

A MONTHLY MAGAZINE OF NATIONAL, REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL STRATEGIC AFFAIRS



# Interaction

ISSUE-02

VOLUME-17

MC-1326

Rs.400/-

193

ABC CERTIFIED

SEPTEMBER 2023

Triumphant Echoes: Remembering the 1965 War's Victory | NATO summit in Vilnius disappointed Ukraine

**Weaponization of space**

**Implications of BRICS summit**

Beyond IMF: Redefining economic Priorities for sovereignty & sustainable growth

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# Interaction

A Monthly Magazine of National, Regional and International Strategic Affairs

September 2023

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Printed by:

**NUSRAT MIRZA**

From Al-Asif Printers, Karachi

Published from:

71/C, 1st Floor, 24th Commercial Street,  
Tauheed Commercial Area, Phase-V, DHA.,  
Karachi, Pakistan.

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One Copy Rs. 400/-  
One Year Rs. 4500/-

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## **EDITORIAL**

### **TRIUMPHANT ECHOES: REMEMBERING THE 1965 WAR'S VICTORY**

The 1965 Indo-Pak War stands as a significant chapter in South Asian history, characterized by intense military confrontations between India and Pakistan. While India's defeat remains a subject of historical analysis, it is crucial to acknowledge Pakistan's achievements and the unwavering bravery of its armed forces. The conflict that commenced in April 1965 escalated into a full-fledged war on September 6th, 1965, when India launched a comprehensive attack along the international border. This fierce engagement persisted until a ceasefire was declared on September 22nd.

During this war against India, Pakistan's resolute armed forces demonstrated remarkable resilience across air, land, and sea battles. Notable victories include the Battle of Chawinda, where the 6th Armored Division triumphed over India's 1st Armored Division, leading to the destruction of numerous tanks. The Battle of Asal Uttar showcased Pakistan's staunch defense, inflicting substantial losses on the Indian forces. Similarly, the Battle of Lahore highlighted Pakistan's effective counterattacks, resulting in significant Indian casualties. The valor exhibited by Major Raja Aziz Bhatti during the Battle of Burki further enhanced Pakistan's determination. These collective efforts culminated in Pakistan's occupation of 1617 square miles of territory and the capture of Indian officers, junior Indian Commissioned Officers, and other ranks.

In this war, the Pakistan Air Force (PAF) played a pivotal role, exemplified by Squadron Leader M.M. Alam's exceptional achievement of downing multiple Indian fighter planes. The Pakistan Navy's successful attack on an Indian naval radar station further elevated the spirits of Pakistani forces. While the conflict reached a stalemate and did not resolve the Kashmir dispute, it drew the attention of global superpowers, the United States and the Soviet Union, subsequently influencing their future roles in the region. The ceasefire was eventually brokered in September 1965.

International media coverage during the war spotlighted the unparalleled courage and determination of Pakistan's soldiers. Notably, top of the News, Washington reported, "The first Indian regiment that found itself face to face with the Pakistanis didn't get clobbered. They just turned and ran, leaving all their equipment, artillery supplies, and even extra clothing and supplies behind." A correspondent in the influential 'Statist' remarked, "During this war, India and Pakistan consumed military hardware worth more than the amount needed to build the Aswan Dam. The losses Army, Navy, and Air Force largely befell the Indian side due to the superior training of Pakistan's armed forces." Le Figaro, Paris, reported, "Against twenty-one Indian Divisions, they had only seven. Despite this disparity, Pakistanis exhibited extraordinary mobility and adeptly utilized their limited resources."

The war accentuated the significance of well-defined politico-military objectives and strategic planning. Pakistan's adept use of its limited resources highlighted the importance of tactical innovation. The lessons derived from the 1965 war led India to consider factors beyond mere numerical strength, while Pakistan recognized the necessity of modernizing its military equipment and bolstering diplomatic ties.

The 1965 Indo-Pak War showcased India's initial resource advantage juxtaposed with Pakistan's valor and strategic brilliance. The conflict underscored Pakistan's resilience against a larger adversary and proved that gallantry and strategic acumen can overcome numerical odds. The war's enduring legacy continues to influence the region's dynamics, serving as a reminder of the intricacies of warfare and geopolitics. The sacrifices made by Pakistan's soldiers stand as a testament to their unwavering commitment to safeguarding their homeland.

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## **SUMMARIZED NEWS & ARTICLES**

### **IAEA SUPPORTS INTERNATIONAL COLLABORATION ON THE LONG-TERM OPERATION OF NUCLEAR POWER PLANTS**

Strengthening Romania's nuclear regulatory infrastructure while providing a venue for international knowledge transfer was the focus of an IAEA technical visit at the Canadian Darlington Nuclear Generating Station (NGS) last month. A team from the Romanian Regulatory Body, the National Commission for Nuclear Activities Control (CNCAN), and the Cernavoda Nuclear Power Plant visited Darlington NGS to discuss the long-term operation (LTO) of nuclear power plants. They also discussed the refurbishment process for CANDU reactors, which includes Calandria and pressure tube removal, re-tubing, and feeder pipe removal and replacement. During the refurbishment process, reactor components, such as the pressure tubes that contain the fuel during operation, are removed and replaced. During the five-day visit from 17-22 July, the Romanian utility and regulator gained insight and experience on how to review and assess ageing management for CANDU reactors, with a focus on refurbishment. Round table interactions, presentations, and on-site tours enabled Romanian experts to enhance their knowledge on how to prepare and train for the implementation of refurbishment activities that typically start several years before the practical work of refurbishment begins. Other areas of discussion included Darlington's third-party assessment of their steam generators to demonstrate their continued ability to operate successfully during the life extension, and insight into which components, such as cables, need to be replaced during or after refurbishment. Maria Oprisescu, the CNCAN Management System Control Section Head, explained, "The insights gained following this technical meeting have added great value to the regulatory oversight of ageing management and preparation for safe LTO, including refurbishment activities planned to be implemented in the coming years

at Cernavoda Nuclear Power Plant, Unit 1." Participants also received information on the kind of documentation required for submission to the regulator before starting a reactor refurbishment programme. Presentations included topics on operating experience, and the codes and standards that the Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission (CNSC) requires for each nuclear power plant and the types of inspections required, including the importance of periodic inspections to check the safety related structures.

Darlington's manager of regulatory affairs, Craig Axler, said, "Sharing operating experience is an extremely valuable activity and is helpful not only for the visitors but also the hosts, as information sharing is passed in both directions on a wide range of topics. Ontario Power Generation is proud to share its successes with its current refurbishment project and is honoured to contribute to the long term operating efforts of all nuclear stations in the international community." During a tour of the onsite mock up training facility, attendees gained practical experience on the processes involved in reactor refurbishment, as well as the importance of proper training and preparation to a successful refurbishment project. Iulia Jianu, a CNCAN Nuclear Safety Adviser, also noted, "The tours, presentations and round table discussions will significantly support the improvement of the Romanian regulatory framework regarding the use of industrial codes and standards."

Courtesy: International Atomic Energy Agency.

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#### **SAUDI DEPUTY FOREIGN MINISTER MEETS PAKISTAN'S ARMY CHIEF OF STAFF**

Saudi Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Waleed bin Abdulkarim Al-Khuraiiji on Thursday met Pakistan's Chief of Army Staff Gen. Asim Munir during his official visit to the capital Islamabad. Munir held a dinner banquet in honor of Al-Khuraiiji and his delegation. During talks, Al-Khuraiiji and Munir discussed international issues of mutual concern and ways to further strengthen links between their two countries. Also present at the meeting was the Saudi Ambassador to Pakistan Nawaf bin Said Al-Malki. CJCSC, Services Chiefs & Armed Forces of Pakistan extend their heartfelt congratulations to the Nation on 76th Independence Day of Islamic Republic of Pakistan.

Courtesy: Pakistan Observer.

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#### **CJCSSC, SERVICES CHIEFS & ARMED FORCES OF PAKISTAN EXTEND THEIR HEARTFELT CONGRATULATIONS TO THE NATION ON 76TH INDEPENDENCE DAY OF ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF PAKISTAN**

This day reminds us of the vision, fortitude and countless sacrifices which our ancestors offered, to realise our elders and great Quaid's dream of a free and independent country. Thousands of sons' of soil have laid down their lives for defence of the motherland and to preserve the cherished dream of freedom of our forefathers. Let us all pledge that irrespective of the challenges we face today,

we will preserve and strengthen the peace, societal harmony and unity among the Nation. We will not let inimical forces to succeed, which are hell bent to create fissures and division among the Armed Forces and people of Pakistan. Armed Forces of Pakistan, with the support of Nation, will always defend the territorial integrity and peace of the motherland and continue to serve the nation as per the aspirations of people of Pakistan, InshaAllah.

Courtesy: Pakdefence.com

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### **PAKISTAN FORMALISES CHASHMA-5 APPROVAL**

According to an official government announcement, ECNEC "considered and approved" the Pakistan Atomic Energy Commission (PAEC) project at a rationalised cost of KPR1,048 billion (USD3.7 billion) with a foreign exchange component of KPR187 billion and Chinese credit of KPR821 billion at a meeting held in Karachi on 27 July. China National Nuclear Corporation and PAEC signed a cooperation agreement on the construction of the plant in 2017, but according to the Dawn newspaper, Pakistan's Planning Commission requested "certain clarifications and corrections", leading to a revised project with an escalated cost of KPR689 billion being submitted in early 2021.

This was revised again to KPR767.6 billion later that year. The ground-breaking ceremony for the 1200 MWe Hualong One reactor was held earlier this month after Pakistan signed a USD4.8 billion deal with China. The Chashma site - also referred to as Chasnupp - at Mianwali in Punjab is already home to four operating Chinese-supplied CNP-300 pressurised water reactors.

Courtesy: World Nuclear News.

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### **WON'T LET 'INIMICAL FORCES' CREATE DIVISIONS WITH PAKISTANI PEOPLE, ARMY SAYS IN AUG. 14 MESSAGE**

Pakistan's top military leadership said on Monday, Pakistan's Independence Day, the army would not allow "inimical forces" to create divisions between the people of Pakistan and its armed forces, in a veiled reference to former Prime Minister Imran Khan. Khan, now behind bars after being convicted earlier this month in a case involving the sale of state gifts, has been embroiled in a tussle with the military since he was removed from power last year in a parliamentary vote that he says was orchestrated by the country's top generals. The military denies this. The stand-off intensified when Khan's supporters were involved in violent protests, including attacks on military installations, following his brief arrest on May 9. Thousands of the former premier's supporters were subsequently arrested and hundreds of members of his party, including his closest aides, defected. The military and the government of then Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif have vowed to punish the perpetrators and instigators of the violence, including through military trials.

"Let us all pledge that irrespective of the challenges we face today, we will preserve and strengthen the peace, societal harmony and unity among the

Nation," the military's media wing said in an Independence Day message from the services chiefs. "We will not let inimical forces to succeed, which are hell bent to create fissures and division among the Armed Forces and people of Pakistan." President Dr. Arif Alvi and Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif also extended "heartfelt congratulations" to the nation in separate messages on Independence Day, Radio Pakistan reported. This year August 14 coincides with the oath-taking of Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar as interim PM to oversee a general election after the dissolution of the lower house of parliament earlier this week. The election is meant to be held within 90 days, by November, but uncertainty looms over the date as the nation grapples with constitutional, political and economic crises. Kakar and his cabinet will run the government until a national election is held and the winner can secure a parliamentary majority and select a new prime minister.

Courtesy: Arabnews.

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### **STRATEGIC IMPORTANCE OF PAK-CHINA RELATIONS STRESSED**

Islamabad: The visiting Chinese delegates affirmed the strategic importance of China-Pakistan relations, highlighted the importance of next phase of CPEC and stressed the need for further deepening people-to-people contacts especially among the youth and vowed to further strengthen institutional relationships between think-tanks of the two countries. The 4-member Chinese delegation was hosted here by Institute of Strategic Studies (ISS). The team was led by Yuan Jianmin, Counsellor of Xinjiang Autonomous Region Government. The delegation included Liu Zongyi, Secretary, China South Asian Study Centre, Shanghai Institute of International Studies, Wang Shida, Deputy Director, South Asia Studies, China Institute of Contemporary International Relations (CICIR) and Li Jingfeng, Associate Professor, Sichuan Academy of Social Science. The wide-ranging exchange of views covered the evolving global environment, developments in major-power relations, impact of Indo-Pacific strategy on South Asia, achievements during the 'Decade of CPEC' and the salience of Pakistan China all-weather Strategic Cooperative Partnership in international dynamics. Sohail Mahmood, DG, ISS, in his introductory remarks, extended a warm welcome to the visiting scholars. He underscored the importance of Pakistan-China relations in the contemporary world and the strategic significance of CPEC for Pakistan's economic transformation and regional prosperity.

He also shared Pakistan's perspective on major-power competition as well as the potential fall-out of designating a South Asian state as 'net security provider.' Stressing that the Pakistan-China strategic partnership was a factor of peace and stability in the region and beyond, he emphasised the importance of crafting a long-term vision of this relationship as, in the next 25 years, both Pakistan and the Peoples' Republic will be celebrating their respective centenaries. Earlier, Dr Talat Shabbir, ISS, in his remarks briefed the Chinese delegation about the structure and functioning of the institute. He recalled the recent seminars held jointly by the ISS-

CICIR and ISSI-Fudan University in China and stressed the pivotal importance of such interactions and dialogues for China-Pakistan bilateral relations.

Courtesy: The News International.

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### **LAVROV SAYS RUSSIA'S NUCLEAR ARSENAL A REMINDER FOR WEST**

Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov stated that having nuclear weapons defends Russia from external security dangers and acts as a continual warning to the West about the risk of nuclear war. While talking to the state news magazine The International Affairs, Lavrov said, "The possession of nuclear arms is today the only possible response to some of the significant external threats to the security of our country." Lavrov made the recent remark following Moscow's military escalation which has risen sharply since Russian forces entered Ukraine last year. He warned that the United States and its NATO allies risk ending up in "a situation of direct armed confrontation of nuclear powers". Former Russian President Dmitry Medvedev stated last month that Moscow would have to use nuclear weapons if Ukraine's counteroffensive against Russian forces proved successful. NATO countries and the US provide the majority of Ukraine's military assistance in its conflict with Russia. According to Al Jazeera, US President Joe Biden described the possibility of Russia utilising tactical nuclear weapons as "real".

"We believe such a development should be prevented. That's why we have to remind about the existence of high military and political risks and send sobering signals to our opponents", Lavrov added. "The Western military alliance has not detected any changes to Russia's nuclear force stance, and therefore, NATO did not need to reciprocate in its nuclear posture", said NATO chief Jens Stoltenberg. On Thursday, Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko, one of Russian President Vladimir Putin's closest allies, warned that he would use the nuclear weapons that Russia had deployed in his country if faced with external aggression.

Courtesy: Aljazeera.

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### **BRITISH PAKISTANI STUDENT, MAHNOOR CHEEMA MAKE HISTORY**

16-year-old British Pakistani student, Mahnoor Cheema, makes history with an extraordinary achievement, passing 34 GCSE subjects. Her record-breaking feat includes 17 A\* grades in Year 10 and 17 more subjects later, setting a new UK and international milestone. Beyond academics, Mahnoor shines with an IQ of 161, excelling in music and essays. Her aspirations for medicine at Oxford and dedication to humanitarian work shape a promising future. She attributes her success to hard work, time management, and family support. Mahnoor's parents, Barrister Usman Cheema and Mrs. Tayyaba Cheema, express immense pride in her accomplishments, breaking European records and garnering admiration.

Courtesy: Daily Pakistan.

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### **CHINA HOPES EXPANDED BRICS WILL TURN WORLD UPSIDE DOWN**



China's recent decision to expand the Brics bloc by adding Argentina, Egypt, Ethiopia, Iran, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates reflects its intent to counter the perceived biases of the US-led western-dominated global system. This move, which joins the new members with existing ones (Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa), creates a formidable grouping with significant size and influence. With the western world having long dominated global institutions, China seeks to establish a counterbalance that challenges this status quo. By some measures of economic power, the new 11-country Brics bloc could potentially reshape the global dynamics. The motivation behind China's effort is to create an opposing force to the G7, aimed at bolstering Chinese leadership on the global stage. This strategic endeavor aligns with Beijing's ambitions to reshape international institutions to be more inclusive of developing countries. The Brics summit's 26-page declaration reflects Chinese influence in shaping the agenda, particularly evident in its calls for reform within international institutions. The primary focus is on reforming entities like the World Bank and the IMF, both of which are currently dominated by western democracies. The declaration emphasizes granting more power and leadership roles to emerging markets and developing nations.

A central demand is the comprehensive reform of the United Nations, an institution China deems crucial for global governance. Specific focus lies on the UN Security Council, where China and Russia are two of the five permanent members. The declaration pushes for increased representation of developing countries in this influential body, a sentiment shared by nations like Brazil and India. Implementing these reforms could diminish the influence of developed countries, prompting resistance from G7 members and others in the developed world. Challenges face the expanded Brics bloc, including differing viewpoints among members, particularly regarding the overtly anti-western stance championed by China and Russia. Geopolitical unity remains elusive on key issues, such as the conflict in Ukraine. Despite these challenges, the expanded Brics grouping represents an unprecedentedly influential force from the developing world. It signifies a shift away from the historical dominance of the western powers, heralding the dawn of a potential "global south" era.

In conclusion, China's move to enlarge the Brics bloc is a strategic attempt to counter the western-dominated global system and create a more inclusive platform for emerging economies. The expansion signifies a shift in global dynamics and challenges the established norms of global governance. As the Brics bloc gains traction and influence, it raises the prospect of a rebalancing of power and a redefinition of international institutions in favor of the developing world.

Courtesy: The Financial Times.

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## **PAKISTAN**

### **VISIT OF PAKISTAN NUCLEAR SOCIETY'S MEMBERS TO RFI OFFICE**

Dr. Tahir Khaleeq (President, Pakistan Nuclear Society), Mr. Waqar Ahmed Butt (Vice President), Mohammad Qamar Abbas (Executive Member), and Mr. Ghulam Sarwar (Finance Secretary) visited Rabita Forum International on August 17, 2023.

A profound meeting ensued between these distinguished individuals and RFI's Chairman, Nusrat Mirza, accompanied by his proficient team. The discourse delved into the very essence of PNS's vision, mission, and objectives, intertwining with the potential for a collaborative synergy between the Rabita Forum International (RFI) and PNS.

The focal point: to disseminate awareness encompassing the peaceful applications of the Nuclear program and to dispel lingering misconceptions.

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### **BTTN CELEBRATES INDEPENDENCE DAY**

#### **BTTN**

In commemoration of Pakistan's 76th Independence Day Celebrations, Balochistan Think Tank Network (BTTN), Quetta, arranged an essay competition on the topic "Unity in Diversity: Promoting National Integration of Pakistan" for all the private and public sector universities of Balochistan. The competition was announced on BTTN's social media platforms on July 19, 2023. The deadline for the submission of essays was August 7, 2023, which was later extended to August 10, 2023, due to an overwhelming response from the participants. On August 14, 2023, the winners were announced on the website and social media platforms of BTTN. Students currently enrolled in different universities in various BS, MA, and MPhil programs in social sciences, humanities, medical and engineering have participated in this competition.

An overwhelming response of 30+ participants was received and evaluated critically as per the assessment criteria that was advertised. The objective of this inter-university essay competition was to engage and empower the youth of Pakistan in promoting national integration through the theme of "Unity in Diversity". Based on the assessment, the top four contributors were invited to BTTN for the prize distribution ceremony held in BTTN Seminar Hall, BUIITEMS, Quetta on Friday 18th August, 2023. Vice Chancellor BUIITEMS Quetta was the Chief Guest for this event while VC SBK and faculty members from University of Balochistan were also present amongst the participants. The program started with the national anthem and was moderated by Miss Samra Hamid, Research Officer, BTTN.

It was followed by a presentation given by Dr. Maria Malik, Director of Research at BTTN, where she introduced BTTN and shed light on the rationale behind this competition. The first cash prize worth of 30,000 PKR was awarded to Ms Farida Gul from University of Balochistan, Quetta. The second cash prize worth of 20,000

PKR was presented to Mr. Imran Ullah from University of Balochistan, Quetta. The third cash prize of 10,000 Rs PKR was awarded to Mr. Abdul Kabeer from BUET, Khuzdar and a consolation prize was awarded to Mr. Saif Ullah from University of Balochistan, Quetta.

While presenting her essay, first prize winner Ms. Farida Gul highlighted that Pakistan's diverse population, comprising various ethnic groups, is a testament to its rich heritage. She stated that the media industry plays a crucial role in shaping societal perceptions. By encouraging the production and promotion of films, television shows, and media content that represent diverse regional cultures, Pakistan can create a more inclusive media landscape. Mr. Saifullah Durrani while referring to Pakistan's multi ethnic and multi religious population stated that Pakistan's strength lies in its diverse population, which comprises of numerous ethnic groups with distinct languages and traditions.

He further suggested that to fully embrace diversity, it is imperative to uplift marginalized communities that have historically faced discrimination and socio-economic disparities. In his address, the Chief Guest, Vice Chancellor BUITEMS, Prof. Dr. Khalid Hafeez, shared his views on national integration and appreciated BTTN on picking up this much needed theme. He suggested that diversity must also include the gender as well. And if we want to celebrate excellence, it has to be on the basis of merit stating that one should become Shaheen of Iqbal. He congratulated the winners and said that this nation belongs to the youth; they must play a promising role in taking it forward. There was a formal interactive session with an exchange of ideas on the subject with the Faculty of Research. Moreover, Brig. Agha Ahmad Gul (R), Head of BTTN in his concluding remarks drew an analogy and said that just like an empty glass can be filled with whatever, similarly diversity can be used positively or negatively; the choice is all ours. The session was concluded with the distribution of cash prizes and certificates of appreciation among the winners and souvenirs to the Chief Guest, a group photo and refreshments.

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### **SALAHUDDIN MENGAL, THE HEAD OF BRAHVI ACADEMY, VISITS BTTN**

The head of the Brahvi Academy and a senior practicing lawyer at the Supreme Court of Pakistan, Advocate Salahuddin Mengal called on Balochistan Think Tank Network (BTTN) on August 21, 2023 and exchanged views about Balochistan's social economic development and various aspects of CPEC and its development.

He also opined that rather than putting full reliance on road transport, government of Pakistan and China both should consider laying the railway line up to Noshki. From Noshki, then the national railway grid network can help pass on the goods arriving at Gwadar or being dispatched from Gwadar to the neighborhood.

Head of BTTN, Agha Ahmad Gul stated that Brahvi is the oldest language in the world, some listed it to be more than 7000 years old. But most certainly, if not 7000 years, there is no language which is even close to it in antiquity. This is a heritage of Balochistan and thereby a heritage of Pakistan. He emphasized that Brahvi language should be spread for knowledge and general education.

BTTN presented Salahuddin Mengal with some of the research work which is directly related to Balochistan and has serious interest of Pakistan. The head of BTTN thanked him and Mr. Mengal invited him to visit the Brahvi Cultural Center.

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### **RFI CELEBRATES THE INDEPENDENCE DAY**

The commemorative cake-cutting ceremony, celebrating the anniversary of Independence Day, took center stage at Rabita Forum International. Mr. Nusrat Mirza, Chairman, stood alongside fellow team members from the news and research departments.

Amidst the jubilant ambiance, Mr. Mirza took the opportunity to reflect upon the Independence Movement's historical journey and underscore its insightful significance. He emphasized that being a resilient nation we have not only to survive but to achieve stability on economic and political grounds.

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### **DG AIMH VISITS BTTN ON AUG, 17, 2023**

#### **BTTN**

Maj Gen Agha Masood Akram (R), DG Army Institute of Military History (AIMH) Rawalpindi, visited Balochistan Think Tank Network (BTTN) on August 17, 2023. He was received by Head of BTTN Brig Agha Ahmad Gul (R) and Dr. Zafar Khan, Executive Director BTTN.

In his welcome remarks, Brig Gul (R) introduced Maj Gen Agha Masood (R) with the Faculty of Research and the workplace. Executive Director, Dr. Zafar Khan briefed on BTTN's progress, aims, objectives and achievements. He provided a detailed account of BTTN's organizational structure and framework of research. He pointed that BTTN is currently focusing on strategic, political, economic, and most specifically the socio-economic issues of Balochistan. BTTN has produced numerous research articles, policy papers and a considerable number of opinion articles on contemporary issues.

Maj Gen Agha Masood (R) lauded the efforts of the institute in promoting the culture of research in the province which, according to him, is a crucial step in informing and empowering the people of the region and is a dire need of hour.

Maj Gen Masood (R) appreciated the efforts and the achievements of BTTN attained in such a short time and expressed his best wishes for the progress of BTTN and Balochistan. During interactive session, he introduced AIMH, its vision and scope while defining it not to be precisely a Think Tank but a cousin to it.

He said that the mission of AIMH is to record, preserve and promote the military history of Pakistan and the history of the Pakistan Army, act as a center of excellence for the study of military history, and provide a forum for open-source intellectual input to the Pakistan Army on contemporary affairs, through two-way interaction with civil society.

He expressed his wish for BTTN's Faculty of Research to visit AIMH. At the end, with the exchange of souvenirs, Brig Gul (R) presented Maj Gen Agha Masood (R) with the major publications and booklets produced by BTTN in the last two years.

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## **COMPLETION OF 2ND INTERNSHIP PROGRAMME**

### **LT GEN (R) KHALID AHMED KIDWAI, NI, HI, HI (M), AWARDS INTERNSHIP CERTIFICATES TO TWENTY STUDENTS**

#### **CISSS**

Twenty students of eight universities and institutes have completed Internship Programme held at the Center for International Strategic Studies Sindh (CISSS) Karachi from 19 July to 18 August 2023. Lt Gen (R) Khalid Ahmed Kidwai, NI, HI, HI (M), Advisor Development National Command Authority (AD NCA) of Pakistan, was the Chief Guest at the ceremony held at CISSS to mark the completion of the Programme. He awarded Internship Certificates to the participants. Executive Director CISSS Ambassador Qazi Khalilullah (R) and all members of Team CISSS were present on the occasion.

The following received the Internship Certificates: (i) University of Sindh Jamshoro students Mr. Habibullah Kalhor, Mr. Jai Kumar, Ms. Johra Mustafa, Mr. Muhammad Waseem Brohi, Ms. Rabia Habeeb, Ms. Sadia Memon, Mr. Sajjad Ahmed, Mr. Waqar Ali Bughio, Ms. Zam Zam Channa, Mr. Abdul Wasio and Ms. Nageen Chohan; (ii) DHA Suffa University students Mr. Jian Khan and Mr. Haroon Rashid; (iii) IBA Karachi students Ms. Nawal Aamir and Ms. Soofya Wajih; (iv) Bahria University Karachi student Ms. Hafsa Azam; (v) University of Karachi student Ms. Areeba Mumtaz; (vi) Institute of Business Management Karachi student Mr. Huzaifa Abdul Rehman; (vii) National University of Modern Languages Islamabad student Ms. Saeeda Summbal; and (viii) Dawood University of Engineering and Technology Karachi student Mr. Muhammad Jawad.

AD NCA congratulated the students on successful completion of the CISSS Internship Programme and conveyed his best wishes for their future endeavors. He expressed appreciation for the presentations made by Interns on the occasion to demonstrate the knowledge of strategic issues acquired and research produced during the Internship Programme.

The CISSS Internship Programme included reading and research assignments, group discussions, writing book review and op-eds and PowerPoint presentations. The Interns also had an opportunity to participate in a Seminar-cum-Webinar held at CISSS on 3rd August to observe the 4th Anniversary of Revocation of Special

Status of Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK) and Twitter Space to Celebrate 76th Independence Day of Pakistan.

A wide range of national, regional and international strategic issues were covered during the Internship Programme including global power competition, nuclear dynamics of South Asia, Jammu and Kashmir dispute, rise of Hindutva and its implications for strategic stability in South Asia, role of nuclear and space technologies in the socio-economic development of Pakistan, arms control, disarmament, non-proliferation, emerging technologies, climate change, India's hegemonic designs in the region, impact of shifting global order on South Asia, hybrid warfare, human rights abuses in India, Indo-Pacific strategy, Indian Cold Start Doctrine, implications of growing India-US technology collaboration and China Pakistan Economic Corridor. CISSS was established in 2021 as a non-profit, non-partisan, non-commercial and multidisciplinary research-oriented organisation. Its core mandate is to connect with the people of Sindh and promote Pakistan's narrative on key issues of national interest. Outreach is a priority area of CISSS activities.

Internship Programme is part of CISSS objectives to establish positive linkages with academic institutions of higher learning in Sindh, and sponsor and groom a talent pool of young scholars with a view to presenting Pakistan's strategic narrative through effective writing, talks and wide participation in seminars and conferences.

First Internship Programme of CISSS was held in September-October 2022 with eight students of DHA Suffa University. It was indeed a milestone for CISSS. Team CISSS was delighted to have twenty students from eight institutions of higher learning in the 2nd Internship Programme. It was reflective of the confidence Interns and their institutions have in professional competence of CISSS, which seeks to impart knowledge and provide exposure to a professional research-oriented environment to young students in Sindh.

CISSS Internship Programme is paid and open to students of all universities in Sindh.

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## **SHAHEEN – III**

### **PAKISTAN'S LONGEST RANGE BALLISTIC MISSILE**

#### **TRIUMPH BEYOND HORIZONS: THE PAKISTANI SHAHEEN-III MISSILE UNVEILED INTERACTION TEAM**

In the chronicles of contemporary warfare and strategic deterrence, the Shaheen-III missile stands as a resounding testament to Pakistan's technological prowess and its unyielding commitment to fortifying its defense capabilities.

This medium-range ballistic missile, bearing the moniker "White Falcon-III," has garnered worldwide attention for its exceptional range and potential. Emerging from the heart of South Asia, the trajectory of this missile's development unveils a narrative steeped in innovation, strategic acumen, and geopolitical influence, which has etched an enduring impact on the global canvas of arms technology.

## **INCEPTION OF THE SHAHEEN SERIES**

The Shaheen-III missile symbolizes the culmination of decades of relentless efforts aimed at establishing Pakistan as a force to be reckoned with in the realm of missile technology. As early as 2000, the Space & Upper Atmosphere Research Commission (SUPARCO) laid the groundwork through design studies for a space launch vehicle, setting the stage for subsequent advancements.

The initial blueprints, unveiled in the IDEAS exhibition of 2002, were centered on harnessing the design technologies of the Shaheen-I missile. This collaborative pursuit, spearheaded by the National Development Complex of National Engineering and Scientific Commission (NESCOM) and the SUPARCO, has been the driving force behind the birth of the Shaheen series.

## **CORE OF TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS**

At the core of the significance of the Shaheen-III missile lies in its impressive technical specifications. It features a solid-fueled, two-stage design and measures around 19.3 meters in length with a diameter of 1.4 meters. However, its most remarkable feature is its remarkable range, estimated to be about 2,750 kilometers.

This capability firmly establishes it as a key component of Pakistan's strategic arsenal. This adaptable design enables the Shaheen-III to carry both nuclear and conventional payloads, thus enhancing the country's strategic flexibility. The WS21200 transporter erector launcher (TEL) is used as the launch platform for this exceptional missile. Regarding its speed, Dr. Summar Mubarakmand, a prominent Pakistani Nuclear scientist, stated in an interview with the senior anchorperson Nusrat Mirza that the Shaheen III missile's velocity is so fast that Indian Defense System will have no time to take protective measures.

While he didn't specify the exact increase in speed, shedding more light on this, Lt. Gen (R) Ghulam Mustafa, during an interview with anchorperson Dr. Sahid Masood on August 19, 2019, unequivocally declared that the missile's velocity exceeds the speed of sound by more than 18 times.

## **TRIALS AND THE CRUCIBLE OF STRATEGIC SHIFTS**

The trajectory of the Shaheen-III's evolution is woven from a fabric of meticulous trials and enhancements, embodying Pakistan's unwavering pursuit of excellence. The inaugural test launch on March 9, 2015, off the southern coast of the Arabian Sea, marked a historic moment that transcended the confines of its predecessors.

The echoes of this triumph were amplified through subsequent successes in January 2021 and April 2022, echoing the reliability and technical precision imprinted upon the missile's design. The tests were overseen by military officials from the Joint Staff Headquarters (JS HQ), scientists and engineers from the SPD (Strategic Plans Division), further solidifying the missile's performance credentials.

## **PATHWAY TO EXTENDED RANGE**

The extraordinary range achieved by the Shaheen-III stands as a testament to the marriage of engineering ingenuity and technological innovation. Differentiating itself from preceding models, the missile relies on a solid-fuel propulsion system, a

shift that endows it with various advantages, including expedited launch readiness and streamlined logistical requirements. The infusion of a third rocket stage assumes a pivotal role in catapulting the missile's range to new horizons. This augmentation, coupled with the efficacy of solid-fuel propulsion, propels the Shaheen-III into the league of long-range ballistic missiles.

### **REGIONAL SECURITY IMPLICATIONS**

The Shaheen-III missile's significant range holds vital implications for regional security dynamics. Pakistan's commitment to upholding a balanced strategic environment is demonstrated by its ability to target far-reaching areas beyond its borders. Notably, the country's nuclear pursuits, as stressed by Mansoor Ahmed, a nuclear and strategic expert, are solely directed towards India, with no intent for a "tit-for-tat" arms race.

Rather, Pakistan seeks to augment its capabilities to outmaneuver India's missile defenses. By encompassing the entire Indian subcontinent and giving special attention to critical Indian islands, Pakistan aims to neutralize India's potential for retaliatory strikes.

Lieutenant General (R) Khalid Ahmed Kidwai, Advisor to the National Command Authority, revealed in a conversation at Carnegie International Nuclear Policy Conference 2015 that the missile's 2,750-kilometer range deliberately covers India's strategic Nicobar and Andaman Islands because these islands could be utilized for Indian military operations, making their inclusion a strategic choice. Furthermore, Pakistan intends to leverage this extended range to uphold its second-strike capability in the face of a nuclear attack.

### **STRIVING FOR PEACE THROUGH DETERRENCE**

The Shaheen-III missile exemplifies Pakistan's unwavering commitment to upholding peace and stability through robust deterrence measures. Its unique ability to accommodate both nuclear and conventional payloads, combined with an extended operational range, establishes a formidable deterrent against potential aggressors.

This narrative underscores Pakistan's steadfast resolve to protect its sovereignty and national interests. During the January 2021 test, Gen. Nadeem Raza, the then Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee, who was present at the event, stated after observing the test, "Pakistan seeks peaceful co-existence in the region, and its strategic capability aims to deter any aggression against Pakistan's sovereignty."

Shahid Latif, a retired Pakistan Air Force Commander, succinctly encapsulates this perspective by highlighting the message the missile conveys: 'Any harm inflicted upon Pakistan will be met with a resolute response.' This is illustrated by the missile's capacity to target India's vulnerabilities as a direct response to India's tests of extra-regional missiles. This shift in strategy reflects Pakistan's unwavering commitment to reciprocate in the face of hostile actions, thereby cultivating an atmosphere of deterrence and mutual caution.

### **CONCLUSION: BALANCING TOMORROW'S HORIZON: A DELICATE EQUILIBRIUM**



In the culmination of its technological odyssey, Pakistan's Shaheen-III missile emerges as the epitome of the nation's commitment to equilibrium amidst shifting geopolitical sands. As the missile program advances, it seamlessly integrates defense fortification with a resolute pursuit of peace and stability, reflecting Pakistan's distinct defense doctrine.

The Shaheen-III's journey, marked by unyielding determination, strategic foresight, and cutting-edge design, showcases Pakistan's ascendancy in global missile technology, characterized by a long-drawn-out range, solid-fuel propulsion, and multi-stage architecture.

Amidst evolving international dynamics, the missile program remains a steadfast emblem of Pakistan's dedication to safeguarding sovereignty, stability, and global harmony, etching its legacy onto the world stage. Beyond its technical prowess, the Shaheen-III embodies Pakistan's unwavering quest for technological eminence, safeguarding deterrence, peace, and national security.

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## **AMERICA**

### **IMPLICATIONS OF BRICS SUMMIT**

DR. MOONIS AHMAR

“You have almost a system akin to apartheid South Africa where the minority decides for the majority, and that's still the situation on the world stage today. We don't want to be told what is right for us, we want the fault lines of the current global governance architecture to be redesigned, to be reformed, to be transformed. And we want to be part of the process to create a more equitable, a more inclusive, a multipolar global community where we have fairness and justice in terms of how we conduct ourselves.” Anil Sookal, South African Ambassador to BRICS. The much awaited 15th summit of BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa) ended in Johannesburg with mixed results. On the last day of the summit on August 24, the South African President Cyril Ramaphosa announced that Argentina, Egypt, Ethiopia, Iran, Saudi Arabia and UAE will become full members of BRICS on 1st January 2024. Hence, the club representing emerging economies will rise from 5 to 11. BRICS, which has more than 40% of world's demography and a quarter of global economy, is a major forum of diversified countries representing primarily global south. The growing importance of BRICS in the recent past prompted several countries like Saudi Arabia, Vietnam, Indonesia, Argentina and Iran to apply for membership of that forum but not all the members are supportive for the expansion of BRICS. On the first day of BRICS summit on August 22, the Chinese President Xi Jinping however supported the expansion of that forum and made it clear that, “hegemonism is not in China's DNA. The talks taking place in Johannesburg were not aimed at asking countries to take sides, or creating bloc confrontation, rather to expand the architect of peace and development.” He further stated in his speech that, “whatever

resistance there may be, BRICS, a positive and stable force for goodwill continue to grow. We will forge a stronger BRICS strategic partnership, actively advance membership expansion and help make the international order more just and equitable." His speech was read out by Chinese Commerce Minister which generated speculations that why Xi, despite his presence, didn't address the summit.. On the issue of expanding the membership of BRICS, Professor Harsh Pant, an international relations expert at the Observer Research Foundation, a think tank in Delhi, said: "India is looking to ensure that this platform doesn't just drift off into being an openly anti-western platform, and there is a danger of that with both Russia and China having a certain agenda. Brics was conceived as a geo-economic platform but is drifting into a geopolitical role and India is not likely to be comfortable with that. India and least of all Modi have no interest in shaping India's foreign policy in an anti-western direction. Brics was conceived as a geo-economic platform but is drifting into a geopolitical role and India is not likely to be comfortable with that."

Certainly, China is a core member of BRICS like Russia and India and favors that the forum plays a leadership role to provide an alternate to the U.S dominated world order. As the world's second largest economy and having strategic partnership with Russia, Beijing is determined to challenge Western led global order but is also mindful of divisions within BRICS because of India's association with pro-American QUAD and its resistance for the expansion of that forum. War in Ukraine leading to growing conflict between Moscow and NATO is another issue engulfing BRICS because South Africa, China and India didn't condemn Russia's invasion against Ukraine whereas Brazil refused to impose sanctions on Moscow. The Russian President Vladimir Putin didn't show up at Johannesburg summit because of international arrest warrant for alleged war crimes in Ukraine and addressed it via pre-recorded message.

Putin in his address "condemned the imposition of sanctions on his country terming it as augmenting global economic crisis and violating all basic norms and rules of free trade and economic life." The reality of global order reflecting apartheid type system run by the West as narrated by Anil Sookal is just one side of the story. To a large extent post-colonial states failed to ensure vibrant economy, good governance, rule of law, accountability, providing basic necessities to their people like clean and safe drinking water, quality education, better health facilities, housing and public transport. Whereas, majority of developing countries accumulated billions of dollars of debt from IMF, World Bank, Asian Development Bank and other multilateral organizations including Asian Infrastructure Bank. Blaming global north is not the solution of dealing with predicament of global south because the leadership of developing countries has utterly failed to meet the aspirations of their people.

BRICS, which was originally called as BRIC was established on June 16, 2006. In September, 2010 BRIC was expanded by awarding full membership to South Africa and was renamed as BRICS. Since then BRICS is termed as a powerful bloc with Russia and China as permanent members of UN Security Council and India

as the most populous country and fifth largest economy. How far the summit of BRICS held in Johannesburg will make a difference in transforming world order and how the expansion of that forum will help alleviate economic predicament of developing countries? How Sino-Indian conflicts and U.S-Indo strategic partnership will have an impact on the smooth functioning of BRICS? These are the questions which are raised by those who are seriously monitoring the performance of BRICS in today's world and needs to be analyzed from two angles.

First, BRICS has a potential to emerge as a global power house provided it maintains unity and take plausible steps to play a leadership role in order to mitigate Western pre-eminence in world affairs. Institutional arrangements made by BRICS member countries to augment their economic clout took practical shape in 2012 when BRICS bank under the initiative of India was launched. It was renamed as New Development Bank in 2015 with a sole purpose of financing sustainable and infrastructure developmental projects particularly in global south. Johannesburg summit ended with a positive note to provide level playing field to all the major stakeholders of global order and to strive for sustainable development. Second, proposals to expand BRICS and admit new members will be a challenge and an opportunity at the same time. India is firm to maintain the present shape of BRICS but majority of members are in favor of expanding the forum. However, Prime Minister Narendra Modi while addressing BRICS summit supported expansion of forum subject to consensus among the members. Host of the summit, South African President Cyril Ramaphosa revealed that more than 40 countries were interested in joining BRICS and 20 countries were making formal requests.

The implications of 15th BRICS summit need to be gauged from the firmness of Russia and China not to derail that forum and augment its role in re-shaping global order. Countries like India and Brazil oppose giving the impression that BRICS pursues an anti-West agenda whereas, Russia and China favor an assertive leadership role. Since 2024 BRICS summit will be held in the Russian city of Kazan, it is yet to be seen how the U.S-NATO strategic moves to isolate Moscow following war in Ukraine will render positive results.

The author is Meritorious Professor of Int'l Relations and former Dean Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Karachi.

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## **PAKISTAN**

### **BEYOND IMF: REDEFINING ECONOMIC PRIORITIES FOR SOVEREIGNTY & SUSTAINABLE GROWTH**

DR. SHAHIDA WIZARAT

At a recent workshop which focused on studying the impact of IMF conditionalities on the specific goals and objectives that they were supposed to

meet and the overall economy, the consensus was that the IMF conditionalities have failed to deliver. Sections 1 to 4 below are summaries of studies on these conditionalities. Section 5 deals with Government of Pakistan's (GOP) plan to lease Karachi Port Terminal to Abu Dhabi Port Co. Section 6 discusses the performance of the State Bank of Pakistan in the post 'autonomous' 18 months. Section 7 deals with the GOP's Economic Revival Plan, while Section 8 concludes the seminar recommendations.

### **1. INFLATION AND INTEREST RATE**

Baig and Aboya estimated the long run (LR) and short run (SR) relationship between the interest rate, consumer price index (CPI) and the budget deficit in the presence of exchange rate, GDP using Johansen co-integration method. They found a long run association between interest rate and CPI. But the flow of relationship is from prices (CPI) to the rate of interest. This indicates that inflation fluctuations have a positive significant impact on the interest rate, but there is no evidence of a reverse relationship from the interest rate to prices (CPI). This may be attributed to the fact that using interest rate to control inflation has been ineffective in Pakistan.

As interest rate as a policy tool manages demand pull factors of inflation, as inflation occurs mainly due to cost push factors in Pakistan. This suggests that we need to pay attention to control cost push factors of inflation along with negative expectations about the future of the Pakistan economy. Budget deficit also has no statistically significant impact on the interest rate, vindicating the Ricardian hypothesis in the case of Pakistan. Baig and Aboya state that their results do not support the conventional idea that high interest rates lead to lower inflation.

### **2. DEVALUATION AND BALANCE OF TRADE**

The study by Rasheed, Zia and Lal empirically investigates the impact of currency devaluation on the trade balance of Pakistan using the ARDL approach. The findings clearly indicate a slightly-significant positive impact of currency devaluation on the trade balance only in the short run. However, in the long run the effect is negative and insignificant. This shows that contrary to what the theory suggests, devaluation plays no role in determining the trade balance in the long run. The comparison of two models suggest some non-alignment in the nominal exchange rate and the real effective exchange rate. Generally, theory suggests they move very closely, but the results suggest some ambiguity in determining the nominal exchange rate.

Money supply shows a significant and negative effect on the trade balance. Monetary expansion leads to higher incomes in the short run and inflation in the long run. Therefore, the government should use supply side policies instead of demand side policies to improve the trade surplus. Better supply side policies would also increase efficiency, productivity, lower inflation and increase export competitiveness.

### **3. INTEREST RATE AND THE EXCHANGE RATE**

Sheikh and Wizarat state that monetary authorities in Pakistan have been considering higher discount rate as a tool for strengthening the Pak Rupee, but

the historical record after the early 1970s have shown that high interest rates did not stabilize the exchange rate. One of the reasons for the situation may be because high interest rate has always resulted in greater amount of public debt, thereby enhancing the amount going to debt servicing, which puts greater pressure on the Pak Rupee and results in weakening it. They recommend that monetary authorities lower the discount rate for the purpose of strengthening the Pak Rupee.

#### **4. PRIVATIZATION**

Privatization in Pakistan seems to be politically conditioned and externally imposed, rather than fulfilling the needs of the domestic economic environment. Majority of the SOEs performed worse after privatization than before it. Most of the privatization programs completed in the 1990s and 2000s were characterized by corruption, nepotism and mismanagement mainly because privatization programs either served vested interest or poor implementation paved the way for the emergence of interest groups that were the real beneficiaries of privatization. The institutional mechanism that enables an effective regulatory environment to get relatively better outcomes and a well-functioning capital market that is a precondition for privatization are missing in Pakistan.

#### **5. AWARDING KARACHI PORT TERMINAL TO ABU DHABI PORT CO**

Abu Dhabi Port Co. UAE has sought the control of Pakistan's port terminals for 50 years without the transparent process of inviting bids. Pakistan which is in a difficult strategic and economic situation will face a serious security risk by allowing a country which is a strategic partner of India to run Pakistan's strategic port. In 2006 UAE had got a contract for running six US ports including New Orleans port, but due to extreme uneasiness in the US public, the US Congress cancelled the contract. On account of security concerns the US felt threatened to allow its port to be handled by tiny UAE.

The joint statement at the conclusion of Modi's visit to the US states and I quote from para 32: "President Biden and Prime Minister Modi reiterated the call for concerted action against all UN-listed terrorist groups including Al-Qa'ida, ISIS/Daesh, Lashkar e-Tayyiba (LeT), Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM), and Hizb-ul-Mujhahideen. They strongly condemned cross-border terrorism, the use of terrorist proxies and called on Pakistan to take immediate action to ensure that no territory under its control is used for launching terrorist attacks. They called for the perpetrators of the 26/11 Mumbai and Pathankot attacks to be brought to justice."

This amounts to giving a green signal to India by the US to start a war with Pakistan. In such a situation Pakistan's strategic port will be operated by UAE, which has a strategic relationship with India and the US.

#### **6. SBP PERFORMANCE EVALUATION**

Evaluating the performance of the SBP for the last 18 months Dr. Usman Chohan, at the Centre of Aerospace and Security Studies (CAA) evaluated performance on the basis of functional independence, statutory independence, inflation

targeting and lending to the government. The author concludes that the State Bank of Pakistan Amendment Act (SBPAA) has failed on all four accounts.

First, the SBPAA aimed to make the SBP free of political interventions through greater statutory independence. He observes that the SBP has become more subservient to the government, "towing the same line even when it shouldn't, and leaving things to "Daronomics." Daronomics has not worked well, as the last economic survey shows, and the value of Rupee, inflation, government debt, credit ratings and money supply are all indicative of the failure."

Second, Chohan says the SBPAA allows the SBP to enjoy greater functional independence, allowing more freedom in choosing monetary tools to achieve the goals that are deemed most appropriate. He says the SBP has achieved only two things: raised interest rates and dabbled in letters of credit (LCs). This has resulted in raising rates to 21% which is the highest in the world and stifling economic activity, as the investor is better off with idle funds instead of investing them.

The author says the LCs fiasco has turned the SBP into an "investment broker or export-merchant dealer, arbitrarily picking (or having picked for it) the winners and losers (and most are losers) in terms of who will be able to do business and who will not. This is a perverse role for a sober monetary authority to play, and it violates the spirit of any law written for a central bank anywhere, including the SBPAA. Therefore, the SBPAA has failed to get the functional independence for the SBP as well."

Third, the SBPAA has envisaged inflation-only mandate for the SBP. And this makes the inflation-obsession "a particularly horrifying stupidity of the foreign drafters of the SBPAA." And evaluating SBP on this account Chohan says SBP performance on this account is the worst in the history of Pakistan. He says "based on the miserable inflation that the public is facing, the SBP has failed beyond measure. Of course, a monetary authority can and should do much more than focus on inflation, and that too by using more than just interest rates when inflation is supply-side in any case."

Fourth, the SBPAA aims to bring some financial discipline through curtailing the SBP's monetary disbursement to a government that habitually lives beyond its means. Chohan says the SBP has achieved this through using banks to lend to the government: "government continues its borrowing binge, instead of shrinking its size and rationalizing its expenditures, while the SBP continues to bankroll this unsustainable trajectory. It is simply that the banking sector has become the vehicle for this practice instead, totally violating the spirit put into the SBPAA."

## **7. ECONOMIC REVIVAL PLAN**

The \$60bn economic revival plan to attract foreign investors in agriculture, industry, minerals, IT, etc. need to bear the following in mind: First, in the past Pakistan has not benefitted from foreign investment due to the inability on the part of the GOP to negotiate with foreign investors on account of rent seeking. It is, therefore, very important that the Government of Pakistan negotiating such agreements is honest and the agreements signed are transparent.

Second, countries that have leased out their mines and exported minerals in raw form have suffered from the resource curse. It is, therefore, very important that we enter into agreements with friends who have the technology to cut and polish our stones, metals and minerals and convert them into manufactured goods. This way we can change our resource curse into a resource blessing.

## **8. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION**

Studies by all the learned authors have shown that orthodox economic policies advocated by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) have failed to achieve their objectives. Baig and Aboya find no evidence of a relationship from the interest rate to prices (CPI). As interest rate as a policy tool manages demand pull factors of inflation, but inflation is largely due to cost push factors in Pakistan.

Their results do not support the conventional idea that high interest rates lead to lower inflation. Rasheed, Zia and Lal show that contrary to what the theory suggests, devaluation plays no role in determining trade balance in the long run. They suggest that the government should use supply side policies instead of demand side policies to improve trade surplus, increase efficiency, productivity, lower inflation and increase export competitiveness.

Sheikh and Wizarat state that high interest rates have resulted in greater amount of public debt, thereby enhancing the amount going to debt servicing, which puts greater pressure on the Pak Rupee and is weakening it. They, therefore, recommends that monetary authorities lower the discount rate for the purpose of strengthening the Pak Rupee.

Zubair and Wizarat state that privatization in Pakistan seems to be politically conditioned and externally imposed, rather than fulfilling the needs of the domestic economic environment. Majority of the SOEs performed worse after privatization than before it. Most of the privatization programs were characterized by corruption, nepotism and mismanagement mainly because privatization programs either served vested interests or poor implementations paved the way for the emergence of interest groups that were the real beneficiaries of privatization.

Awarding Karachi Port Terminals to Abu Dhabi Port Co. which is trying to control Pakistan's port terminals for 50 years without the transparent process of inviting bids. Joint statement issued between the US and India amounts to giving a green signal to India by the US to start a war with Pakistan. In such a situation Pakistan's strategic port will be operated by UAE. We need to bear in mind the strategic relationship between India and UAE and the US and UAE.

Evaluating the performance of the SBP for the last 18 months Dr. Usman Chohan, at the Centre of Aerospace and Security Studies (CAA) evaluated performance on the basis of functional independence, statutory independence, inflation targeting and lending to the government. The author concludes that the State Bank of Pakistan Amendment Act (SBPAA) has failed on all four accounts.

Economic Revival Plan should bear in mind that in the past Pakistan has not benefitted from foreign investment due to the inability on the part of the GOP to negotiate with foreign investors on account of rent seeking. It is, therefore, very

important that the Government of Pakistan negotiating such agreements is honest and the agreements signed are transparent.

Second, countries that have leased out their mines and exported minerals in raw form have suffered from the resource curse. It is therefore very important that we enter into agreements with friends who have the technology to cut and polish our stones, metals and minerals and convert them into manufactured goods. Instead of looking for countries and organizations from whom to borrow, we need to look within the country and work on an Alternative to the IMF spelt out by Wizarat.

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## **NATO SUMMIT IN VILNIUS DISAPPOINTED UKRAINE**

DR. ZAFAR NAWAZ JASPAL

The geopolitical dynamics compel NATO members to support politically, diplomatically, financially, and materially Ukrainians in self-defense against Russia. However, they are afraid of the escalation of the ongoing protracted asymmetrical warfare in Ukraine, having the potential to spread to the neighboring countries. Therefore, they have been following a cautious strategy to keep the conflict localized rather than spiraling into a transnational Euro-Atlantic area.

Since the beginning of the Russian invasion in February 2022, the Americans and Europeans have observed a restrained approach in providing military hardware or non-lethal assistance through the Comprehensive Assistance Package (CAP) to Ukraine. Nevertheless, "since the Madrid Summit, Allies and partners have committed over 500 million Euros to the CAP."

The NATO members encouraged Finland and Sweden to join the military alliance but refrained from offering similar opportunities to Ukraine. Notably, the leaders of the 31 member states agreed to include Ukraine in a military alliance during the recent summit held in Vilnius, Lithuania. The Vilnius Summit Communiqué issued on July 11, 2023, stated, "Ukraine's future is in NATO.

We reaffirm the commitment we made at the 2008 Summit in Bucharest that Ukraine will become a member of NATO, and today we recognize that Ukraine's path to full Euro-Atlantic integration has moved beyond the need for the Membership Action Plan." It announced, "We will be in a position to extend an invitation to Ukraine to join the Alliance when Allies agree and conditions are met." Realistically, the invitation seems shadowy.

The vague invitation disheartened Volodymyr Zelensky, the Ukrainian president. While declaring the decision "absurd," he said having "faith in partners" and wanted a strong NATO that "does not hesitate." His earnest desire is that NATO directly partakes in the Russian-Ukrainian ongoing war, as it did in the case of the Kosovo war in 1998-99, the Afghanistan war in 2001-2021, and Libya in 2011.



NATO is hesitant to participate directly in the Ukrainian conflict due to the Russian conventional and nuclear-armed forces. On September 30, 2022, President Vladimir Putin raised the specter of nuclear use by claiming that the U.S. nuclear attacks on Hiroshima and Nagasaki had created a precedent. Subsequently, President Joe Biden's cautioning statements that his Russian counterpart is not bluffing when he talks about the potential use of nuclear weapons. NATO's cautioned-cum-restrained strategy to assist the Ukrainians underscores the Russian nuclear threat's efficacy.

Granting Ukraine full membership of NATO predictably escalates the conflict into the Euro-Atlantic area having a nuclear dimension. Russian modernized nuclear forces, including a large stockpile of theatre-range weapons, and expanded novel and disruptive dual-capable delivery systems terrified NATO's members. Kremlin recently completed the deployed nuclear weapons and nuclear-capable systems on Belarusian territory.

Notably, the NATO 2022 Strategic Concept reveals that the members appreciated the alliance's strategic nuclear forces in its security. NATO's nuclear deterrence posture relies on the United States' nuclear weapons forward deployed in Europe. Currently, the U.S. has 100 nuclear weapons deployed in the Netherlands, Belgium, Germany, Italy, and Turkey. Hence, the Russian and American nuclear threat needs to be taken seriously.

The Russians' limited nuclear weapons use, even a tactical nuclear weapon on the battlefield, could swiftly escalate a local or regional conflict into a global one, provided the Americans dare to retaliate with nuclear weapons to defend Ukraine. U.S. National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan assured European allies on September 25, 2023, that the U.S. and its allies would respond decisively to Russian nuclear weapons.

However, according to the United States nuclear doctrine, only the NATO members have the luxury of a nuclear umbrella. Hence, NATO refrained from granting alliance membership to Ukraine to avoid a broader NATO-Russia clash involving nuclear weapons.

Pakistan has struggled to improve its bilateral relations with Russia since the beginning of the twenty-first century. Simultaneously, Islamabad attached great importance to its relations with Ukraine. Therefore, Pakistan has espoused a neutral position in the Russia-Ukraine conflict. On July 20, 2023, the Foreign Minister of Ukraine, Dmytro Kuleba, visited Islamabad. Instead of condemning the Russian invasion, Pakistan's Foreign Office offered to mediate between Russia and Ukraine to end the war.

To conclude, President Putin's nuclear rhetoric or signaling deterred NATO's forces' participation in the ongoing asymmetrical warfare between Ukraine and Russia and thwarted Ukraine's membership in the 31 nation's military alliance.

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## **OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES**

AMBASSADOR HASAN HABIB

Since Pakistan-China announced the CPEC project in July 2013, it has drawn more attention than any other infrastructure in the World. The pro-CPEC elements touted it as a games changer while those opposing it called it a "Debt Trap". The economic failure of Sri Lanka further emboldened the anti-CPEC lobby to claim that Chinese investments are a debt trap for developing countries.

After 10 years of CPEC launch, it is time to analyze facts related to this huge infrastructure project. This article will look at success and failure of CPEC and try to map challenges being faced by this "flagship project" of the One Belt One Road (OBOR) initiative, specially focusing on the political challenges to it.

### **CHINA-PAKISTAN ECONOMIC CORRIDOR THE NEED**

The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) is the pilot project of China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) also called the One Belt One Road (OBOR). This is China's first foreign government project that promotes the economic development of another country along the Silk Road. Analyzing the Chinese and Pakistani experiences during the development and operational stages of the CPEC provides valuable insights that help us understand the political economy of the BRI.

China has already made heavy overseas investments through the BRI to promote economic development in developing countries. For China, in the face of increasing economic difficulties, the essence of the BRI is to defend free trade by opening new international markets and find new opportunities for growth. Also, China considers a turn toward Eurasia as vital to the avoidance of direct conflicts with traditional sea powers.

The CPEC is geo-economic and an all-inclusive project. It as a geo-economic project attaches importance to the shared interests and cooperation among nation states in international relations and emphasizes the search for win-win solutions.

With long coastlines and vast inland territories, China's geological location boasts strategic advantages in geo-economics. Western China is connected to Central and South Asia and is not far away from the resource rich Middle East. So BRI and CPEC connect countries of abundant energy, resources, population, capital, and technology, Eurasian railways and roads can mobilize production factors and further improve the relative global economic and political status of these countries.

### **BENEFITS FOR PAKISTAN**

Pakistan was severely energy deficient and needed support to fill that gap. The CPEC's four elements namely a) Gwadar (including port and city and Gwadar region socio-economic development) b) Energy (Coal, Hydel, Wind, Solar, LNG, Transmission) c) Transport Infrastructure (Road, Rail, Aviation) d) Investment & Industrial Cooperation (Gwadar Free Zone and other industrial parks to be finalized) properly suited it. Also being the biggest ever investment project it made high-lights in Pakistan and abroad. The Pakistani government recognizes that

CPEC is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for the country's economic development.

Pakistan offers unique political support for CPEC that other countries do not. Since both China and Pakistan consider each other all-weather strategic partners, domestic political support for cooperation with China is very strong in Pakistan; in fact, Chinese cooperation as a national policy is unanimously accepted by all political parties in Pakistan. Pakistan's geographic location is of great importance to China. Pakistan's geographic location bears unique significance for the BRI. Situated on the other side of the Himalayas in South Asia, Pakistan is both an important pathway for China to reach the Indian Ocean and a vital route connecting all of South, Central, and West Asia. Pakistan is an important channel through which China can communicate with the resource rich Islamic world. It also makes Pakistan very relevant in the regional matrix.

The main issue with Pakistan in the implementation of CPEC has been transparency and management. The most important project the upgradation of Pakistan Railways (ML-1) has been delayed and focus remained on road development and energy pipe lines are not even discussed. The industrial zones are taking shape but very slowly. There an urgent need to enhance security of the personnel and projects. If Pakistan can attract the Chinese sunset industries the CPEC will become real game changer.

#### **STATUS OF CPEC PROJECTS**

Most of the coal fired projects completed. Solar power Quaid-e-Azam Park 400 MW completed 600 MW being constructed. Several hydro projects completed while Suki Kinari, Kohala and Azad Pattan under active construction phases. Through energy projects over 11,000 MW electricity has been added to national grid. Four Wind power projects completed adding 300 MW to the system.

In transport infrastructure 6 major projects got completed and 8 are in advanced stages of construction. The most ambitious railway upgradation project ML1 for 1760 km is being promoted for approval. Gwadar airport is complete and other projects are pursued.

#### **POLITICAL CHALLENGES CHINA'S RISE**

Military trends in Asia were shifting in China's favor and called for redoubled efforts to reinforce deterrence, especially in the Taiwan Strait. China's power is nearing its peak. China's economic performance over the past 40 years has been extraordinary. Its industries dominate some important sectors including solar and wind technology and its electric car industry is outperforming the rest of the world. Three of the world's top construction companies are Chinese. It has secured access and supply controls to critical minerals and metals. By denying China access to advanced semiconductors (and related technologies), the United States is hoping to retain technological supremacy in this important sector. There is every reason to expect China to remain a major economic player far into the future.

The US has created a number of alliances and using China fear factor pressurizes countries like Pakistan to keeps them away from improving economic ties with

states that are not favored by it. Pak-Iran pipeline is one such example. CPEC has suffered some setbacks/delays due to alleged US pressure. The United States announced plans to invest in five to 10 large infrastructure projects around the world in January 2022 as part of a broader G-7 initiative to counter China's BRI, this project failed to get steam.

The recent economic failure of Sri Lanka is blamed on Chinese infrastructure projects. These project finally led to economic default. Several critics point fingers to US and its regional allies for creating security situation in and around Baluchistan to scare aware intending investors and portray CPEC as a failed project by China.

### **CONCLUSION**

If Pakistan wants to gain better geopolitical and economic positioning in the region, CPEC is its only hope. This project will provide Pakistan with the strength and opportunities to become a regional player. Gwadar port is a prime example of Pak-China ties. The security concerns for oil importing and exporting states, as safe passage is their first and foremost priority. Pakistan need to settles it issues with its neighboring states and address the concerns of its internal people.

China and Central Asian States, this route will save money, days and lesser costs will ensure profits and viability. The shared interests among these states may provide basis for these states eventually to draw closer. CPEC demands Pakistan's cordial relations with neighbors and further strengthened relations with China. Now Pakistan needs, peace in the region for which it needs full support of China, whereas China needs Pakistan for it's in the region. Improved Pak-China relations will minimize the US influence in the region. The key issue here is which of the two strongest powers plays this new game most effectively.

If managed properly, CPEC will create a connectivity in which exchange of views between the two governments, interest groups, and individuals with different ethnic, cultural, religious and linguistic backgrounds and heritage will be possible. This will make CPEC might just become a defining regional initiative for the 21st century.

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## **NEW ORDER AND NEW GEOGRAPHY OF THE WORLD WORLD WAR OR SETTLEMENT? AMERICAN SUPREMACY VERSUS THE SURVIVAL OF THE OPPOSING NATIONS**

NUSRAT MIRZA

To expand and spread for attaining power is human instinct. From a small place let us say a village to a city and more cities that later on called country then if spread more called an empire. In one glance at the known history, one finds many empires, including Greeks, Romans, Othman, Moghuls, and many others. In recent history, the United Kingdom of Britain, the Soviet Union, and more. China is another land where many dynasties and cultures and empires existed.

But no global power ever existed in any time in history except the United States of America which became the sole superpower of the world. In 1989, when Soviet bloc of the WARSA pact was defeated in Afghanistan with the full support of Pakistan. Pakistan's intelligence, manpower, and technique were used to defeat the Soviet Union. It was Pakistan's war. The best advantage of which has been taken by America.

Pakistan, in the backdrop of East Pakistan's fall, would like to save itself from the clutches of the Soviet Union which was trying to reach the hot water through Gwadar or Pakistani coastal area where it has invested too much paying money and providing facilities to Landlords and many others.

For Pakistan, it was a sacred war to save itself and to take revenge of the East Pakistan debacle in which the Soviet Union was the leading player taking the help of India and giving India the pride to defeat Pakistan. Indians are still in the grip of this deceptive pride. They don't recognize the fact that breaking up the mighty USSR into 15 countries was Pakistan's doing with support from the West and USA. One should also recognize that under the cover of this war, Pakistan became a Nuclear Power to stabilize and to establish a balance of Power in South East Asia. It was achieved successfully. The Indian hegemonic dream was kept a dream for which it is striving day and night without success. To achieve supremacy over Pakistan Indian Madness has reached the extent that it has leased out all its seaports to the USA.

The balance of Power, however, has been maintained by Pakistan even without the support or rather obstacles created by the USA creating Economic Crises, using elites of the country for its own interest, putting pressure through International Monetary Fund, creating hindrances in China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), through Hybrid War to destabilize the country. The west understands that Pakistan's Armed Forces have the capability to disturb the Asia Pacific region if it goes against American Agenda.

It can rightly be said that hegemony is old as mankind. As per America, its current hegemony is distinctive in the rapidity of its emergence, its global scope, and the manner of its exercise. In a single century, it has achieved this status from isolated land to power with worldwide reach. Its bases said to be 700 hundred in number are everywhere.

Its sea vessels are on the surface or under the surface in every ocean and any bottleneck of the sea. This hegemony, however, has now been challenged by Russia and China separately. The USA is spending money and time and its intellect to keep Russia and China apart ensuring that they do unite in their efforts. The visit of Henry Kissinger, a renowned intellectual and former Secretary of State is one example. While America has been gathering even small countries in its block is another example. And those who hesitate to join the block are being tortured, frightened, and being destabilized, slowly but steadily. India and almost all countries of Far East are around America including Japan and Australia bonded with the Defense Pact of QUAD and AUKUS. It seems the circuit is not complete without Pakistan.

For the United States and other countries in the West, this is familiar territory. Pakistan a vital, flawed ally in the Cold War and War on Terror has seen decades of military rule interspersed with periods of partial civilian rule. Now, Washington and its trans-Atlantic partners again face the choice: do they hold Pakistan to account for its authoritarian turn or do they look away because its army is once again a valuable partner in a major global conflict?

If this fact is taken into view, and considering the inability of India, the strategic partner of the United States in certain areas and taking into account that the USA is gathering many countries around itself for perhaps preparation of war against Russia or China or both. Pakistan which had and has been America's proven helpful partner in several wars joined several defense pacts such as SEATO, CENTO, and others.

The defeat of the Soviet Union in Afghanistan with the help, and support of Pakistan with blood, ruining its own economy, and then America abandoned Pakistan plundering and facing terrorism injected by the USA and its allies, however, breaking the Soviet Union into 15 plus parts and dismantling WARSA PACT to become the only Super Power of the world making the world Unipolar for almost two decades.

To achieve this status, the United States of America remained at war constantly for almost a century as confirmed by its own Security Advisor Zbigniew Brzezinski in his book GRAND CHESS BOARD which is a summarized handbook of American policy, politics, and hegemony writes "The defeat and collapse of Soviet Union was the final step in the rapid ascendance of a western Hemisphere Power, the United States, as the sole and, indeed, the first truly global power."

He further writes in Chapter 1, Hegemony of New Type "The Spanish-American war in 1898 was America's first overseas war of conquest. It thrust American power far into the Pacific, beyond Hawaii to the Philippines. By the turn of the century, American strategists were already busy developing doctrines for a two-ocean naval supremacy, and the American navy had begun to challenge the notion that Britain "rules the waves." American Claims a special status as the sole guardian of the Western Hemisphere's security proclaimed earlier in the century by the Monroe Doctrine and subsequently justified by America's alleged manifest destiny and even further enhanced by the construction of the Panama Canal, which facilitated naval domination over the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans. This is not enough author Caitlin Johnstone in her article US is War on July 12, 2023 has written: "The US won WW2 and then immediately plunged into the Cold War. The US won the Cold War and then immediately set to work destroying the Middle East. The US destroyed the Middle East and then immediately started another cold war in preparation for another world war. The US is war. A normal country wages war with the goal of getting back to peacetime. The US wages war with the goal of getting to the next war."

Though the merciless killing of innocent people maintains kings and empires for some time but after certain limits, the empires also fade. America is in the process of fading. The baggage of sins and crime it is carrying on its back is too heavy. A

time comes when with all preparations and strength everything goes against it. USA though has the plan to restore its primacy over the world through Brexit, mass migration of Asians and Africans from the West and inflation of the highest degree, and a war. Out of four, three plans are at work even today, simultaneously America is preparing for its hegemony and others are struggling for their very existence. Let us see what will be the end result.

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## **WEAPONIZATION OF SPACE**

BUSHRA BATOOL

Space technology plays an important role in day-to-day affairs of people, businesses, and governments worldwide. The navigation system, communication, remote sensing among others are important applications of satellites that help to connect people, operate global economy and support military operations. From states' security point of view, tracking of forces, troop movement, situational awareness and ensuring accuracy of precision-guided munitions are very crucial uses of satellites.

These advancements however are also equipped with a number of vulnerabilities and security challenges. Subsequently, counter-space capabilities are emerging to counteract the threats posed by advancements of other states, creating a race of power balancing in space. By the end of 2022, space was holding 6,718 satellites, Union of Concerned Scientists notes. Counter-space capability may refer to any technology used to disrupt or destroy another space-based system. Direct ascent anti-satellite (DA-ASAT), Co-orbital anti-satellite (ASAT) weapons, Electromagnetic Warfare (EW) and use of Directed Energy Weapons (DEW), and cyber-attack are most notable counter-space weapons used these days.

So far, the United States (US), the Russian Federation (Russia), China and India have conducted debris causing anti-satellite (ASAT) tests, validating their capability to destroy other satellites. This article addresses space and counter-space capabilities of above mentioned countries. Pakistan's advancements in space technology are also discussed. The United Nations (UN) resolution presented in December 2022 to ban ASAT testing also received varying response from these states. So far, the US has voted in favour of the resolution, Russia and China voted against it, India and Pakistan however abstained from voting.

### **UNITED STATES**

As a response to Soviet Union's Sputnik-5 satellite, the US developed first ever Anti-Satellite (ASAT) missile, Bold Orion, and intercepted Explorer 6 satellite as a target in 1959. Co-Orbital ASAT: The US has conducted multiple tests of technologies for close approach and rendezvous in both Low Earth Orbit (LEO) and geosynchronous orbit (GEO), along with tracking, targeting, and hit-to-kill (HTK) intercept technologies. Although these technologies are non-offensive but they may lead to a co-orbital ASAT capability.

Network Jamming: The US has an operational Counter Communications System (CCS), deployed globally to provide uplink jamming capability against geostationary communications satellites. Through its Navigation Warfare program, the US at some instances have also interfered with the global navigation satellite service (GNSS) signals to prevent its use by the adversaries.

EW/DEW: The US has an operational EW counter-space system. Over the past several decades, it has conducted significant research on the use of ground-based high-energy lasers. With its Satellite Laser Ranging (SLR) sites and defence research facilities, the US possesses low-power laser systems with the capability to dazzle, and possibly blind, Earth observation (EO) imaging satellites. The Missile Defense Agency (MDA) is conducting research on Directed Energy Weapons (DEW) to ensure defence against ballistic missiles. If developed, it may be used against other orbiting satellites.

Space Situational Awareness (SSA): The US owns the most advanced SSA capability in the world, particularly for military applications. The core of its SSA capabilities is a robust, geographically dispersed network of ground-based radars, telescopes and space-based telescopes. With the continuous addition and upgrading of sensors, and signing of data sharing agreements with other countries and satellite service providers, the US is advancing its software systems used to conduct SSA.

## **RUSSIA**

Russia conducted its first ASAT testing in 1963. Russia's significant space capabilities are evident especially after the Russia-Ukraine War and the recent Russian invasion in 2022. One of the Pentagon's correspondents for Real Clear Defence terms the Russia-Ukraine War as 'first commercial spacewar', because of probable use of space technology during this war leading its way in the time to come.

Co-orbital ASAT: Reports suggest that Russia has started a new co-orbital ASAT program, Burevestnik. The Kosmos-2491, 2499, 2504, 2521, 2535, 2536 and 2543, all are likely to be co-orbital ASAT. Most of them are secretly launched for orbital rendezvous and inspection maneuvers, NASA notes. Russia in 2021 successfully demonstrated a Direct Ascent (DA) ASAT capability by hitting its own dysfunctional Cosmos-1408 satellite present in LEO, using the newer DA-ASAT system, the Nudol.

Network jamming/Cyber-attack: Russia can significantly jam user terminals and GPS receivers within tactical ranges. The interference of GPS signals of Finnair, a Finnish airline, when it passed nearby to Kaliningrad, verifies this capability. At least ten such instances of GPS disturbance by other Finnish airlines were reported in the week following Russian invasion of Ukraine in February 2022.

Electromagnetic Weapons/Directed Energy Weapons: Russia is developing high-powered space-based EW platforms to augment its existing ground-based platforms and holds significant expertise in making DEW. Russia is further developing military applications of the laser systems to work in a variety of environments. The Deputy Prime Minister Yuri Borisov claims that Zadira, a laser weapon, was used by Russia in May 2022, during Russia-Ukraine War and



destroyed a Ukrainian Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV). This claim was however refuted by the US and Ukrainian governments. The 2023 report of the Secure World Foundation suggests that Russia may have developed an aircraft-borne laser system that could target optical sensors of imagery reconnaissance satellites.

## **CHINA**

Destroying its own aging weather satellite in January 2007, China became the third country to conduct ASAT testing, causing serious concerns, especially for the US. A Harvard astronomer Jonathan McDowell termed the testing as the first real escalation on weaponization of space over last twenty years. Only in 2022, China performed 64 orbital rocket launches, breaking its own record of year 2021 of 55 space launches with a further plan to launch over 200 spacecraft by the end of 2023.

EW/ DEW: Although, non-kinetic counter-space weapons including high-powered lasers and microwaves are still classified, the US Office of the Director of National Intelligence claimed in Threat Report 2021 that China's ground-based laser weapons are capable to blind or damage optical sensors on low-altitude satellites.

Co-orbital ASAT and cyber-attacks: China possesses capability to rendezvous with other satellites in the same orbit. Additionally, China's cyber-attacks on space system have also been reported in last couple of years.

SSA: China's space-surveillance capabilities include SLC-18 radar that China unveiled in November 2022. It is designed to search, detect and track objects such as ballistic missiles and satellites present in LEO.

Quantum Communications and Computing Satellite: With the launch of its first quantum satellite, Micius, in August 2016, the idea of secure method of communication was introduced. Quantum-encrypted communication has a special feature that any attempt to spy the signal transmission would leave an error-like footprint that could be detected by the receiving stations.

Using the satellite, the first quantum-encrypted virtual teleconference was held between Beijing and Vienna in 2017, as an experiment to figure out the flaws in communication during data transfer from satellite to ground stations. China in January 2020 successfully developed world's first mobile quantum satellite station and it was followed by the launch of first quantum micro-nano satellite, Jinan-1, in July 2022. China's National Space Science Center is further working to advance in the field of quantum communication to develop medium-high orbit quantum satellites, to build a wide-area quantum communication network.

China has also completed building its own space station, Tiangong, in 2022 and is fully operational. It hosts two crewed space mission every year, Shenzhou-16 sent recently in May 2023, hosting three astronauts including the first civilian, on a five-month mission.

## **INDIA**

In March 2019, India demonstrated its ASAT capability by destroying its own satellite, referred to as mission Shakti. In spite of doing the ASAT testing, India's focus is to explore commercial applications of space in order to boost its share in

global space economy and improve international standing. The launch of Chandrayaan-3 mission on moon on August 23, 2023 to examine lunar surface is one recent example.

EW/DEW: The Secure World Foundation in its 2023 reports insists that India is in the early phase of working on DEW.

DA-ASAT: India's indigenous missile defence and long-range ballistic missile programmes may lead to Direct-ascent ASAT (DA-ASAT), the Secure World Foundation report suggests. Defence applications: In October 2022, India's Prime Minister announced 'Mission DefSpace', a space programme to develop innovative solution for country's defence forces. The mission's aim is to work on highlighted 75 challenges to India's space sector and develop military applications, thereby consolidating India's defence capabilities in space. In this context, India has recently signed the Artemis Accords in June 2023, during Prime Minister's visit to the US, to expand Indo-US space cooperation. India is also developing its military intelligence satellites, specially focusing on the contested Indo-China border.

## **PAKISTAN**

With the formation of Space and Upper Atmosphere Research Committee (SUPARCO) on 16 September 1961, Pakistan's journey of space exploration initiated. The launch of Rehber-1, Rehber-2, made Pakistan the first country in South Asia and third in Asia, to launch such rockets by 1962. The subsequent Hatf missile programme and launch of Badr-1 and Badr-2 which was the first Earth observation satellite of Pakistan, reflects upon the advancements took place by the end of 20th century. With China's assistance, PakSAT-1R, was launched on 11 August 2011 having 15 years operational life. This satellite provides broadband internet service, TV broadcasting and mobile backhauling to various parts of Asia, Africa and Europe. This laid foundations of further collaboration and in 2018, Pakistan acquired PakSat Multi Satellite (PakSat-MM1) after a deal was signed between Suparco and China Great Wall Industry Cooperation (CGWIC). Launched on 27 February 2018 with 3 years mission life, PakSat MM1 helped in expanding various communication services, most notably, Direct to Home (DTH).

## **SPACE VISION 2047**

Space research has gained momentum in recent years. In 2014, the then Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif approved Pakistan's national Space Programme 2040, later becoming Space Vision-2047. Its goals include; installation of geostationary orbit communication satellites, low-earth orbit experimental satellites, launch of solid fuel rockets and conducting space research, among others. Several projects related to agriculture, water resource management, disaster management, environmental monitoring and mapping, are initiated under this programme. Moreover, PAKSAT MMI-38 satellite is also expected to be launched by 2024, to mitigate the impacts of climate change and management of water scarcity in Pakistan, which is expected to worsen by 2025.

Pakistan Remote Sensing Satellite (PRSS-1) and Pakistan Technology Evaluation Satellite (PakTES-1A), launched on 9 July 2018, are a great addition to help

Pakistan in its imagery requirements including agriculture assessment, land mapping and environmental monitoring. Pakistan Remote Sensing Satellite (PRSC-EOS), a three times stronger optical remote sensing satellite, is also scheduled to launch soon.

Regarding the launch vehicle capability, the testing of Shaheen-3 on 9 March 2015 signifies that although it is a medium-range ballistic missile, the technology may be used by Suparco to develop a Shaheen-3 variant capable to launch a light-weight satellite in future.

Pakistan's advancement in counter-space capability building is in progress. Although Pakistan has not yet conducted ASAT testing, it has all the means to counterbalance every threat to its national security; Guided Multiple Launch Rocket System of Fatah-1 and II is an example. As reflected by Lt. Gen. Khalid Kidwai, Advisor, National Command and Authority (NCA), Pakistan possess full spectrum of nuclear weapons that can cover not only large Indian landmass but also its outlying territories and that there is no place for India's strategic weapons to hide. These comments indicate that Pakistan has all means to locate and keep check of the regional engagements, especially that of its rival India, and is fully prepared for a counter-massive retaliation, if needed.

The author is Research Officer at Rabita Forum International (RFI).

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## **MULTIPLE CHALLENGES OF PAKISTAN**

MIRZA KASHIF BAIG

Pakistan, a country of over 220 million people, is grappling with a multitude of challenges in 2023. From political instability to an economic crisis, Pakistan is facing a turbulent period that requires careful navigation and strategic decision-making.

Pakistan's political landscape has been marred by instability and turmoil in recent years. The Incident in May 2023, though swiftly controlled and the miscreants were speedily apprehended by the law enforcement agencies, the incident proved to be damaging to Pakistan's image internationally.

Due to the efforts of the government did not result in any violence but the situation still to be taken care of as the political unrest could be created by external forces which are at work very actively. Any effort of division within the country has to be controlled efficiently.

Pakistan's economic outlook apparently seems to bleak, with growth stalling and inflation soaring but the resolve of Pakistan is so strong that it can control every negative activity carried by internal or external forces..It is true, the country has been grappling with a severe shortfall of dollars, leading to a depreciation of the rupee and dwindling foreign currency reserves. This has made it challenging to import essential products, resulting in skyrocketing prices.

Inflation reached an alarming annual rate of 28.3%, causing significant hardships for the population. The World Bank has warned that the economic crisis could

reverse the poverty gains achieved in the last two decades, exacerbating the plight of already vulnerable households. Moody's, a ratings agency, has downgraded Pakistan's credit rating, citing concerns about its ability to maintain debt payments. In spite of such challenges Pakistan shall overcome these forecasts as it has done in the past couple of times.

The government has been working with the IMF to resume a financing program that has been stalled since November 2022. However, with elections approaching and public discontent mounting, implementing the reforms necessary to improve the country's fiscal position has become challenging. The rupee has hit record lows, and Pakistan government bonds have been trading at distressed prices, reflecting investor skepticism. Pakistan has been grappling with terrorism and security challenges for many years, and these issues continue to pose a threat to the country. The Pakistani Taliban, known as the TTP, have been emboldened by Taliban-ruled Afghanistan and have engaged in a series of attacks, mostly in the northwest region. The TTP's sanctuary in Afghanistan has limited Pakistan's options in effectively dealing with the group.

The Pakistani state's negotiations with the TTP have repeatedly failed due to the group's fundamental opposition to the existing Pakistani state and constitution. The deteriorating relations between Pakistan and the Afghan Taliban further complicate the situation, though there seems to be some change in Afghan government. While the Pakistani Taliban is not currently the biggest threat facing Pakistan, there are factors as well which are to be checked with iron hands.

Pakistan has also been grappling with infrastructure challenges, exacerbated by natural disasters such as devastating flooding. Last year, the country experienced catastrophic floods that submerged entire villages, killed thousands, and displaced millions of people. The flood waters have receded, but the recovery process has been slow and arduous.

Rebuilding lost infrastructure, including roads, schools, and other essential facilities, requires significant capacity, resources, and transparency. The Pakistani government has made efforts to bring awareness to the flooding catastrophe and secure financial assistance from the international community. A donors' conference, co-hosted with the United Nations, raised pledges of more than \$9 billion for flood recovery over the next three years. However, the road to sustainable recovery remains challenging, especially given Pakistan's economic constraints.

Pakistan is currently grappling with a host of challenges that have significant implications for its future. Political instability, economic crisis, terrorism, infrastructure challenges, and others have all contributed to a complex and uncertain environment. Navigating these challenges will require strategic decision-making, effective governance, and international support.

The government's ability to implement necessary reforms will be crucial in addressing the economic crisis. Additionally, addressing security challenges, particularly terrorism, will require concerted efforts to counter the influence of extremist groups. Rebuilding infrastructure and ensuring transparent and efficient

recovery from natural disasters are also essential for the country's long-term development. Pakistan's journey to stability and prosperity is riddled with obstacles, but with effective leadership, cooperation, and national resolve, the country can overcome these challenges and pave the way for a brighter future. The author is Editor of Monthly Interaction.

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## **THE DEMOGRAPHICS OF INEQUALITY IN INDIA, UNDER THE RULE OF THE BHARATIYA JANATA PARTY (BJP)**

SUMMRA HAMID

India, as the world's largest democracy, boasts a rich tapestry of cultures and faiths, with a thriving economy and Western alliances. India is known as world's 8th most diverse and multi-cultural nation but is openly practicing violence against its Muslim population. The rise of Hindutva ideology under the leadership of Narendra Modi and the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) has become alarming. Hindutva, a far-right Hindu nationalist supremacist belief system, has raised fears about the inequality and persecution faced by minority communities in India. Therefore, this article delves into the implications of Hindutva ideology on minorities and the inequalities they endure since India's independence in 1947. Since, the rise of Hindutva ideology, Narendra Modi and the BJP have openly championed Hindutva ideology, seeking to establish a Hindu Rashtra (Hindu Nation) and promoting the concept of Akhand Bharat (Undivided India). This ideological shift and hate speeches in public against minorities have led to growing concerns about the safety and existence of minority groups, including Christians, Muslims, Sikhs, Dalits, and others. Scholars and human rights activists have expressed alarm over the implications of this ideology, as it echoes sentiments of supremacy and poses a threat to the secular fabric of Indian society.

The roots of communal tensions between Hindus and Muslims in India can be traced back to the colonial era and the partition in 1947. The trauma of partition, which led to the creation of Pakistan, has perpetuated mistrust and animosity between the two religious communities. Some argue that the Hindutva ideology has capitalized on this historical context, stoking religious divisions for political gains. Recent examples which prove that this government's behaviour towards Muslims and minorities is discriminatory include the controversial Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) and the National Register of Citizens (NRC). The Modi government potentially targeted Muslims and created a divide among communities.

Furthermore, the government's response to communal violence, like the Delhi riots of 2020, exposed the government as being ignorant towards the minority's rights. Along with these, the abrogation of Article 370 in Jammu and Kashmir verifies that the governmental decisions towards the minorities, particularly Muslims are biased and particularly referred to the BJP-led Hindutva ideology.

Minority marginalization and violence under the BJP rule has caused an increase in the incidents of communal riots and violence against minorities. It has been noted that the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) is united by an extremist ideology rooted in religious nationalism, commonly referred to as Hindutva. The Human Rights Watch reports indicate that communal riots have increased by 6.4 percent since Modi took power, with the majority of cases of violence against minority communities being under reported. The growing intolerance and hostility towards other ethnicities have exacerbated the sense of insecurity among minorities.

One of example is the February 23, 2020, communal violence in Delhi that killed 53 people, 40 of them Muslim. Instead of conducting a credible and impartial investigation, it was alleged and later proved in the documentary, "India; The Modi Question" that the BJP leaders incited violence and police officials were complicit in attacks. Another incident reported was the mass protest, by the farmers, vilifying minority Sikh protesters and opening investigations into their alleged affiliation with separatist groups.

The plight of women from minority communities in India faces additional challenges, often becoming victims of violence, harassment, and even rape at the hands of extremist mobs. Besides this brutal behavior, law is also missing for the Muslims in India. The incident of Gujrat riots in 2002 and then the release of 11 jailed men in Gujarat, who were accused of brutally killing 13 members of a Muslim family, including a three-year-old girl, and raping the mother of the child, serves as a distressing confirmation of the perceived absence of justice for Muslims in India. Along with these, on 31 July 2023, the BJP-affiliated group brutally murdered two Muslim men in Haryana provides evidence of a biased rule of law by the BJP-led government towards the minorities. These incidents further highlights the prevailing gender inequality and discrimination, particularly within the context of Hindutva ideology, as the lack of adequate protection and justice exacerbates the vulnerability of women and those belonging to minority communities.

The spread of Hindutva ideology is not confined to India alone. Its influence has been observed in other parts of the world. For instance, the manifesto of a far-right Norwegian mass murderer mentioned Hindutva and expressed support for the deportation of Muslims from India and from Europe, which further proves that the ideology is not limited to India only. The Hindutva violence is not only limited to Muslims or Christians, but its intolerance against other ethnic groups and other minorities has skyrocketed as well. The extent of violence associated with Hindutva differs across different communities affecting Christians, Dalits and Muslims.

The government under Modi's leadership has asserted that nearly 2 million Muslims, whose families have roots tracing back generations in Bangladesh, do not hold rightful Indian citizenship. These individuals have been relocated to what the government refers to as transit camps or mass detention centers, a situation reminiscent of treating them as refugees. The unchecked ascent of Hindutva

ideology gives rise to grave human rights concerns, and recent events of ethnic violence in Manipur on 3 May 2023, further proves it to be true. Women in Manipur were subjected to harassment and forced nudity, which not only violated human rights but also infringed upon women's rights.

This state-sanctioned support for such actions has eroded the very notion of self-determination in India. It is essential for the international community to hold India accountable for violating the principles of human rights, women's rights, equality, and tolerance for all its citizens. Despite the widespread attention given to Islamic extremism as a global threat, the resonance of Hindutva ideology highlights its significant potential consequences on a global scale, which, surprisingly, remains largely unnoticed and unaddressed. The international response to the situation in India has been relatively muted.

Economic interests, political alliances and regional interests have contributed to downplaying the issues related to Hindutva ideology and its impact on minority communities within India and Kashmir. Some countries, including the US, have prioritized their economic relations with India over raising human rights concerns, leading to criticism from human rights advocates. As US trade with India is estimated \$146.1 billion in 2019, which is an empirical evidence that explains the US tilt towards India.

In conclusion, the rise of Hindutva ideology under the BJP rule in India poses a significant threat to the country's multicultural fabric and the well-being of its minority communities. The growing intolerance, violence, and discrimination against these groups underscores the urgent need for global attention and action.

Despite India being the world's largest democracy, its so-called democratic practices are questionable. Its emergence as an economic powerhouse should not divert attention from critical human rights concerns. The violations of human rights and the ongoing Muslim genocide within India and Kashmir must be addressed earnestly. Minorities should be granted security and religious freedom and the imposition of Hindutva ideology on minorities should be discouraged on the global platforms.

True democracy and progress can only be achieved when the rights of all individuals, regardless of their faith or ethnicity, are safeguarded and respected. The international community, including Western allies like the US, must prioritize human rights and equality when engaging with India and any nation facing similar challenges.

Ms. Summra Hamid is Research Fellow at Balochistan Think Tank Network (BTTN).

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## **10 GLORIOUS YEARS OF CPEC**

### INTERACTION TEAM

On August 18, 2023, the Pakistan Print and Electronic Media Foundations (PPEMF) and the Pakistan National Council of the Arts (PNCA) came together to commemorate the 10-year journey of CPEC. The celebration took place at the National Museum Karachi, featuring an enlightening speech by the Chairman of Rabita Forum International (RFI). For the benefit of our readers, the Chairman's insightful address is presented here.

Excellency YANG VANDONG, Consul General of the People's Republic of CHINA, Excellencies of Sultanate Oman, Eng. Sami Abdullah Alkhanjari, Jagath Abeywarna, CG Sri Lanka, Vice CG of Iran, and Counselors of different countries, Respected Guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

While welcoming all of you, I take immense pleasure in participating in this August gathering to celebrate the 10-year anniversary of CPEC, organized by PPEMF and PNCA. I am truly grateful to PPEMF and PNCA for extending the invitation to me for this prestigious event.

I had the privilege of visiting China in September 1999, which was approximately twenty-four years ago. I led a delegation of esteemed journalists on the occasion of China's Golden Jubilee, and this visit was made possible through the gracious invitation of the Chinese Government.

At that time, a resounding slogan echoed, declaring the profound depth of Pakistan-China friendship as being higher than the Himalayan Mountains, deeper than the sea, and sweeter than honey. During that period, CPEC was still in its preparatory stages. Today, we proudly proclaim that Pakistan and China stand as ironclad brothers.

The history of Pakistan-China relations spans several decades, with Pakistan steadfastly supporting China's bid for permanent membership in the UNO. It is worth recalling the initial visit of Henry Kissinger, the Foreign Minister of the USA. Notably, during that era, Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) was the sole airline connecting China to the rest of the world. Pakistan has consistently upheld the principle of One China.

China holds an enduring memory of Pakistan's unwavering support. In return, China has been a steadfast ally, providing crucial assistance on issues such as Kashmir and other matters of significance to Pakistan within the realm of the UNO and various international organizations.

The China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) stands as the flagship project of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), designed to uplift developing nations and promote global peace. The resounding support for this project from over 100 countries underscores its widespread international appeal.

Despite opposition from the USA and India, who voice concerns over the BRI and CPEC, Pakistan and China remain committed to progress and development, firmly rejecting any hegemonic aspirations. By 2030, China envisions its products, proudly "Made in China," reaching all corners of the globe. China's strategic



efforts are already evident in fostering stronger relations between Iran and Saudi Arabia, as well as its active engagement in Palestine and various African countries.

With regard to CPEC, Pakistan faces pressure, especially from the West and notably the USA, to reconsider its commitment. Despite these challenges, Pakistan displays remarkable resilience and views CPEC as an integral part of its strategic interests. The resolute determination of the Pakistani nation to see CPEC through to completion remains unshaken. China's unwavering support for this project is nothing short of remarkable.

To conclude I want to assure Your Excellency that the people of Pakistan are deeply grateful for China's unwavering support, not only in the context of CPEC but also on the global stage. We wholeheartedly pledge our continuous backing to China and reiterate our strong determination to successfully bring the CPEC project to fruition. Thank you

Pakistan Zindabad

Pak-China friendship Paindabad.

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## **CULTURAL CORNER: INDUS CIVILIZATION**

### **BEYOND THE SANDS OF TIME: A PERSPECTIVE ON MOHEN JO DARO**

INTERACTION TEAM

In the annals of history, amidst the dusty winds of time, stands the enigmatic city of Mohen Jo Daro, an ancient urban civilization that flourished during the Bronze Era, around 2600 BC. This captivating tale of an advanced society, nestled along the banks of the mighty Indus River, unfolds with mysteries that still confound scholars and historians alike.

The tale of Mohen Jo Daro is intricately woven with two other prominent ruins Kalibangan near Bikaner in Rajasthan, India, and Harappa, located in the Sahiwal district of Punjab, Pakistan. These three remnants collectively constitute the Indus Valley Civilization, a rich tapestry of human ingenuity that emerged on the banks of the Indus River. This civilization predates the Egyptian civilization by five hundred years, standing as a testament to the remarkable achievements of ancient societies.

Mohen Jo Daro's legacy is intertwined with the course of the Indus River itself. Its ruins are strewn across the region that the river once traversed, from its origin at the Manasarovar Lake in the Himalayas to its culmination in the Sindh province of Pakistan, a journey of over 3160 kilometers (although historical records often cite it as 3249 K/M or 1980 miles.). The very fabric of this civilization was intricately tied to the river's flow, fostering a thriving society that engaged in agriculture and trade.

Picture the Indus River meandering through the landscape, once flowing close to Mohen Jo Daro. This ancient metropolis bears witness to a society characterized

by prosperity and innovation. Its urban planning showcases a semi-grid structure, intricate drainage systems, and remarkable architecture. The crown jewel, the Great Bath, a monumental rectangular pool, echoes the city's remarkable craftsmanship. Throughout this remarkable civilization, there's evidence of trade, artistic expression, and an advanced understanding of city management.

Among the mesmerizing relics discovered, the alluring dancing girl statue and intricate jewelry provide glimpses into the aesthetic tastes of this society. The essence of worship finds its expression in their devotion to deities such as Shiva. Yet, amid the splendor, a shroud of mystery envelops the fate of this civilization.

Imagine a civilization that flourished with multi-story buildings, a well-organized drainage network, and trade flourishing along the serene banks of the Indus. Then, consider its sudden vanishing act an entire society that seemingly vanished into thin air, leaving behind a vacuum of understanding.

Was it a natural catastrophe, an unforeseen calamity, or perhaps mass upheaval that wiped this civilization off the map? The history books remain silent, refusing to reveal the true cause behind their disappearance. The tales of this civilization's end remain shrouded in obscurity, awaiting the inquisitive minds of researchers to unravel the ultimate truth.

The residents of Mohen Jo Daro were not solitary inhabitants. They lived in harmony with the rhythm of the mighty Indus River, engaging in agriculture, trade, and their daily pursuits. The cities and villages bustled with activity, painting a picture of peaceful coexistence and routine trade.

The city of Mohen Jo Daro itself unfolded in two distinct realms. The Citadel, situated on an elevated mud-brick platform, held the administrative heart of the city. It housed pivotal structures like the Great Bath, granaries, and the priestly college. This bastion of authority was fortified by a formidable mud-brick wall.

On the other hand, the Eastern section, the low-lying part, catered to the common folk. Woven together by an intricate network of streets and alleys, this area exudes the essence of the everyday lives of the people. It's here that the roots of the city's guild system can be found, manifested in various sub-parts shaped by the needs of its inhabitants.

Diving deeper, historians' meticulous observations reveal that, unlike its contemporaries, Mohen Jo Daro did not adhere to a strict grid system in its road layout. Although the city was meticulously planned, its roads embraced a more organic design, not always conforming to right angles. These streets, particularly in the lower city, divided it into distinct blocks, linked by subordinate roads and alleys, with the main road broad enough for two bullock carts to cross side by side.

The mystery of Mohen Jo Daro's fall thickens as we ponder its defense strategies. There's an account that a prince's love for the daughter of the city's ruler led to a massacre, leaving the city in ruins. Stories of survival, lost in sandstorms, further cloud the narrative. Yet, these tales, while captivating, remain unproven conjectures, hampered by the lack of solid evidence.

The cryptic nature of the Indus Valley Civilization's written language amplifies the confusion. Despite the abundance of abandoned written scripts, deciphering their meaning eludes even the most skilled experts. This civilization was undeniably intellectually robust, a society that mastered engineering, city planning, agriculture, artistry, and defense. However, the shadows of its decline persist, casting an eternal question mark over its fate. In pursuit of truth, historians and researchers have contemplated various scenarios. The Aryan invasion theory once held sway, suggesting that this advanced society fell victim to outside aggression. Noman Bukhari, a credible writer, posits that while Aryan invasions were once thought to be the cause of Harappa's decline, recent research suggests climate change as the primary factor behind the civilization's downfall. The supposed massacre in Mohenjo-Daro led to theories of external invasion, but contradictory evidence challenges this notion. The complex history of Aryans, including Rajputs, Brahmins, Baloch, and Mughals, prompts the question of their role in the subcontinent's timeline. The entry of Aryans around 1500 BC, a thousand years after the civilization's height, refutes invasion claims.

Climate change could potentially be a significant factor in the enigmatic downfall of Mohen Jo Daro. Even the Quran, in several surahs, speaks of nations being destroyed by various forces like hot air, deafening shouts, and storming rain all of which are elements of nature's wrath. This perspective aligns with the possibility that Mohen Jo Daro could have succumbed to the might of a sandstorm or similar climatic catastrophe, as indicated in various ancient texts.

In our quest for truth, the indomitable spirit of inquiry drives us onward. The riddles of Mohen Jo Daro's rise and fall remain far from resolved, entwining history, science, and speculation. As researchers continue to unearth relics, decode inscriptions, and decipher clues from the past, the sands of time may one day reveal the secrets hidden within the Mound of the Dead.

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Book Review

**BELT AND ROAD INITIATIVE: EMERGING WORLD ORDER BY DR. TALAT AYESHA WIZARAT (SINGAPORE: PARTRIDGE, 2023)**

SYED SAMIULLAH

The book, titled: "Belt and Road Initiative: Emerging World Order" is authored by Prof. Dr. Talat Ayesha Wizarat, an esteemed scholar in international relations and Middle Eastern studies from Pakistan. Within the pages of this book, Dr. Wizarat meticulously dissects President Xi Jinping's visionary and evolutionary concept of connectivity and collaboration, offering a comprehensive exploration of the future trajectory of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). Recognizing that modern infrastructure is the bedrock upon which both economic and political progress is built, she underscores the paramount importance of digital technology in the current development landscape.

The scope of the BRI which in fact is transforming the world order, spans both land and maritime domains, and Dr. Wizarat expertly delineates the intricate interplay between these two facets. Beyond mere trade routes, the BRI embodies a multifaceted entity, where economic corridors function as conduits of interdependence, fostering cooperation and shared growth among participating states. The book consists of seven chapters and a concluding section, delving into two main themes. The first six chapters extensively explore the Modern Silk Road Economic Belt (MSREB), while the seventh chapter focuses on the Modern Maritime Silk Road (MMSR).

In the book's initial section, Dr. Wizarat provides an overview of ancient trade routes. It encompasses the historical and cultural significance of trade routes in promoting global interdependence. The Silk Road, a renowned trade network, is detailed extensively, encompassing multiple routes connecting diverse regions like China, Central Asia, the Middle East, and Europe. The section also explores other routes, including the Spice Route, Salt Road, Incense Route, Tea Road, and routes for commodities like amber, tin, and fur etc. These routes facilitated economic survival, cultural exchange, and strategic interests across Asia, Africa, and Europe. Furthermore, the arms trade is likened to a Silk Road of its own.

The modern world has seen the emergence of various Silk Roads, like the Knowledge Silk Road, Digital Silk Road, and Space Silk Road, all fostering global connectivity. China's role in promoting mutual development through these routes is emphasized. The author, Dr. Wizarat underscores the continued significance of trade routes and proposes their revival, highlighting factors like economic compatibility, sustainability, and interdependence among states (p. 19).

Exploring the intricacies of energy routes, particularly those entailing the Middle East's supply of oil and gas to diverse regions, sheds light on the complex dynamics at play. Among these routes, the Iran-Pakistan-India (IPI) and Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India (TAPI) pipelines hold significance which faced challenges in recent past due to the presence of the US in the region. The author, Dr. Wizarat emphasizes that the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), launched by China's president in 2013, aims to create trade routes with infrastructure like roads, railways, storage facilities, and industrial zones. The Modern Silk Road Economic Belt (MSREB) is its land component. The BRI, focuses on economic development and communication enhancement, spanning Asia, Africa, and Europe, aims to alleviate poverty and promote mutual growth. China's exceptional success in reducing poverty is notable (p. 46).

BRI's first phase involves over a trillion USDs investment for infrastructural development while the second phase emphasizes over industrialization, Special Economic Zones, creating millions of jobs, technology upgrades, and research. The promotion of key developments in this regard has been advanced by the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) and the Silk Road Fund (SRF). The Silk Road Economic Belt encompasses a network of diverse economic corridors, each with a value in the billions of dollars, effectively bridging continents and catalyzing profound socio-economic transformations.

The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) is considered a flagship BRI project. According to Dr. Wizarat, China and Pakistan prioritize their interests, avoiding interference in each other's internal affairs, possibly learned from US-Pakistan relations, which is assembled with great lack of trust owing to American interference (p. 89). Realizing the importance of CPEC both countries have created a number of special institutions to facilitate decision making and smooth implementation of CPEC projects. Several task forces and joint commission committees have been bilaterally established which especially deal with energy, transportation infrastructure, Gawadar port, industrial cooperation, security, policy planning and cooperation, socio-economic development, international cooperation and coordination, agriculture and science and technology.

CPEC has divided into three phases. The phase one focuses on infra-structure and energy, which was expected to be completed in 2018, the phase two focuses on creating Special Economic Zones (SEZ) to promote the industrial ventures while phase three will see the completion of railways, mainline-1, and operationalization of all SEZs.

This phase is intended to be finalized by 2030. Developments in the energy sector covers all thermal power, hydel power, tidal wave energy, wind energy, solar energy and nuclear energy. In 2018, somewhat 13000 MW of energy were added to national grid station. Industrial parks and special economic zones are being created in the core areas of CPEC. CPEC begins in China's Kashgar, crosses into Pakistan via Khunjerab Pass, and features three routes within Pakistan: a western route to, an eastern route, and a central route. However, all the three routes originates from Gawadar and culminate in the North (p. 112). The collaboration under CPEC is driven by mutual interests, bolstering China's global maritime influence via Gawadar.

The realization of CPEC was made possible by the existence of the Karakoram Highway (KKH), acclaimed as the 8th wonder of the world, constructed in the 1960s. KKH's historical and cultural significance is emphasized, serving as a conduit for ideas, religions and cultures (p. 129). Originally spanning 1300km from Hasan Abdal to Xingjing, KKH has been extended to connect Gawadar and all Pakistani provinces, forming a basis for an extensive network of roads, railways, and pipelines. This is vital for socio-economic development, education, and China's strategic outreach. (p. 159).

In the past three decades, the concept of 'Special Economic Zones' (SEZs) has gained global traction, with 5400 established in 147 countries. Notably, China's SEZs lead, contributing 46% of exports, 22% of GDP, and employing over 30 million people of the country.

The author, Dr. Wizarat, emphasizes to maximize Gawadar port's potential, addressing security, local fisherman concerns, and enhancing education and lifestyles are paramount. Gawadar has the potential to emerge as a regional trade hub involving China, Central Asia, the Middle East, Afghanistan, and Pakistan. This outlook presents opportunities and challenges in equal measure.

The book's second part includes chapter seven, "Modern Maritime Silk Road: Geopolitical Realities in a Changing World." This chapter introduces the concept of the Modern Maritime Silk Road (MMSR) within the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). MMSR focuses on the South China Sea, East China Sea, and Indian Ocean, with potential expansion into the Mediterranean Sea, Pacific Ocean, and Atlantic Ocean. The 14th Chinese five-year plan (2020-2025) aims to extend this initiative to the Arctic Ocean. The success of this expansion could revolutionize the maritime network, impacting the Indian Ocean's Arabian Sea, Persian Gulf, Bay of Bengal, and Strait of Malacca. This expansion is referred to as the 'Polar Silk Road.' China also intends to connect the Andaman Sea and South China Sea by digging a canal in Thailand's Kra Isthmus, involving bridges and road networks (p. 248). In the historical context, the Indian Ocean was long dominated by European powers.

This hegemony eventually gave way to US influence following World War II. However, the emergence of China has introduced a significant shift in power dynamics, creating unease among Western nations, particularly the US. According to D. Wizarat, in this situation a dual approach could be seen: intense anti-BRI propaganda and, if unsuccessful, attempts at regime change. In this regard the already taken steps e.g. 'Pivot to Asia' and Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (QUAD) aims to contain China. Other platforms like AUKUS and Fourteen Eyes are established, though yet a direct power clash remains unexpected but the notion of an 'Indo-Pacific corridor' seeks American influence in the region. China's maritime security strategy evolved over four decades, but challenges persist due to dependencies on the Indian Ocean, South China Sea, and East China Sea. The South China Sea is pivotal, handling 80% of China's trade. Unconventional measures, like converting reefs into islands and 'Blue water Navy,' address challenges. The People's Liberation Army (PLA) Navy also plays a crucial security role.

Additionally, the maritime strategies of regional states, notably Pakistan and India, hold significant importance. Pakistan's development of Port Qasim, Jinnah Naval Base, and Gawadar as a deep sea port enhances trade avenues and maritime security. Gawadar's potential benefits extend to Afghanistan and Central Asian states. In contrast, India aligns with the US to counter China amid their rivalry (p. 270). However, Chinese initiatives are meticulously planned and resonate with developing states' aspirations for a better future.

In conclusion, the book "Belt and Road Initiative: Emerging World Order" is a remarkable demonstration of Dr. Wizarat's insightful grasp of worldwide dynamics, effectively shedding light on the intricate interplay between developmental pursuits and geopolitical considerations. Within its pages, the comprehensive examination of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) is presented alongside a well-defined path for participating nations to skillfully navigate the uncertainties that lie ahead, all while fostering a sense of unity in the global arena. This work encapsulates the profound potential for a shared and interconnected tomorrow, one that thrives on strategic cooperation among nations. Central to this vision is

China's notion of 'shared prosperity,' which infuses a sense of optimism for a more promising future, magnifying the influence of collective determination in translating aspirations into tangible achievements.

The author is Research officer at RFI

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## **CHASNUPP-5: A STEP TOWARDS MEETING FUTURE ENERGY TARGETS**

MUHAMMAD USAMA KHALID

On June 20, China and Pakistan signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for the establishment of the Chashma 5 Nuclear Power Plant (NPP) in Mianwali, Punjab. The stated capacity of this NPP will be 1200 megawatts. China National Nuclear Cooperation (CNNC) will build this power plant in collaboration with the Pakistan Atomic Energy Commission (PAEC). The project will assist Pakistan in transitioning away from its heavy reliance on fossil fuels, which account for more than 80 percent of its total energy production.

Pakistan sees nuclear power as cost effective way to meet its rising energy demand in the face of an energy crisis and the rising expense of fossil resources. Pakistan uses coal, natural gas, hydropower, renewable energy, and nuclear power. Pakistan can expand its energy production more using renewable and nuclear energy than hydro, coal, and natural gas. Thus, the nation wants to use more renewable energy. To increase energy security, Pakistani energy experts recommend reducing fossil fuel use and maximizing nuclear energy.

Pakistan's civil nuclear energy program commenced way back in 1954, inspired by then-US President Dwight D. Eisenhower's 'Atom for Peace' speech delivered in December 1953. By 1959, PAEC had penned an agreement with the Canadian General Electric Company for the development of Pakistan's first NPP in Karachi, known as KANUPP-I.

The Indian nuclear weapon development and test in May 1974 using plutonium (Pu244) from the Canadian CIRUS research reactor paved the way for the termination of Canadian nuclear cooperation with both non-NPT India and Pakistan.

China Pakistani civilian nuclear cooperation began in the late 1970s; however, an official agreement was signed in 1986 for the development of Chashma NPP projects that contributed to the enhancement of Pakistan's industrial and technological capacity. The development of the new nuclear reactors is an addition to the nuclear agreement signed in 1986 before China's adherence to the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG) because western scholars and policymakers accused China of violating the NSG's guidelines.

Moving towards nuclear energy will provide Pakistan with an alternative to its rising energy demands, as nuclear energy is a clean, reliable, and stable source of energy production. Current energy generation by the NPPs according to the date available at the Finance Division's website is 2530 megawatts (MW) that supplied about 7,076 million units of electricity to the national grid during July-March FY2021. However, with the completion of Chashma 5 NPP, this will further

add 1200 MW to the national grid that will supply around 3350 units of electricity alone, which is strategically a significant development.

The National Electric Power Regulatory Authority (NEPRA) estimates that domestic nuclear energy generation in 2022 will result in significant savings over non-nuclear energy imports. After deducting loan payments on NPPs, Pakistan saved \$3 billion versus importing oil, \$2.2 billion versus importing natural gas, and \$1.6 billion versus importing coal. Increasing nuclear energy capacity would significantly contribute to Pakistan's foreign exchange savings by reducing dependency on imported fuel and supplying cheaper electricity to national infrastructure.

Pakistan has been using civil nuclear technology for the country's socioeconomic development in order to achieve the 'SDG' (United Nations Sustainable Development Goals). Nuclear technology is utilized in numerous disciplines, including medicine, hydrology, electricity generation, environment, basic sciences, and agriculture.

Pakistan's civil nuclear engine for achieving its sustainable development objectives, which include enhancing the nation's energy security by maximizing its nuclear energy potential and decreasing its reliance on fossil fuels.

The operationalization of CHASNUPP-5 will bolster Pakistan's ambitions to use nuclear energy to increase its capacity to generate electricity. The CHASNUPP-5 is Pakistan's first NPP, with a capacity to generate 1200 MW of electricity alone. The nuclear-powered energy generation are more dependable, have a high-capacity availability factor, are environmentally friendly, and maintain a sustainable electricity price due to lower fuel costs.

Pakistan's adherence to global nuclear safety and security protocols is manifest by the fact that it has produced electricity from nuclear powered reactors for the past 48 years without a single accident. The IAEA has determined that the already installed civil nuclear reactors satisfy the safety requirements of the 'Generic Reactor Safety Review' (GRSR). The IAEA's evaluation of the ACP-1000 reactor reveals that it is equipped with both active and passive technology and meets all safety requirements.

Pakistan's endeavors to use nuclear technology for peaceful purposes are unquestionably validated by these solid credentials. In addition, it would assist Pakistan in meeting its energy requirements via a more secure, peaceful, and safe nuclear energy program.

Consequently, to achieve a sustainable future, Pakistan is increasing its reliance on alternative sources of renewable energy. Pakistan is in the process of constructing additional NPPs to increase the role of nuclear power in meeting future energy demands. Pakistan would also need international assistance to achieve its objective of 8800 MW of electricity production by 2030, a vision set by the government under the energy security plan, as well as to enhance the development of its nuclear power industry.

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## **GROWING HINDUTVA IN INDIA-MANIPUR TO GURGAON**

ABDUL HAMEED

The General Elections of 2014 in India, resulted in a triumph for the Bhartiya Janta Party (BJP) and as a result, a Pro-Hindu leader Narendra Modi sat on the uppermost echelon of the governmental ladder. Modi's party won the elections with an absolute majority. In the realm of economic diplomacy, he championed the rallying cry of 'Reform, Perform and Transform' India, pledging unwavering progress while elevating the nation's stature in the international decision-making arena.

The BJP made efforts to garner Muslim support during the election drive, but subsequently, their government implemented certain policies that contravene the social, cultural, and religious values cherished by the Muslim community. Bhartiya Janta Party (BJP) had a manifesto for Lok Sabha- the House of People or the lower house of India's parliament- in 2019 which pledged the elimination of Articles 370 and 35-A of the constitution.

August 5, 2019, is marked as the gloomiest day for the populace of Jammu and Kashmir as the Indian premier's party declared the annulment of Articles 370 and 35-A of the constitution of India. These interconnected laws provided the region of Jammu and Kashmir, which is under Indian administration, with distinctive semi-autonomous prerogative. Abrogation of these provisions had major repercussions for the predominantly Muslim populace of Jammu and Kashmir.

It also aggravated the previously strained relations between India and Pakistan, and potentially triggered unrest in the region. The Hindu Nationalists under the leadership of the BJP not only oppressed the Muslims but also the other minorities of the country. A graphic video recently came out, two women being sexually abused in public in India's northeastern state of Manipur. The clip went viral on Wednesday 19, July showing two women belonging to the Kuki-zo group walking naked along a street, being ridiculed, insulted, and harassed by marauding hordes reportedly from the Meitei community.

There have been some ethnic clashes between the Hindu Meiti and Christian Kuki-zo communities in the Manipur state. Violence flared up among the majority Meiti and the minority Kuki-zo over the job quotas and land rights. Furthermore, the chaos was sparked by the orders of the apex court of India that government should consider extending special benefits enjoyed by the Kuki-zo to the Meiti populace as well. The video was shot 2 months ago but because of the unavailability of Internet facilities, it came to the mainstream media a little late.

The statistics are alarming, not less than 140 people have been killed, 3000 plus injured, and more than 50,000 have fled their homes since the unrest began. After almost being silent on the incident for 80 days, Indian Premier Modi called it a 'shameful' act and told authorities to take strict action against the suspects. The Manipur incident has underscored the pressing need for inclusive governance and policies that promote equitable representation and fair distribution of resources. Another recent event occurred in Haryana- an Indian state located in the northern part of the country- the burnt bodies of two men were found in a

car. A report published by India Today disclosed that according to the relatives of the demised ones, they were forcefully abducted by the cow vigilantes. Later, they were burnt alive and the bodies were discovered inside a car. It serves as a wake-up call for Indian authorities to take proactive measures to safeguard the rights and security of all its citizens, irrespective of their ethnicity or religious affiliations.

The aforementioned incidents are not the only incidents of this type, but ample events have also been reported in the past. A report by Islamabad Policy Research Institute states, under the contemporary government 61 percent of Muslims have been victims of Hindu Extremism and an overall 73 percent of the minorities have been the prey of Hindutva ideologists, an immense number of 700 casualties in the Farmers Movement and last but not the least 124 Muslims have been assassinated in cow-related hate crimes.

However, the role of International Organizations addressing, promoting, and protecting Human Rights, for example, the Human Rights Commission and Amnesty International have been skeptical. In essence, these incidents underscore the immediate need for comprehensive steps to address the rife challenges presented by Religious extremism and Human Rights violations, both at a national and international level.

Abdul Hameed is an Intern at BTTN.

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## **CONNECTING THE DOTS: 5G'S REACH AND THE IMPERATIVE OF SECURITY**

NOREEN CHOUDHRY

The continuous evolution of cellular technology has revolutionized connectivity, and the emergence of 5G, the fifth generation of cellular technology, signifies a new era of enhanced network performance and interconnected experiences. This article offers a comprehensive exploration of 5G technology, highlighting its capabilities, applications, and impact on various industries. It also addresses security concerns associated with 5G, particularly in developed nations.

Central to 5G's significance is its role as a catalyst for unmatched connectivity. Unlike its predecessors, it not only delivers faster speeds but also reduces latency and enhances adaptability in wireless services. Impressively, 5G boasts a theoretical peak speed of 20 Gbps, outpacing the previous 4G standard's 1 Gbps. Beyond speed, 5G promises revolutionary experiences, benefiting applications like online gaming, videoconferencing, and autonomous driving.

Unlike earlier cellular generations that focused on connectivity, 5G introduces seamless cloud-to-client connected experiences through virtualized and software-driven infrastructure. This innovation ensures smooth transitions between cellular and Wi-Fi networks, offering users uninterrupted connectivity. At the core of 5G's prowess lies its approach to network functionality network slicing. This empowers administrators to customize functionality for users and devices, bolstering efficiency. Additionally, massive MIMO (multiple input, multiple output)

technology allows multiple transmitters and receivers to exchange more data simultaneously. The convergence of licensed and unlicensed wireless technologies amplifies available bandwidth, unlocking 5G's full potential.

5G's true potential shines in the context of the Internet of Things (IoT). Robust 5G networks facilitate seamless integration of IoT devices, enabling intelligent automation across industries like healthcare, automotive, manufacturing, and smart cities. The healthcare sector can leverage 5G's low latency and high-speed connectivity for real-time monitoring and data sharing. However, the adoption of 5G brings security concerns. The complex 5G infrastructure involving numerous vendors raises worries about vulnerabilities in the supply chain. Ensuring data privacy becomes crucial due to the proliferation of connected devices and vast data generated by 5G networks. Addressing these concerns necessitates robust encryption, secure data storage, and stringent access controls. The intricate nature of 5G networks introduces new vulnerabilities. Cyber-attacks targeting critical infrastructure pose risks, compelling governments, operators, and vendors to establish regulatory frameworks for reliable and resilient 5G networks.

Mitigating security risks requires collaboration among stakeholders, including threat sharing, security audits, and robust protocols. Given 5G's global nature, international cooperation is vital. Developed nations like the US and EU must collaborate with global counterparts to establish standards, share best practices, and harmonize security efforts for a secure global 5G ecosystem. In conclusion, 5G's evolution marks a new era of connectivity, transforming industries and enabling innovative applications. While challenges, particularly security concerns, exist, the potential benefits are significant. Prioritizing security measures, fostering collaboration, and embracing international cooperation will enable developed nations to harness 5G's power while ensuring a secure and reliable global network. This fusion of technology and security lays the groundwork for innovation, economic growth, and societal progress globally.

Ms. Noreen Choudhry, Post Graduate in Mass Communication, is a member of RFI team.

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## **AMERICA**

### **US MILITARY BUILDUP IN PERSIAN GULF: RISK OF CONFLICT ESCALATION WITH IRAN**

SALEHA MASOOD

Iran's increasing efforts to seize merchant ships in the Strait of Hormuz in the wake of the American confiscation of Iranian fuel-carrying vessel, have sparked grave concerns. As a response, the US has increased its Naval presence in the region, deploying various aircrafts and ships, along with around 300 Navy Personnel and Marines.

This buildup coincides with the upcoming expiration of the 2015 Iran Nuclear Deal in October. The projection of military force by the US in the Gulf may trigger the

revival of potential "Tanker War". Hard-liners in Tehran are showing strength through recent actions. This, additionally, serves as a caution to the US and its allies, indicating that Iran possesses the capability to respond, retaliate and exert influence in the Gulf region. Strait of Hormuz is a 33 kilometers narrow strait in the Persian Gulf between Iran and Oman where one-fifth of the oil tankers passes. Gulf States depend on this route for oil transportation and, therefore, express worries about Iran's broader regional intentions. It has been reported that Iran has seized 20 commercial vessels over the past two years.

Owing to the sanctions on Iran's oil and its limited global market access, Iran's aggressive move to project strength and exert influence in the region is becoming evident to safeguard its territorial waters and security of the state. In response, the US is conducting patrols to ensure the free flow of oil and legal trading in the waters. The US has deployed additional warships and fighter jets along with the already installed US fighter jets F-35s, F-16s, A-10s and other warplanes. The buildup aims to deter Iran from the seizures of commercial vessels in the region.

Maintaining open access to the Strait of Hormuz is essential for the US to avoid abrupt spikes in worldwide energy prices but the recent development could potentially lead to a broader conflict as the US takes on the intricate responsibility of protecting foreign commercial activities. The US Navy's 5th Fleet stationed since 2022 near Bahrain also revealed photographic evidence of the seizure of Liberian-flagged vessel in the Gulf. These events are escalating tensions and raising chances of military conflict in the region.

Since 2019, Iran has captured multiple ships in the Strait of Hormuz, a vital gateway to the Persian Gulf, as part of its strategy to influence talks related to its abandoned nuclear deal with world powers. The prospect of placing US troops on commercial ships could discourage Iran's ship seizures, yet it also carries the risk of intensifying maritime tensions. General Abdolrahim Mousavi, Iran's Army Chief commented that the US deployment would bring only "insecurity and damage" to the region.

Iran is preparing for the worst and has threatened to close the Strait in times of conflict which would disrupt the international energy markets. Following the breakdown of the nuclear deal, Iran has moved closer to enriching uranium to weapons-grade level. It has invested in speed boats, sea mines, drones, and missiles. Iran has also acquired surface-to-air missile and electronic warfare system. Its defense system can also counter the air-borne threats. Iran is also working to strengthen its government by making progress in its nuclear program.

Recently, Iran's Defense Ministry revealed a newly produced long-range naval ballistic missile, purportedly with the ability to eliminate carriers. Iranian authorities stated they have already manufactured this "stealthy" missile, powered by artificial intelligence, with the potential to fully demolish any frigate. The US Army General, Kurilla states that: "The Iran of 2023 is not the Iran of 1983, In fact, Iran today is exponentially more militarily capable than it was even five years ago,"

The projection of military force in the Gulf seems as a diplomatic failure in de-escalating the maritime tensions. Iran's Brig Gen. Mohammad-Reza Ashtiani states

that "America is pursuing its own plans, but the Islamic Republic has reached such a level of power and authority, where no one is capable of threatening it," It sends a message to the US and its allies that Tehran has the means to retaliate.

As diplomatic efforts remain at a standstill and Iran's willingness for increased maritime aggression becomes evident, the US seems to be returning to its reliance on military strength to encourage Tehran to ease tensions. Nevertheless, this approach leaves the unresolved matters between the two nations to persist beyond the realm of naval interactions.

Saleha Masood is Research Intern BTTN.

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## **MIDDLE EAST**

### **SAUDI ARABIA CONSIDERS CHINESE BID FOR NUCLEAR PLANT**

Saudi Arabia is considering a Chinese bid to build a nuclear power plant, the wall street journal reported on recently a decision that could derail US plans in the kingdom.

China National Nuclear Corp, a state-owned company known as CNNC, has bid to build a nuclear plant in Saudi Arabia's Eastern Province, near the border with Qatar and the United Arab Emirates, the newspaper reported, citing Saudi official's familiar with the matter.

CNNC did not immediately respond to a request from Reuters for comment. The foreign ministries of both China and Saudi Arabia did not respond to requests for comment on the report. Saudi Arabia has previously sought US cooperation in establishing a civilian nuclear programme on its soil as part of a possible normalisation deal with Israel.

US officials have said in the past they would share nuclear power technology only if the agreement prevents enrichment of uranium or reprocessing of plutonium made in reactors - two routes to making nuclear weapons. Saudi officials acknowledged that exploring the issue with China was a way of goading the Biden administration to compromise on its non-proliferation requirements, the newspaper added.

Saudi officials said they would prefer to hire South Korean state utility Korea Electric Power to build the plant's reactors and involve US operational expertise, but without agreeing to the proliferation controls that Washington generally requires, the newspaper said.

The Saudi officials said Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman was prepared to move ahead with the Chinese company soon if talks with the US failed, the WSJ said. China would continue to cooperate with Saudi Arabia in civil nuclear energy while abiding by international non-proliferation rules, the newspaper cited China's foreign ministry as saying.

Saudi Arabia has built closer relations with China over the past year. In March, China brokered a resumption of ties between Saudi Arabia and its arch-regional foe Iran.

Israel's energy minister has voiced opposition to the idea of Saudi Arabia developing a civilian nuclear programme as part of any US effort to forge closer Israeli-Saudi relations. Israel has said it expected to be consulted by Washington on a US-Saudi deal affecting its national security.

Israel, which is outside the voluntary Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and has no nuclear energy, is widely believed to have atomic weapons.

Courtesy: Al-Jazeera & News Agencies.

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## **MISCELLANEOUS**

### **CANADIAN WARSHIPS KICK OFF INDO-PACIFIC SECURITY PUSH IN JAPAN VESSELS ALSO HEADING TO TENSE TAIWAN STRAIT, SOUTHEAST ASIA IN BEEFED-UP OPERATIONS**

AKIRA KITADO

Three Canadian naval vessels arrived on August 28, 2023 at Japan's Yokosuka port as Ottawa moves to bolster Indo-Pacific security amid soaring concerns about China and North Korea's saber-rattling.

Two Royal Canadian Navy warships, the Ottawa and Vancouver, along with the supply vessel Asterix, arrived at the port south of Tokyo -- home to bases of the U.S. Navy and Japan's Maritime Self-Defense Force - after departing Canada's west coast in mid-August.

As their first port of call, the vessels will be at Yokosuka until Friday to refuel, let the crews rest and boost relations with their Japanese hosts before setting out on joint exercises with regional partners including the U.S., Japan, South Korea, Australia and New Zealand.

Among the plans are exercises in the tense Taiwan Strait, where China has sent military vessels near Taiwan, which Beijing claims as its territory. Robert Watt, the Canadian defense attache to Japan, confirmed the exercises but did not disclose details.

"Nothing in the current deployment is designed specifically against one nation or to deter any specific nation," Watt said Monday when asked if China is being targeted, but he added that Canada is working with regional partners to support a free and open Indo-Pacific.

The deployment is part of Canada's Operation Projection, which is set to be upgraded under the name Operation Horizon, a new operation that then-Defence Minister Anita Anand announced in June at the 2023 Shangri-La Dialogue, Asia's premier defense summit.

"China is an increasingly disruptive global power that increasingly disregards international rules and norms," Anand said at the time. "We will challenge China when we ought to, and we will cooperate when we must."

The beefed-up operation is aimed at deepening cooperation with allies and partners and empowering Canada to play a more active role in regional security, with the number of warships deployed annually set to rise to three from the current two. "The operation will increase the level of our commitment," Watt said.

As part of the multinational exercises and engagements, the Ottawa will focus on Southeast Asia, while the Vancouver will look to security in Northeast Asia. The Vancouver will also help monitor United Nations sanctions against North Korea over its nuclear weapons program.

"What we'd like to see from our partners is more integration of Canada into those various exercises and operations," the commanding officer of the Vancouver, Meghan Coates, said Monday.

Canada has been growing its Indo-Pacific military presence, with its first comprehensive regional strategy released in November. The strategy says, "China's rise, enabled by the same international rules and norms that it now increasingly disregards, has had an enormous impact on the Indo-Pacific, and it has ambitions to become the leading power in the region." Beijing-Ottawa relations have been strained in recent years.

In 2018, Canadian authorities detained Huawei Technologies executive Meng Wanzhou at the request of the United States. Shortly after, China arrested two Canadians on spying charges. All have since been released.

This year, both countries expelled each other's diplomats after an envoy at the Chinese Consulate in Toronto reportedly targeted a Canadian opposition lawmaker and his relatives in Hong Kong.

Courtesy: NKKEI Asia.

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