a record \$2.8 billion for alleged anti-monopoly violations. After forcing the removal of more than 25 of Didi's apps from Chinese Internet platforms, talk of a fine that might exceed the earlier penalty imposed on Alibaba, or even a possible delisting, is rampant.
- Moreover, there are signs of a clampdown on many other leading Chinese tech companies, including Tencent (Internet conglomerate), Meituan (food delivery). Without entrepreneurial energy, the creative juices of China's New Economy will be sapped, along with hopes for a long-promised surge of indigenous innovation.
- And now it's Didi Chuxing's turn. Didi, the Uber-like Chinese ridesharing service

## 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.

## Demography

- 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.
- 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.
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## Energy

- 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.
- Importing 80% of oil that China needs is its strategic vulnerability and contributes to one of the most deliberated US-China conflict contingencies which is: what if US navy blocks the Strait of Malacca (80% of Chinese oil imports pass through it)?
- China’s deal with Iran, its interest in Afg and Central Asia.

## Space race

- **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.
- 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.
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## 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
- In January, Biden became the first US president since 1978 to host Taiwan's envoy to the US at his inauguration.

## Soft power

- 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 post-war Europe may have resembled an empire, but it was “an empire by invitation.”
- US is clear winner.

## Climate Change

### Organization's race

- 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.
- China wants to assert that it played a central part in the creation of post-war 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 post-war order and also as inheritor of non-western anti-imperialism of the postcolonial world
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## Diplomacy

- 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.

### *Middle East*

- 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.
- 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."

### *Latin America*

- 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.
- **Critical analysis**
- 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?
- 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.
- 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.

#### *Debt trap diplomacy*

- 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.

#### *Hostage diplomacy*

- Canada Huawei CFO

#### *Wolf Warrior diplomacy*

- 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.

#### Russia and China

- Reacting to American unilateralism, Russia and China have moved increasingly closer through their bilateral Treaty of Friendship of 2001, and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, which encompass political, security, military, economic and technical cooperation. Both sides are also investing heavily in developing their conventional and strategic military capabilities. Yet, they remain far behind the US in terms of military assets and expenditure since the American military budget, according to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), is larger than the next 10 countries combined, including Russia and China.
- Mention all projects both share.

#### Hurdles

- Russia is more isolated now than the Soviet Union ever was, it has become dangerously dependent on China. But the main beneficiary of Putin’s anti-Western antagonism over the past decade has not been Russia but China. By bringing Russia in from the cold in which the West has placed his economy, Putin could reverse its descent into economic sclerosis and stagnation.
- while China’s leaders never mention it, they are just as embittered over Russia’s theft of Chinese territory in the nineteenth century as they are over the West’s imperial predations. With Western imperialism having been largely rolled back, it is Russia’s continued occupation of historic Chinese territory that stands out the most to ordinary Chinese observers.
- For example, the city of Vladivostok, with its vast naval base, has been a part of Russia only since 1860, when the tsars built a military harbor there. Before that, the city was known by the Manchu name of Haishenwai. When Russia held celebrations for the city’s 160th anniversary last year, hyper-nationalist Chinese internet users exploded in indignation.
- Putin recognizes that his country has received scant benefits from its relationship with Xi’s China. Although China has been investing massively in firms and infrastructure around the world (much of it through Xi’s signature Belt and Road Initiative), only a miniscule amount of Chinese money has made it to Russia, where it has been desperately needed to offset the effects of Western sanctions.

#### How West Benefits?

- If the West wants Russia to distance itself from China, it will have to accept Putin as he is – warts and all. Though he won’t improve his record on human rights, he could at least be convinced to recognize internationally agreed norms in cyberspace, and to stop openly threatening his neighbours. That sort of bargain is more than possible, and it just might be enough to alert a stubborn Xi to the strategic dangers of his own regional and international bullying. (Biden-Putin Meeting explains it)
- 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.
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## Comparing China with USSR

- distinguished Singaporean academic and former diplomat Kishore Mahbubani in his book titled **Has China Won? The Chinese Challenge to American Primacy** asks Does the US have a strategy in its geopolitical competition with China? No, says Mahbubani and argues that America is committing the “classic strategic mistake of fighting tomorrow’s war with yesterday’s strategy” as it is treating the China challenge similar to the old Soviet threat.
- 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.
- **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.

## Will containment work?

- Chinese President Xi Jinping is no Stalin, and the Chinese system is not Marxist-Leninist but “market Leninist” – a form of state capitalism based on a hybrid of public and private firms subservient to an authoritarian party elite. A third cold war would be a non-starter because of three main reasons, as follows:
- 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.
- 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.

- 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."
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#### West against China

- 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 communique 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".
- 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.
- 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.

- 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.
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#### *Ground realities*

- 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.”
- 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

#### *China general*

- 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.
- Beijing has always adjusted its policies to shifting domestic and foreign circumstances, following Deng Xiaoping's approach of “**crossing the river by feeling the stones.**”

- the country's power is second only to that of the United States. Consider the sharp contrast between Chinese success and American failure in the fight against COVID-19: China suffered the least among all major powers during the pandemic and is the only major economy to have grown over the past year. By the end of 2020, its GDP had reached 71 percent of U.S. GDP, up from 66 percent in 2019
- 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.
- 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.
- 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.
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### *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'.

### *Dual circulation*

- 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.

### *China's war against poverty*

- 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%.
- "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.
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### *War is inevitable?*

- 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
- US won't 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.)
- 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.
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### *How to stop war/ way forward?*

- 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 result in apocalyptic destruction)
- Liberal international order? You know problems about this one
- 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
- 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.
- 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.
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#### How must Pakistan manage this?

- 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 and 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.