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## GHAZNAVI MISSILE

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# Interaction

March 2024

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## Contents

<b>1</b>	<b>Pakistan, under attack from several directions</b>	Editorial	<b>02</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>Team CISSS visits RFI</b>		<b>05</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>BTTN, CISSS and RFI come together at a Special dinner hosted by AD NCA Lt. Gen. (R) Khalid Ahmed Kidwai, NI, HI HI(M)</b>		<b>06</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>Dr. Zafar Khan alongwith his team visits RFI &amp; RFI observes Kashmir Solidarity Day</b>		<b>07</b>
<b>5</b>	<b>CISSS and DHA Suffa University join hands for Kashmir Solidarity</b>		<b>08</b>
<b>6</b>	<b>"Kashmir stands as the potential trigger for conflict in the region"</b>	Nusrat Mirza	<b>09</b>
<b>7</b>	<b>American security under severe Threat?</b>	Nusrat Mirza	<b>10</b>
<b>8</b>	<b>De-Dollarization</b>	Dr. Bushra Batool	<b>12</b>
<b>9</b>	<b>Geostrategic Competition in The South China Sea: Challenges for Pakistan</b>	Wajeeha Najam	<b>15</b>
<b>10</b>	<b>Navigating the Horizon: Charting A course for Pakistan's new Government Post-2024</b>	Mirza Kashif Baig	<b>17</b>
<b>11</b>	<b>Ghaznavi Missile: Evolution, Specifications and Strategic Significance</b>	Syed Samiullah	<b>21</b>
<b>12</b>	<b>Speech of Ambassador Qazi M. Khalilullah (R) Executive Director, CISSS</b>		<b>24</b>
<b>13</b>	<b>Pakistan Institute of Engineering and Applied Sciences (PIEAS)</b>	Interaction Team	<b>27</b>
<b>14</b>	<b>Op-Ed: Time to discipline India through FATF</b>	Iraj Abid	<b>35</b>
<b>15</b>	<b>Op-Ed: Loss of Arable Land to sea in Indus Delta</b>	Areeba Azhar	<b>38</b>
<b>16</b>	<b>India's Contradictory Policy Towards SCO</b>	Noureen Choudry	<b>40</b>
<b>17</b>	<b>Aegean Civilization: Revealing the past from Knossos to Mycenae</b>	Interaction Team	<b>42</b>
<b>18</b>	<b>Book Review: Hafsa Kanjwal, Colonizing Kashmir: State-Building Under Indian occupation</b>	Zeeshan Hyder	<b>46</b>

**EDITORIAL**

# PAKISTAN, UNDER ATTACK FROM SEVERAL DIRECTIONS

When the internal situation is experiencing unrest and the justice system is under question, there are two different theories about it. 1) The border is safe and the forces that control Law and Order consider that they can handle the internal situation. 2) The enemy countries, taking into consideration the internal unrest, may use hybrid warfare or attack the borders and create law and order situation with suicidal or hit-and-run type of attacks inside the country just to break the rod of authority, as people have become irrelevant or charged to confront the law forcing agencies. Thus, economic activities were reduced slowly and consequently, the rod of authority weakened.



What should be done in this situation is the prime question. Pakistan must address the attacks from non-state actors such as TTP and TJP (Tehreek e Jihad Pakistan - a newly formed organization by TTP) based in Afghanistan with the support of the Afghanistan regime, as the separatist groups of Pakistan share the same philosophy as that of the Afghan Taliban. Then there are some Baloch elements with bases in Afghanistan and Iran, which need to be addressed.

In the case of Baloch elements, the first punishment was inside Iran's locality Serewan in province Sistan of Iran, where at least seven wanted terrorists were killed on 18th January 2024, in response to the Iranian attack on 16th January 2024. It was observed with great concern, shock, and surprise that Iran had attacked inside the territory of Pakistan. The concern is that Iran attacked immediately after the visit of Indian External Affairs Minister, Jai Shankar to Tehran. The response of Pakistan was so accurate and timely, sending a message to all neighbors and the world that Pakistan's response would be severe and just if anyone dared to attack Pakistan.

It was a similar response as that which was done against India on 27th February 2019 by Pakistan. In continuation of the efforts to address the terrorists, Pakistan should give a clear warning to Afghan leadership, which has supposedly reached a secret pact with the USA at Doha, Qatar, to destabilize Pakistan, as Pakistan has helped the Afghan Taliban to defeat the USA after defeating the USSR. This was a matter of concern and revenge of the USA. The new leadership of Afghanistan is not under the influence of Pakistan as it was during Mullah Omar's regime.





No government including the present one does not accept Durand Line between Pakistan and Afghanistan while Afghans accept this Line with Iran, Tajikistan and Azerbaijan. The new Afghan government does not accept Pakistan's favor to get rid of the USA from their homeland.

American blame that their defeat in Afghanistan was due to Pakistan. Therefore, in retaliation, the USA has left tanks, fighter jets, helicopters, and other ammunition on Afghan soil to use against Pakistan. It has to be remembered that

never before had the Afghan government possessed jet fighters or helicopters of such quality in Afghanistan which the USA has left now to be used by Afghanistan, leaving this country.

In any case, Pakistan cannot accept the attacks of TTP, TJP, or Baloch organizations that have safe havens in Afghanistan, Iran, or anywhere else. The hideouts of TTP or TJP are to be wiped out for the safety of Pakistan. The irony of the fact is that the Afghan government seems to take guidance from India and the USA. Our assets in this country have to be activated to keep them busy, as they are working against Pakistan under a so called secret pact with the USA. Though apparently, this matter has been discussed with the Pentagon. It was probably requested that the USA should advise its assets to stop terrorist activities against Pakistan, use its influence on the Afghan government not to give any hideout to any organization that is working against Pakistan, or let Pakistan do what is necessary to sort them out.

About ten million Afghans are residing in Pakistan and more than sixty thousand TTP-aligned individuals have been rehabilitated should be screened, and notorious ones should be arrested. For those who arrived after August 2021, the USA should facilitate their departure from Pakistan as soon as possible. Additionally, Afghans who came during the period of former President of Afghanistan Hamid Karzai or Ashraf Ghani, whom the American administration is interested in not removing from Pakistan, must also be thoroughly checked. As far as the relationship with China, Iran, and Russia is concerned, Pakistan must keep them within mutually agreed terms.

The UK's biggest concern is to stop Russia from accessing warm waters. When the USA was reluctant to help Ukraine against Russia, the UK came forward and reached a defense pact with Ukraine. This shows how the UK would like Russia to be contained within its present boundaries. I think the UK expects from Pakistan that it will not go too far in developing good relations with Russia. We can consider such proposal with certain conditions as the world has changed and Pakistan would like good relations with Russia anyhow in spite of the fact that UK has started third great game against Russia not to let it reach out the hot waters.

Regarding China, America is very much concerned that CPEC be abandoned or at least the progress be kept at a low level. This is not in the interest of Pakistan. Therefore, if America expects Pakistan's help against China, then America's offer should be lucrative enough. In Pakistan, the people don't believe Americans, as Americans don't believe Pakistan. There is a great lack of trust between the two. In this situation, why should Pakistan leave its iron friend or undermine its



interest. The USA does not supply arms, technology, or economic assistance to Pakistan, while China does.

As far as Iran is concerned, except for the incident on 16th January 2024, Pakistan does not have any severe problem. Both neighboring countries would like to live peacefully. India's case is different. India is our adversary and would like to destroy Pakistan or keep us under pressure. It has launched a hybrid war against Pakistan. Its assets are working to destabilize Pakistan. Furious Media propaganda has been launched, without hiding the intention to destroy or destabilize Pakistan. It has usurped Kashmir and tried to crush the liberation movement very harshly, violating the UN charter and human rights conventions and standards. It purchases arms from all over the world, especially from Russia, America, Israel, and France and eventually has become a major buyer of arms throughout the world.

We are a responsible nuclear power, so India dare not to attack Pakistan despite its will under the umbrella of the newly formed religion Hindutva. India has started considering itself as a major power of the world, neglecting the USA's design or the Russian one. It chooses any country to buy arms, which may annoy the USA, which has become too weak to check whether Indian designs are against the USA, China, Russia, France, or any other country. To recognize itself as a major or superpower, India has started killing its opponents in Canada, the USA, the UK, Australia, and other countries. Some countries are not known where India is playing its notorious game. Maldives, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, and Bhutan are under the great influence of India. They cannot move an inch without the consent of India. India is thus a dangerous country for world peace.

If it is not checked timely, it will destroy the world, being an irresponsible ambitious country remaining in salivary for one millennium years. Anyone can understand the mentality of such a nation. It would like to take revenge, it would like to rise. It would like to become the superpower of the world. Would the people of the world be allowed to do so? At least Pakistan would not allow it at all costs. Regarding the twelve-country joint force, in which the UAE, Bahrain, Qatar, Jordan, Egypt, and other countries are ready to join for the protection of sea lanes from Houthis of Yemen at the Red Sea, Pakistan has already refused to participate in such force as Pakistani forces are not meant to fight against Muslims, as has been decided by the Pakistani parliament when Saudi Arabia attacked Yemen.



Despite all sorts of difficulties at home, at the borders, and the pressure from different countries, Pakistan has been determined to protect its sovereignty and independence. The armed forces and the people of Pakistan have a very strong resolve that, by the grace of Allah, Pakistan is safe and shall overcome all the challenges it is facing today.

# TEAM CISSS VISITS RFI

On the 22nd of February 2024, a delegation from the Center for International Strategic Studies Sindh (CISSS), led by the esteemed Executive Director Amb. (R) Qazi M. Khalilullah, visited the Rabita Forum International (RFI) Office.

The delegation included CISSS's Directors of Research, Air Commodore Zahid ul Hassan SI(M), TI(M), (R), and Aftab Hussain, Associate Director of Research, Lt Col Azfar Bilal Qureshi TI (M) (R), along with a group of young research officers, who received a warm welcome from RFI Chairman Nusrat Mirza and his team from the research and media departments.

During the meeting, Ambassador (R) Qazi M. Khalilullah expressed gratitude to Chairman RFI for the warm reception and highlighted the achievements of CISSS, praising the noteworthy work carried out by RFI.

Nusrat Mirza, in turn, thanked and appreciated the CISSS team for their long-awaited visit, providing insights into the



ongoing projects at RFI and addressing inquiries from the young researchers of CISSS.

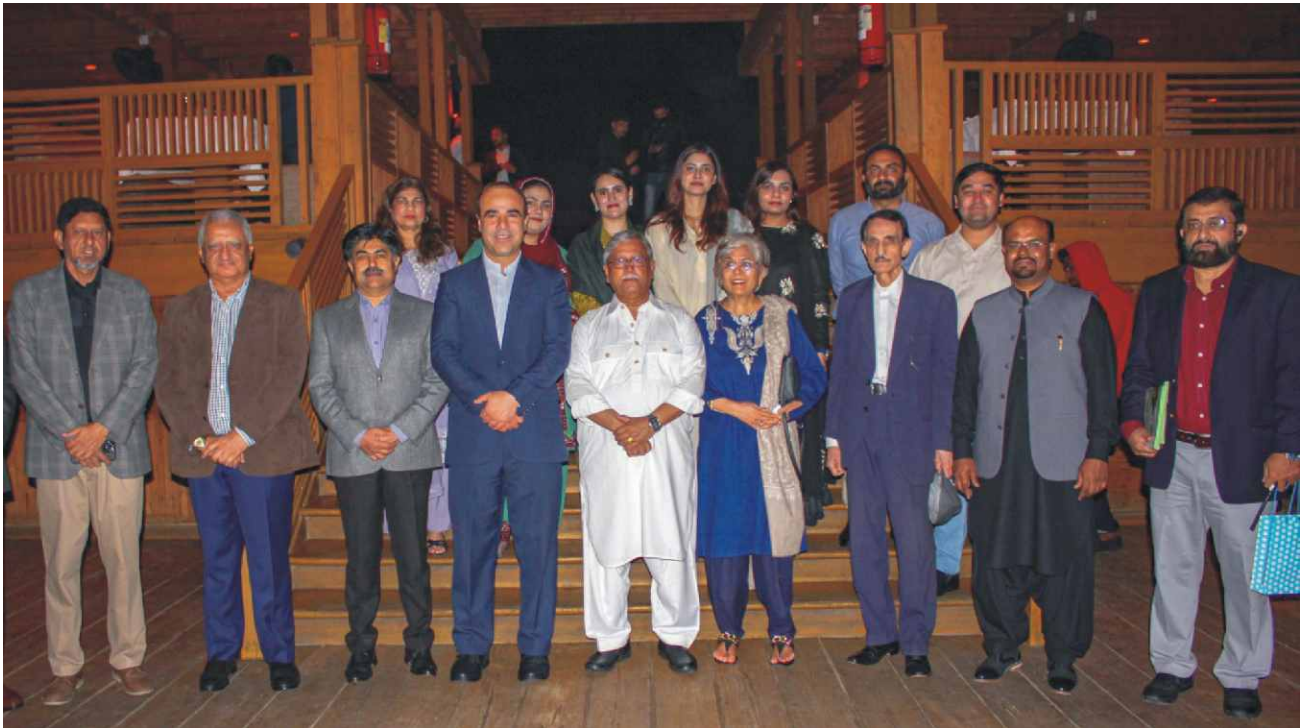
The RFI team provided an overview of various departments to the CISSS team members during the visit. The engagement concluded with a delightful lunch served at the office. As a gesture of honor, Chairman RFI presented a souvenir and RFI's Memento to Executive Director CISSS.

Both teams expressed mutual interest in fostering collaboration in the domains of research and media in the foreseeable future.





# BTTN, CISSS AND RFI COME TOGETHER AT A SPECIAL DINNER HOSTED BY AD NCA LT. GEN (R) KHALID AHMED KIDWAI, NI, HI, HI(M)



On February 19, 2024, Lieutenant General (R) Khalid Ahmed Kidwai and Mrs. Kidwai organized a dinner at a distinguished restaurant near Du-darya, Karachi. The event brought together prominent intellectual

figures, including Dr. Zafar Khan from the Balochistan Think Tank Network and his team, retired Ambassador Qazi M. Khalilullah from CISSS Sindh, and Mr. Nusrat Mirza, Chairman of Rabita Forum International.





## DR. ZAFAR KHAN ALONG WITH HIS TEAM VISITS RFI

Dr. Zafar Khan, the Executive Director of the Balochistan Think Tank Network (BTTN), led a delegation to visit the offices of Rabita Forum International (RFI) on 20<sup>th</sup> February,



2024. Accompanying him were key members of his team, including Muhammad Fahad Abrar, Assistant Director of Administration and Finance, Summra Hamid, Research Officer, and Sakina Ahmed, also a Research Officer.

During the visit, Dr. Zafar provided a concise overview of the significant contributions made by BTTN and expressed admiration for the commendable work undertaken by RFI. In concluding the visit, Nusrat Mirza, Chairman of RFI, expressed gratitude and presented Dr. Zafar Khan with RFI's memento as a token of honor and appreciation.

## RFI OBSERVES KASHMIR SOLIDARITY DAY

On February 5, 2024, Rabita Forum International (RFI) observed Kashmir Solidarity Day, organizing a televised debate on the pressing issue. Dr. Tala'at Wizarat, in her talk, emphasized the significance of Kashmir, highlighting the inherent right to self-determination for every individual, which, she asserted, India has been suppressing.

Khwaja Razi Haider condemned the extremist perspective in India, where Kashmir is viewed as part of 'Hindutuwa,' and held international forces accountable for the ongoing brutality in the region. Dr. Summar Sultana lamented the nation's reliance on UN resolutions and India's unfulfilled promises,



urging a shift toward genuine struggle. Nusrat Mirza concluded that Kashmiris, who have resisted oppressive regimes since 1931, will attain their rightful independence through unwavering perseverance.

# CISSS AND DHA SUFFA UNIVERSITY JOIN HANDS FOR KASHMIR SOLIDARITY



DHA Suffa University in Karachi hosted a seminar organized by the Center for International Strategic Studies Sindh (CISSS) to express solidarity with Kashmir.

Ambassador (R) Qazi M. Khalilullah, the Executive Director of CISSS, highlighted that the Indian government, in its pursuit of maintaining hegemony, dismissed the option for a peaceful resolution and instead opted for an aggressive occupation of Kashmir. Dr. Huma Baqai, addressing the seminar, emphasized the ongoing struggle for freedom in occupied Kashmir, despite the oppressive actions of the Indian Army.

Professor Dr. Rizwan Zeb shared his views,



stating that the Modi government seeks to rationalize its aggressive actions in Kashmir by labeling them as a response to terrorism, garnering support from global powers. He pointed out that Modi exploits this support for his political objectives. Pro-Vice-Chancellor of DHA Suffa University, Prof. Dr. Ahmed Saeed Minhas, asserted that the Indian government violated its own constitution by abolishing the special status of Kashmir.

The seminar concluded with the signing of a memorandum of understanding between DHA Suffa University and CISSS, aimed at fostering further collaboration across various fields.



**QUAID-E-AZAM ACADEMY**

# “KASHMIR STANDS AS THE POTENTIAL TRIGGER FOR CONFLICT IN THE REGION”

## NUSRAT MIRZA



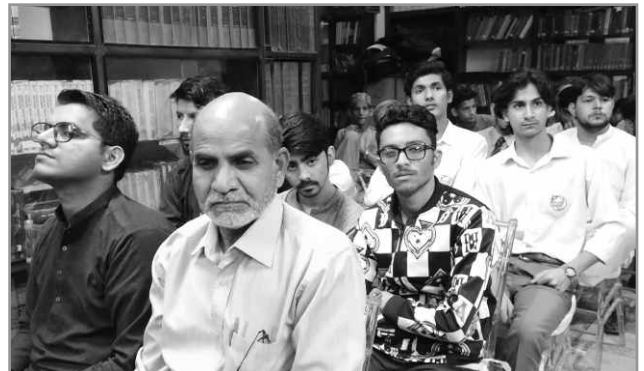
During a seminar convened at Quaid-e-Azam Academy in Karachi, dedicated to expressing solidarity with Kashmiris, Chairman Nusrat Mirza of Rabita Forum International (RFI) underscored that India is adhering to the extremist philosophy of RSS.

He emphasized the inadequate commitment of the United Nations, major global powers, and humanitarian organizations in addressing and resolving this critical issue, warning that it holds the potential to destabilize the region.

Dr. M. Abid Abbasi, another distinguished

speaker at the seminar, highlighted the escalating severity of the Kashmir issue on a daily basis. Farooq Azam, a PhD scholar from Karachi University, contributed to the discourse by asserting that Kashmir's history is marked by resilience, expressing confidence that this resistance will ultimately succeed.

The seminar served as a forum for insightful conversations addressing the urgent challenges associated with the Kashmir conflict and proposed efforts to more effectively bring attention of the world to the issue.





# AMERICAN SECURITY UNDER SEVERE THREAT?

**NUSRAT MIRZA**

Mike Turner, the Chairman of the United States House of Commons Intelligence Committee, has issued a cryptic warning of a "serious national security threat" facing the US. Speaking to CBS News (the American BBC), Turner stated that Russia is developing a nuclear-capable weapon that could take down satellites, thereby disrupting communications. While the American administration maintains that there is no proof of the deployment of such a weapon, the White House has emphasized that the threat is not immediate.

However, congressional leaders are scheduled to receive a briefing on the matter. Russia has categorically denied such threat, but Turner remains concerned and believes that the President of the United States of America (USA) should address the nation to provide confidence regarding this serious national security threat.

This represents a new type of security threat to America, perhaps exaggerated by the top congressman for unknown reasons. Despite

America's geographical distance from Russia, China, and other countries that have faced destabilization since the post-1945 world order, both Russia and China are actively developing weapons to overcome this distance. Supersonic glide missiles have been tested using both lower and upper space to threaten the USA's mainland. However, USA does not consider such weapons as a threat to the United Nations, as perhaps it possesses more potent weapons to counter and deter adversaries.

The US is facing threats from Iran as well. Iran's extended hands are operating in Lebanon as Hezbollah, in Yemen as the Houthis, and supporting militant groups in Iraq and Syria. Among them, Yemen's Houthis pose severe threats, as Red Sea traffic is unsafe, with approximately 15% of the world's oil and cargo ships passing through this route from Asia to Europe and America. Twelve communication cables pass through the Bab al-Mandab Strait. If these cables are damaged, all internet and communication services will be disrupted.

Additionally, as confirmed by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), Iran has enriched uranium to 83%. However, enrichment to 93% would enable Iran to develop an atomic bomb. It is speculated that amidst the Israel-Hamas conflict and global unrest, Iran could emerge as a nuclear power. The United States may be hesitant to attack Iran, as Russia has been supporting this newly





emerging nuclear power. On the other hand, the media is speculating that Europe and the USA are working toward regime change in Iran.

Another threat emerged in the first week of February 2024 when the USA and the Philippines, in an effort to pressure China, commenced military drills just 24 nautical miles away from China's land. The drills lasted for two days in disputed waters and involved an aircraft carrier strike group led by the USS Carl Vinson. The US stated that the drills would enhance our ability to coordinate maritime domain awareness and other shared security interests. Armed Forces of the Philippines Public Affairs Chief Xerxes Trinidad told AFP that they took place between the Recto Bank and Scarborough Shoal, where clashes occurred last month. Beijing condemned them as "provocative military activities" aimed at "flaunting their military might." China's foreign ministry spokesman Wang Wenbin said the exercises were "detrimental to management and to pressurize China."

The US considered that China would remain defensive in the South China Sea, and it did. However, China also became offensive. It organized a super task force fleet of twenty warships weighing 200,000 tons along with four Nuclear Submarines, sailing toward the

western coast of the US from the Pacific Ocean. It was, in fact, a message to the USA: if they come to China's coast, China will go to theirs, and their mainland ultimately wouldn't be as safe as it was after World War II in 1945.

However this has created a serious situation, as the drill was supposed to end in two days, so it concluded on time. China's maneuvering of the Super Fleet and its movement toward the American West Coast has created news, and the media sensationalized it. This movement was unprecedented, but the US took it lightly, perhaps due to reasons related to the American Election of 2024. Some US senators believe that China has a presence in Cuba, though this presence has not been discussed, and details of it have not been mentioned.

In Ukraine, the US is again on the back foot or has reduced the burden. UK concluded a defense pact instead of America or NATO which is considered a sign of weakness for America. Having discussed the above situation, one must keep in mind the American plan to restore the challenged American primacy over the world. It seems that everything, except one, is going according to plan. The United Kingdom (UK) is out of the European Union, and migration from the West to Asia and Africa has started, but it seems to be modified; the West needs manpower for the world war, but inflation is increasing as per plan, and wars in Ukraine and Gaza are in progress. The last stage of the plan is World War III, the symptoms of which are evident. Another problem that has emerged is the increasing unrest in America. Will the American administration be able to control it? If not, the American plan to re-establish its primacy will fail, and this country will come under severe threat.

**The author is the Chief Editor of Monthly Interaction.**

# DE-DOLLARIZATION



**DR. BUSHRA  
BATOOL**

**“The dollar is our currency, but it is your problem” - John B. Connally**

When the US Treasury Secretary John B. Connally in 1971 said these words, he might have had various ambitions attached to the currency but in my opinion, he was imagining the extraterritorial reach of the dollar and his country over the international trading system. As part of the post-war Bretton Woods agreement, the dollar was established as the world's reserve currency. This meant that other countries were supposed to hold large amounts of US dollars in their foreign exchange reserves for international trade and finance. The dollarization of the international trading system empowers the US to manipulate not only the international economy but international order, owing to the power the US holds to impose sanctions, obstructing a country's access to dollars in international markets and preventing international partners from engaging in trade.

The freezing of a country's dollar-

denominated assets held within Western apex financial institutions or the banning of a country's banks from the dollar-denominated SWIFT (Society for Worldwide Interbank Financial Telecommunications) payment system, are all such mechanism that helps the US to harness other countries according to his conditions. Five decades later today, the world has realized that the dollar problem has gone merely beyond hegemonic designs and has become an existential threat. The increasingly hostile US may strangle any country into its crosshairs, many recent examples including sanctions against Russia and Iran, are driving the international community to try decreasing their dependence on the dollar and finding alternate currencies.

During the fifteenth annual BRICS summit held in August 2023, the idea of de-dollarization gained momentum when Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, Brazil's president, and his South African counterpart, Cyril Ramaphosa, proposed using individual countries' currencies for settling trade. The now newly admitted member states, who were by then extended invitations to enter the bloc, might also be considered a driving force in this matter. In July 2023, India and Argentina made their payments to Russia and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) respectively in Chinese Yuan (CNY) or Renminbi due to the constant shortage of US dollar (USD). Iran on the other hand also aspires to find a parallel arrangement for trade except the dollar due to



**Source: EIU Corporate Network**



constant international sanctions. Saudi Arabia during the annual meeting of the World Economic Forum in 2023 in Davos categorically mentioned that the country was open for oil trade in currencies other than the USD for the first time in 48 years.

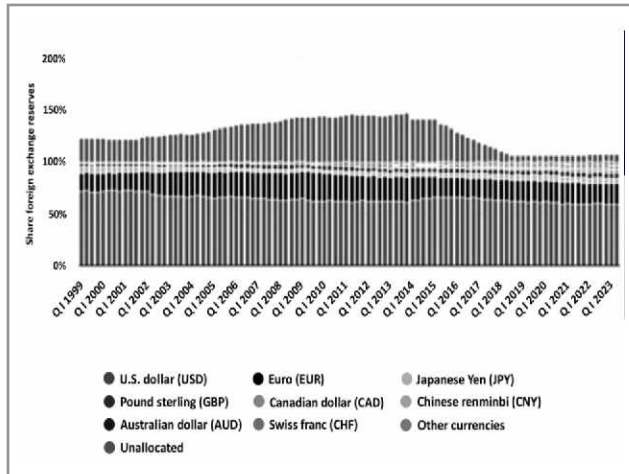
This announcement of Saudi Finance Minister Mohammed al-Jadaan gained much attention internationally and echoes with China, Russia, Iran, and Brazil's views who advocate for reducing the role of the USD as the main global trade currency due to recent geopolitical tensions with the US. Saudi Arabia seems to be frustrated by the US also because of the perceived US negligence in various matters including matters of cooperation in Saudi defense and weapons system, US meager efforts in containing Iran, US failure to ensure a two-state solution of Palestine as well as US criticism towards human rights violation in Saudi Arabia. Saudi Arabia doubts the commitments of the US as the main security guarantor to the region.

These grievances have led Saudi Arabia to prompt cooperation with China and Russia which also paved the way to its historic rapprochement with Iran. Referring to Saudi Arabia's growing proximity with China, in parallel to the US, Foreign Minister Prince Faisal bin Farhan Al Saud remarks that 'We don't see this as a zero-sum game,' reflects that his country would continue to work with all its partners, all separately placed and not in any contradiction to one another, however, the message it communicated to the US. Saudi Arabia making non-USD currency deals might be a component of a multifaceted bargaining strategy that the US is taking seriously and is willing to make arrangements. A New York Times columnist Thomas Friedman in his article published in July 2023 revealed that high-level negotiations were underway on a comprehensive security agreement to address

Saudi concerns in return for a limit on Saudi relations with China. It added that arrangements for Saudi-Israeli rapprochement were also discussed however, due to Israel's continuous aggression on Gaza, the matter seemed to be halted.

China plans to make oil and gas contracts in Yuan and would continue importing large quantities of crude oil and Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) from Gulf countries and others making use of the Shanghai Petroleum and National Gas Exchange (SHPGX) as a platform. SHPGX specializes in trading energy-related products in China and has settled its first cross-border trade in China's digital currency in October 2023. Petro China International paid for one million barrels of crude oil using digital Yuan or e-Yuan, however, the seller was kept anonymous, Yicai Global reports. Now the question is, why do BRICS member countries matter in currency settlement of international trade? The answer is their share in international trade. Only in 2023 before the recent enlargement of 2024, the five countries accounted for 32% of the world's GDP which is even greater than 30% for the G7 countries, and with the admission of six more members, the bloc has an increasing potential to govern the pattern of international economy and setting rules for international trade, earlier dictated by the US due to USD hegemony.





BRICS member countries are not the only aspirants of de-dollarization, there are various reasons why there is growing dissatisfaction in countries around the world including the dollar hegemony, the Federal Reserve Board's manipulations of interest rates, ever-mounting debt, rising inflation, and growing differences between rich and poor regions around the world, among others. Critiques believe that an alternate trading system is needed. From the above representation, it is clear that the USD is the largest held currency in global foreign exchange followed by Euro (EUR) and Japanese Yen (JPY). The performance of the Chinese Renminbi (CNY) is comparatively lower but this attributed to the fact that IMF included the CNY as part of the Special Drawing Rights (SDR) basket in 2016 and the currency has been gaining momentum recently.

The trend shows its contribution to international trade is increasing with the increasing influence of China regionally and globally. The infrastructural development and increasing diplomatic engagements put China on the path to challenge the US currency, although there is a long way to go. In recent times, some central banks are touting digital currencies as a way to create a more

balanced global economy where no single country dominates international trade. Digital currency is a form of currency that is available only in digital or electronic form and is called digital money, electronic money, electronic currency, or cyber cash. Digital currencies do not have physical attributes and are available only in digital form.

Transactions involving digital currencies are made using computers or electronic wallets connected to the internet or designated networks. The rise of digital currencies, i.e., Crypto currencies is an important means of exchange, which is a decentralized digital money, used over the internet. The worldwide capitalization of crypto currencies is over a trillion dollars and is largely used globally. Another prospect of dealing in crypto currencies is that they are not a national currency and are not likely to be manipulated by international political contestations. Bitcoin, a leading crypto currency, is also very popular in some of the world's largest economies including the UK, Turkey, and India, which in 2023 ranked second behind the US for raw crypto currency transaction volume. Thus, it is seen as the potential currency to take over the USD. Americans and Europeans own Bitcoin among others. If as an alternate currency, India plans to adopt Bitcoin for international trade, its biggest trading partner the US would have to opt for the same and would create a domino effect taking other countries in its net and the era of an international, transparent currency to replace the dollar-based economy will truly begin. OpenBazaar and BitGo are two companies that have already started using crypto currencies in international trade. These initiatives have at least introduced alternates of dollar in international trade.

**Continued on page 34**

# GEOSTRATEGIC COMPETITION IN THE SOUTH CHINA SEA: CHALLENGES FOR PAKISTAN



**WAJEEHA  
NAJAM**

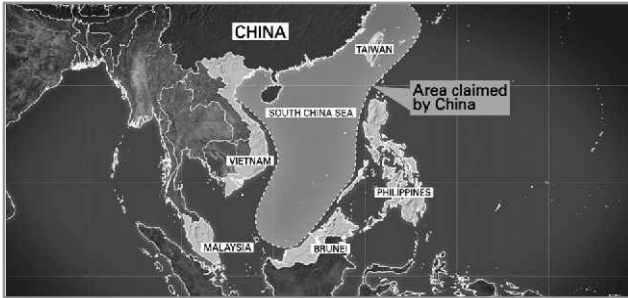
The South China Sea has emerged as a focal point of geostrategic competition, presenting complex challenges for countries far beyond its immediate vicinity. For Pakistan, situated at the crossroads of South Asia, Central Asia, and the Middle East, the developments in this region hold significant implications. The complex dynamics, characterized by overlapping territorial claims, militarization of islands, and competing interests among major global players, pose both opportunities and challenges for Pakistan's foreign policy and strategic calculus. At the heart of the South China Sea disputes lie conflicting territorial claims between several regional actors, primarily China, Vietnam, the Philippines, Malaysia, and Brunei. China's assertive actions, including the construction of artificial islands and the deployment of military assets, have heightened tensions in the region. These actions not only challenge the sovereignty of other claimant states but also raise concerns regarding freedom of navigation and overflight in one of the world's busiest maritime routes.

For Pakistan, a country heavily reliant on maritime trade for its economic prosperity, ensuring the stability and security of the South China Sea is of paramount importance. As a key player in the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), Pakistan shares strategic interests with China, its longstanding ally. However, it also maintains robust diplomatic

and economic ties with other claimant states, particularly Vietnam and the Philippines, complicating its stance on the issue. Moreover, Pakistan's geographical proximity to the Indian Ocean further highlights the significance of the South China Sea in its strategic calculus. The Indian Ocean serves as a vital maritime lifeline for Pakistan's trade and energy security, connecting it to global markets and energy resources. Any disruption or escalation of tensions in the South China Sea could reverberate across the Indian Ocean, affecting Pakistan's maritime interests and regional stability.

In navigating the complex web of geostrategic competition in the South China Sea, Pakistan faces several challenges and dilemmas. Firstly, balancing its relations with China, a major economic and strategic partner, while also maintaining cordial ties with other claimant states, requires adept diplomacy and nuanced maneuvering. Pakistan's support for China's territorial claims in the South China Sea must be weighed against its broader interests in upholding international law and maritime norms. Secondly, Pakistan's alignment with China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), of which CPEC is a flagship project, could potentially draw it into the geopolitical rivalries playing out in the South China Sea. While CPEC offers immense economic benefits for Pakistan, it also ties its fate closely to China's geopolitical ambitions, including its assertive actions in disputed





waters. Striking a delicate balance between reaping the rewards of Chinese investment and safeguarding its own national interests is a persistent challenge for Pakistani policymakers.

Furthermore, Pakistan's relations with the United States and other Western powers add another layer of complexity to its approach toward the South China Sea disputes. While Pakistan enjoys strategic cooperation with the US in counterterrorism and regional security, its deepening ties with China have raised concerns in Washington about its alignment with Beijing's assertive agenda. Managing this triangular relationship amidst the shifting dynamics of the Indo-Pacific region poses a strategic conundrum for Pakistan. In light of these challenges, Pakistan must adopt a nuanced and pragmatic approach to the South China Sea disputes, guided by its national interests and commitment to upholding international law. Firstly, Pakistan should continue to advocate for peaceful resolution of disputes through dialogue and diplomacy, emphasizing the principles of international law, including the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS).

Secondly, Pakistan should actively engage in regional initiatives aimed at enhancing maritime cooperation and security in the Indo-Pacific, such as the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) and the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF). By promoting confidence-building measures and cooperative

mechanisms, Pakistan can contribute to fostering stability and reducing tensions in the South China Sea. Moreover, Pakistan should leverage its geostrategic position and maritime capabilities to play a constructive role in ensuring freedom of navigation and overflight in the South China Sea. As a member of the Indian Ocean Naval Symposium (IONS) and the Combined Task Force 150 (CTF-150), Pakistan can collaborate with like-minded states to uphold maritime security and counter illicit activities in the region.

In parallel, Pakistan should pursue diversification of its strategic partnerships and economic ties to mitigate overreliance on any single country or bloc. By deepening its engagement with regional powers such as Japan, Australia, and India, Pakistan can enhance its diplomatic leverage and mitigate the risks associated with geopolitical rivalries in the South China Sea. Furthermore, Pakistan should invest in enhancing its maritime domain awareness and capabilities to effectively safeguard its maritime interests in the broader Indo-Pacific region. This includes modernizing its naval fleet, bolstering coastal surveillance infrastructure, and investing in human capital development to build a skilled maritime workforce. Ultimately, Pakistan's approach to the geopolitical competition in the South China Sea should be guided by a combination of pragmatism, diplomacy, and strategic foresight. By actively engaging in regional initiatives, diversifying its strategic partnerships, and strengthening its maritime capabilities, Pakistan can navigate the challenges posed by the evolving dynamics of the South China Sea while safeguarding its own national interests and contributing to regional peace and stability.

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

# NAVIGATING THE HORIZON: CHARTING A COURSE FOR PAKISTAN'S NEW GOVT POST-2024

**MIRZA KASHIF  
BAIG**

## INTRODUCTION

The 2024 general elections in Pakistan have ushered in a new government, marking a significant transition in the country's political landscape. This pivotal moment comes with high expectations and the colossal responsibility of navigating through a myriad of challenges that lie at the intersection of economic, political, social, security, environmental, and international domains. The new administration faces the daunting task of addressing these multifaceted challenges in a manner that ensures sustainable development, national unity, and a robust position in the global arena.

Pakistan, with its strategic geopolitical location, diverse population, and rich cultural heritage, stands at a crossroads where the decisions of the new government will have profound implications not only for its own future but also for regional stability and global dynamics. The economic challenges encompass fiscal management, trade imbalances, and the need for structural reforms across key sectors to rejuvenate

growth and ensure equitable development. Politically, the government must strengthen democratic institutions, ensure good governance, and navigate the intricate civil-military relations that have historically shaped the country's governance landscape.

Social cohesion and inclusivity remain paramount, with education, healthcare, gender equality, and social integration at the core of building a harmonious society. Security challenges, both traditional and non-traditional, demand a comprehensive strategy that addresses internal and external threats, ensuring the safety and stability of the nation. Environmental sustainability and climate change mitigation are critical for preserving Pakistan's natural resources and ensuring a livable future for coming generations. In the realm of international relations and diplomacy, the new government must articulate a clear foreign policy vision that enhances Pakistan's global standing, fosters regional cooperation, and navigates the complex web of international geopolitics. The diplomatic acumen with which Pakistan manages its bilateral and multilateral relationships will be instrumental in securing its interests and contributing to global peace and development.

This article aims to delve into these challenges, providing a nuanced analysis of each domain and offering strategic recommendations for the new government. The goal is to outline a pathway that leverages opportunities, addresses vulnerabilities, and



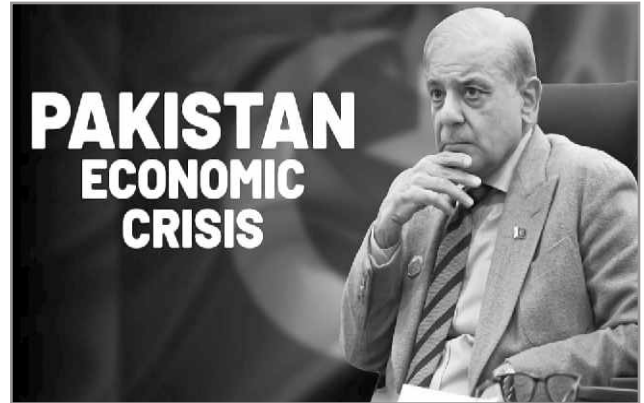
sets Pakistan on a course towards prosperity, stability, and an enhanced role on the world stage.

## ECONOMIC CHALLENGES

The new government of Pakistan, established post-2024 elections, is met with a daunting array of economic challenges. These issues are multifaceted, stemming from both longstanding structural weaknesses and more immediate fiscal crises. Addressing these challenges is critical for setting Pakistan on a path toward sustainable economic growth and development. This section examines the key economic hurdles, including fiscal stability, trade imbalances, structural reforms, the energy crisis, and inflationary pressures.

One of the most pressing concerns for the new administration is the precarious state of Pakistan's fiscal health. The country's budget deficit has widened, and public debt levels have soared, raising alarms about fiscal sustainability. The government needs to implement rigorous fiscal reforms aimed at enhancing revenue collection through broadening the tax base and curbing tax evasion. Additionally, rationalizing public expenditure, particularly by cutting down on non-essential spending, is crucial for fiscal consolidation. Effective debt management strategies, including renegotiating terms and exploring sustainable borrowing options, are imperative to prevent debt from spiraling out of control.

Pakistan's economy is also characterized by a persistent trade imbalance, with imports significantly outweighing exports. This trade deficit contributes to depleting foreign exchange reserves, placing additional pressure on the country's balance of payments. To address this, the new government must focus on boosting exports through diversification, improving product



quality, and entering new markets. Additionally, policies to encourage import substitution and reduce reliance on imported goods, especially in energy, can help improve the trade balance. Strengthening foreign exchange reserves is essential for maintaining currency stability and meeting international payment obligations.

The need for structural reforms in critical sectors of the economy cannot be overstated. Agriculture, manufacturing, and services sectors require modernization to enhance productivity and competitiveness. In agriculture, there is a need for improved irrigation techniques, seed quality, and access to markets. The manufacturing sector requires investment in technology and innovation to move up the value chain. In services, focusing on IT and financial services can help capture more of the global market. These reforms are essential for job creation, increased exports, and overall economic growth.

An ongoing energy crisis, characterized by power shortages and an unreliable supply, has been a significant bottleneck for economic activity in Pakistan. The new government must prioritize the development of a sustainable and diversified energy mix, focusing on renewable sources and improving energy efficiency. Investment in energy infrastructure, including upgrading the grid and reducing transmission losses, is also vital for ensuring a



reliable energy supply to support industrial and commercial activities.

High inflation rates have eroded purchasing power and contributed to socio-economic disparities. The government, in coordination with the State Bank of Pakistan, needs to adopt a monetary policy that addresses inflation without stifling economic growth. This might include controlling money supply, managing interest rates, and implementing policies to stabilize food and energy prices. Ensuring price stability is crucial for household welfare and overall economic stability.

## **POLITICAL AND GOVERNANCE CHALLENGES**

Following the 2024 elections, Pakistan's new government is confronted with a complex array of political and governance challenges that are crucial to address for the country's stability and democratic consolidation. These challenges range from ensuring the integrity of democratic institutions and managing civil-military relations to fostering regional stability and addressing governance issues. This section outlines the primary political and governance hurdles the new administration must navigate.

The foundation of political stability in Pakistan rests on the strength and integrity of its democratic institutions. The new government must prioritize the reinforcement of these institutions to ensure they function transparently, efficiently, and accountably. Strengthening the rule of law, ensuring the independence of the judiciary, and promoting a culture of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms are imperative. Efforts to enhance the electoral process, ensuring it is free, fair, and transparent, will further consolidate democratic norms and practices.

The civil-military dynamic in Pakistan has

historically been a delicate balance. The new government must navigate these relations prudently, ensuring civilian supremacy while fostering a constructive partnership with the military. This involves clear demarcation of responsibilities, with the military focusing on defense and security, while governance remains the purview of the elected civilian administration. Open dialogue and mutual respect between civilian and military leadership are essential for maintaining this balance and ensuring national stability.

Effective governance is key to addressing many of the socio-economic challenges Pakistan faces. The new administration needs to implement comprehensive governance reforms aimed at enhancing efficiency, transparency, and accountability across all levels of government. Tackling corruption head-on is crucial for restoring public trust and attracting domestic and foreign investment. Initiatives such as e-governance, merit-based appointments, and strengthening anti-corruption institutions can play a significant role in improving governance.

Pakistan's diverse ethnic and regional makeup presents challenges in terms of regional stability and inter-provincial harmony. The new government must work towards equitable development across all regions, ensuring fair distribution of resources and addressing regional grievances. Promoting policies that respect linguistic,



cultural, and ethnic diversity and ensuring representation of all groups in governance structures can mitigate feelings of marginalization and promote national unity.

A vibrant and engaged civil society is a hallmark of a healthy democracy. The new government should encourage public participation in the democratic process and foster an environment where civil society organizations can operate freely and contribute to policy-making. Engaging with citizens, media, and non-governmental organizations in a constructive dialogue can enhance policy effectiveness and ensure that governance is responsive to the needs of the populace. Addressing these political and governance challenges is vital for the new government to establish a stable, democratic, and prosperous Pakistan. The path forward requires a commitment to democratic principles, effective governance, and inclusive policies that cater to the diverse needs of the Pakistani population.

## **SOCIAL CHALLENGES**

The societal fabric of Pakistan is characterized by its rich diversity and complex dynamics. Post-2024, the new government is faced with an array of social challenges that span across education, healthcare, gender equality, and social integration. Addressing these challenges is essential for fostering a cohesive, inclusive, and progressive society. This section explores the key social hurdles and their implications for the country's development.

A cornerstone for any progressive society is its emphasis on education and literacy. Pakistan's education sector faces issues such as low enrollment rates, gender disparities in education, lack of infrastructure, and outdated curricula. The government must prioritize education reform, focusing on

increasing access to quality education, particularly for girls and underprivileged communities. Investment in teacher training, infrastructure development, and curriculum modernization is crucial for nurturing a skilled and informed citizenry.

Equitable access to quality healthcare remains a significant challenge in Pakistan, exacerbated by regional disparities, insufficient healthcare facilities, and a shortage of trained medical personnel. The new administration needs to enhance the healthcare infrastructure, ensure the availability of essential medicines and services, and promote public health initiatives. Addressing these issues is vital for improving the overall health and well-being of the population. Despite progress in certain areas, gender inequality persists, manifesting in economic participation, education, and political representation. The new government must implement policies that promote gender equality and empower women and girls. This includes ensuring equal access to education and employment, legal protections against gender-based violence, and promoting women's participation in political and public life.

Pakistan's diverse ethnic, linguistic, and religious landscape presents challenges for social integration and cohesion. The government must work towards fostering a sense of national identity that transcends these divisions, promoting tolerance, and mutual respect among different communities. Initiatives to celebrate cultural diversity, protect minority rights, and prevent discrimination are essential for building a harmonious and inclusive society. Poverty and socio-economic inequality are pervasive challenges that undermine social stability and development.

**Continued on page 29**

# HAZNAVI MISSILE

## HATF 3 HAZNAVI

**CLASS:**  
SRBM

**BASING:**  
Road-Mobile

**LAUNCH WEIGHT:**  
4,560 kg

**PAYLOAD:**  
Single Warhead,  
700 kg

**WARHEAD:**  
HE, Submunitions,  
12-20 kT nuclear

**RANGE:**  
300 km

**LENGTH:**  
8.5 M

**DIAMETER:**  
0.8 M

**STATUS:**  
Operational





# GHAZNAVI MISSILE: EVOLUTION, SPECIFICATIONS, AND STRATEGIC SIGNIFICANCE



**SYED SAMIULLAH**

## INTRODUCTION:

The Ghaznavi missile, also identified as Hatf-3 within military discourse, is categorized as a Short-Range Ballistic Missile (SRBM). Notably, it possesses an operational range of approximately 300 kilometers. What makes it a crucial asset within Pakistan's weaponry is its versatile capacity to carry both conventional and nuclear warheads. The National Development Complex (NDC) of Pakistan had been assigned the responsibility for the missile's development, marking a strategic initiative geared towards bolstering the nation's military capabilities.

## GHAZNAVI'S DEVELOPMENT:

The genesis of this project traces its roots to 1987, signifying its initial commencement. However, subsequent to its beginning, the project experienced a temporary hiatus when Pakistan procured Chinese M-11 (DF-11) missiles in the early 1990s. Acknowledging the inherent limitations of the Chinese missiles in effectively enhancing Pakistan's nuclear deterrence against India, the Ghaznavi program experienced a revival in 1993. In



1995, its rocket engine was successfully tested and was said to be a "major break-through in rocket development in Pakistan". This resurgence ultimately led to its formal incorporation into military operations in 2004.

## SPECIFICATIONS:

The Ghaznavi, with dimensions measuring 8.5 meters in length and 0.8 meters in diameter, bears a notable visual resemblance to the Chinese DF-11. It is a Supersonic missile. (Supersonic speed is the speed of an object that exceeds the speed of sound i.e.



Mach 1).

In terms of weight, it possesses a launch weight of 4,650 kg, utilizing a single-stage solid propellant for propulsion. The missile is deployed from a road-mobile transporter-erector-launcher (TEL) featuring four axles. With a capacity to carry a 700 kg payload, the nuclear variant of the missile is anticipated to include a single warhead with a yield ranging from 5 to 12 kilotons. The Ghaznavi, featuring an inertial guidance system, attains an estimated accuracy of 250 meters Circular Error Probable (CEP). The integration of terminal guidance, however, has the potential to enhance its precision to 50 meters CEP.

### TESTS AND SERVICE HISTORY:

Commencing its spaceflight endeavors in 1994, Ghaznavi achieved its inaugural launch on May 26, 2002, amid heightened tensions with India. The nuclear weapon-delivery system gained global attention in the tense climate of 2002. Subsequent to a successful test on October 3, 2003, from an undisclosed location, the Ghaznavi, with a range of 290km, entered military service with the Pakistan Army's strategic command in March 2004. Further tests ensued, including those on December 9, 2006, February 13, 2008, May 8, 2010, and May 2012, along with a night training launch on August 28, 2019.

The most recent test launch of Ghaznavi took place on January 23, 2020. According to ISPR, Pakistan successfully executed a training launch for the surface-to-surface ballistic missile Ghaznavi, possessing the capability to deliver various warheads within a range of 290 kilometers. This launch was part of the Army Strategic Forces Command's Field Training Exercise, conducted to practice operational readiness procedures in both day and night scenarios.



Lieutenant General Nadeem Zaki Manj, the then Director General of the Strategic Plans Division, along with other high-ranking officials, witnessed the training launch. The Director General commended the operational preparedness of the Army Strategic Forces Command, acknowledging their high proficiency in handling the weapon system. Additionally, he expressed confidence in the robustness of the Strategic Command and Control System and the capabilities of the Strategic Forces. As of 2019, Pakistan was reported to possess and operate 30 Ghaznavi launchers, approximately 16 of which were configured for the deployment of nuclear warheads.

### SIGNIFICANCE:

The strategic significance of the Ghaznavi missile within Pakistan's military capabilities is noteworthy, as it functions as a credible deterrent against potential adversaries. Since its active deployment, the missile has demonstrated operational readiness, highlighting the efficacy of Pakistan's Strategic Command and Control System. The missile's commendable attributes, including its range, payload capacity, and precision, contribute substantially to Pakistan's overarching defense strategy, particularly within the context of regional security dynamics.

The author is a Research Officer at Rabita Forum International (RFI) and the Associate Editor of Monthly Interaction.

# SPEECH OF AMBASSADOR QAZI M. KHALILULLAH (R), EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, CISSS ON “VITALITY OF PAKISTAN-RUSSIA RELATIONS FOR REGIONAL CONNECTIVITY AND DEVELOPMENT”

**CONFERENCE ORGANIZED BY INSTITUTE OF ORIENTED STUDIES, RUSSIA ACADEMY OF SCIENCES, MOSCOW ON “PAKISTAN POTENTIAL OF COOPERATION WITH RUSSIA IN CONTEXT OF POLITICAL PROCESS OF DEMOCRATIZATION” 29 JAN. 2024**

Dear Chairman,  
Honourable Director of the Institute of Oriental Studies,  
Excellencies  
Dear Guests,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,  
Good Afternoon,  
Assalam o Alaikum.

At the outset, allow me to thank the Chair for the invitation to participate in this important conference along with many distinguished speakers from Pakistan and Russia. I have very fond memories of my stay in Moscow as Ambassador of Pakistan to Russia from 2016 to 2019. Moscow is one of the most beautiful capitals of the world. People of Russia are friendly and hospitable.

During my stay in Moscow as Ambassador, I worked very closely with researchers of the Institute of Oriental Studies, in particular Prof. Dr Belokrenitsky and Dr Irina Serenko to exchange views on bilateral, regional and global issues of mutual interest from time to time. Let me also mention that I had the fullest support of senior officials of the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs as well as other ministries and departments of Russia.

Let me now say a few words with regard to the title of the Conference. Pakistan is all set to hold Federal and Provincial elections on 8 February. However, I am confident that the



outcome of the elections will have no impact on Pakistan-Russia relations as all political parties in Pakistan and State institutions share common desire to enhance relations with Russia.

Today's conference is the third Pakistan-Russia conference in nine months. The first conference was organized by the Institute of Oriental Studies in Moscow in May last year to celebrate 75 years of establishment of diplomatic relations between Pakistan and Moscow. The second was organized in Islamabad in November 2023 by the Strategic Vision Institute in collaboration with the Russian Center for Energy and Security Studies on “Pakistan-Russia Relations Amid Transforming Global Order”. I participated in the previous two conferences and am delighted to participate in this one as well.

These conferences are in line with the upward trajectory of Pakistan-Russia relations



and speak positively about the efforts of our think tanks to further enhance Pakistan-Russia cooperation with the support of our respective Embassies and Governments. Pakistan and Russia enjoy close and multifaceted relations based on mutual respect, goodwill and trust.

Over the last two decades, both sides have worked closely and succeeded in enhancing relations in various areas including trade, energy, security and military-to-military engagement. Pakistan and Russia also enjoy close cooperation in multilateral fora. We come together as partners in the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO).

Let me now focus on my topic which is "Vitality of Pakistan-Russia Relations for Regional Connectivity and Development." At this point, let me recall a term that was coined by the then Defence Minister of Pakistan Mr Khurram Dastgir Khan during his visit to Moscow in 2018. The term was "RUPEC", which stands for Russia-Pakistan Energy Corridor, similar to China-Pakistan Economic Corridor which is being built in Pakistan with Chinese investment of more than 60 billion dollars. But I will not restrict myself to RUPEC. I will also talk about Pakistan-Russia Maritime, Road and Rail corridors.

Pakistan-Soviet relations developed gradually after establishment of diplomatic relations on 1st May 1948. Although Pakistan was in the Western bloc during the Cold War, Pakistan and Soviet Union were able to



cooperate on a number of important projects such as establishment of Pakistan Steel Mills, power projects at Guddu and Muzaffargarh and OGDCL. The desire to do more such mutually beneficial projects exists on both sides and will be the focus of my presentation.

In May last year, first ever direct shipping service between St. Petersburg and Karachi was launched. Arrival of NECO Line vessel "MV Crystal St. Petersburg" on 25 May 2023 at Karachi port marked the commencement of this service and establishment of a Maritime Corridor between the two countries.

However, maritime trade routes have become vulnerable to geopolitical contestation and reaction to Israel's genocide in Palestine. This highlights the significance of land corridors. As during the Soviet period, focus of economic cooperation between Pakistan and Russia has remained on energy projects. These projects include:

- i. In 2015, Islamabad and Moscow signed a USD 2.5 billion contract to build the Pakistan Stream Pipeline, an 1,100 km north-south gas pipeline to supply gas from LNG terminals from Karachi and Gwadar to Lahore.
- ii. An Inter-Governmental Agreement on Cooperation in the Sphere of Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) was signed between the two countries on 13 October 2017.
- iii. Pakistan and Russia also have interest in a





regional undersea gas pipeline. In this connection, the two countries signed a MoU in February 2019 in Moscow on conducting feasibility study for a subsea pipeline from Middle East to South Asia.

Formation of Afghan Interim Government after the chaotic withdrawal of foreign forces from Afghanistan in 2021 has enabled Pakistan, Russia and Central Asian Republics to enhance trade through Afghanistan. In recent months, trucks carrying goods from Russia and Kazakhstan have made first ever trips to Pakistan through Afghanistan.

Also, Russian LPG has been transported by road from Russia to Pakistan through Afghanistan. Interestingly, Afghanistan, which divided Islamabad and Moscow during the Soviet invasion was helpful in bringing the two countries closer due to shared concerns and approaches to the peace process, and orderly exit of foreign forces from Afghanistan. According to Pakistani traders, 90% of goods from Pakistan to Russia are being exported via Afghanistan and Uzbekistan.

Pakistan's "Vision Central Asia" policy focuses on enhanced and result-oriented engagement with Central Asian countries under its five pillars: (i) Political; (ii) Trade and

Investment; (iii) Energy and Connectivity; (iv) Security and Defence; and (v) People-to-People Contact.

According to the National Security Policy of Pakistan 2022-2026, Islamabad's geo-economic pivot is focused on enhancing trade and economic ties through connectivity that links Central Asia to our warm waters. Pakistan is therefore working towards actualizing agreements on energy and transit with the Central Asian Republics. These include:

- i. TAPI, conceived in 1992. It will be 1,800 km long pipeline from Turkmenistan through Afghanistan and Pakistan to India. Construction of the pipeline will transport 33 billion cubic meters of gas to the three countries.
- ii. CASA 1000 is one of Central Asia's largest electricity transmission project from Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan to Afghanistan and Pakistan. It is 1,250 km long. The project will provide 1500 MW of electricity from Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan to Afghanistan and Pakistan.

Russia has the opportunity to participate in these projects. I recall that in 2017, during a session of Pakistan-Russia Inter-Governmental Commission, Russia expressed interest in upgrading Quetta-Taftan Railway line from Pakistan to Iran. According to media reports, Russia has expressed renewed interest in this project.

This will be helpful in establishing a rail corridor between Pakistan and Russia via Iran. Let me share with you that freight train service between Pakistan, Iran and Turkey resumed in December 2021. The train covers more than 1,990 km inside Pakistan, 2,600 km in Iran and 1,850 km in Turkey before reaching its final stop in Istanbul.

**Continued on page 28**

# PAKISTAN INSTITUTE OF ENGINEERING AND APPLIED SCIENCES (PIEAS)

**INTERACTION  
TEAM**

In 1967, the foundation for this prestigious Institute was laid with the establishment of the 'Reactor School' at the Pakistan Institute of Nuclear Science & Technology (PINSTECH). Though the Reactor School was initially focused on nuclear technology courses for young engineers and scientists of PAEC but it evolved into the 'Centre for Nuclear Studies' (CNS) in 1972, affiliated with Quaid-i-Azam University for Master's degree programs. A fellowship program was also initiated in 1972, offering attractive fellowships for science and engineering graduates.

As activities expanded, CNS relocated to a separate building in 1978, introducing new degree programs such as M.Sc. (Systems Engineering) in 1988, M.Sc. (Nuclear Medicine) in 1989, and Ph.D. (Nuclear Engineering) in 1990. The institution's growth and diversified offerings prompted a name change to "Pakistan Institute of Engineering & Applied Sciences" (PIEAS) in 1997. PIEAS attained degree-awarding institute status from the Government of Pakistan in April 2000, elevating its position in the education and research landscape. Today, PIEAS stands as a multidimensional, degree-awarding



university-level educational institution with programs spanning various disciplines.

The institute offers Bachelor's, Master's, and Ph.D. programs in Chemical Engineering, Electrical Engineering, Mechanical Engineering, Metallurgy and Materials Engineering, Nuclear Engineering, Computer and Information Sciences, Medical Sciences, and Physics. The typical durations for BS and MS/MPhil programs are 4 and 2 years, respectively. PIEAS achieved national recognition when the Higher Education Commission (HEC) named it the best engineering university in Pakistan in 2006 and retained this title in 2012. Subsequent rankings by HEC and QS World University Rankings have consistently acknowledged







PIEAS as a leading institution in engineering and technology.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, PIEAS played a vital role by collaborating with POF to develop CORVENT, Pakistan's first indigenous ventilator. This achievement showcased the institute's commitment to innovation and societal impact. The faculty at PIEAS is highly accomplished, having published over 650 papers in international journals. Faculty members have been honored with prestigious awards, including 3 Sitara-e-Imtiaz, 2 Tamgha-i-Imtiaz, 3 President's Pride of

Performance, 1 President's Medal for Technology, 1 Aizaaz-e-Kamal, 3 Aizaaz-e-Fazeelat, and 9 Best Teacher Awards.

Furthermore, PIEAS has fostered international collaborations with renowned universities, enhancing its Ph.D. program. The institute actively engages in industry-related projects, leading to the development of various industrial products and specialized educational systems. The PIEAS 'Literary Society' contributes to the institute's vibrant culture by publishing quarterly newsletters titled 'Zeast' since 2013 and yearly magazines named 'Dareecha' since 2012. These publications are accessible in PDF format on the official PIEAS website, reflecting the institution's commitment to academic and creative pursuits.

In conclusion, PIEAS stands as a beacon of excellence in engineering and applied sciences, consistently delivering high-quality education, groundbreaking research, and impactful contributions to society.

**Continued from page 26**

## **SPEECH OF AMBASSADOR QAZI M. KHALILULLAH (R),**

It completes one side of the trip in 11 days. The journey takes 10 days less than the voyage of 21 days by sea. It is therefore possible to talk of a train corridor from Pakistan to Russia via Iran. In February 2021, leaders of Pakistan, Uzbekistan and Afghanistan agreed to a roadmap for a 573 km rail link from Mazar-i-Sharif to Peshawar, via Kabul. Rail and road routes already exist from Termez to Mazar-i-Sharif connecting Uzbekistan with Afghanistan.

Connectivity is also possible within the framework of SCO. Pakistan wishes to connect CPEC with other corridors in Central Asia.

SCO holds a lot of potential for promoting connectivity in the region as in terms of geographic scope and population, it is the world's largest regional organization, covering approx. 60% of the area of Eurasia, 40% of the world population, and more than 30% of global GDP.

Connectivity for development between Russia and Pakistan and realization of projects that I have spoken about will also be helpful in the realization of Russian President's vision for integration of the Eurasian space. Let me conclude by underscoring that the Moscow Format of Consultations was very effective in promoting peace in Afghanistan. We need a similar format to promote regional connectivity for development.

Thank You.

**Continued from page 20**

## **NAVIGATING THE HORIZON: CHARTING A COURSE FOR PAKISTAN'S NEW GOVT POST-2024**

The government's approach to social welfare must be holistic, targeting the root causes of poverty and inequality. Social safety net programs, equitable economic opportunities, and targeted interventions for marginalized communities are necessary to uplift the socio-economic status of the vulnerable population. The social challenges facing Pakistan are deeply interwoven with the country's economic and political landscapes. Effective strategies to address these issues require a multi-sectoral approach, combining policy reforms, targeted interventions, and active participation from all stakeholders, including civil society, non-governmental organizations, and the international community.

### **SECURITY CHALLENGES**

In the contemporary geopolitical landscape, Pakistan faces a complex array of security challenges that span both traditional and non-traditional domains. The evolving nature of these threats necessitates a comprehensive and adaptive security strategy by the new government. This section delves into the critical security challenges, including terrorism and extremism, border security, internal security dynamics, and cybersecurity threats.

Despite significant efforts and successes in counterterrorism operations, Pakistan continues to grapple with the threats of terrorism and extremism. These challenges are multifaceted, involving domestic insurgent groups, transnational terrorist networks, and ideologically motivated extremism. The government must continue to strengthen its

counterterrorism framework, focusing on intelligence sharing, law enforcement capacity building, and deradicalization programs. Addressing the socio-economic and ideological underpinnings of extremism is crucial for long-term peace and stability.

Pakistan's strategic location, bordering Afghanistan, India, Iran, and China, presents unique security challenges. Maintaining secure and stable borders is essential for national security and regional stability. The government must navigate complex relations with its neighbors, particularly in managing cross-border terrorism, smuggling, and irregular migration. Enhanced border



management systems, diplomatic engagement, and regional cooperation are vital components of a robust border security strategy.

Internal security concerns, such as sectarian violence, ethnic conflicts, and organized crime, pose significant challenges to Pakistan's stability. Strengthening the capacity and professionalism of law enforcement agencies is imperative for effective internal security management. This includes modernizing police forces, enhancing legal and judicial frameworks, and promoting community policing initiatives to build public trust and cooperation.

In the digital age, cybersecurity has emerged as a critical aspect of national security. Pakistan faces increasing threats in cyberspace, including cyber-attacks on critical infrastructure, data breaches, and cyber espionage. Developing a comprehensive national cybersecurity strategy, investing in cyber defense capabilities, and fostering collaboration between government, private sector, and international partners are essential to safeguard against cyber threats.

Beyond traditional security concerns, Pakistan must also address non-traditional security threats that impact national stability. These include climate change, water scarcity, pandemics, and food security. A multidimensional approach that integrates security, development, and environmental policies is necessary to mitigate these risks and ensure sustainable security. The security landscape confronting Pakistan is dynamic and requires a multi-pronged approach that combines tactical measures with strategic, long-term initiatives. Addressing these security challenges is pivotal for the new government to ensure the safety of its citizens, protect national interests, and contribute to regional and global peace.

## **ENVIRONMENTAL AND SUSTAINABILITY CHALLENGES**

Pakistan stands at a critical juncture regarding environmental sustainability, with the country facing severe challenges that threaten its ecological balance, public health, and economic development. Climate change, pollution, water scarcity, and deforestation are among the pressing issues that require immediate and strategic responses from the new government. This section examines these environmental and sustainability challenges in detail.

Climate change poses a significant threat

to Pakistan, manifesting in extreme weather events, melting glaciers, and changing monsoon patterns. These changes have dire implications for agriculture, water resources, and disaster vulnerability. The government must prioritize climate adaptation and mitigation strategies, incorporating climate-resilient practices in development planning, enhancing disaster preparedness, and investing in renewable energy to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Air, water, and soil pollution are critical environmental health concerns in Pakistan. Urban areas, in particular, suffer from hazardous air quality levels, primarily due to vehicular emissions, industrial pollution, and burning of solid waste. Water pollution from untreated industrial and domestic waste poses risks to public health and aquatic ecosystems. Addressing these issues requires stringent enforcement of environmental regulations, investment in pollution control technologies, and public awareness campaigns on environmental health practices.

Water scarcity is a growing challenge in Pakistan, exacerbated by inefficient water use, inadequate management practices, and climate change impacts. Ensuring water security for agriculture, domestic use, and industry is crucial for the country's sustainability. The government needs to implement integrated water resource management policies, promote water conservation techniques, and invest in infrastructure to enhance water storage and distribution efficiency.

Pakistan's forests and biodiversity are under threat due to deforestation, land degradation, and habitat loss. These trends not only contribute to climate change but also undermine biodiversity and ecosystem services. Effective forest management, reforestation initiatives, and protected area



expansions are essential to conserve biodiversity and maintain ecological balance.

Sustainable development is imperative for Pakistan's long-term prosperity and environmental health. The new government must integrate sustainability principles across all sectors of the economy, promoting green technologies, sustainable agriculture practices, and eco-friendly urban planning. Collaborating with international partners, civil society, and the private sector can accelerate the transition towards a sustainable and resilient development model. The environmental and sustainability challenges facing Pakistan are interlinked with the country's economic and social dynamics. A proactive and integrated approach is necessary to address these challenges, ensuring that environmental conservation and sustainable development are central to the new government's agenda.

## **INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND DIPLOMACY**

In the wake of the 2024 elections, Pakistan's new government faces the critical task of navigating a complex and ever-changing international landscape. Effective diplomacy and strategic foreign relations are essential for advancing national interests, promoting regional stability, and contributing to global peace. This section outlines the key areas of focus for Pakistan's international relations and diplomacy efforts. A primary challenge for the new administration is to strengthen Pakistan's bilateral relations with key countries, including neighbouring states, strategic partners, and global powers. Enhancing diplomatic ties with India, Afghanistan, China, the United States, and the European Union requires a balanced approach that addresses mutual concerns and explores areas for cooperation.

Furthermore, active engagement in multilateral forums such as the United Nations, SAARC, and the OIC is vital for Pakistan to assert its interests and contribute to collective solutions to global issues.

Regional security remains a significant concern, with ongoing issues related to cross-border terrorism, geopolitical tensions, and conflicts. Pakistan must advocate for constructive dialogue and conflict resolution to foster regional cooperation and stability. Participating in regional security arrangements and confidence-building measures can help mitigate tensions and build trust among neighbouring countries. Economic diplomacy is crucial for enhancing Pakistan's trade relations and attracting foreign investment. The government should focus on negotiating trade agreements, participating in international trade forums, and promoting Pakistan as a favorable investment destination. Strengthening economic ties through initiatives like the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) and exploring new markets are essential for economic growth and diversification.

Pakistan faces the challenge of effectively advocating its position on critical global issues, including the Kashmir dispute, counter-terrorism, climate change, and sustainable development. Articulating a clear and coherent stance in international forums, while building alliances and partnerships, is essential for advancing Pakistan's interests and contributing to global debates. Cultural diplomacy and soft power are valuable tools for improving Pakistan's international image and fostering people-to-people ties. Promoting Pakistani culture, heritage, and values abroad can enhance mutual understanding and goodwill. Initiatives such as cultural exchanges, educational scholarships, and participation in

international cultural events can strengthen Pakistan's soft power.

## STRATEGIES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### 1. Economic Revitalization

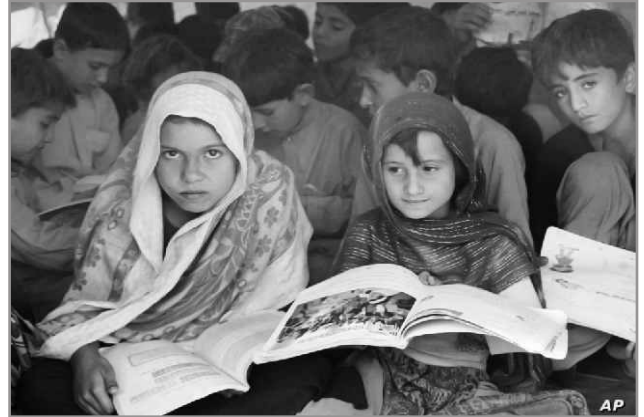
Implement comprehensive tax reform to broaden the tax base, making it more equitable and reducing the informal economy's size. This involves simplifying tax codes, improving tax collection systems, and leveraging technology to prevent evasion. Introduce fiscal discipline by setting strict budgetary controls, prioritizing public spending towards high-impact sectors such as infrastructure, education, and healthcare, and reducing non-productive expenditures.

Develop a national trade strategy that identifies and promotes sectors with high export potential. Support these sectors through subsidies, tax incentives, and infrastructure improvements. Negotiate trade agreements that open up new markets for Pakistani products. Emphasize trade facilitation measures that simplify customs procedures and reduce trade barriers.

In agriculture, introduce modern farming techniques, improve irrigation efficiency, and provide access to quality seeds and fertilizers. Establish agricultural extension services to educate farmers on best practices. In manufacturing, promote industrial zones with state-of-the-art facilities and incentives for investment in high-tech industries. Encourage public-private partnerships for technology transfer and skills development.

### 2. Political Stability and Governance Enhancement

Enhance the capacity and independence of electoral bodies to conduct free and fair elections. Implement electoral reforms based on consensus among all political stakeholders to improve representation and transparency.



Strengthen the judiciary's independence and capacity, ensuring timely and fair dispensation of justice. Enhance legal frameworks to protect fundamental rights and freedoms.

Establish clear protocols for civil-military interactions, ensuring civilian oversight of military and security affairs consistent with democratic principles. Promote dialogue and trust-building measures between civilian and military leaders to foster a collaborative approach to national security and governance. Strengthen anti-corruption institutions by ensuring their independence and providing them with the necessary resources and legal authority to investigate and prosecute corruption cases. Promote transparency and accountability in public procurement and government contracts through e-governance platforms and public oversight mechanisms.

### 3. Social Cohesion and Inclusivity

Increase public investment in education, focusing on improving access in rural and underserved areas. Implement teacher training programs and curriculum updates to improve education quality. Expand healthcare infrastructure and services, particularly in rural areas. Increase funding for public health programs, focusing on preventive care, maternal and child health, and infectious disease control.

Develop policies and programs that promote intercultural dialogue and understanding among Pakistan's diverse ethnic, linguistic, and religious groups. Encourage media and educational content that highlights cultural diversity and fosters national unity. Implement affirmative action and social welfare programs targeting marginalized communities to reduce inequalities and promote social mobility.

#### **4. Security and Stability**

Develop a comprehensive counter-terrorism strategy that combines intelligence-led policing, community engagement, and deradicalization programs. Focus on addressing the socio-economic conditions that contribute to radicalization. Enhance regional and international cooperation on counterterrorism through intelligence sharing, joint operations, and capacity-building initiatives.

Invest in modern border security technologies and infrastructure to monitor and secure Pakistan's borders effectively. This includes surveillance systems, border fencing, and checkpoints to regulate cross-border movement. Engage in diplomatic dialogues with neighbouring countries to address mutual security concerns and cooperate on border management and counterterrorism efforts.

#### **5. Environmental Sustainability**

Develop a national climate action plan that includes both adaptation strategies to cope with the impacts of climate change and mitigation efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Focus on sectors most vulnerable to climate change, such as agriculture, water resources, and coastal areas. Promote the adoption of renewable energy sources, such as solar and wind, through incentives and regulatory support. Implement energy

efficiency measures across industries and residential areas to reduce energy consumption and emissions.

Implement integrated water resource management practices that consider the entire water cycle, from source to sea. Invest in water conservation technologies, improve irrigation practices, and promote water-efficient crops in agriculture. Launch reforestation and afforestation campaigns to combat deforestation and land degradation. Protect and expand natural protected areas to conserve biodiversity and ecosystem services.

### **CONCLUSION**

As Pakistan stands at a pivotal juncture following the 2024 elections, the new government is endowed with both significant challenges and profound opportunities. The complexities of the economic, political, social, security, environmental, and international arenas demand a nuanced, integrated approach that balances immediate needs with long-term visions. The strategies and recommendations outlined in this discourse provide a roadmap that, if navigated with foresight, dedication, and inclusivity, can steer Pakistan towards a trajectory of sustainable development, resilience, and prosperity.

Economic revitalization hinges on fiscal prudence, sectoral reforms, and trade diversification, setting the foundation for a robust, diversified economy. Political stability and governance enhancement, underpinned by the strengthening of democratic institutions and effective anti-corruption measures, are paramount for fostering a conducive environment for growth and development. Social cohesion and inclusivity, achieved through focused investments in education, healthcare, and social integration initiatives, will knit the fabric of a unified, equitable society.



Addressing security challenges with a holistic counterterrorism strategy and comprehensive border security measures will ensure the nation's safety and stability, essential for domestic and international confidence. Environmental sustainability, prioritizing climate action and natural resource management, will safeguard Pakistan's ecological assets for future generations, ensuring that development does not come at the expense of environmental degradation.

In the realm of international relations and diplomacy, Pakistan must assert a proactive, principled stance, strengthening bilateral and multilateral ties, advocating for its interests on global platforms, and contributing to regional stability and global peace. The diplomatic finesse with which Pakistan navigates its international relations will significantly impact its global standing and its ability to secure international cooperation and investment.

**Continued from page 14**

## DE-DOLLARIZATION

De-dollarization is an emerging campaign but it needs a structural change and would have to trigger a shift in capital flows internationally. The marketing campaign that 'America runs on Dunkin' might be an exaggeration and that the US may run without Dunkin' Donuts, however, the global economy runs on the dollar.

China would need to recycle its savings domestically, and Japanese investors would have to repatriate at least \$1.3 trillion in U.S. Treasury bonds. Other central banks would have to find a safe and liquid alternative currency, or crypto asset, to park their reserves and in the absence of such a seismic shift, Dollar will remain on its throne.

The journey ahead for Pakistan's new government is fraught with challenges, yet it is also ripe with the potential for transformative change. By adopting a holistic, integrated policy approach, grounded in the principles of transparency, accountability, and inclusivity, the government can harness the diverse strengths of the Pakistani nation. The path forward requires not only the government's unwavering commitment but also the active participation of civil society, the private sector, and the international community. In conclusion, the post-2024 era presents a critical opportunity for Pakistan to redefine its trajectory. With strategic foresight, collaborative governance, and an unwavering commitment to the nation's welfare, Pakistan can navigate the complexities of the 21st century, ensuring prosperity, peace, and stability for its people.

**The author is the Editor of Monthly Interaction.**

While there is an increasing aptitude of countries to come up with other currency options for international trade, it should also be emphasized that for most countries, the intention, for now at least, is not to replace the US dollar as the world's leading reserve currency. Rather, their main goal is to achieve sufficient diversification toward other forms of currency so that should they be targeted by US-led punitive economic measures, alternatives would be available to them.

As such, while the dollar is not about to be dethroned anytime soon, the steady shift toward other currencies will continue, bolstering the prospects of true global multipolarity and offering much of the world potentially critical economic lifelines.

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

# OP-ED: TIME TO DISCIPLINE INDIA THROUGH FATF



**IRAJ ABID**

According to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), money laundering in India reached USD 159 billion in 2021, accounting for around 5% of the GDP. Based on the UNODC estimates, the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI) released a report in September 2023, titled “Hidden Streams: Linkages between Illicit Markets, Financial Flows, Organized Crime, and Terrorism.”

According to the report, between 2009 and 2018, there was a USD 674.9 billion surge in trade-based money laundering in India. Currently, India's illicit trade gap is estimated to be 20%. Overall, India's black economy is projected to be about 62% of its GDP.

According to the Global Organized Crime Index (2021), criminal networks enjoy significant influence in India, scoring 6, which is higher than the average of 5 among 122 countries. The illegal economy has an overall score of 6.3, surpassing the average of 5. India's illicit arms trafficking mark stands at 5.5, exceeding the 5.2 average.

In drugs, India has a count of 6, compared to the global average of 5. The FICCI report further reveals the complex nexus between illicit trade, organized crime, and terrorism in India. It highlights that illicit markets are on the rise and are contributing to the increase in criminal activities and terrorism in India, and beyond.

Under the Modi-led Bharatiya Janata Party

(BJP) government, India has devised a two-pronged strategy for engaging with international organizations. Firstly, it uses multilateral platforms to spread propaganda against other states, advocating for the imposition of sanctions for violation of rules. Secondly, the same rules are exploited to bolster the BJP's hold domestically. Indian association with the Financial Action Task



Force (FATF) serves as a textbook example of this strategy.

According to the Amnesty International report titled “Weaponising Counterterrorism: India's Exploitation of Terrorism Financing Assessments to Target Civil Society,” the Indian authorities have exploited the 2010 and 2013 FATF recommendations to introduce draconian laws such as the Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act (FCRA), Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA) and Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA). These laws are used to suppress dissent, stifle activism, and restrict funding access for non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

The Amnesty International report points out that in India over 20,600 NGOs have had their licenses cancelled in the last decade, including 6,000 in 2022. This crackdown has forced NGOs to significantly reduce their staff or shut down entirely. As a result, vital programs supporting human rights, minority advocacy, gender equality, and environmental issues are being curtailed, leaving vulnerable populations without crucial support.

Ironically, NGOs are being targeted without any risk assessment, defying FATF's standards to uphold transparency in the process. Amnesty International ceased operations in India in 2020 because of "constant harassment" from the government. The UAPA, India's major counterterrorism law, is often used to arbitrarily detain human rights activists and even students.

The rights of minorities in India are already threatened under the shadowy "Hindutva" ideology. The BJP, which is the political face of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), aims to create a "Hindu Rashtra" exclusively for the followers of the Hindu religion, leaving no place for religious diversity.

Indian minorities, particularly Muslims, routinely face persecution at the hands of the Hindu majority, often becoming targets for Hindu extremists due to their religious identity. Incidents of Hindu mobs desecrating mosques and churches are on the rise. Dalits, who constitute about 17% of the population, endure the worst forms of abuse. Given this background, the Modi government has launched a campaign targeting anyone calling out the appalling state of human rights in India.

The ongoing ethno-religious conflict in Manipur between the Hindu Meitei majority and the Christian Kuki tribal community has also laid bare the fraught social fabric of Indian society. According to official sources,

violent clashes have claimed at least 180 lives with several hundred injured. Churches and villages were set ablaze and more than 60,000 people have been displaced and forced to live in relief camps. Kuki women have been subjected to horrifying gender-based violence by the Hindu mobs.

A number of United Nations human rights experts have raised alarm on the grave humanitarian situation in Manipur and an "inadequate humanitarian response" by the Indian government. According to some experts, there are reports of counterterrorism measures being exploited in Manipur to "legitimize acts of violence and repression against ethnic and religious minorities."

Meenakshi Ganguly, South Asia director at Human Rights Watch, notes that "the BJP's embrace of the Hindu majority at the expense of minorities has seeped into government institutions, undermining equal protection of the law without discrimination ...the government has not only failed to protect Muslims and other minorities from attacks but is providing political patronage and cover for bigotry."

Throughout India, Hindutva groups are involved in ethnically or racially motivated terrorism and enjoy state patronage. Hindutva Watch, an independent research group documenting hate crimes and hate speeches against religious minorities in India, found out that 80% of hate incidents occurred in states and union territories under the BJP rule. The RSS affiliates like the Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP) and the Bajrang Dal were mentioned as religious militant organizations by the World Factbook of the Central Intelligence Agency in 2018.

A critical aspect of the support infrastructure for the Hindutva groups in India lies in an ingenious network of financial transactions, often masked as charitable



endeavors through both domestic and international organizations. Hindutva Watch emphasizes that the growth and influence of these groups are tied to their financial resources.

A report by the South Asian Citizens Web (SACW) sheds light on the flow of millions of dollars from charity groups in the US to RSS-affiliated organizations in India. Between 2001 and 2014, significant contributions were made by organizations such as Ekal Vidyalaya Foundation and Vishwa Hindu Parishad of America (VHPA), which provided USD 27 million and USD 3.9 million, respectively, to the RSS and its affiliates.

Additionally, Sewa International transferred USD 3.3 million to various right-wing activities across India, while the Infinity Foundation channeled USD 1.9 million in grants to universities and researchers supporting the Hindu supremacist agenda. This international funding acts as the financial backbone of Hindutva groups.

In fact, the Indian terror tentacles have outgrown its geographical borders, where Indian diplomatic presence is leveraged to perpetrate terrorism in other countries including NATO member states. From espionage activities in the Middle East to financing terrorist outfits like the Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) and Balochistan Liberation Army (BLA) against Pakistan, India is now engaged in an assassination drive in the Western countries, targeting Sikh nationals. India has thus started behaving like a rouge state. Ironically, despite its dubious history of supporting terrorism, New Delhi has manipulated its FATF membership to its favor and against other states.

Despite showing overzealousness in implementing FATF recommendations, the Indian government has failed to control money laundering and illicit trade. The

Smuggling in India Report (2021-22) highlighted 437 cases of duty evasion amounting to Indian rupees 39,240 million, marking a 40% surge from the Indian rupees 28,100 million reported in the previous fiscal year. The UN-backed International Narcotics Control Board (2023) identified India as a significant contributor to the over USD 650 billion global drug trade, functioning as a distribution hub for narcotics markets worldwide.

According to a report titled "A Golden Web: How India Became One of the World's Largest Gold Smuggling Hubs (2019)," "various policies in India have incentivized smuggling and the illicit trade of gold." The report revealed that "possible conflict and illicit gold tied to human rights abuses in Africa and South America is entering India." According to the same report, "illicit gold enters the country, is absorbed into the legal market with ease, and is re-exported back out as jewelry."

Aakar Patel, Chair of the Board at Amnesty International India, has urged FATF to hold Indian authorities accountable for the weaponization of FATF recommendations, stating that Indian actions have led to a failure in compliance with both FATF standards and international human rights law.

The FATF must hold its member states accountable to prevent exploitation of the global watchdog's recommendations. FATF also needs to take necessary measures to discipline India through its mechanisms for indulging in terror financing and money laundering.

**The author is a Research Officer at the Center for International Strategic Studies Sindh (CISSS).**

# OP-ED: LOSS OF ARABLE LAND TO SEA IN INDUS DELTA



**AREEBA AZHAR**

**“No water, no life.  
No blue, no green” Sylvia Earle**

On 23 March 2023, global leaders and water stakeholders gathered at the United Nations (UN) Headquarters in New York and called for establishing a new UN Convention for the Conservation of River Deltas (UN-CCRD) to address the alarming threat of River Deltas around the world that are shrinking and diminishing, and stressed on the need for their protection. This issue is creating serious impact on the ecosystem and livelihood of the communities around the world.

Pakistan's Indus River Delta, the fifth largest Delta in the world, is known as the vertebra of Pakistan's ecology and economy. Indus Delta lies at the heart of Sindh coastal area, comprising the Indus Delta Creek system and the Karachi Coast. A study conducted by a team of five academics lead by Prof Dr Altaf Ali Siyal, at the United States-Pakistan Centre for Advanced Studies in Water (USPCASW) of Mehran University of Engineering and Technology (MUET) in 2018, reveals that the Indus River had seventeen river creeks, now there are only two active creeks, Khobar and Khar. These creeks occupied an area of about 12,900 sq km in 1838, but have shrunk to only 1000 sq km, a reduction of about 92 percent.

The Delta's degradation can be traced back to 1920s. Prior to that, the Delta water flow reached up to 150 million-acre-feet (MAF) annually and the drainage to sea was

about 80 MAF of water. Subsequently, dropping of water levels led to water shortages by the early 1950s. According to the article titled How to Bring the Indus Delta Back to Life Give it Water 2019, written by Zofeen Ebrahim and published in Inter Press Service (IPS), “of the original nearly 6,000 acres of tidal land and mud flats, over 2,500 acres of Indus Delta have slowly been swallowed by the sea over the last 70 years”.

According to Pakistan Institute of Development Economics (PIDE) report (2022): “the country has changed from being a water abundant country till 2021 to a water-stressed country with 0.5 percent of global renewable water resources and ranks 36th in total renewable water resources worldwide. It ranks 14 among the 17 'extremely high water-risk' countries of the world”. In addition, the water availability per capita in Pakistan has dropped from 5,060 cubic meters per annum in 1951 to only 908 cubic meters in 2022. According to UN Development Program (UNDP), “if no urgent action is taken, Pakistan will dry up by 2025”. It is rapidly evolving into a serious crisis, if not controlled in time.

Over the last few decades, the flow in the



Indus Delta decreased by 80 percent, which adversely affected the deltaic soil and underground water, converting it to saline. The USPCASW report (2018) found that “up to 78 percent of the water available in the Delta is unfit for drinking purposes”. According to Pakistan Economic Survey 2021-22, “more than 65-70 percent of the population of the country depends on agriculture for its livelihood. Agricultural growth rate suffers badly due to the waste of sweet water that has been constrained by shrinking arable land, climate change, water shortages, and migration of large-scale population and labor from rural to urban areas”.

According to Water-Resources Situation in Pakistan: Challenges and Future Strategies report (2003), “a total of 138 million acres arable area is served by Indus River and its tributaries. Of this, the Indus River alone provides 65 percent of the total river flows annually”. The lack of brick lining in these canals has become a major contributor to raising the groundwater table and the resulting water-logging and salinity, adversely affecting cultivable land on one hand, and reducing the flow of river water in the Delta region.

Salinization is further pronounced in these zones by insufficient drainage. According to the Sindh Water Sector report (2011), the Left Bank Outfall Drain (LBOD) was built on the Indus River in the 1990s to reclaim agricultural lands by addressing the problem of water-logging and salinity failure due to financial and technical problems. According to the article titled Pakistan's Indus Delta Becoming No-man's-land, written by Shahid Shah and published in Third Pole 2019, “Only 20 percent sweet water is available underground, as remaining becomes saline, forcing farmers to under irrigate”.

Environmental and socio-economic

aspects of the Delta are also under perpetual threat due to coastal erosion and under-cultivation of crop. According to the article titled Indus Second Most Plastic-Polluted River in the World, published in Dawn newspaper of 24 October 2019, “the Indus is the second most plastic-polluted river in the world and produces 164,332 tons of plastic waste annually”. This affects the marine life as well as the lives and livelihoods of people living astride the River. According to the article titled Pakistan's Indus Delta Becoming No-man's-land, published in July 2019, “during floods, strong water flows flush most of the sediments from the river Delta into the sea, resulting in uncultivable saline-sodic lands and forcing farmers to migrate to cities”.

According to Pakistan's Monthly Climate Summary, issued by the Pakistan Meteorological Department in July 2022, “due to the altering conditions of La Niña in 2022, the national monthly rainfall was 181 percent above the average and stood as the record wettest month since 1961. On a regional scale, Sindh (726 percent), Balochistan (590 percent), and Gilgit-Baltistan (233 percent) all witnessed extremely heavy rains, which caused massive flooding and loss of fertile sediments to the sea”.

According to the University of Utah's Department of Geography in the US, published in Frontiers in Earth Science Journal (2022), “Pakistan, being the most glaciated country, faces water scarcity due to the vulnerability of its primary water source [the Indus River], to changes in climate and demand”. This vulnerability is exacerbated by the altering effects of El Niño and La Niña weather patterns, impacting the glacial regions of northern Pakistan.

**Continued on page 45**



# INDIA'S CONTRADICTIONARY POLICY TOWARDS (SCO)



**NOUREEN  
CHoudry**

India's involvement with the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) has followed an interesting track. As New Delhi strengthened ties with Washington after the Cold War, it also joined forces with Moscow and Beijing to express concerns about America's dominance. This collaboration led to the formation of a trilateral alliance with Russia and China, followed by the broader BRICS coalition (Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa). The idea was that with Moscow's support, India could balance China's growing influence.

The rivalry between India and China is evident in various forums, with their bilateral issues being apparent. Surprisingly, in 2017, China welcomed both India and Pakistan into the SCO, a group dominated by China. China aimed to create a bloc where it could seek diplomatic support for regional projects, limiting U.S. involvement.

Despite tensions between India and China, China expected new SCO members to be engaged constructively, linking them to its Belt

and Road Initiative (BRI). However, India, as an SCO member, stands out by not supporting China's BRI and consistently criticizing the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). India has even announced its own economic corridors, like the International North-South Transit Corridor (INSTC) and India Middle East Europe Corridor (IMEC), raising questions about its SCO membership amid opposition and rivalry.

India's delicate balancing act on the tightrope of dual roles may find itself in jeopardy sooner than later, as its political acrobatics between two extremes seem to be performed with a careless disregard for the stability of its position. While India wishes to benefit from the opportunities the organization offers, it is unwilling to cooperate with certain member countries, especially China and Pakistan. In the past, India aligned with Russia and China against American unilateralism.

However, India's current most strategic partner is the U.S., while concerns about Chinese expansionism have risen. India's discomfort increases as its longstanding partner, Russia, moves closer to China, and India-China relations have soured. Despite concerns about the deteriorating ties between India and China, neither country wants a serious conflict. The U.S. seeks a stronger relationship with India as the U.S.-China rivalry intensifies, considering India a vital partner in its Indo-Pacific strategy.

**Continued on page 45**



# AEGEAN CIVILIZATION





# AEGEAN CIVILIZATION: REVEALING THE PAST FROM KNOSSOS TO MYCENAE

**INTERACTION  
TEAM**



The Aegean Civilization, flourishing from approximately 3000 BC until the decline of the Mycenaean civilization around 1100 BC, represents a significant era in ancient European history. This civilization was centered in the Aegean Sea region, encompassing the Cyclades, the Aegean

Islands, parts of mainland Greece, and notably, Crete.

It is within this geographical scope that distinct cultures such as the Minoan on Crete, the Cycladic on the Cyclades Islands, and the Mycenaean in the Peloponnese and parts of mainland Greece, emerged and thrived, each contributing their unique aspects to the cultural and historical fabric of ancient Europe.

Spanning the Bronze Age, the Aegean Civilization is renowned for its remarkable achievements in art, architecture, and the development of writing systems, which have had a lasting impact on European cultural heritage. The Minoans (c. 2700-1450 BC), known for their majestic palaces like Knossos, advanced maritime trade, and the mysterious Linear A script (the primary script used in







palace and religious writings of the Minoan civilization), were instrumental in the early development of Aegean society.

It is considered Europe's first advanced civilization. The Cycladic civilization (c. 3200-2000 BC) is celebrated for its simple yet captivating marble figurines, indicative of sophisticated artistic expression. The Mycenaeans (c. 1600-1100 BC) being the inheritors of these cultural traditions, expanded their influence across the Aegean and beyond, developing the Linear B script (a syllabic script, used for writing in Mycenaean Greek), and establishing powerful citadels.

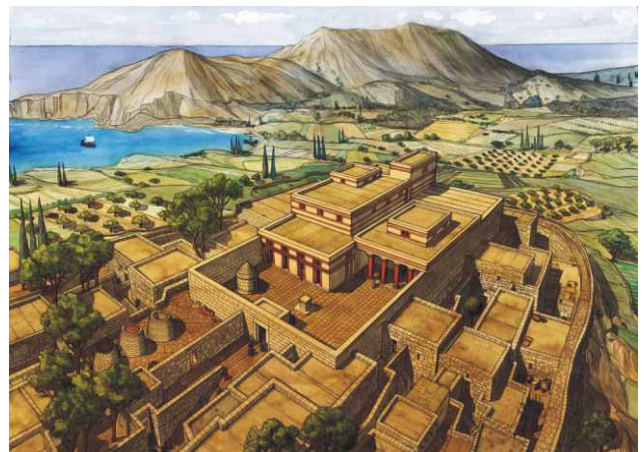
A crucial aspect of the Aegean Civilization's history is its role in the spread of agriculture to Western Europe. It was a transition marked by the movement of Aegean Neolithic farmers around 5000 BC. These farmers, originating from the Aegean region, ventured into northern France and Germany, and about a millennium later, their descendants reached Britain.

This migration, which split into two groupsones moving north along the Danube and the other south along the Mediterranean to Iberia (a peninsula in Southwestern Europe, defining the westernmost edge of Eurasia) before heading to Britainwas foundational in the transformation from hunter-gatherer to

agrarian societies in these areas.

The Aegean farmers' arrival signified a significant shift, replacing the existing western hunter-gatherer cultures and contributing to a major genetic and cultural transition towards farming. By 4000 BC, the genetic makeup of the population had largely shifted to reflect the ancestry of these Aegean Neolithic farmers, comprising about 74% of the genetic heritage in the regions they settled.

The economy of this civilization was based on agriculture, trade, and maritime commerce. The Minoans, in particular, were skilled sailors, engaging in trade with Egypt, the Levant, and possibly the Mesopotamian civilizations, which facilitated the exchange of goods such as olive oil, wine, and saffron for gold, silver, and ivory.





Mycenaean civilization further developed these trade networks, showcasing a more aggressive and expansive approach to economic integration. Religion, however, played a significant role in Aegean society, with evidence of polytheistic beliefs and practices.

Minoan religion, for instance, seemed to emphasize goddess worship, possibly indicating a matriarchal or at least a significant female deity presence. Mycenaean religion shared similarities with later classical Greek mythology, hinting at the worship of gods like Zeus, Hera, and Poseidon, albeit in an earlier form.

In the development of arts and sciences, the Aegean civilizations no doubt made significant contributions. Minoan and



Mycenaean art influenced classical Greek art, particularly in pottery and sculpture. The Linear A and Linear B scripts, especially Linear B deciphered as an early form of Greek, laid the groundwork for the Greek alphabet. Architectural innovations, including the use of columns and advanced urban planning, influenced the later European architecture profoundly.

The significance of this rich civilization lies in its role as a foundational culture for Western civilization. It represented a convergence of architectural, artistic, economic, and political innovations that shaped the trajectory of European history. The legacy of Aegean civilization is most visible in the continuation of its artistic styles, mythological themes, and technological advancements into Classical Greece, which in turn, influenced the Roman Empire and the broader Western world.

In short, the Aegean Civilization, with its abundant history, culture, and technological advancements, played a crucial role in the development of ancient European civilization. Its legacy is a testament to the enduring influence of ancient cultures on subsequent generations, laying the foundational aspects of Western art, culture, political organization, and scientific thought.



**Continued from page 40****INDIA'S CONTRADICTIONARY  
POLICY TOWARDS (SCO)**

India maintains a policy of nonalignment amid major power competition and an emerging multipolar world. China, on the other hand, has strengthened its relationship with India's South Asian rival, Pakistan. This Beijing-Islamabad axis has military and economic dimensions, complicating India's

diplomatic landscape.

India's relations with the U.S., the QUAD, and Russia are not mutually exclusive, and balancing these connections becomes crucial. China envisioned the SCO as an alternative regional arrangement, aiming to present itself as a responsible major power and create a regional order with multiple countries, challenging U.S. supremacy.

Indian diplomats hoped that talks with China on the disputed border would pave the way for summit-level diplomacy in 2023. However, expectations were unmet, leading to the downgrading of the SCO summit. India may need to navigate carefully as it holds the presidency of the SCO and the G-20, with the importance of the latter declining. Striking a balance between contradictory demands from the G-20 and the SCO, especially in the Global South, requires caution rather than grandstanding.

**The author is a graduate of Mass Communication and a member of RFI**

**Continued from page 39****OP-ED: LOSS OF ARABLE  
LAND TO SEA IN INDUS DELTA**

According to Pakistan's Water Resource Management: Ensuring Water Security for Sustainable Development report, issued by the Frontiers Environmental Science Journal (2023), "the country receives about 50-80 percent of its average river flows from glacial melt, while the remaining comes from yearly monsoon rains".

These factors outlined above are impacting the availability of water, converting Pakistan into a water-stressed country. This accentuating problem highlights the need for the formulation of a long-term policy for the

protection of deltaic soil and the restoration of agricultural land. Secondly, there is a need for institutionalized decision-making to address the threats of climate change on water availability.

Thirdly, seawater intrusion warnings should be provided so that concerned departments can take timely action through a well-regulated water management system. However, if the concerned authorities utilize the fertility of the Indus Delta under the Green Pakistan Project, it will be a revival of the Indus Delta Region. Otherwise, the damage to the Indus Delta will be irreversible.

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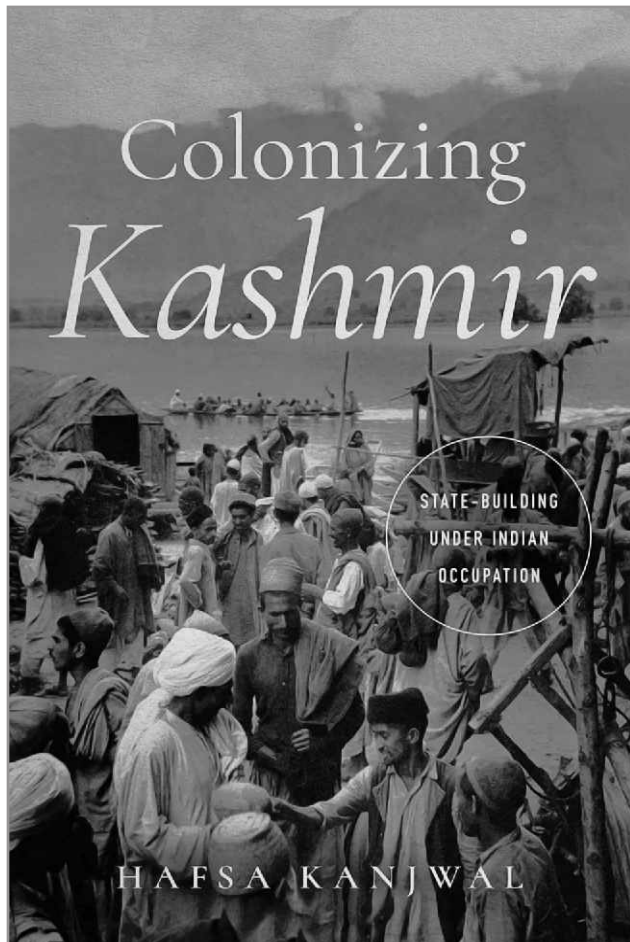
**BOOK REVIEW****HAFSA KANJWAL,  
COLONIZING KASHMIR:****STATE-BUILDING UNDER INDIAN OCCUPATION,  
STANFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS, 2023, 384****ZEESHAN  
HYDER**

The Kashmir dispute between India and Pakistan is internationally recognized. United Nations Security Council (UNSC) resolutions provide the people of Jammu and Kashmir the right to self-determination. However, the forceful occupation of the territory by India has denied that right to the Kashmiri people. Hafsa Kanjwal's book *Colonizing Kashmir: State-building Under Indian Occupation*

provides a well-researched account of colonization of Kashmir by India. The book explains how India had managed to consolidate its occupational control over Kashmir. It also narrates how India used state institutions, politics, media, tourism, culture, economic policies and demographic engineering to colonize Kashmir. The book is divided into nine chapters including an introduction and a conclusion.

Talking about brief history of Kashmir, the author informs that during the last British census of 1941, Muslims constituted the majority, comprising almost 77 percent of the entire population of the princely state. Hindus, in contrast, accounted for slightly over 20 percent of the total population. Notably, the native region of the Dogras, Jammu, had a predominantly Muslim population of over 60 percent, with the remaining populace identifying as Hindu. However, the ethnic cleansing of the Muslim population in Jammu in 1947 resulted in a change in demographic composition, with Hindus becoming the majority (p. 5).

The author notes that Sheikh Abdullah, a prominent Kashmiri politician of the anti-Dogra movement, was appointed as the prime minister of an interim government of Jammu and Kashmir by the Maharaja on 5 March 1948 on the insistence of Indian Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru. Sheikh Abdullah was a staunch supporter of the accession of Jammu and Kashmir to the dominion of India.





He had envisaged that Kashmir would attain an enhanced autonomous status within India.

From 1947 to 1953, during his tenure, Jammu and Kashmir assumed the status of legal provisionality, operating as an administered yet autonomous territory under the jurisdiction of the government of India. This arrangement was contingent upon a United Nations-mandated plebiscite to ascertain the future of the entire region. In 1953, Sheikh Abdullah was ousted by the Indian government due to his growing concerns about rising Hindu nationalism. Consequently, the Indian government replaced Sheikh Abdullah with Bakshi Ghulam Muhammad and assigned him the task of emotionally integrating Kashmiris into India. His role included denying the possibility of a plebiscite for the people of Kashmir by implementing "state-building" policies in the valley, a strategy the author terms the "winning hearts and minds" approach (p. 7).

In chapter two "Narrating Normalization" the author contends that to project normalcy and "state-building" efforts, rigorous propaganda initiatives were undertaken during Sheikh Abdullah's leadership which intensified under Bakshi's tenure (p. 54). Contextually, under Sheikh Abdullah's administration, plans were devised to publish three magazines i.e., Kashmir Today (English), Tameer (Urdu), and Yojna (Hindi) with the sole aim of advocating Kashmir's accession to India (p. 72). Journalists visiting the region were exposed to aspects that would convey a semblance of normalcy, emphasizing the National Conference's significant influence and portraying the government as widely popular. Any facts contradicting this narrative were systematically erased.

While under Bakshi, the Department of Information utilized Radio Kashmir to host a series of programs to encourage Kashmir's



**Hafsa Kanjwal, author of the book**

accession to India, where cabinet members discussed development schemes that the new government was seeking to implement (p. 89). In chapter three, titled "Producing and Promoting Paradise: Tourism, Cinema, and the Desire for Kashmir," the author reveals how India employed its film and tourism industries as instruments of propaganda in Kashmir during the 1950s and 1960s. The author underlines that many Indian filmmakers wrote letters to Kashmiri officials seeking permission to make films in the valley.

They assured the Kashmiri government that their production had nothing to do with politics, religion, and propaganda. Despite these assurances, the films produced during this period proved as a means to give a false impression of normalcy. Moreover, tourist guidebooks published by the Indian and Kashmir governments were also part of the propaganda. These guidebooks promoted fake normalcy and blurred the miseries of the people of the valley (p. 97). Chapter four "Developing Dependency: Economic Planning, Financial Integration, and Corruption" discusses the economic and development policy initiatives taken under Bakshi era. The author underscores that soon after the ouster of Shaikh Abdullah, Bakshi in his speech which was broadcasted on Kashmir radio, widely criticised the economic policies

of Shaikh Abdullah, noting that they had exacerbated the miseries of people specially of peasants who were pitiably taxed for their produce.

The author argues that Bakshi was too focused on carrying out the “state-building” project. He praised the Indian government and emphasized that Kashmir would benefit from economic ties with India. He believed that by addressing the economic challenges faced by masses he would be able to curb political dissent and suppress opposition to forceful accession (p. 129). With this aim, Bakshi introduced a new manifesto named “Naya Kashmir (New Kashmir).” The author argues that as most of the population relied mainly on agriculture, the economic policies were profoundly focused on the abolition of landlordism, the distribution of land, and the establishment of associations to facilitate the sale and purchase of agricultural produce (p.132).

In chapter five “Shaping Subjectivities: Education, Secularism, and its Discontents”, the author argues that Bakshi, with an aim to emotionally integrate Kashmiris into India introduced educational reforms which were mainly targeted towards the Muslim population.

He waived off the tuition fee which was charged during Shaikh Abdullah's government, made the Kashmiri language a medium of instruction in primary schools, granted scholarships to the students, and organized rallies to commemorate days like Indian Independence Day and Nehru's birthday. The author highlights that the underlying goal of these policies was to involve youth in physical and sports activities, thereby diverting their focus from political engagement (p.175).

Chapter six “Jashn-e-Kashmir: Patronage and the Institutionalization of Kashmiri

Culture” discusses the promotion of Kashmiri culture as an effort of “state-building” process. The author argues that in 1956 Bakshi government organized a festival under the name of Jashn-e-Kashmir. The main objective behind this initiative was to promote and highlight Kashmiri culture through art, literature, poetry, dance, music and project normalcy. This event attracted some twenty thousand foreign tourists as well as leaders from India including Jawaharlal Nehru (p. 203).

Lastly in chapter seven titled “The State of Emergency: State Repression, Political Dissent, and the Struggle for Self-Determination” and conclusion of the book author argues that despite all the efforts by Indian client regimes in Kashmir, dissent of people against forceful accession and yearning of Muslim population to join Pakistan could not be suppressed. In order to overwhelm echoing voices of natives to join Pakistan, Indian government sent a militia under the name of “peace brigade” to silence the voices and dissent.

This militarization of Kashmir further triggered demand of freedom from India among people through a plebiscite envisioned in the UNSC resolutions (p.238). The well-researched book uses primary and secondary sources, official documents, biographies and contains several interviews in English, Urdu and Kashmiri languages. It documents carrot and stick policy implemented by New Delhi through puppet governments in occupied Kashmir to instil pro India and anti-Pakistan sentiments into the people of Kashmir. However, India failed to achieve its objectives.

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# RFI TALK

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