

A MONTHLY MAGAZINE OF NATIONAL, REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL STRATEGIC AFFAIRS



Interaction

ISSUE-12

VOLUME-17

MC-1326

Rs.400/-

203

ABC CERTIFIED

JULY 2024



AL-ZARRAR TANK

**STRENGTHENING PAKISTAN'S
MILITARY ARSENAL**



www.instagram.com/rfi.pakistan/



www.facebook.com/rfipakistan



www.rfipakistan.com

Interaction



July 2024

CHIEF EDITOR:
Nusrat Mirza

EXECUTIVE EDITOR:
Bismah Mirza

EDITOR:
Mirza Kashif Baig

MANAGING EDITOR:
Yusuf Rahi

ASSOCIATE EDITOR:
Syed Samiullah

PRODUCTION MANAGER
M. H. Khan

LAYOUT DESIGN:
Malik Zia Muhammad

CONTRIBUTORS:

Gen. (R) Mirza Aslam Baig
Nisar Ul Haq Usmani
Dr. Bushra Batool
Wajeeha Najam

BUREAU CHIEF & DIRECTOR MARKETING:

Islamabad:
Prof. Dr. M. Attaullah Khan

REPRESENTATIVES:

UK (London)

Tahir Shah

Bangladesh

Abdul Rahim Khan

Printed by:

NUSRAT MIRZA

From Al-Asif Printers, Karachi

Published from:

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

Mailing Address:

Plot No.71/C, 1st Floor, 24th Commercial Street,
Tauheed Commercial Area, Phase-V, DHA.,
Karachi, Pakistan.

Tel : +92 21 358 619 35 -36

Email : rfi@rfipakistan.com

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

Contents

1	Opportunities in Turmoil: Pakistan Foreign Policy amid Global Power Shifts	Editorial	02
2	Address at CISS on 'Pakistan's Nuclear Program Since 1998: Opportunities, Challenges, Responses, and Future Trajectory' Lt. Gen. Khalid Ahmed Kidwai NI, HI, HI(M)		05
3	RFI & ASCE host a National Conference on 'Future Prospects of Regional Connectivity through Dialogue in South Asia: Global and Strategic Perspectives'		14
4	Welcome Address at the National Conference	Nusrat Mirza	18
5	Inaugural Speech at the National Conference	Prof. Dr. Khalid M. Iraqi (VC, KU)	21
6	Session-I: Chair's Opening Remarks	Amb Qazi M. Khalilullah (R), (ED CISS)	23
7	The Role of Nuclear Energy in Fostering Regional Economic Cooperation: Ethical Considerations and Governance within The Regional Context	Syed Samiullah	27
8	Al-Zarrar Tank: Strengthening Pakistan's Military Arsenal	Interaction Team	31
9	The Pakistan Movement: A Saga of Struggle and Triumph (Part I)	Interaction Team	38
10	Ancient Indian Civilization: a journey through Time	Interaction Team	41
11	The Possibility of War Between India and China: an in-depth exploration	Nusrat Mirza	44
12	How To Project India's Human Rights violations and its Systematic Economic Marginalization of Indian-Occupied Jammu & Kashmir (IOJK) in Europe?	Dr. Uzma Shujaat	46
13	The Tug of War	Dr. S Bushra Batool	48
14	Beyond Poverty Porn: Ethical Representation of Balochistan	Mehmood Ali	50
15	Shifting Alliances: a realist analysis of US-Taiwan Relations	Wajeeha Najam	52
16	The Influence of conquerors on subjugated Nations: Lessons for Pakistan (In The Light of Ibn Khaldun's thoughts)		55
17	Geostrategic Importance Makes Pakistan a Hard Country	Tayyaba Tehseen	58
18	Balochistan in Media's limelight for two Days	Muhammad Usama Khalid	62
19	Putin's Nuclear Threats: A Serious Warning to The West	CE	64

EDITORIAL

OPPORTUNITIES IN TURMOIL: PAKISTAN'S FOREIGN POLICY AMID GLOBAL POWER SHIFTS



In the ever-evolving landscape of global geopolitics, Pakistan stands at a pivotal juncture. The growing assertiveness of the China-Russia bloc against the traditional hegemony of the United States offers unique diplomatic and strategic opportunities for Islamabad. This article delves into the complex tapestry of recent geopolitical shifts and examines how Pakistan can leverage these developments to fortify its position on the world stage and safeguard its national interests.

US AND UKRAINE DEFENCE PACT

In a significant development, the United States has fortified its strategic partnership with Ukraine through a comprehensive defense pact. This agreement, forged against the backdrop of ongoing regional tensions, underscores the US's commitment to countering Russian influence in Eastern Europe. The pact aims to enhance Ukraine's defensive capabilities, offering military aid, advanced defensive systems, and joint training programs.

The primary objective of this pact is to serve as a deterrent against further Russian aggression, reinforcing Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity. By strengthening Ukraine's military infrastructure, the US seeks to stabilize the region and project its power and influence. This move is part of a broader strategy to contain Russian expansion and assertiveness, particularly in light of the ongoing conflicts and geopolitical shifts.

The implications of this pact are profound. It not only solidifies the US-Ukraine alliance but also signals to Moscow that the US is prepared to take concrete steps to protect its interests and those of its allies. This escalation could lead to heightened tensions and a potential arms race in the region, further complicating the already complex US-Russia relationship. Additionally, it may prompt Russia to seek closer ties with other adversarial states, leading to new alliances and shifting power balances on the global stage.

The defense pact also underscores the US's strategic intent to maintain a foothold in Eastern Europe. This region is crucial for its proximity to Russia and the European Union, making it a significant point of contention in the broader US-Russia rivalry. By securing a strong alliance with Ukraine, the US can exert influence over Eastern European affairs, potentially countering Russian moves in the area.

NANCY PELOSI'S VISIT TO TIBET AND CONGRESSIONAL RESOLUTIONS

In another significant geopolitical maneuver, Nancy Pelosi's visit to Tibet and her meeting with the Dalai Lama have intensified the already fraught US-China relations. This visit, underscored by the symbolic support for Tibetan autonomy, has been viewed by Beijing as a direct challenge to its territorial integrity and sovereign affairs. The timing of this visit is

crucial, coming amid increasing US legislative actions aimed at pressuring China on human rights issues.

Furthermore, the U.S. Congress has adopted a resolution that calls for the liberation of Tibet, a bold move that adds to the tension. This resolution indicates a clear stance by the US government, aligning itself with pro-Tibet sentiments and signaling a tougher approach towards China. The implications of this move are manifold. It exacerbates the existing geopolitical rivalry between the US and China, potentially igniting further confrontations in international forums and economic spheres.

This development is part of a broader US strategy to exert pressure on China over its human rights record and territorial claims. By supporting Tibetan autonomy, the US is not only advocating for human rights but also strategically positioning itself as a defender of oppressed regions under Chinese control. This stance could lead to increased diplomatic friction and economic sanctions, further straining US-China relations.

PUTIN'S DIPLOMATIC ENGAGEMENTS

Russian President Vladimir Putin has been actively reinforcing Russia's strategic alliances through a series of high-profile visits to China, North Korea, and Cuba. His visit to China was particularly significant, as it underscored the deepening ties between Moscow and Beijing. This meeting reaffirmed their mutual support in facing Western economic sanctions and military pressures. The Sino-Russian partnership is pivotal in challenging US dominance and reshaping global alliances.

Putin's outreach to North Korea, resulting in new defense agreements, signals a strengthening of ties with Pyongyang. This move is strategic, aiming to bolster Russia's

influence in East Asia and counterbalance US presence in the region. Additionally, Putin's visit to Cuba and the announcement of deploying nuclear submarines and establishing a naval base there mark a direct challenge to the US in its own hemisphere. These actions are reminiscent of Cold War-era posturing, indicating a robust and provocative stance by Russia.

The implications of these visits are multifaceted. Strengthening ties with China provides Russia with a robust ally in its confrontation with the West. The defense agreements with North Korea could lead to increased military cooperation and potentially destabilize the region further. The deployment of Russian military assets in Cuba is a bold statement, reminiscent of the Cold War, signaling Russia's readiness to confront the US on multiple fronts.

ECONOMIC SHIFTS FROM THE DOLLAR

One of the most significant developments in the global economic landscape is the decision by Russia and China to conduct trade using currencies other than the US dollar. This move is a direct challenge to the dominance of the dollar in international trade, aiming to reduce dependency on the US financial system and mitigate the impact of US sanctions. The end of the petrodollar deal with Arab states



further accentuates this shift, as it undermines a key pillar of US economic influence.

The implications of this shift are profound. It signals a potential reconfiguration of global trade networks and financial systems, with new economic alliances and trading blocs emerging. This move could lead to increased financial autonomy for countries traditionally under US economic influence, thereby weakening the US's ability to exert economic pressure globally.

For countries like Pakistan, this shift presents both challenges and opportunities. Engaging in trade using alternative currencies could open new economic avenues and reduce reliance on the US-dominated financial system. However, it also requires



navigating complex international financial regulations and potential pushback from traditional economic powers.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR PAKISTAN

Amid these seismic shifts in global geopolitics, Pakistan finds itself in a unique position to leverage these developments to its advantage. As a strategically located nation with strong ties to both China and the United States, Pakistan can navigate these changes to enhance its diplomatic and economic standing. Firstly, Pakistan can strengthen its relationship with China, capitalizing on the deepening Sino-Russian alliance. By aligning more closely with China, Pakistan can benefit from economic investments and infrastructure

projects, particularly through the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). Additionally, Pakistan can play a crucial role in facilitating dialogue and cooperation between China and other regional powers, positioning itself as a key diplomatic player.

Secondly, Pakistan should maintain a balanced approach towards the United States. Despite the growing tensions between the US and China, Pakistan's historical relationship with the US remains important. Engaging with the US on issues of mutual interest, such as counter-terrorism, trade, and regional stability, can ensure that Pakistan continues to receive economic and military support. Moreover, Pakistan can explore new economic opportunities by aligning with countries moving away from the US dollar. Engaging in bilateral trade agreements with nations like Russia and China using alternative currencies could provide economic benefits and reduce reliance on the US financial system. In the context of the US-Ukraine defense pact, Pakistan can advocate for regional stability and diplomatic solutions, emphasizing the importance of peaceful conflict resolution. This stance can enhance Pakistan's reputation as a proponent of peace and stability in international forums.

The current geopolitical landscape presents Pakistan with both challenges and opportunities. By strategically navigating its relationships with global powers and leveraging its unique geopolitical position, Pakistan can enhance its national interests and secure economic and diplomatic gains. The key lies in maintaining a balanced approach, fostering strong alliances, and advocating for regional stability. In this complex and evolving global scenario, Pakistan's ability to adapt and strategically engage with international developments will determine its success on the world stage.

AD NCA'S ADDRESS**CENTRE FOR INTERNATIONAL STRATEGIC STUDIES(CISS)
ROUND TABLE 28 MAY, 2024****PAKISTAN'S NUCLEAR PROGRAM SINCE 1998:
OPPORTUNITIES, CHALLENGES, RESPONSES,
AND FUTURE TRAJECTORY**

Lt Gen Mazhar Jamil, Ambassador Ali Sarwar Naqvi, ladies and gentlemen. Assalam-o-Alaikum.

I feel greatly honored to have been invited by the Centre for International Strategic Studies (CISS) to speak on the occasion of the 26th Youm-e-Takbir. I think all Pakistanis understand the importance of 28th May and

30th May 1998 as two historic and critical dates for Pakistan's national security. The nuclear tests conducted by Pakistan's brilliant scientists and engineers on these two dates represent the firm establishment of a strategic balance in South Asia which till then had eluded Pakistan. A covert nuclear capability, whose journey had started in 1972, was now

announced to the world at large as an overt nuclear weapons capability, especially for the benefit of our adversary in the east to register and ponder over the implications arising out of the restoration of the disturbed strategic balance and the offsetting of the relative conventional asymmetry.

The topic that has been chosen by CISS: Pakistan's Nuclear Program since 1998: Opportunities, Challenges, Responses, and Future Trajectory is both challenging and yet not very challenging at the same time. Challenging only because it is a bit of a test of my memory recall abilities of events and issues of 25 years ago, and not very challenging because once recalled, things appear in my mind with sufficient clarity because these happened on my watch of over 15 years at the SPD, most of these at our own initiative, and with our own reasoning and rationale. The real challenge here, however, thrown by CISS at me is to squeeze all of these inside 30 minutes. Thank you Naqvi Sahib and CISS for the challenge!

Ladies and gentlemen, when you look back at the history of Pakistan's nuclear program since the famous Multan meeting of nuclear scientists called by President Zulfikar Ali Bhutto in 1972, 52 years ago to be exact, you might discern a very clear line of separation between two eras of 26 years each:

- * Nuclear program in the pre-28th-30th May 1998 era
- * Nuclear program in the post-28th-30th May 1998 era

What was achieved by the celebrated Pakistani scientists and engineers in the pre-28th-30th May 1998 era, 26 years to be exact, and specifically on those two historic days was the culmination of a heroic, committed, and dedicated national scientific

and engineering effort underwritten by a consistently fierce political will, commitment and national resolve at the government levels, irrespective of the politics of the day, to make Pakistan a nuclear weapons power. Pakistanis may or may not have eaten grass but the galaxy of Pakistani scientists and engineers through their successful experiments demonstrated to the world on those two days a basic Pakistani nuclear weapons capability as they responded in style to the Indian nuclear tests of 11th and 13th May.

On the other hand, the post nuclear tests era from May 1998 onwards, again 26 years to be exact, for which Allah Almighty chose some of us to carry forward the good work of the scientists, represents the full operationalization, consolidation and the securing of Pakistan's nuclear capability physically and diplomatically according to the policy of Credible Minimum Deterrence initially, and then subsequently the policy Full Spectrum Deterrence.

Before proceeding further, I consider it appropriate to very briefly put on record as to now destiny placed me and my colleagues in a position where it became our responsibility to take Pakistan's nuclear program forward 1998 onwards and to shape it as per a vision of its end state.

On approval for promotion to the rank of Major General in late April 1998, I was



posted to the COAS Secretariat as DG Evaluation, Analysis and Research Cell (EA&R Cell), which was set up by the then COAS Gen Jehangir Karamat as a small think tank within the COAS Secretariat for working on special issues. The first DG EA&R Cell and my immediate predecessor was then Major General Ahsan Salim Hayat, later VCOAS, who worked on a number of other issues but not the nuclear subject.

When I reported to the Chief a few days after the nuclear test of 30th May 1998, he tasked me to develop a paper, a proposal, for the establishment of a national command and control system for Pakistan now that Pakistan had declared its nuclear weapons capability overtly. My small team and I put our heads together and we completed the task to the best of our professional ability.

However, before Gen Karamat could have a look at it, he had to resign and Gen Pervez Musharraf was appointed as the new COAS sometime in October 1998. It was Gen Musharraf, who, after attending a few presentations on our proposals, approved the recommendations as proposed by us, and then surprised me by asking me to take over as the first DG SPD, an appointment that was proposed in the recommendations of our paper. Thus began the journey of over 15 years of my association with the nuclear program, the beginning of what I have called

the second era from May 1998 onwards.

As we settled down in our new premises in the Chaklala Garrison, the newly created SPD started to find its feet, fill in the necessary manpower, and commenced its work in all seriousness with the clear advantage of confidence that comes from ignorance. The very first obvious challenge therefore that I would like to mention without any hesitation was that of overcoming our ignorance of matters nuclear whether strategic, scientific, organizational, operational, or the locations of various sites of various strategic organizations spread far and wide across the country, personalities, and individuals as to who was who and in which strategic organization. It was a truly mysterious world out there and the level of secrecy had all along been so high that even asking questions invited hushed answers sometimes in sign language.

The other side, by which I mean the scientists and engineers, were also not quite sure as to how much of the classified information they could share with the new gentleman. It took time to educate and familiarize ourselves with the new environments, with people who had just recently emerged as national heroes, the new scientific jargon, and most important, where stood the program and what needed to be done from here on.

One thing was clear that SPD had hit the ground running and there wasn't much time to waste in getting on with the further development and operationalization phase. Nevertheless, patience and good manners helped us in bringing down some of the mental barriers. From there on, we became a respected part of their team and the mutual respect, camaraderie and even friendships developed then exist till today. First challenge



overcome!

- * To begin with, the next challenge, turned into an opportunity was broadly the work undertaken in the second era, our era, which was based on the early identification and conception of a vision, and thereafter, heads down for focused work on seven main segments, and a few additional supporting ones, all moving in parallel, because most of the work was inter-linked. These, when gradually integrated into one wholesome "force in being as a tri-services strategic capability, a term that I learnt from my naval friends at the war college, was to be based on the elements of 'Credibility' of the capability as well as the 'Minimum' numbers of weapons assessed, which would duly radiate the strategic effects of 'Deterrence' of aggression on the large military machine of our adversary. Mind you, no staff college or war college prepares one for the challenge of conceiving and developing an operationalized national nuclear capability. No ready DS solutions. All of these had to be based on our best professional judgments and on-job learning. These seven main elements, each of which was a challenge of sorts, were:
- * One, the establishment of an institutionalized nuclear command and control structure comprising of a National Command Authority (NCA), the Strategic Plans Division (SPD) as a one-window secretariat, and the three tri-services Strategic Forces in the field to handle the national nuclear capability. This was based straight on the approval that had been accorded to our initial paper that had been presented to the COAS, and subsequently to two other forums of the



Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee (JCSC) and the National Security Council (NSC).

- * Two, the conception of a national nuclear policy with a specific vision of where Pakistan's nuclear capability ought to be for at least a decade beyond the scientific experiments of May 1998, say, by the year 2010. This was based on the classic military methodology of assessment of the likely geo-political and strategic environments in the coming decade, the nature of the evolving threat with an eye on strategic developments across the border, and own technical, operational, and financial capabilities and capacities.
- * Three, based on the foregoing assessments, translation of the national nuclear policy or vision into a robust force development strategy for the raising, equipping, housing and training of the three tri-services strategic forces, as the end-users, as per the then approved policy of Credible Minimum Deterrence.
- * Four, in line with the force development strategy, the real time sweat and hard labor by the strategic organizations to develop and deliver in adequate numbers in tangible terms, the wherewithal of a variety of nuclear weapons for the three tri-services strategic forces to include

weapons earmarked as First and Second Strike capability.

- * Five, conceiving and developing a secure and efficient C412SR capability, which stands for Command, Control, Communications, Computers, Intelligence, Information, Surveillance and Reconnaissance. The project of conceiving and developing a modern strategic C412SR system was a technical and operational challenge.

As you might note, the innocent sounding acronym of C412SR has eight elements within it, each one of which is a wholesome system in itself, to be conceived, developed, tested, Integrated, and then fielded within the length and breadth of the nuclear infrastructure to provide fool proof command and control capability to the NCA, SPD, and the Strategic Forces.

- * Six, the securing of all of the foregoing elements of Pakistan's nuclear capability against all types of external or internal threat under the broader rubric of nuclear security. You would recall that due to the worldwide politico-military fallout of 9/11, the US invasion of Afghanistan and Iraq, the war on terror and its severe internal fallout inside Pakistan, nuclear security particularly became a top priority area.

Under the shadow of the then prevailing adverse geo- political environments including the sharp international focus on the safety and security of Pakistan's nuclear weapons, and the negative international narrative of the possibility of Pakistan's nuclear assets falling into wrong hands, further fueled by hostile adversaries, there was zero margin for error. We realized that in those difficult

days when internal terrorist attacks particularly against Pakistan's military installations were being conducted with relative impunity, any incident in the domain of the SPD, howsoever big or small, would be just the opportunity that the international media and our adversaries might be waiting for to blow out of proportion, and further the purported myth that Pakistan's nuclear weapons were not safe. SPD simply could not afford to assign anything but the highest priority to nuclear security. We therefore invested much time, effort and funds in ensuring that nuclear security of Pakistan's nuclear infrastructure would be as fool proof as was humanly, professionally and financially possible. Allah be praised, we came out of that particular difficult phase safe and unscathed.

Consequently, it was quite satisfying to learn every once in a while the influential international voices, which could verify independently through their National Technical Means (NTMs), declaring formally that Pakistan's nuclear weapons were in safe hands.

For example Just one quote amongst many that I can recall came in David Sanger's book 'Confront and Conceal: Obama's Secret Wars and Surprising Use of American Power, ... the process has impressed as to now seriously the Pakistanis take nuclear security, perhaps more seriously than anyone else in the world." Talking of challenges, well, nuclear security was certainly one of the bigger ones.

- * Seven, last but not the least, the conduct of nuclear diplomacy in concert with the Foreign Office and our key diplomats

abroad especially in Geneva, Vienna, Washington and New York, with the objective of pre-empting and preventing any adverse fallout of international efforts that might be detrimental to the smooth development of Pakistan's nuclear program and its objectives as per our vision.

Remaining within the broad parameters of the foregoing segments, my personal way of looking at the end state big picture of the force development strategy was to see the end state big picture as one large jigsaw puzzle, which needed to be completed in its final shape by placing the large number of smaller pieces, call these projects, at their right places. These smaller pieces of the jigsaw puzzle were tasked for development to the developing agencies or strategic organizations as strategic projects each with clearly defined timelines and dedicated year-to-year funding.

Whenever there was project proposal put forward by a strategic organization, my mind would try and read the relevance of the project to the end state big picture and the part that the proposed project would play in it. Whether the project fell in the category of development of infrastructure by way of indigenization, or in the category of a new weapon system, or in the category of a new and emerging technology, the litmus test invariably was the project's place in the end state big picture. If there was justification and relevance, the project was a go, or else it was a polite no-go.

In this context, another major challenge turned into an opportunity was the never ending saga, which continues till today, of layers upon layers of sanctions and denials imposed on Pakistan by the international actors with the clear intent of preventing the

further development of Pakistan's nuclear program and squeezing it as much as possible. These sanctions and denials went to the extent of being ridiculous, indiscriminate and devoid of any logic in their application. The list of entities that were sanctioned fairly regularly sometimes included universities and private sector companies that were miles away from the nuclear program.

What was our response and standard policy? Very simple. Go indigenous. It took time, funding and patience but, take my word, our scientists and engineers at the strategic organizations are professionally in a different class altogether committed and motivated professionals who love challenges. I cannot recall a single project which we decided to develop indigenously and on which they did not deliver.

The sanctions and denials invariably worked to our advantage by compelling us to become self-reliant. Amongst many other success stories of our times, indigenization of the nuclear infrastructure is one big one. And this is something which was not an SPD effort alone.

The story goes back to the earliest days of the commencement of Pakistan's nuclear program. Both the eras that I have talked about, 52 odd years cumulatively, are replete with success stories of projects and facilities being developed locally when compelled by sanctions. Perhaps we owe a small vote of thanks to our detractors.

Operation Parakaram undertaken by India in the year 2001-02 was a watershed event which impacted SPD's force development strategy. As a consequence of the attack on India's Parliament in December 2001, India, never in a hurry to establish the truth, straightaway put the blame on Pakistan and deployed its entire military in battle ready,

offensive ready mode on Pakistan's eastern border.

Pakistan too followed suit and carried out operational counter deployments of its conventional forces. For 10 months, however, India did not pick up the courage to attack Pakistan and withdrew its forces after suffering considerable attrition in the hot desert in men, materials and reputation. Certainly, a contributory factor for India getting deterred was in no small measure because of Pakistan's nuclear capability.

In the ensuing years thereafter, together with its earlier experience of the failed Exercise Brasstacks of 1986-87, India finally concluded that all-out war was no longer an option under the nuclear overhang now prevailing in South Asia. It started to work on a new war fighting strategy of limited war with shallower objectives starting with tactical formations. Consequently, a new doctrine called the Cold Start Doctrine was adopted for fighting a rapid but limited war. It took nearly 10-12 years for India to be ready to fight under the new doctrine.

At the SPD, the new strategic and operational developments posed a challenge. Our operational and strategic analysis concluded that though India had regressed from the strategy of an all-out war to a limited war, the Indian obsession to be prepared now to fight a limited conventional war irrespective was being encouraged by a perceived gap in Pakistan's nuclear inventory at the tactical level-hence the Indian Army's focus on commencing operations by independent Battle Groups (IBGs) at the tactical level.

While Pakistan's larger nuclear weapons, categorized as strategic and operational according to their ranges and yields, were deterring large-scale operations, the Indian

military apparently considered that there was yet space to fight at the tactical level. Our conclusion therefore was simple - plug the perceived gap by developing short range low yield nuclear weapons and thereby go full spectrum. It was easy to conclude but to get there involved one of the biggest challenges to SPD's force development strategy - in terms of time, technological challenges, diplomatic challenges, and of course financial challenges.

Nevertheless, we took the decision and the rest is history. SPD and its organizations identified the scope of the variety of work that needed to be done and got on with it. The eventual outcome was the Nasr short range multi-tube weapon system with appropriate nuclear yields and range to fully cover the bridgehead battles of India's IBGs and follow-on forces.

The smaller weapons required Plutonium as fissile material. Therefore, the required numbers of Plutonium producing reactors and reprocessing plants were constructed at the fastest pace possible. Astute nuclear diplomacy ensured that the required time in terms of years was made available. By 2011, a little over a decade since May 1998, we had reached a point in our force development strategy when we felt confident enough to transit Pakistan's nuclear policy from Credible Minimum Deterrence to Full Spectrum Deterrence.

During the period of this decade-plus, with the development of a variety of ballistic missiles, the tactical nuclear weapon Nasr together with a family of highly accurate low-flying cruise missiles Babur and Ra'ad for a variety of land, air, sea and under-sea platforms, the long-range Shaheen III with a range of 2750 km, the Ababeel with a Multiple Independently Targeting Re-entry

Vehicle (MIRV) capability, by 2011 the entire spectrum of nuclear weapons was covered horizontally and vertically. India's vast eastern and southern geographical dimensions, including its outlying territories, were therefore fully covered by Pakistan's various nuclear weapons.

Today Alhamd o Lillah, Pakistan's Full Spectrum Deterrence capability, while generally remaining within the larger philosophy of Credible Minimum Deterrence, comprises horizontally of a robust tri-services inventory of a variety of nuclear weapons, a triad if you may. It is held on land with the Army Strategic Force Command (ASFC), at sea with the Naval Strategic Force Command (NSFC), and in the air with the Air Force Strategic Command (AFSC).

Vertically the nuclear spectrum encapsulates progressively increasing destructive weapon yields, and range coverage at three tiers: strategic, operational and tactical all the way to 2750 km so as to cover India's vast eastern and southern geographical dimensions, including its outlying territories.

Cumulatively, there is an awesome amount of deterrent nuclear power available to the NCA/SPD. It enables Pakistan to effectively deter aggression through smart deterrence strategies in the first and second strike modes. The capabilities enhance Pakistan's response options both for peacetime and pre-war deterrence, and if ever deterrence is challenged by the adversary, for intra war deterrence. The development strategy was designed to enable a powerful Full Spectrum Deterrence and on that it has delivered.

Specifically, the policy of Full Spectrum Deterrence implies the following:

- That Pakistan possesses the full

spectrum of nuclear weapons in three categories: strategic, operational and tactical, with full range coverage of the large Indian land mass and its outlying territories, there is no place for India's strategic weapons to hide.

- That Pakistan possesses a full range of weapons yield coverage, and the numbers strongly secured, to deter the adversary's policy of massive retaliation; Pakistan's 'counter- massive retaliation' will therefore be as severe if not more.
- That Pakistan retains the liberty of choosing from a full spectrum of targets in a "target-rich India", notwithstanding the Indian BMD or the Russian S-400, to include counter value, counter force and battlefield targets.

By developing Full Spectrum Deterrence capability, we have reinforced deterrence at all levels, re-restored the disturbed strategic balance, thereby ensuring that peace will generally prevail.

Cold Start Doctrine or Proactive Operations have not only been checked but the operational options of the large Indian military have been severely curtailed to a point that now in 2024, five years since the last Indian humiliation at Balakot-Rajauri in 2019, one hears murmurs about a Dynamic Response Strategy (DRS) being crafted by the Indian military planners based essentially on the hackneyed "strategic strikes" formula at the tactical level across the LOC, or even the international borders. In a matter of a few decades, that is a fairly steep climb down from Gen K. Sundarji's blitzkrieg and Gen VP Malik's limited war.

In my opinion, Dynamic Response Strategy (DRS) is a clear reflection of the limits and constraints imposed by Pakistan's robust nuclear capability on India's strategic and

operational options, and therefore my preference to call Pakistan's strategic weapons especially the Tactical Nuclear Weapons as 'weapons of peace'.

When seen against the reality of the gradual erosion and regression of India's politico-military options in the real world of today's South Asian strategic balance, to me it sounds comical and a bit Quixotic to hear India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the Defense Minister Rajnath Singh threatening that India will chase infiltrators inside Pakistani territory, and for the born again Hindutva Foreign Minister Jaishankar to say that Pakistan's nuclear capability should be ignored while planning to take Azad Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan.

Such statements at the highest political levels can only fall in the category of political rhetoric and bluster borne out of the frustration of seeing one of the world's largest militaries standing deterred because of Pakistan's robust nuclear capability. They forget the fantastic tea that was served to Abhinandan the last time the Indians came chasing terrorists inside Pakistan. That does not, however, mean that the threats should not be taken seriously by Pakistan's conventional forces.

I have been asked to give my views on the future trajectory of the nuclear program. I would like to say that there are extremely competent and professional people at the SPD who have a vision of the future trajectory of Pakistan's nuclear program. They are very well versed with the nature of threat and the obtaining geo-political environments as these exist today and as these are likely to take shape in the future.

I have no doubt that they will not only protect the program but also by extension, protect Pakistan against all threats and will

therefore take the best decisions about the future trajectory in the best interest of Pakistan's security. I have full faith in all my successors who were, and are, top professionals and who have contributed immensely in taking Pakistan's nuclear capability from strength to strength. We owe them all our gratitude. May Allah bless them all.

One thing that is inevitable for sure is that advancements in technology including what are referred to as emerging technologies will continue to make their way appropriately in Pakistan's national security calculus. The nuclear program too will be that much richer and stronger by benefitting from these. Also, I would be very happy if an energy-deficient Pakistan can benefit from the NCA approved Nuclear Energy Vision-2050 which promises to deliver 42000 MW of nuclear energy by the year 2050. And that mind you is the rough equivalent of ten Kalabagh Dams.

I would like to conclude by recalling that nearly 80 years of geo-political and military history post World War II reinforces the universal wisdom that nuclear powers do not fight direct wars. I do not see any reason why India and Pakistan would want to defy that logic and risk Mutually Assured Destruction (MAD) of the worst kind.

The illogical logic of MAD is as relevant to South Asia as it is to Europe and across the Atlantic. Pakistan does not have a No First Use policy. The Indian gung ho leadership may like to think about it. There should never ever be a doubt in anyone's mind, friend or foe, that Pakistan's operationally ready nuclear capability enables every Pakistani leader the liberty, the dignity and the courage to look straight into the Indian eye and never blink.

RFI & ASCE HOST A NATIONAL CONFERENCE ON 'FUTURE PROSPECTS OF REGIONAL CONNECTIVITY THROUGH DIALOGUE IN SOUTH ASIA: GLOBAL AND STRATEGIC PERSPECTIVES



To explore the prospects of regional connectivity and related issues, Rabita Forum International (RFI) in collaboration with the Area Study Centre for Europe (ASCE), University of Karachi organized a one-day national conference titled 'Future Prospects of Regional Connectivity through Dialogue in South Asia: Global and Strategic Perspectives'

at the National Institute of Management (NIM), Karachi on June 5, 2024.

Dr. Khalid Mehmood Iraqi, Vice Chancellor of the University of Karachi, honored the conference being a chief guest while the keynote speaker was Ambassador (R) Najmuddin Sheikh, a renowned intellectual. The conference included three



sessions: an inaugural session and two working sessions.

In the inaugural session, Dr. Uzma Shujaat, Acting Director of ASCE, deliberated geopolitics, the new great game, and Asia's rising significance, along with emerging regional agreements and alliances. She highlighted China's role in regional integration and its challenge to US hegemony, emphasizing the conference's aim to explore economic opportunities and regional cooperation with actionable measures.

Mr. Nusrat Mirza, Chairman of RFI, in his welcome speech, acknowledged the dignitaries, speakers, and participants. He highlighted RFI's achievements from 2012 to 2022, including 52 seminars, conferences, workshops, strategic training programs, and webinars. He stressed the importance of regional connectivity, citing South Asia's diverse cultures, economies, and political landscapes. He advocated for linking countries through infrastructure, trade, cultural exchanges, and diplomatic engagements to make South Asia more prosperous and integrated.

Dr. Shaista Tabassum, Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences at the University of Karachi, addressed potential cooperation mechanisms for the South Asian region. She noted that the South Asian Association for



Regional Cooperation (SAARC) is currently inactive and proposed climate change and energy crisis management as common grounds for collaboration, given the frequent floods in Pakistan, Bangladesh, and India.

Ambassador Najmuddin Sheikh in his keynote address, underscored the vital importance of fostering economic development through enhanced regional connectivity, emphasizing that this objective should be a priority for all nations. He highlighted that Pakistan has been a steadfast advocate for regional connectivity and cooperation within South Asia, maintaining this supportive stance irrespective of the political administration in power.

Dr. Khalid Mehmood Iraqi, as the chief guest, accentuated the importance of connectivity globally, regionally, and personally for sharing economic benefits. He praised the European Union (EU) and the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) for their effective connectivity mechanisms. However, he criticized SAARC for lacking the capacity to achieve common goals and enhance regional connectivity. Citing a World Bank report, he pointed out that South Asia's intra-regional trade volume is only 1% of their GDP compared to ASEAN's 11%, highlighting the critical role of regional trade in development. He also addressed the





political conflicts within South Asian countries as barriers to trade, contrasting them with China and Taiwan, who maintain bilateral trade despite political tensions.

The first session was chaired by Ambassador (R) Qazi M. Khalilullah, Executive Director of the Center for International Strategic Studies Sindh (CISSS). He addressed critical issues such as connectivity, supply chain disruptions, and food and energy insecurity, highlighting them as significant challenges for the international community. He also discussed the Ukraine war, Israel's actions in Gaza, and the competition among global powers, noting their extensive implications. Ambassador Khalilullah suggested that the world is transitioning from unipolarity to multipolarity, with an assertive China and a resurgent Russia. He emphasized that Pakistan must safeguard its strategic interests and shield itself from the consequences of this global power shift.

In the first session, three distinguished speakers presented their insightful papers on various aspects of regional connectivity. Dr. Asad Ur Rehman, Assistant Professor at Habib University, Karachi, delved into the "Divergent Nature of Pakistani Geopolitics," exploring the complexities and strategic nuances of Pakistan's geopolitical landscape. Mr. Syed

Samiullah, Head of the Research Department at Rabita Forum International, examined "The Role of Nuclear Energy in Fostering Regional Economic Cooperation," focusing on the ethical considerations and governance issues within the regional context. Lastly, Ms. Haya Fatima Iqbal, an independent filmmaker and faculty member at Habib University, Karachi, presented her film "Beltoon," which addressed the media discourse on India-Pakistan issues. The film offered critical insights and suggested remedies to the media-driven narratives affecting bilateral relations between the two countries. Prof. Dr. Tanveer Khalid, former Chairperson of the Department of Political Science at the University of Karachi, chaired the second session. She emphasized the essential role of regional connectivity in promoting development, asserting that no state can prosper in isolation and must forge links with others. Dr. Khalid highlighted the conference's significance, noting that connectivity fosters integration and development. She observed that South Asia, which houses 2.5% of the world's population and numerous ancient civilizations, shares a unifying colonial history. Despite facing common challenges like poverty, inequality, climate change, terrorism, and political instability, she stressed the need to address





these issues through dialogue and economic integration. Other distinguished speakers supported her views and suggested various measures to enhance regional stability and connectivity while addressing ongoing conflicts and challenges.

In the second session, three speakers presented their papers, offering valuable insights into regional connectivity from different perspectives. Mr. Amir Sultan, Associate Professor at Bahria University, Karachi Campus, discussed the "European Model of Regional Connectivity: South Asian Perspective," highlighting how South Asia can

learn from European integration to enhance regional cooperation. Dr. Faisal Javed, Assistant Professor at FUUAST, Karachi, explored "Reach Towards South Asia: Implications for Regional Connectivity," examining the strategic and economic impacts of external powers engaging with South Asia. Dr. Syeda Fizza Batool, Assistant Professor at SZABIST, Karachi, presented on "Sub-Regional Organizations in South Asia," analyzing the roles and effectiveness of various sub-regional entities in promoting connectivity and collaboration within the region. Each session concluded with a question-and-answer segment and a shield distribution ceremony. Participants from various universities, including Karachi University, The Federal Urdu University of Arts, Science and Technology, DHA Suffa University, Shaheed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto Institute of Science and Technology (SZABIST), Habib University, and DOW University of Health Sciences, actively engaged in all sessions of the conference.



WELCOME ADDRESS BY

NUSRAT MIRZA

CHAIRMAN

RABITA FORUM INTERNATIONAL (RFI)

Mr. Nusrat Mirza's welcome address at the national conference serves to introduce the theme of the event, highlighting the importance of regional connectivity in South Asia. He emphasizes the economic, cultural, and diplomatic dimensions of connectivity and calls for collaborative efforts to enhance peace, stability, and prosperity in the region. Mr. Mirza also introduces Rabita Forum International (RFI), underscoring its mission to defend Pakistan's strategic interests and foster dialogue and strategic discourse. His remarks set a positive tone for the conference discussions. It is therefore below:

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good morning and a very warm welcome to all of you. It is my honor and privilege to welcome you to this national conference on:

"Future Prospects of Regional Connectivity through Dialogue in South Asia: Global and Strategic Perspectives."

Today, we gather to discuss and deliberate on one of the most pressing issues of our time, and I am delighted to see such a distinguished gathering of experts, scholars, and policymakers here with us.

First and foremost, I extend a warm welcome and heartfelt thanks to our Honorable Chief Guest, Dr. Khalid M. Iraqi, Vice Chancellor of the University of Karachi. His esteemed presence and leadership at this prestigious institution inspire us all, and we are honored to have him here with us today.

I also wish to express my sincere gratitude to Ambassador Najmuddin Shaikh for honoring us with his presence today. His vast experience and insights are immensely valuable to our discussions, and his friendship and support are greatly cherished. Sir, you



know very well the respect I have for you due to your services for this country of ours.

I would like to extend my thanks to Dr. Uzma Shujaat, the Acting Director of the Area Study Centre for Europe (ASCE) at the University of Karachi. She has been very active in co-hosting this conference, and I am grateful for her cooperation. I also feel that she has the attitude and spark in doing something good for the students of the University of Karachi, her directorate, and the country of Pakistan.

A special thank you to Dr. Shaista

Tabassum, the Dean of the Faculty of Arts & Social Sciences.

I am also pleased to welcome Ambassador Qazi M. Khalilullah, the Executive Director of the Center for Strategic Studies Sindh (CISSS), for accepting our request to chair the first session of this National Conference.

My heartiest thanks to one of the most senior Professors, Prof. Dr. Tanveer Khalid Saheba, for consenting to chair the second session of the conference.

Last but not least, my heartiest thanks to all the learned speakers and participants of this Conference.

Before we delve into the heart of our discussions, allow me to introduce Rabita Forum International (RFI). RFI was officially established on May 5, 2005, and from 2012 to June 2022, we have proudly conducted 52 seminars, conferences, workshops, strategic training programs, and webinars.

During that period, RFI stood as the sole organization defending Pakistan's strategic interests in Karachi and Sindh. Our commitment to fostering dialogue and strategic discourse remains steadfast as we continue to navigate the complexities of our regional landscape.

Today's conference topic, "Future



Prospects of Regional Connectivity through Dialogue in South Asia: Global and Strategic Perspectives," is of paramount importance. In our interconnected world, the significance of regional connectivity cannot be overstated. South Asia, with its diverse cultures, economies, and political landscapes, holds immense potential for growth and collaboration. However, realizing this potential requires a concerted effort to bridge divides and foster cooperative relationships.

Regional connectivity encompasses a wide array of initiatives and strategies aimed at linking countries through infrastructure, trade, cultural exchanges, and diplomatic engagements. By enhancing these connections, we can create a more integrated and prosperous South Asia, capable of addressing shared challenges and seizing common opportunities.

One of the key aspects of regional connectivity is the development of economic corridors and trade routes. These pathways not only facilitate the movement of goods and services but also promote economic interdependence and stability. Through infrastructure projects such as roads, railways, and ports, we can reduce trade barriers, lower transportation costs, and increase market access for businesses across the region.





Moreover, cultural exchanges play a vital role in fostering mutual understanding and respect among South Asian nations. By celebrating our shared heritage and embracing our diverse traditions, we can build stronger, more resilient societies. Educational programs, tourism initiatives, and cultural festivals are just a few examples of how we can bridge cultural gaps and create a sense of regional solidarity.

Diplomatic engagements are equally crucial in promoting peace and stability in South Asia. Dialogue and negotiations are essential tools for resolving conflicts, building trust, and enhancing cooperation. By nurturing diplomatic channels, we can address issues such as border disputes, security concerns, and resource management, paving the way for a more harmonious region.

From a global perspective, South Asia's connectivity initiatives have far-reaching implications. As we strengthen our regional ties, we also enhance our collective influence on the global stage. South Asia's strategic location, demographic potential, and economic dynamism position it as a key player in international affairs. By working together, we can amplify our voice in global forums, advocate for our shared interests,

and contribute to shaping a more just and equitable world order.

Throughout today's conference, we will delve into these various dimensions of regional connectivity, examining both the opportunities and challenges that lie ahead. Our esteemed speakers and panelists will share their insights and expertise, providing us with a comprehensive understanding of the strategic landscape. We will explore case studies, best practices, and innovative approaches that have successfully enhanced connectivity in other regions, drawing lessons that can be applied to our context.

Ultimately, our goal is to foster a robust and meaningful dialogue that will not only enhance our understanding but also lead to actionable strategies for promoting peace, stability, and prosperity in South Asia. By working together, we can transform the vision of regional connectivity into a reality, creating a brighter future for all our nations.

In conclusion, I once again extend my deepest thanks to all our distinguished guests, speakers, and participants for being here today. The contributions of all of you are vital to the success of this conference, and I look forward to the enriching discussions that will unfold.

Thank you, and let us embark on this journey of dialogue and discovery together.



INAUGURAL ADDRESS BY**PROF. DR. KHALID M. IRAQI****VICE CHANCELLOR, UNIVERSITY OF KARACHI.****NATIONAL CONFERENCE ON FUTURE PROSPECT OF REGIONAL CONNECTIVITY THROUGH DIALOGUES IN SOUTH ASIA: GLOBAL AND STRATEGIC PERSPECTIVES**

Ladies and Gentlemen, Keynote Speaker, Mr. Najmuddin Shaikh, former Foreign Secretary of Pakistan, Ambassador (R) Qazi M. Khalilullah, Prof. Dr. Shaista Tabassum, Dean Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, University of Karachi hosts of the conference, Mr. Nusrat Mirza, Chairman Rabita Forum International, Dr. Uzma Shujaat, participants, guests from civil society, faculty members, and students!

Good Morning!!

Regional Connectivity as a concept is not a new phenomenon. Regions are well-connected since old times, basically for the purpose of economic cooperation and trade. Today, some regions experiencing deep and strong integration like the EU and ASEAN (Southeast Asian association). However, region like ours (South Asia) is loosely integrated even after a genuine desire for the



regional connectivity is strongly prevail in the masses of this region. I can say, the theme of the conference is quite relevant these days.

The South Asian region continues to be one of the least integrated in the world. Barriers restricting the flow of people, capital and goods are common across the subcontinent, stunting economic growth, preventing the emergence of globally competitive supply chains and limiting people-to-people contact that can help develop constituencies for peace, especially between India and Pakistan.

Trade data for South Asia highlights the impact of these barriers: while intra-regional trade accounts for about one per cent of South Asia's GDP, it accounts for almost 11pc of regional GDP in East Asia and the Pacific, according to the World Bank. This need not be the case, and South Asia's economic and geopolitical future would be far more secure if





it were to become more integrated.

The shared history, culture and languages of the region, particularly in Pakistan and India, means that trade, tourism and direct investment can be catalyzed by encouraging the flow of people across the border.

This would initiate a virtuous cycle as the flow of people builds trust and enhances trade linkages that create economic interdependencies, which further builds trust and fosters even greater trade and investment.

Such a virtuous cycle is taking hold in the border regions of India and Bangladesh, two countries whose governments have aggressively sought to improve trade and people-to-people ties in the last few years.

Hard-liners on both sides of the border argue that increased trade, connectivity and flow of people is simply not possible due to unresolved disputes between India and Pakistan. While it is true that several issues

need to be resolved including the Kashmir dispute, the fact of the matter is that countries around the world have been able to do business despite the existence of thorny issues.

The Taiwan-China relationship is a case in point. Taiwan, with a population of over 23 million, is an island that has been governed independently from mainland China since 1949. At a time when Pakistan has invested in building infrastructure under the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor, it is important that the country pursue efforts to enhance trade and connectivity across the east-west axis in South Asia.

As the data shows, there is a significant potential for growth, and the cultural, linguistic and historic ties across this axis make it an important factor in future economic growth of the region. Furthermore, a look at the population centres of the region, including China, shows that the east-west corridor has far more potential than the north-south economic corridor that connects Gwadar to Kashgar.

Revitalizing the historic trade ties of South Asia, which have been disrupted in the decades since Partition, is integral to the long-term economic growth of the region. The economic opportunity is there for the taking and a bold push by policymakers in the region can have a transformative impact across South Asia.



NATIONAL CONFERENCE ON**"FUTURE PROSPECTS OF REGIONAL CONNECTIVITY
THROUGH DIALOGUE IN SOUTH ASIA:
GLOBAL AND STRATEGIC PERSPECTIVES"****ORGANIZED BY****Rabita Forum International (RFI) and The Area Study Centre for Europe, University of Karachi****SESSION-I****CHAIR'S OPENING REMARKS BY****AMBASSADOR QAZI M. KHALILULLAH (R)
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
CENTER FOR INTERNATIONAL STRATEGIC STUDIES SINDH**

Mr. Nusrat Mirza, Chairman Rabita Forum International,

Dr Uzma Shujaat, Acting Director Area Study Center for Europe, University of Karachi,

Dear Students,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Assalam-o-Alaikum,

It is a matter of honour and pleasure for me to Chair Session-I of this very important conference jointly organized by Rabita Forum International and the Area Study Centre for Europe of University of Karachi.

Connectivity, supply chain disruptions, food and energy security have become serious issues impacting most countries around the world due to global power contestation, trade and tech wars, clash between unipolarity and multipolarity, war in Ukraine and Israeli genocide in Gaza.

According to the "2024 Annual Threat Assessment of the US Intelligence Community", the US faces an increasingly fragile global order marked by accelerating strategic competition among major powers, more intense and unpredictable traditional challenges, and multiregional conflicts with





far-reaching implications. Furthermore, it states that an ambitious China, a confrontational Russia, some regional powers such as Iran and more capable non-state actors are challenging long-standing rules of international system as well US primacy within it.

Bipolarity ended with the end of the Cold War in December 1991. What we are witnessing nowadays is the end of unipolarity and emergence of multipolarity. Peaceful rise of China and resurgence of Russia have successfully promoted a multipolar world, which the US is resisting by any means possible.

Pakistan, therefore, needs to come up with a strategy that would protect its strategic interests, advance economic development and shield it from the fallout of global power contestation.

Pakistan has 559 km long border with China, 2611 km border with Afghanistan, 909 km border with Iran and 3323 km long border with India which includes Line of Control and Working Boundary. Out of these four, China is our time-tested strategic partner and Iron brother, Iran and Afghanistan are brotherly countries and India poses existential threat to Pakistan.

Although Pakistan faces security challenges on its eastern and western borders, Pakistan's nuclear deterrence provides the enabling environment of relative peace and security in South Asia which then facilitates the other elements of national power in nation building to progress unimpeded in their respective spheres.

PAKISTAN'S PRIORITY FOR REGIONAL CONNECTIVITY FOR DEVELOPMENT

Since 1960s, Pakistan has attached priority to regional connectivity for development and shared prosperity. Regional Cooperation for Development (RCD), Karakoram Highway (KKH) and Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) stand out as examples of Pakistan's geo-economic pivot, that predate the coining of this term. CPEC is the latest manifestation of Pakistan's continued quest for regional connectivity for development or geo-economic pivot.

RCD was established by Pakistan, Iran and Türkiye in 1964 to foster regional cooperation in the fields of economy, technology, culture, trade and industry. It was renamed Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) by the three countries in January 1985. It was expanded with addition of five Central Asian Republics, Azerbaijan and Afghanistan after disintegration of the Soviet Union. 1300 km long Karakoram Highway, also known as Friendship Highway in China, was started in 1962 and completed in 1978.

Since the independence of Central Asian Republics in 1991, Pakistan has focused on establishing close relations with these countries in diverse fields including trade, investment, energy, security and connectivity. Accordingly, Pakistan's geo-economic pivot is focused on enhancing trade and economic ties through connectivity that links Central Asia to our warm waters.

REGIONAL CONNECTIVITY THROUGH AFGHANISTAN

Exit of foreign forces from Afghanistan in 2021 and re-establishment of Taliban rule in Afghanistan has offered valuable opportunities for completion of the following long-delayed connectivity projects between Pakistan and Central Asia:

- i. Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India gas pipeline.
- ii. Central Asia-South Asia electricity transmission project (CASA 1000) from Kyrgyz Republic and Tajikistan to Pakistan via Afghanistan. According to Ambassador of Kyrgyz Republic to Pakistan, the 1,300 MW CASA-1000 project is likely to be completed this year. It would be helpful in meeting Pakistan's energy needs and enhance regional cooperation in the energy sector.

Taliban rule in Afghanistan has also offered opportunities to Pakistan for enhancing trade with Russia and Central Asia through the land route. Many noteworthy developments have taken place in this regard recently. Let me highlight some of them:

- i. According to Pakistani businessmen, nearly 90% of Pakistani goods exported to Russia by road are being transported through Afghanistan.
- ii. Last year, trucks carrying goods from Russia and Kazakhstan made their first ever-trips to Pakistan through Afghanistan.
- iii. Russian LPG has been transported to Pakistan through Afghanistan.
- iv. Pakistan and Uzbekistan have signed MoU for construction of railway link between the two countries through Afghanistan.
- v. According to Kazakhstan's Ministry of Trade, the country wants to develop road and railway links through Afghanistan to connect with South Asia and the Gulf.

- vi. In April this year, a convoy of NLC Trucks transported goods through Afghanistan to Tajikistan's capital Dushanbe from Pakistan.
- vii. Afghanistan has agreed with Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan to build a logistics center or Transit Hub in Herat which will facilitate export of Russian oil to South Asia. Afghanistan also intends to hold talks with Russia in this context.

However, Pakistan is facing many challenges in its relations with Afghanistan, in particular terrorism emanating from the Afghan soil. But the good thing is that both sides remain engaged and are trying to resolve all issues peacefully through dialogue.

REGIONAL CONNECTIVITY THROUGH IRAN

In 1995, Pakistan faced shortage of long staple cotton. The then Prime Minister of Pakistan Mohtarma Shaheed Benazir Bhutto, therefore, authorized purchase of 31,000 tons of cotton from Turkmenistan and instructed that it should be transported through western Afghanistan so that a transport corridor for trade could be opened for regional connectivity.

However, this could not happen due to instability in western Afghanistan. As a result, the cotton was transported from Turkmenistan to Pakistan through Iran.



Two months ago, a convoy of 16 NLC trucks transported Pakistani Kinnow to Russian cities of Derbent and Grozny. The trucks drove through Iran and Azerbaijan to arrive in the Russian cities in 18 days, covering a distance of 6000 km. Prior to that, Pakistan transported Kinnow to Russia through the sea route which took months to reach the destination.

Islamabad Tehran Istanbul (ITI) freight train service was launched on 14 August 2009 on trial basis. The train covers 6,500 kilometers in the three countries and takes up to 15 days one way, which is about 10 days less than the sea route. The train service stopped in 2011, but was restarted with departure from Islamabad on 21 December 2021. The train reached Istanbul with a load of 150 tons of pink salt in 14 days. The ITI train link highlights Pakistan's potential to provide a trade and transport corridor to all regional countries for trading with Iran, Türkiye and Europe.

REGIONAL CONNECTIVITY THROUGH PAKISTAN

In conclusion, let me make a few recommendations for realization of Pakistan's potential as a hub of regional connectivity. In my view, in order to promote regional connectivity for development and for Pakistan to realize its true transit trade potential, it is important to:

- a. Attach priority to completion of road, rail and energy projects from Central Asia to Pakistan through Afghanistan.
- b. Keeping in view that the government of Pakistan is inclined to reviving trade with India, Pakistan may consider:
 - i. Offering transit trade access to India for trading with Iran, Türkiye, Europe, Afghanistan, Central Asia, Russia and China and offering transit trade access to all these countries through Pakistan to

India by road and rail.

- ii. Pakistan may seek in return transit trade access from India to Nepal, Bhutan, Bangladesh and beyond.

This would be a gamechanger for the entire region and make Pakistan a real transit trade hub. It would also play a pivotal role in integrating the region economically.

Finally, the Government of Pakistan may:

- i. Take the lead in setting up a Forum of Regional Countries to come together to discuss ways to realize the potential for regional connectivity for development through dialogue and address challenges at borders, including security issues.



- ii. Establish a Ministry or Department of Transit Trade and Regional Connectivity in Pakistan to pursue available opportunities on 24/7 basis.
- iii. Appoint a Special Envoy for Connectivity and Transit Trade for engaging with all regional countries.

Let me conclude by stressing that this is the right time to push for regional connectivity by road and rail through Pakistan in all directions as maritime trade routes have become vulnerable due to geopolitical contestation and reaction to Israel's genocide in Palestine.

Thank You.

THE ROLE OF NUCLEAR ENERGY IN FOSTERING REGIONAL ECONOMIC COOPERATION:

ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS AND GOVERNANCE WITHIN THE REGIONAL CONTEXT

SYED SAMIULLAH

The basic nature of our universe is an amazing interaction of matter and energy, which supports all existence and movement. Before exploring the details of my topic, "The Role of Nuclear Energy in Fostering Regional Economic Cooperation: Ethical Considerations and Governance within the Regional Context," it's important to consider this key fact.

Energy is the lifeblood of the universe, bringing life to what would otherwise be lifeless matter. Since the start of the industrial age, the vital role of energy in driving development has been inescapable. For any nation aiming for sustainable progress, achieving self-sufficiency in energy production is not just a goal but a fundamental need.

Given the inevitability of energy in our lives, the next crucial question is: how should we produce it? There are numerous sources, including coal, natural gas, crude oil, sunlight, and nuclear materials. However, when asked why nuclear energy should be preferred over fossil fuels, the answer is clear and compelling: nuclear energy is reliable, clean, and safe.

In terms of reliability, nuclear energy stands unrivaled. A nuclear power plant operates at maximum power for over 92% of the year, nearly twice as much as natural gas and coal units, and almost three times more reliable than wind and solar plants. This



consistency is paramount in ensuring a stable energy supply.

Apart from reliability, Nuclear energy is a clean and safe power source because it generates power through fission, I mean splitting uranium atoms to produce energy. The heat released by fission is used to create steam that spins a turbine to generate electricity without emitting harmful byproducts, unlike fossil fuels. For example, For example, a 1,000-megawatt coal power plant releases nearly 6 million tons of carbon annually, polluting the environment and endangering life on our planet.

Additionally, nuclear energy requires significantly less land than any other clean energy source. A typical 1,000-megawatt nuclear plant occupies just over 1 square mile, compared to wind farms needing 360 times more space, and solar plants requiring 75 times more area for the same output.

Nuclear power also generates minimal waste due to the high density of nuclear fuel, which is about 1 million times greater than



traditional energy sources. For instance, all the used nuclear fuel from the U.S. over the past 60 years could be dumped on a football field less than 10 yards deep.

The U.S. has about 92 nuclear reactors with a combined capacity of 94,765 MW, far surpassing Pakistan's 3,620 MW. Moreover, nuclear waste can be reprocessed and recycled, and advanced reactor designs are being developed to use spent fuel, further minimizing waste and enhancing sustainability. Now looking into its role in fostering regional economic cooperation, the rapid advancement of nuclear energy technology is of significant importance. Especially, for Pakistan and its neighboring countries, nuclear energy presents a unique opportunity to enhance energy security, reduce dependence on fossil fuels, and promote economic diversification.

In the realm of enhanced energy security, nuclear energy can play a critical role by providing a reliable and stable power source. This is particularly important for countries like Pakistan, which face energy shortages and rely heavily on expensive and environmentally hazardous imported fossil fuels.

These countries through cooperation can diversify their energy mix with nuclear power, reducing vulnerability to global energy market

fluctuations and enhancing energy independence.

In terms of economic diversification, energy is undoubtedly one of the most important drivers of economic growth. Currently, only in Pakistan over thirty million people i.e. 15% of the total population, do not have access to electricity, which ultimately limits their potential for inclusive growth.

The creation of nuclear energy infrastructure has the potential to promote economic progress in various ways. It can stimulate job creation, encourage technical innovation, attract foreign investment, launch joint research and development projects, and strengthen market sustainability. Investing in nuclear energy allows developing nations to minimize reliance on traditional sectors, reinforcing economic resilience and developing a more diverse and robust economic structure.

However, the adoption of nuclear energy also brings forth a range of ethical and governance challenges that need to be taken care of to ensure that its benefits are maximized and its risks minimized. Prominent challenges include the risks of accidents, nuclear waste management, and potential risks to public health.

The risks of accidents encompass the possibility of nuclear reactor malfunctions or disasters, which can have catastrophic



consequences for both human life and the environment. Addressing this challenge requires stringent adherence to safety protocols and regulations set forth by international bodies like the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

Compliance with IAEA guidelines ensures that nuclear facilities are constructed, operated, and maintained with the highest standards of safety, reducing the likelihood of accidents. Nuclear waste management presents another significant challenge. Proper disposal and containment of radioactive waste are essential to prevent environmental contamination and health hazards.

The IAEA provides directions on the safe handling and disposal of nuclear waste, including recommendations for long-term storage solutions and monitoring techniques. By following these directives, countries can effectively manage their nuclear waste and mitigate the associated risks.

Additionally, it is essential to recognize the potential public health risks associated with radiation exposure. To address these concerns, robust regulatory frameworks guided by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) are vital. These frameworks should include strict radiation protection measures for nuclear facility workers and



comprehensive protocols for monitoring and responding to radiation incidents. By prioritizing public health and adhering to international standards, we can ensure that the benefits of nuclear energy significantly outweigh its risks.

Notably, the absence of major disasters in nuclear facilities worldwide highlights the critical role of stringent safety protocols, regulatory oversight, and international collaboration. Emphasizing safety, security, and environmental protection allows nations to reap the benefits of nuclear energy while minimizing risks.

Robust governance frameworks are essential to address the ethical and practical challenges of nuclear energy development. These frameworks, recommended by the IAEA, should include comprehensive regulations, oversight mechanisms, and international cooperation to ensure safe and responsible nuclear operations.

In Pakistan, the Pakistan Nuclear Regulatory Authority (PNRA) has been managing the country's nuclear regulatory infrastructure since 1965. This organization ensures the safe operation of nuclear facilities, protects workers, the public, and the environment from radiation hazards, and fosters transparency and trust.

Continued on page 37



AL-ZARRAR TANK



TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| • Designer: Heavy Industries, Taxila. | • Height: 8.20 ft (2.5m) |
| • Designed: 1990's | • Crew: 4 |
| • Mass: 44 t (97,000lb) | • Power/Weight: 18.3 hp |
| • Length: 31.17 ft (9.50m) | • Operational Range: 450km |
| • Width: 10.83 ft (3.30m) | • Speed: 65km (40 mi) |

AL-ZARRAR TANK:

STRENGTHENING PAKISTAN'S MILITARY ARSENAL

INTERACTION TEAM

The Al-Zarrar is a second-generation Main Battle Tank (MBT), manufactured by Heavy Industries Taxila (HIT), the hub of Pakistani tanks and tracked vehicles. It has been in service with the Pakistan Army since 2004. The tank is named after the renowned Muslim warrior and companion of the Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W.), Zarrar bin Al-Azwar R.A. (Diraar ibn al-Azwar in Arabic).

DEVELOPMENT HISTORY

In 1990, the Pakistan Army chose to upgrade their extensive inventory of Chinese-origin Type 59 tanks rather than discarding them. Heavy Industries Taxila (HIT) spearheaded a phased modernization program to improve the tanks' firepower, mobility, and protection, offering a more economical solution compared to acquiring new main battle tanks (MBTs). The initial phase of this upgrade was completed in 1997, and the subsequent phase commenced in 1998. This effort culminated in the creation of a significantly enhanced tank, featuring over 50 modifications and integrating advanced



systems from HIT's Al-Khalid MBT. Following rigorous testing, this new tank was finalized and named Al-Zarrar.

The Al-Zarrar emerged as a cost-effective alternative for the Type 59 fleet, boasting modern armament, sophisticated fire control, and enhanced ballistic protection. Furthermore, the Al-Zarrar upgrade package was made available to other nations seeking to modernize their T-54/T-55 or Type 59 tanks to this advanced standard. Mass production of the Al-Zarrar officially began on 6 May 2003, under the leadership of Engineer Mahmood Khan. The first batch of 88 tanks was delivered to the Pakistan Army on 26 February 2004, in a ceremony attended by General Pervez Musharraf, the then-President of Pakistan.

KEY FEATURES

It features a 125 mm smoothbore gun as a primary weapon. The Al-Zarrar can achieve a maximum speed of 65 km (40 mi) per hour, weighs around 44 tons, and has a four-man crew: commander, gunner, loader, and driver.





ARMAMENT AND FIRE-CONTROL

Al-Zarrar's primary armament is a 125 mm smoothbore tank gun with an auto frettaged, chrome-plated gun barrel. It is capable of firing a variety of munitions, including Armor-Piercing Fin-Stabilized Discarding Sabot (APFSDS), High-Explosive Anti-Tank Fin-Stabilized (HEAT-FS), and High-Explosive Fragmentation (HE-FS) rounds. It can also launch anti-tank guided missiles and the Pakistani depleted uranium (DU) round, known as the 125 mm Naiza, designed to penetrate heavy armor and used by the military for targeting armored vehicles. Naiza is capable of penetrating 550 mm of Rolled Homogeneous Armor (RHA) at a distance of 2 km. The gun has a dual-axis stabilization system and thermal imaging sights integrated into the fire-control system for the commander and gunner, giving it enhanced night-time target acquisition capabilities. The image-stabilized fire-control system includes a laser range-finder for accurate range information and a ballistics computer to improve accuracy. An improved gun control system is also fitted.

The secondary armament consists of an external 12.7 mm anti-aircraft machine gun mounted on the roof of the turret, which can be aimed and fired from inside the tank, and a 7.62 mm coaxial machine gun.

MOBILITY AND POWER

Powered by an upgraded liquid-cooled 12-cylinder diesel engine, the Al-Zarrar's power output is increased from 580 to 730 horsepower. This gives the tank a power-to-weight ratio of 18.3 hp/tonne and a top speed of 65 km/h. The modified torsion bar suspension system enhances crew comfort compared to the original Type 59 design.

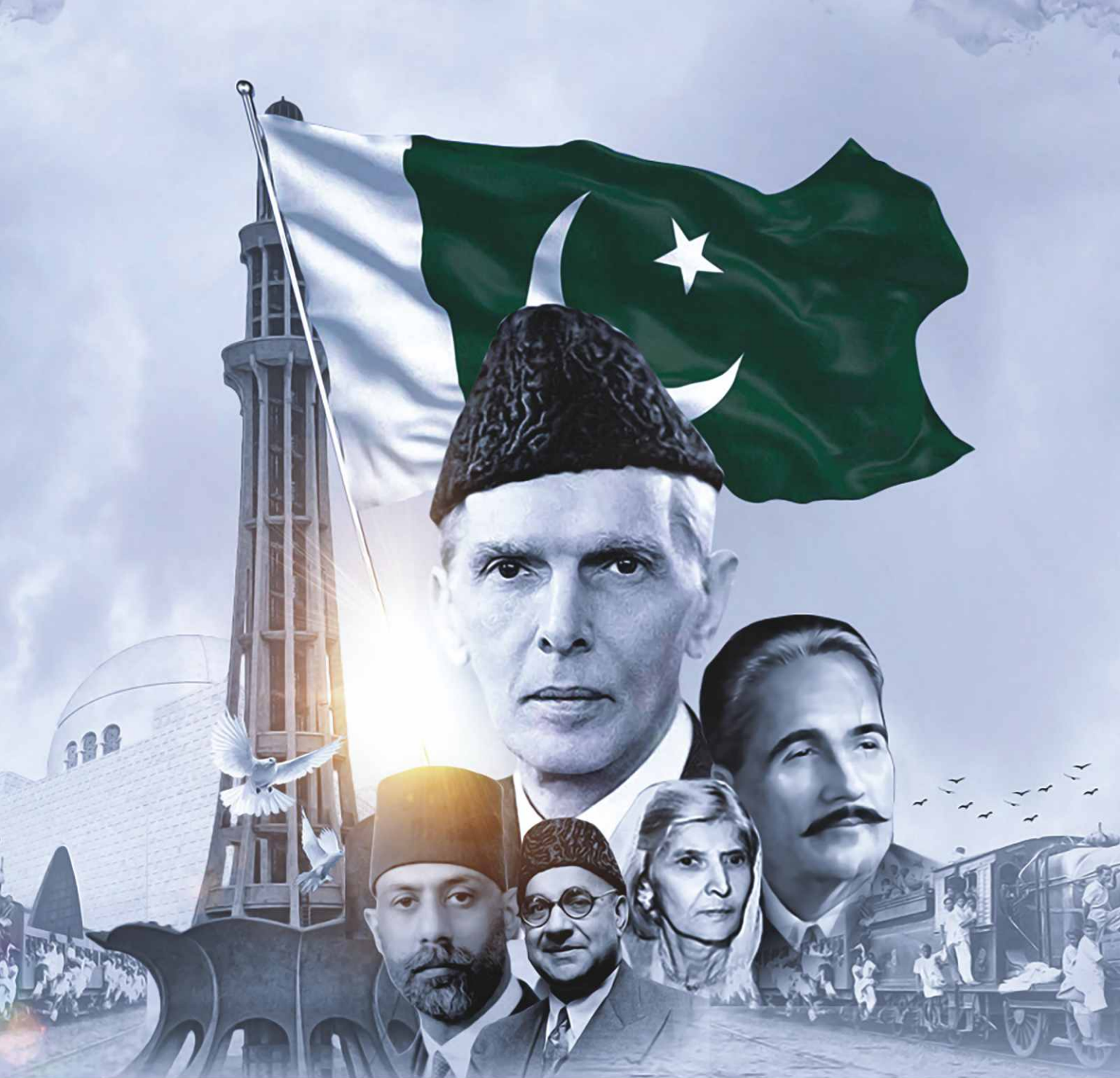
PROTECTION AND SURVIVABILITY

The Al-Zarrar employs modular composite armor for improved protection against anti-tank missiles, mines, and other threats. It is equipped with the Pakistani ATCOP LTS-1 laser threat warning system, smoke grenade launchers on the turret sides, and an automatic fire-extinguishing and explosion suppression system to enhance crew survivability.

CONCLUSION

The Al-Zarrar has proven to be a cost-effective and highly capable upgrade for the Pakistan Army's Type 59 fleet. With its modern armament, advanced fire control systems, and enhanced protection, the Al-Zarrar stands as a robust and reliable main battle tank, ready to meet the demands of modern warfare. The upgrade package has also been offered to other nations seeking to modernize their T-54/T-55 or Type 59 tanks, showcasing Pakistan's growing expertise in military technology.





PAKISTAN CORNER

Welcome to "Pakistan Corner," a dedicated section in our magazine where we explore the rich tapestry of Pakistan's history, culture, and legacy before and after its independence. This series aims to illuminate the diverse heritages, local languages, various cultures, and unsung heroes of the nation, offering our readers an in-depth look into the different facets that shape today's Pakistan.

THE PAKISTAN MOVEMENT:

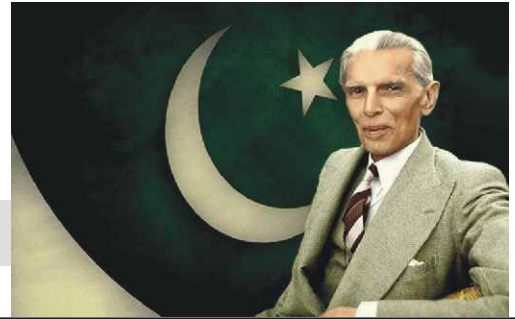
A SAGA OF STRUGGLE AND TRIUMPH

(PART I)

INTERACTION TEAM

The story of the Pakistan Movement is a mesmerizing journey filled with both celebrated and overlooked events that bring tears to the eyes and stir the soul when imagined. Here, we aim to provide a brief and balanced account of this extraordinary chapter in history. According to Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah, the father of the nation, the Pakistan Movement began when the first Muslim, Muhammad bin Qasim, set foot on the soil of Sindh, the gateway of Islam in India. However, for a more focused narrative, we start from the early 20th century. For the most part, this movement was a political and nationalist struggle for Muslim self-determination under British rule, with the ultimate goal of establishing an independent country for Muslims in British India.

If the history of the movement is examined, it can be seen that the Aligarh Movement, led by Sir Syed Ahmed Khan, laid the groundwork for the Pakistan Movement by fostering a



sense of identity and purpose among Muslims, eventually supplying the new nation with its leading figures. The formation of the All-India Muslim League marked the formal commencement of the Pakistan Movement. Many of its leaders were educated in Great Britain, including graduates from Aligarh Muslim University and the University of Dhaka. Interestingly, it was the Muslim community from the minority provinces, like the United Provinces, that predominantly pushed the movement forward, rather than those from the Muslim-majority areas.

The Pakistan Movement was inherently linked to the broader Indian independence struggle but gradually evolved to seek a separate state that safeguarded the political rights of Muslims in British India. Along with the political leadership, Literary figures like poets Iqbal, the spiritual father of the movement, and Faiz, along with revered religious scholars like Ashraf Ali Thanwi, lent their voices and support to the cause. Within the Deobandi school of thought, there were divergent views. Leaders like Hussain Ahmed





Madani of the Jamiat Ulema-e-Hind advocated for a united India under composite nationalism, while Ashraf Ali Thanwi and his followers, including Shabbir Ahmad Usmani, Zafar Ahmad Usmani, and Mufti Muhammad Shafi, provided religious support for the creation of Pakistan. Shabbir Ahmad Usmani's faction broke away from the Jamiat Ulema-e-Hind to form the Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam, backing the movement for an independent Pakistan. In recognition of their contributions, Usmani was honored with the privilege of raising the Pakistani flag in Karachi, while Zafar Ahmad Usmani did the same in Dhaka.

Thus, the Pakistan Movement was not just a political struggle but a tapestry woven with cultural, educational, and religious endeavors, each playing a pivotal role in the creation of a new homeland for Muslims in the subcontinent. Despite numerous political challenges and social hurdles, the Pakistan Movement ultimately triumphed, leading to the establishment of Pakistan on 14 August 1947.

During the early 19th century, Lord Macaulay's radical educational reforms introduced Western languages like English and Latin, along with Western history and philosophy, into the curriculum. These changes led to the exclusion of religious studies and traditional languages such as Arabic, Turkish, and Persian from state universities. By 1835, English had become the

official language, replacing Persian, which left many who had built careers around the latter language at a disadvantage. Traditional Hindu and Islamic studies lost support from the British Crown, and many madrasahs lost their financial endowment.

Amid these transformations, Sir Syed Ahmad Khan emerged as an inspirational figure for the Pakistan Movement. While few Muslim families sent their children to English universities, the Bengali Renaissance had made the Hindu population more educated, enabling them to secure lucrative positions in the Indian Civil Service and rise to influential posts in the British government. In 1930, Allama Muhammad Iqbal delivered a famous speech at the Allahabad annual session, which is often regarded as the inception of the idea for a separate state, later known as Pakistan.

Class conflict in colonial India took on a religious dimension, with Muslims generally being agriculturists and soldiers, while Hindus were increasingly seen as successful financiers and businessmen. According to historian Spear, an industrialized India was perceived by Muslims as a Hindu-dominated India. Sir Syed Ahmad Khan played a crucial role in transforming the cultural and religious identity of Indian Muslims into a separatist political force, framing nationalism within an Islamic

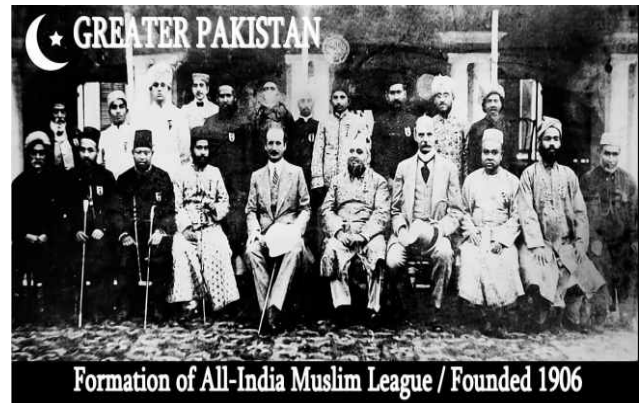


context. The distinct sense of value, culture, and tradition among Indian Muslims persisted since the Muslim conquests in the subcontinent.

At the dawn of the twentieth century, a number of factors convinced the Muslims of the need to have an effective political organization. Therefore, in October 1906, a deputation comprising 35 Muslim leaders met the Viceroy of the British at Simla and demanded separate electorates. Three months later, the All-India Muslim League was founded by Nawab Salimullah Khan in Dhaka, mainly with the objective of safeguarding the political rights and interests of the Muslims. The British conceded separate electorates in the Government of India Act of 1909, which confirmed the Muslim League's position as an All-India party.

The visible trend of the two major communities progressing in opposite directions caused deep concern to leaders of All-India stature. They struggled to bring the Congress and the Muslim League onto one platform. Quaid-i-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah was the leading figure among them. After the annulment of the partition of Bengal and the European Powers' aggressive designs against the Ottoman Empire and North Africa, the Muslims were receptive to the idea of collaboration with the Hindus against the British rulers.

The Congress-Muslim League rapprochement was achieved at the Lucknow sessions of the two parties in 1916, and a joint scheme of reforms was adopted. In the Lucknow Pact, as the scheme was commonly referred to, the Congress accepted the principle of separate electorates, and the Muslims, in return for 'weightage' to the Muslims of the Muslim minority provinces, agreed to surrender their thin majorities in the Punjab and Bengal. The post-Lucknow Pact



period witnessed Hindu-Muslim amity, and the two parties came to hold their annual sessions in the same city, passing resolutions of identical content.

The peak of Hindu-Muslim unity was noticeable during the Khilafat and Non-cooperation Movements. In the aftermath of the First World War, the Ali Brothers, Maulana Muhammad Ali, and Maulana Shaukat Ali spearheaded the historic Khilafat Movement. Their mission was to safeguard the Ottoman Empire from being dismantled. At this juncture, Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, seeing an opportunity to unite the Indian populace, intertwined the Khilafat issue with the quest for Swaraj or self-government, thereby bringing the Hindus into the fold. This collaboration birthed the first nationwide popular movement in India.

Though the Khilafat Movement did not meet its intended goals but its impact on South Asian Muslims was profound. For the first time in a long while, they collectively rallied around a purely Islamic cause, fostering a fleeting but significant sense of unity. This movement also cultivated a cadre of Muslim leaders adept at public organization and mobilization, skills that proved invaluable in the later Pakistan Movement. However, the movement's failure ushered in an era of intense Hindu-Muslim antagonism. The Hindus initiated the Shudhi and Sangathan movements, aiming to convert

Muslims to Hinduism and to solidify Hindu unity in the face of communal tensions. In response, Muslims launched the Tabligh and Tanzim organizations to counter these efforts. The 1920s saw an extraordinary frequency of communal riots, and despite numerous Hindu-Muslim unity conferences, the fires of communalism burned unabated.

In this environment of discord, Muslims revisited their constitutional demands. They sought the preservation of their numerical majorities in Punjab and Bengal, the separation of Sindh from Bombay, the establishment of Balochistan as a separate province, and the introduction of constitutional reforms in the North-West Frontier Province. To advance these demands, a faction of the All-India Muslim League decided to cooperate with the British Government's statutory commission, led by Sir John Simon, in 1927.

The Simon Commission later on itself



became a point of contention. While one section of the League engaged with the commission despite being composed entirely of White members, another faction chose to collaborate with the Nehru Committee, formed by the All-Parties Conference to draft a constitution for India. The Nehru Report, however, was glaringly anti-Muslim, and the Congress leadership's refusal to amend it led to a deep disappointment among even the moderate Muslims...

Continued from page 29

THE ROLE OF NUCLEAR ENERGY

The effectiveness of PNRA's regulation is evident in the international recognition and improvements highlighted in the NTI (Nuclear Threat Index) reports. Notably, in the 2023 NTI report, Pakistan ranked higher than India and some other countries, showcasing its commitment to nuclear safety.

Well, to summarize, the development of nuclear energy has considerable promise for enhancing regional economic cooperation, strengthening energy security, and encouraging economic diversity. As a result, encouraging information interchange, joint investments, and collaborative research and development may help to strengthen regional cooperation.

Working together, countries may combine their knowledge and resources to confront similar difficulties and accomplish common goals.

However, the ethical and governance concerns must be addressed carefully. By developing robust governance systems and resolving ethical problems, as Pakistan has done since the program's beginning, neighboring nations and the entire region can guarantee that nuclear energy encourages a cooperative and stable environment. Ultimately, this will benefit all involved parties.

(Note: This is a summary of the paper, presented by Syed Samiullah at the National Conference organized by RFI and ASCE. Syed Samiullah is Head of the Research Department at RFI and The Associate Editor of Monthly Interaction.)

PAKISTAN WELDING INSTITUTE (PWI)

Pakistan Welding Institute (PWI) was established in 1995 in Islamabad. Its basic goal was to achieve self-reliance in the design and fabrication of mechanical equipment for various industries, including oil refineries, fertilizer plants, and thermal power plants. With a 50,000 sq. ft. facility, PWI is a professional institution devoted to maintaining and promoting standards of excellence in Welding Technology.

PWI provides industry with technical support through advice & information, consultancy, Research & Development, and training & qualification. Its services & expertise cover all areas of welding & joining technology and materials engineering for metals and non-metals alike. It has gained membership from the International Institute of Welding (IIW) since 2000 and is working to acquire the status of Authorized National Body (ANB) and Authorized Training Body (ATB) from IIW.



Pakistan Welding Institute (PWI) - Main building

MAIN OBJECTIVES:

- Implement qualification and certification programs for welding procedures and welders/operators.
- Produce skilled welders, inspectors, and supervisors to meet industrial demands.
- Develop standard procedures for the qualification and approval of welding equipment, materials, and workshops.
- Enhance the knowledge and skills of welding personnel through training courses, seminars, and workshops.
- Act as a consultant to address complex welding-related issues.

Services Offered:

- PWI is dedicated to upholding and enhancing national standards of excellence in welding technology. It offers a variety of services to its clients in Welding and Joining technology, including:

Training and Qualification:

- PWI provides short-term basic and advanced welding technology courses for welders, supervisors, inspectors, engineers, and managers. The institute offers technical support for the continuous improvement of welding education quality.

Research & Development:

- PWI conducts industrial need-based applied R&D in the field of joining materials, aiming to increase productivity,

**Micro / Plasma Welding**

quality, and promote automation. Teams of specialists carry out R&D projects for the industry to improve efficiency, reliability, and profitability.

Repair & Maintenance:

- PWI addresses industrial challenges such as cracks, wear, corrosion, and abrasion by providing repair and maintenance services for all types of equipment. Products of various sizes can be repaired at PWI and at the client's site.

Welding Equipment:

- PWI is equipped with both conventional and sophisticated equipment, capable of welding almost all commercially available engineering materials ranging in thickness from 0.3mm to 300mm.

FACILITIES OFFERED

The Material Testing Facilities:

- At PWI, they include comprehensive services such as chemical analysis, ferrite content measurement, mechanical testing, and welding equipment calibration. Chemical analysis uses the Spark Emission Technique to detect various elements in alloys, while ferrite content in stainless steel welds is measured using electromagnetic induction. Mechanical testing evaluates tensile, compressive, impact, weldability, fatigue, and bend properties using a 100-ton computer-controlled universal testing

machine. Additionally, PWI creates NDE test samples with known flaws for training and qualification in accordance with ASME, API, and other standards. PWI also offers rigorous calibration and validation of welding equipment to ensure consistent weld quality.

Cutting Facilities:

- PWI offers advanced cutting facilities, including Oxyfuel Gas Cutting with manual and semi-automatic portable machines for up to 300mm, Air Plasma Arc Cutting for stainless steel (50mm), carbon steel (300mm), and non-ferrous metals (50mm), and Mechanical Cutting (Band Saw) with a capacity of 520mm in height and 700mm in width.

Heat Treatment Facilities:

- PWI has a fully automatic high-tech electrical resistant stress relieving and preheating heat treatment unit with 120kW power, six individual programmers, and a six-point chart temperature recorder for welded joints.

PAKISTAN WELDING SOCIETY (PWS)

- PWI established PWS to organize conferences, seminars, and meetings for the local industry. In addition, PWS provides various levels of membership with benefits such as access to resources, networking opportunities, and professional growth. Membership forms are available for individuals and corporate entities.

**Ferrite content measurement equipment**

ANCIENT INDIAN CIVILIZATION:



ANCIENT INDIAN CIVILIZATION:

A JOURNEY THROUGH TIME

INTERACTION TEAM

The ancient Indian civilization, one of the world's oldest, is a tapestry of diverse cultures, traditions, and innovations that have profoundly shaped the Indian subcontinent and influenced the broader world. This civilization has left an indelible mark on history through its contributions in various fields, including science, mathematics, literature, philosophy, art, and architecture.

Human settlement in the Indian subcontinent dates back to some of the earliest known Neolithic sites. One of the foremost among these is Bhirrana, situated along the ancient Ghaggar-Hakra riverine system in present-day Haryana, India, and dating back to around 7600 BC. Other significant early Neolithic sites include Lahuradewa in the Middle Ganges region and Jhusi near the confluence of the Ganges and Yamuna rivers, both dating to around 7000 BC.

The aceramic Neolithic period at Mehrgarh, located in present-day Pakistan, spans from 7000 to 5500 BC. This period then transitions into the ceramic Neolithic period,



which lasted up to 3300 BC. Mehrgarh is notable for being one of the earliest sites with evidence of farming and herding in the Indian subcontinent. It is likely that the culture centered around Mehrgarh migrated into the Indus Valley, eventually evolving into the Indus Valley Civilization (IVC).

The IVC, starting around 3300 BC during the Early Harappan Phase, marks the dawn of urbanization in the region. The civilization saw the emergence of fortified towns, such as Rehman Dheri in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, dated to 4000 BC, and other fortified sites including Amri (3600-3300 BC), Kot Diji in Sindh, and Kalibangan (3000 BC) along the Hakra River. These early urban centers laid the groundwork for the mature Indus Valley Civilization, which flourished with advanced urban planning, architecture, and a robust system of weights and measures.

THE INDUS VALLEY CIVILIZATION (2500-1500 BCE)

The story of ancient India begins with the



Indus Valley Civilization, one of the earliest urban cultures, contemporaneous with ancient Egypt and Mesopotamia. Centered around the Indus River and its tributaries, this civilization is renowned for its advanced urban planning, including well-laid-out cities like Harappa and Mohenjo-Daro. These cities featured sophisticated drainage systems, granaries, and standardized weights and measures, reflecting a highly organized society. The Indus script, though undeciphered, suggests a developed system of writing.

THE VEDIC PERIOD (1500-500 BCE)

Following the decline of the Indus Valley Civilization, the Vedic Period emerged, named after the Vedas, a collection of sacred texts that form the foundation of Hinduism. This era witnessed the migration of the Indo-Aryans into the Indian subcontinent, bringing with them new cultural and religious practices. The Vedic texts provide insights into early Indian society, including the development of the caste system and rituals that remain integral to Hindu practices today. This period also saw the early development of Sanskrit, one of the world's oldest languages.

THE MAURYA AND GUPTA EMPIRES (322 BCE - 550 CE)

The establishment of the Maurya Empire

by Chandragupta Maurya in 322 BCE marked the unification of most of India under a centralized administration. The most illustrious Mauryan ruler, Ashoka the Great, is celebrated for his embrace of Buddhism and efforts to spread its teachings across Asia. His reign is notable for the propagation of non-violence, social welfare, and the establishment of monuments and edicts that promote moral governance.

The Gupta Empire, often referred to as the Golden Age of India, saw unparalleled advancements in various fields. Under rulers like Chandragupta II, the Gupta period was characterized by significant achievements in art, science, mathematics, and literature. Scholars such as Aryabhata and Kalidasa flourished during this time, contributing to the fields of astronomy, mathematics (including the concept of zero), and classical Sanskrit literature.

RELIGION AND PHILOSOPHY

Ancient India was a cradle for major world religions and philosophical thought. Hinduism, with its complex pantheon and rituals, evolved during the Vedic period and continued to develop through the ages. Harl, an American scholar, author, and classicist says, along with great literary traditions and incredible architecture. The Upanishads, or sacred Hindu texts, include the ideas of





reincarnation and the caste system based on birthright, both of which have endured into modern times.

Buddhism, founded by Siddhartha Gautama (the Buddha) in the 6th century BCE, offered a path to enlightenment through ethical conduct, meditation, and wisdom. Jainism, another significant religion, emphasized non-violence (ahimsa) and asceticism. These religious traditions not only shaped Indian society but also spread across Asia, influencing diverse cultures and civilizations.

ART AND ARCHITECTURE

The artistic heritage of ancient India is rich and varied, encompassing various forms such as sculpture, painting, and architecture. The rock-cut caves of Ajanta and Ellora, with their intricate carvings and frescoes, are masterpieces of Buddhist art. Hindu temple architecture, epitomized by the temples of Khajuraho and the Sun Temple at Konark, showcases elaborate designs and iconography. The construction of stupas, such as the Great Stupa at Sanchi, reflects the architectural ingenuity of ancient India.

SCIENCE AND MATHEMATICS

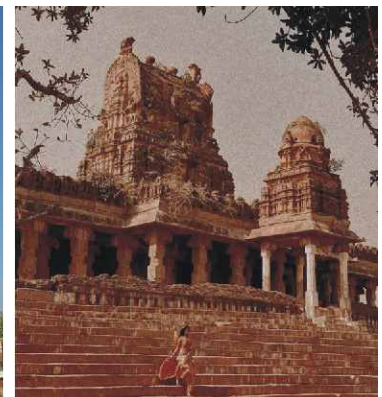
Ancient Indian contributions to science and mathematics are profound. The concept of zero, the decimal system, and significant



advancements in algebra and trigonometry originated in India. Aryabhata's work on the approximation of pi and his assertion that the Earth rotates on its axis were groundbreaking. In medicine, the texts of Ayurveda and the surgical practices described by Sushruta laid foundational principles that continue to influence modern medical science.

CONCLUSION

The ancient Indian civilization is a testament to human ingenuity and cultural richness. Its contributions to various domains have had a lasting impact, transcending geographical and temporal boundaries. The legacy of ancient India, with its blend of intellectual, spiritual, and artistic achievements, continues to inspire and shape the modern world, reminding us of the enduring wisdom and creativity of our ancestors.



THE POSSIBILITY OF WAR BETWEEN INDIA AND CHINA:



AN IN-DEPTH EXPLORATION

NUSRAT MIRZA

The possibility of war between India and China, two of the world's largest and most powerful nations, is a subject of considerable concern and analysis. With a long and contentious shared border, their relationship is marked by a blend of cooperation, competition, and conflict. This article explores the historical context, geopolitical dynamics, military capabilities, economic interdependence, diplomatic efforts, and the influence of external powers to evaluate the likelihood of conflict and its implications for regional and global stability.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

The roots of India-China tensions lie in historical territorial disputes, particularly in three key areas: Aksai Chin in the western sector and Arunachal Pradesh in the eastern sector. Aksai Chin is controlled by China but claimed by India, whereas Arunachal Pradesh is administered by India but claimed by China as part of South Tibet. The 1962 Sino-Indian War was a significant military conflict over these regions, resulting in a Chinese victory and substantial territorial gains for China. The third issue between China and India regarding Tibet where recently the American Congress passed a bill to Resolve Tibet Act. This Act will further aggravate the relationship between China and India.

Since the 1962 war, there have been numerous border incidents and skirmishes,

with the most recent and significant clash occurring in the Galwan Valley in June 2020. This confrontation resulted in the first combat fatalities between the two countries in over four decades, highlighting the ongoing volatility of their border disputes.

GEOPOLITICAL RIVALRY

China and India are not just neighboring countries; they are also rivals for regional dominance in Asia. China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and its expanding influence in South Asia through investments and infrastructure projects are viewed with suspicion by India. New Delhi perceives the BRI as a strategic encirclement, often referred to as the "String of Pearls," aimed at limiting India's influence in its neighborhood.

In response, India has sought to strengthen its strategic partnerships with countries like the United States, Japan, and Australia, particularly through the Quad (Quadrilateral Security Dialogue). This grouping is seen by China as an attempt to counterbalance its rise, adding another layer of complexity to the India-China rivalry.

MILITARY MODERNIZATION AND CAPABILITIES

Both China and India have been significantly upgrading their military capabilities. China's People's Liberation Army (PLA) is the world's largest standing army, bolstered by advanced missile systems and a

rapidly modernizing navy and air force. India, while not as technologically advanced as China in some aspects, has been investing heavily in modernizing its military, focusing on indigenous production and strategic partnerships with countries like the United States, Russia, and Israel.

The military buildup along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) has led to an arms race, increasing the potential for both accidental and intentional escalation. The deployment of advanced weaponry, including fighter jets, tanks, and artillery, along the LAC underscores the readiness of both nations for potential conflict.

ECONOMIC INTERDEPENDENCE

Despite their political and military tensions, India and China share significant economic ties. China is one of India's largest trading partners, with bilateral trade surpassing \$100 billion annually. This economic interdependence serves as a deterrent to conflict, as war would be economically detrimental to both nations. However, it can also be a source of leverage. Following the 2020 Galwan clash, India imposed restrictions on Chinese investments and banned numerous Chinese apps, illustrating how economic tools can be used in geopolitical disputes.

DIPLOMATIC EFFORTS AND CONFLICT RESOLUTION MECHANISMS

Both countries have established various mechanisms to manage their differences and avoid conflict. These include high-level dialogues, border personnel meetings, and confidence building measures.

Such as the 1993 Border Peace and Tranquility Agreement and the 2005 Protocol on Modalities for the Implementation of



Confidence Building Measures are examples of such efforts.

However, these mechanisms have not always been effective in preventing or de-escalating tensions. Differing strategic cultures and perceptions of threat complicate diplomatic resolutions. China's assertive foreign policy under President Xi Jinping and India's increasingly nationalistic stance under Prime Minister Narendra Modi further complicate diplomatic efforts.

THE ROLE OF EXTERNAL POWERS

The involvement of external powers, particularly the United States, adds another layer of complexity to India-China relations. The US has been strengthening its strategic partnership with India as part of its Indo-Pacific strategy aimed at countering China's influence in the region. This includes arms sales, joint military exercises, and intelligence sharing. China views these developments with suspicion, interpreting them as part of a broader strategy to contain its rise. This external dimension can exacerbate tensions, as both India and China may feel compelled to demonstrate their resolve and military capabilities.

FUTURE SCENARIOS: CONFLICT AND PEACE

While the possibility of war between India and China cannot be entirely dismissed, several scenarios could either escalate or mitigate tensions.

Continued on page 54

HOW TO PROJECT INDIA'S HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS AND ITS SYSTEMATIC ECONOMIC MARGINALIZATION OF INDIAN-OCCUPIED JAMMU & KASHMIR (IOJK) IN EUROPE?



DR. UZMA SHUJAAT

The above question implies that we already have up-to-date facts and figures to proceed to effectively emanate them when, in fact, depressingly, we have not been keeping ourselves abreast of the events taking place inside IOJK. Our ministries and diplomatic missions abroad have not been maintaining a blog to document the predicament of the battered people of IOJK.

Do we even know precisely how many days it has been since the “constitutional” aggression on IOJK? No, of course not. None of our official portals are running a live counter of days to persistently remind all and sundry that Jammu & Kashmir remains our foundational concern and that without the land of Jammu & Kashmir, the ideological case of Pakistan is incomplete.

What could be the reason for this callousness? This is sheer bureaucratic lethargy and nothing else. Publishing elegantly colored official maps can be useful for ornamental purposes but, surely, it would not solve anything. We will not move an inch on this issue.

How many seminars & workshops did we officially organize in the last five years to keep this issue at the very center of mass communications? The score in this regard is



miserable.

Secondly, political mismanagement and maneuverings in Azad Kashmir have given the adversary an opportunity to fan hopelessness and pessimism in the eyes of the people of IOJK. Thirdly, political chaos, a lot of which is engineered, in the rest of Pakistan has been keeping us distracted from the issue of Kashmir. Power struggles within the corridors of power and the blatant use of state institutions and their machinery to prop up politically destructive individuals paint a damning picture of our contemporary politics.

All in all, we are yet to reach a point where we will be justified in advancing to the new stage of our advocacy for the cause of Kashmir and Kashmiris.

Nevertheless, the following are some recommendations that originate from the



assumption that we have already reached the abovementioned phase:

- Build a digital archive of all the relevant historical literature on Jammu & Kashmir. All official portals should provide a link, which is bold and eye-catching, to that page.
- Recruit a dedicated team of researchers who assiduously follow Indian mass communications to sift reports on the abuses of the Indian state in the IOJK.
- Direct the diplomatic core stationed in European capitals to organize lectures and workshops on this issue. Moreover, armed with relevant facts and figures, they should also be expected to contribute to Western dailies to familiarize occidental audiences with this more than 75-year-long issue.
- Make full use of digital social media platforms.
- Build collaborations with foreign think tanks as well as channels of communication with national think tanks.
- Speedy mass communications have also enabled a proliferation of fabrications and fake narratives. Our presence on these platforms must ensure that apart from presenting our case we should also debunk and refute false accounts with respect to Jammu & Kashmir.

- Themes related to Kashmiri symbolism (language, culture, history, etc.) should be constantly disseminated from our official audiovisual and diplomatic organs.
- Our missions in Europe should closely engage with our diaspora. Let us not reduce our embassies and consulates to mere travel/tourism facilitation centers.

The cyberspace is filled with occurrences of drug abuse, suicides, and New Delhi's heavy-handedness in the IOJK. There is no end in sight for the beleaguered people of Jammu & Kashmir. We should've left no stone unturned to respond to New Delhi's unilateral decision.

How did we lose deterrence? Was there any gesture from our side that convinced New Delhi to move to unilateral action in August 2019?

It is hoped that those with responsibility and authority will do a little introspection and bring back the issue of Jammu & Kashmir to the center of our national narrative. Ceremonial utterances may have their importance, however, to resign to that practice would mean a betrayal of our Founding Fathers' principles; a crime for which future generations will never forgive us.

The author is the Acting Director of Area Study Center for Europe, University of Karachi.



THE TUG OF WAR



DR. SYEDA BUSHRA BATOOL

The last year is marked by wars, in Eastern Europe and the Middle East, and political confrontation between the West and Russia with a new contender China rising on the stage, marking the beginning of great power competition. For 28 months into the war, Russia and Ukraine are yet to come to terms to negotiate a settlement for the future of Ukraine.

The consensus is difficult to reach. Putin sticks to the view that Russia would not surrender in Ukraine until the latter surrenders entirely from the four regions claimed by the former and drop the idea of joining the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), which Ukraine dismissed considering it a 'complete sham'. Apparently, it is a war between Russia and Ukraine; however, the larger picture explains much more details of great power competition.

Ukraine enjoys huge support, economic and military, to continue its war with Russia, whereas, Russia is also trying to secure defense partnerships with like-minded

countries. The recent strategic partnership agreement with North Korea and cooperation agreement with Vietnam as an attempt to pivot to Asia, in addition to the unwavering support of China, signifies that Russia is well-equipped to counter any aggression.

In a recent G-7 meeting, leaders of the world's seven largest economies gathered to discuss important economic and political issues; the war in Ukraine was a primary agenda. Russia was not invited to the summit and China opted not to attend it due to its reservations related to the absence of Russian representation.

A deal is outlined in the G-7 meeting to provide \$50 billion of loans for Ukraine to fight its existential war with Russia. This does not end here, the multi-year loan will be produced using interest generated from the Russian assets in Western banks and in the European Union, approximately \$300 billion, which were frozen after its Ukrainian invasion in 2022. The purpose is to ratchet up economic and political pressure on Russia to reconsider its military engagements in Ukraine while funding Ukraine's military operations and reconstruction efforts.

This was met with a strong response from Russia considering it a 'theft' of Russia's sovereign assets. Russian foreign ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova while considering the act as 'criminal' added that Moscow's response would be very painful for the European Union.



In such a scenario, both Russia and Ukraine are trying to secure security arrangements. Ukrainian president Volodymyr Zelenskiy signed a new, 10-year security accord with U.S. President Joe Biden, the value of which is not stated. Additionally, US Congress has also approved \$61bn in military aid for Ukraine this year. This deal followed a 10-year security accord with Japan when Tokyo committed to provide \$4.5b to Kyiv this year, to serve its military, financial, and humanitarian needs.

As a countermeasure, Russian President Vladimir Putin signed a comprehensive strategic partnership agreement with North Korean leader Kim Jong Un on Wednesday, which, he said, included 'mutual assistance in the event of aggression'. This refers to the military assistance between Moscow and Pyongyang if either is attacked.

This development could destabilize the Korean Peninsula and extend the instability and political chaos further, with the possibility of Russia providing weapons to North Korea. Additionally, the US and its allies are also concerned about a possible arms supply by North Korea to Russia, which the latter badly needs, to continue its military engagements in Ukraine, hence spreading the threat posed by Kim's nuclear weapons and missile program even further.

G-7 countries are skeptical of the growing ties between the two countries especially in the wake of China's indirect support to the Russian war machine, considering it as enabling Russia to maintain its illegal war in Ukraine. In the context of new power competition, the equation affirms the US in its rhetoric to prove to European nations that China is actively participating in the Ukraine war in supporting Russia, thus directly harming Europe's security. This might also make the US ways smoother to



isolate China, along with Russia, on the global stage.

Ukraine and Russia have pursued international military agreements as their forces remained largely stalemated during the past few days. On one hand, Ukrainian leader Zelenskiy is trying to convince the world of their support in the Ukraine war with Russia, and on the other, Russia is giving signals to the US and Europeans that it has the right to arm the US adversaries around the world and setting a stage to revolt, if need be.

The tug of war between Russia and Ukraine is likely to continue at least in the near future with both contenders securing their political and security arrangements from other countries around, consolidating their defense capabilities, and making sure to imbalance the power equation.

In case the conflict escalates, it is going to destabilize the whole of Europe and Asia, and the international community would have to bear to brunt of it, especially at such a time when the Middle Eastern crisis has already reached a pinnacle.

The author is a Research officer at Rabita Forum International (RFI)

BEYOND POVERTY PORN:

ETHICAL REPRESENTATION OF BALOCHISTAN



MEHMOOD ALI

According to a widely accepted definition of the term proposed by journalist Matt Collins in 2009, poverty porn is "any type of media, be it written, photographed or filmed, which exploits the poor's condition to generate the necessary sympathy for selling newspapers, increasing charitable donations, or support for a given cause." Overall, it misrepresents the poor and denies them their dignity, and it deceives both the helper and the helped.

Even though Balochistan in Pakistan is as large as some countries in the world, the media tends to portray it as a poor and neglected area. While these depictions contain some truth, their portrayal blurs the line between menace and sentimentality, presenting problematic examples of "poverty porn," which exploits the plight of the poor to garner sympathy, money, or web traffic. This article focuses on the impact of poverty porn in



Balochistan, calling for better treatment of the people of Balochistan and a better portrayal of their plight.

Furthermore, media houses, NGOs, and social media activists tend to convey the difficult situation of Balochistan and its people to create empathy. Even so, it is crucial and highly urgent to analyze the intent and methodology of these representations. Usually, poverty porn distorts conditions to revive people's interests, provides little context, and uses people's images and narrations without their permission; it reproduces the detrimental stigma of powerlessness and reliance. What effect would such a depiction have?

The impact of these descriptions is very negative. Such portrayals of hopelessness impact people's self-esteem accompanying decisions and autonomy, encouraging a culture of begging while stagnating local development initiatives. Moreover, long-term negative portrayal influences the understanding of Balochistan and thus





hinders investment, tourism, and development opportunities. Hence, after some time, the audience is likely to become fatigued and lose the ability to sympathise and donate.

In this case, we can see ethical representation as the key to reducing the negative effects highlighted above. The media and organizations need to provide examples of how people can emerge stronger from adversity and achieve new developments and progress. This response makes contextual reporting, which relates to the act of detailed reporting of the causes of poverty, help in teaching concerned stakeholders the policy issues instead of attributing the difficulty in its eradication to personal shortcomings.

Thus, the fact that all the portrayed people were willing and their cases were presented with proper concern for their identities as victims is quite important. Collaborating with local communities can lead to more accurate and empowering representations. Lastly, the focus should shift from merely highlighting problems to showcasing solutions and initiatives making a positive impact.

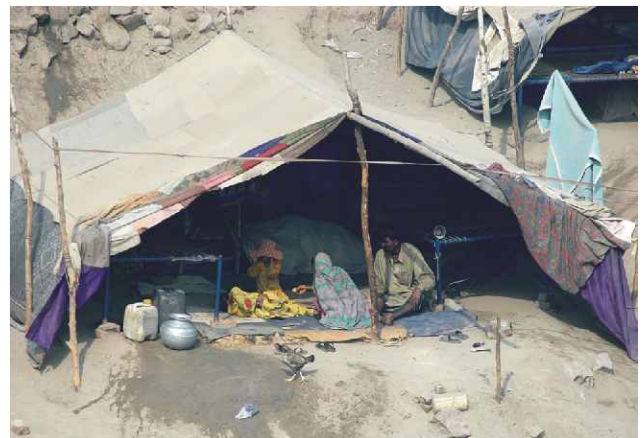
Therefore, it is pertinent to draw attention to the issues facing Balochistan, while also emphasizing the importance of eradicating the concept of poverty porn. Ethical representation also pays homage to the

agency of the people of Balochistan and improves the dialogue about their prospects. In this way of focusing on the human side of the stories, giving context, and focusing on solutions, it is possible to bring about a more balanced and empowering representation of Balochistan, along with a framework for bringing about constructive change.

Focusing on the fact that media and NGOs operating and functioning in Balochistan should change their method of projecting the people of Balochistan and start projecting Balochistan in a more ethical way beyond the lens of poverty porn. In this way, it is possible to shift from focusing on the negative aspects of Balochistan to a focus on its positive aspects and potential and look at the people of Balochistan not as helpless but as a strong and aspiring population that can successfully manage the difficulties facing it.

What Balochistan lacks is not coverage of the poor, the downtrodden, and the misery they have to go through daily; rather, it is an elaborate depiction of the change they want, the change they aspire for and want to bring about for the country.

Mehmood Ali is a Researcher at Balochistan Think Tank Network (BTTN) and served as a Research fellow at South Asian Times and as a Research Intern at India Study Center (ISSI).



SHIFTING ALLIANCES:



A REALIST ANALYSIS OF US-TAIWAN RELATIONS

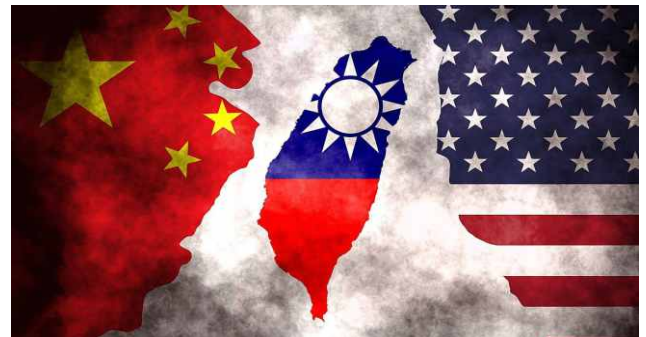
WAJEEHA NAJAM

The nature of international relations, as understood through the lens of realist theory, is fundamentally shaped by the principle that states operate in an anarchic international system where there are no permanent friends or permanent enemies, only permanent interests. Realism posits that the primary objective of states is to ensure their survival by maximizing their power relative to others.

This leads to a dynamic and ever-changing landscape of alliances and rivalries, contingent upon the strategic interests of states. The historical trajectory of US relations with Taiwan exemplifies this realist principle, illustrating how strategic interests can lead to the formation and dissolution of alliances based on the shifting balance of power.

Rooted in the writings of Thucydides, Machiavelli, and Hobbes, realism emphasizes that international politics is driven by an unrelenting quest for power in an environment where no central authority exists to enforce order. This anarchic nature of the international system compels states to prioritize their security and interests above all else.

The absence of a global government means that states must rely on their capabilities and strategic alliances to navigate the complexities of international relations. This realist view underscores the transient nature of friendships and enmities among states, as they continuously reassess their positions to



protect and enhance their power.

The case of US relations with Taiwan offers a compelling historical example of realist dynamics. During World War II and its immediate aftermath, the United States and the Republic of China (ROC), under the leadership of Chiang Kai-shek, were allies against the Axis powers and later against the spread of communism in Asia.

However, the Chinese Civil War (1945-1949) resulted in the victory of the Communist Party of China (CPC) led by Mao Zedong and the establishment of the People's Republic of China (PRC) in 1949. The ROC government retreated to Taiwan, maintaining its claim as the legitimate government of all China.

In the early years following the establishment of the PRC, the United States continued to recognize the ROC as the legitimate government of China. This recognition was driven by the strategic imperative to contain the spread of communism during the Cold War. Taiwan, under the ROC, became a critical ally in the US

strategy to counterbalance communist influence in Asia. The US provided military and economic support to Taiwan, ensuring it remained a viable counterforce to the PRC.

However, as the geopolitical landscape evolved, so did the US approach to China and Taiwan. The 1970s marked a significant shift in US foreign policy with the realization that engaging the PRC could serve broader strategic interests, particularly in the context of the Sino-Soviet split.

The rivalry between the Soviet Union and China allowed the United States to realign its alliances to exploit this division within the communist bloc. President Richard Nixon's historic visit to China in 1972 and the subsequent normalization of relations between the US and the PRC in 1979 were pivotal moments in this strategic realignment.

The normalization of US-PRC relations in 1979 required a recalibration of US policy towards Taiwan. The US officially switched diplomatic recognition from Taipei to Beijing, acknowledging the PRC as the legitimate government of China. This shift was not a repudiation of Taiwan but rather a strategic decision driven by the broader objective of countering Soviet influence by improving relations with China.

The Taiwan Relations Act (TRA) of 1979 was enacted by the US Congress to manage

this complex transition. The TRA ensures that the US maintains unofficial relations with Taiwan and provides it with defensive arms, signaling continued, albeit adjusted, support for Taiwan's security.

This period underscores the realist principle that alliances are fluid and subject to the exigencies of strategic interests. The US decision to engage with the PRC, despite its longstanding partnership with Taiwan, exemplifies how states prioritize their broader strategic objectives over historical alliances. The shift was driven by the imperative to strengthen the US position in the global balance of power, particularly vis-à-vis the Soviet Union.

In the decades following the normalization of relations with the PRC, US policy towards Taiwan has continued to reflect realist principles. The rise of China as a global power and its increasingly assertive posture in the Asia-Pacific region have led to a renewed emphasis on the strategic importance of Taiwan.

The US has responded by enhancing its support for Taiwan, viewing it as a critical element in maintaining a balance of power in the region. This support includes substantial arms sales, military cooperation, and diplomatic backing, aimed at bolstering Taiwan's defense capabilities and deterring potential aggression from the PRC.

The evolving US-Taiwan relationship demonstrates the realist dictum that the enemy of my enemy is my friend. As China's power and influence have grown, the strategic value of Taiwan as a counterbalance to China has increased. The US support for Taiwan is thus driven not by ideological affinity or historical ties, but by the pragmatic calculation that a strong and secure Taiwan serves US interests in countering Chinese expansion and



maintaining regional stability.

Moreover, the US approach to Taiwan is also shaped by the broader strategic objective of upholding a rules-based international order. The US has a vested interest in ensuring that the status of Taiwan is determined peacefully and by international norms. This stance is not just about supporting Taiwan, but also about signaling to other regional actors that the US is committed to maintaining stability and order in the Asia-Pacific.

The realist perspective also highlights the inherent tensions and complexities in the US-Taiwan-China triangle. While the US supports Taiwan's security, it must also manage its broader relationship with China, a key economic partner and a major global power. This balancing act requires a nuanced and flexible approach, reflecting the realist understanding that international relations are characterized by shifting alliances and competing interests.

The case of US relations with Taiwan represents the core belief of realist theory in international relations, where state behavior is driven by strategic interests within an anarchic

global system. This dynamic illustrates the fluid nature of alliances and rivalries, as states continuously reassess their positions to maximize power and ensure security.

The historical shifts in US policy towards Taiwan, from unwavering support during the Cold War to the strategic realignment with China in the 1970s, and the recent renewed emphasis on Taiwan's strategic importance amid China's rise, underscore the pragmatism inherent in realist thought. This approach reflects the ongoing necessity for states to adapt to changing power structures and geopolitical realities, emphasizing that, in international relations, the pursuit of power and security remains paramount, with alliances serving as flexible instruments to achieve these ends.

As global power dynamics continue to evolve, the US-Taiwan relationship will likely remain a salient example of how realist principles shape state behavior and international alliances in pursuit of enduring strategic interests.

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

Continued from page 45

THE POSSIBILITY OF WAR BETWEEN INDIA AND CHINA:

ESCALATION SCENARIOS:

1. Border Incidents:

Accidental or intentional skirmishes along the LAC could escalate into a larger conflict, especially if casualties occur.

2. Nationalistic Pressures:

Domestic political pressures and nationalistic sentiments in both countries could drive leaders.

3. The Resolve Tibet Act of USA shall create

further tension between two neighboring countries.

The author is the Chief Editor of Monthly Interaction.



THE INFLUENCE OF CONQUERORS ON SUBJUGATED NATIONS:

LESSONS FOR PAKISTAN

(IN THE LIGHT OF IBN KHALDUN'S THOUGHTS)

Ibn Khaldun, a renowned philosopher, provides profound insights into the socio-political dynamics of conquered societies. His observations, translated into Urdu by Dr. Abu al-Khair Kashfi, are strikingly relevant to contemporary Pakistan. This article explores these insights, advising Pakistanis on how to forge a stronger, more self-reliant nation.

THE TENDENCY TO IMITATE CONQUERORS

Ibn Khaldun asserts that subjugated nations tend to emulate their conquerors. They adopt the conquerors' uniforms, symbols of power, customs, and even mannerisms. This imitation stems from an inherent belief in the conquerors' superiority, rooted in the subjugation they have experienced. For Pakistan, this translates into a cultural and societal drift towards Western ideals and practices, often at the expense of indigenous values and identity. In Pakistan today, this tendency is evident in various spheres of life. From the education system that favors Western curricula to the media that glorifies Western lifestyles, there is a pervasive sense of

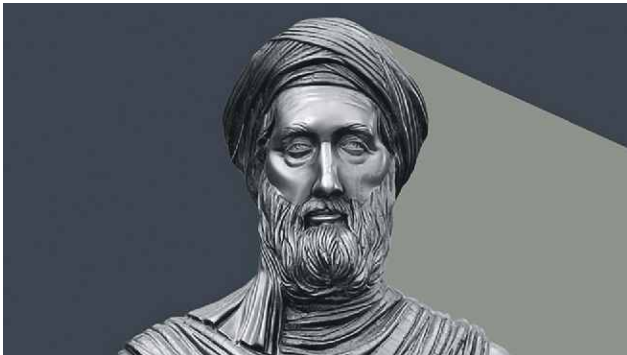
admiration for the West. While learning from advanced nations can be beneficial, blind imitation without contextual adaptation can erode national identity and self-worth. Pakistan must find a balance between adopting beneficial practices and preserving its unique cultural heritage.

MORAL DECLINE AND THE LOSS OF VALUES

Under prolonged subjugation, societies experience a moral decay. As oppression persists, people become desensitized, living only to satisfy basic needs like food and reproduction. This erosion of values is evident in Pakistan, where societal issues such as corruption, nepotism, and moral indifference have taken root. Reclaiming a sense of morality and ethical governance is crucial for national rejuvenation. In contemporary Pakistan, the rampant corruption and declining moral standards reflect this decline. Political scandals, financial embezzlement, and lack of accountability are symptoms of a deeper moral crisis. To address this, Pakistan needs to reinvigorate its commitment to ethical governance and instill a strong sense of morality among its citizens. Education systems, religious institutions, and community leaders must play a pivotal role in this moral revival.

THE PROLIFERATION OF CHARLATANS AND OPPORTUNISTS

Ibn Khaldun notes that failing states witness a surge in opportunists astrologers,



beggars, hypocrites, and charlatans who exploit the populace's desperation. Pakistan has seen similar phenomena, with the rise of pseudo-intellectuals, self-proclaimed reformers, and opportunistic politicians. This environment stifles genuine talent and hampers progress, necessitating a cultural shift towards valuing authentic expertise and integrity. In Pakistan, the media often highlights sensational figures who promise quick fixes to complex problems. This creates an environment where genuine experts and thinkers are overshadowed by those who offer superficial solutions. Encouraging critical thinking and valuing authentic expertise over populism is essential for Pakistan's progress.

THE BREAKDOWN OF SOCIAL ORDER

As states collapse, fear spreads, leading people to seek refuge in groups. Ibn Khaldun describes a society rife with rumors, endless debates, and a blurred line between friend and foe. In Pakistan, this manifests as social fragmentation and political polarization. To counter this, fostering national unity and a shared vision for the future is imperative.

The political landscape in Pakistan is highly polarized, with frequent clashes between different political factions and social groups. This division weakens the nation's ability to address common challenges. Promoting dialogue, understanding, and cooperation among diverse groups can help bridge these divides and strengthen the social fabric.

THE DISAPPEARANCE OF TRUE LEADERS

In a decaying state, genuine leaders become scarce, replaced by demagogues and sycophants. This leadership crisis is evident in Pakistan, where populist rhetoric often overshadows substantive policy discourse. Developing and supporting true leaders who prioritize the nation's welfare over personal

gain is essential for Pakistan's revival.

Pakistan's political arena is often dominated by leaders who prioritize personal or party interests over national interests. To overcome this, Pakistan needs to invest in leadership development programs that emphasize ethical conduct, public service, and a deep commitment to the nation's welfare. Identifying and nurturing young leaders with these qualities can pave the way for a brighter future.

THE EXODUS OF HOPE

Ibn Khaldun describes a scenario where despair drives people to emigrate, transforming the homeland into a transient shelter. This resonates with Pakistan's brain drain, where talented individuals seek better opportunities abroad. Reversing this trend requires creating an environment that nurtures talent and provides ample opportunities for growth within the country.

Pakistan has witnessed a significant brain drain, with many skilled professionals seeking employment overseas due to lack of opportunities and political instability. To retain and attract talent, Pakistan must create a stable and conducive environment for economic growth, professional development, and innovation. Strategic investments in education, healthcare, and infrastructure are key to reversing this trend.

PATH TO A STRONGER PAKISTAN

To forge a stronger Pakistan, it is crucial to break free from the cycle of imitation and subjugation. Here are key steps to achieve this: Reconnecting with Pakistan's rich cultural heritage and Islamic values can provide a strong foundation for national identity. This involves promoting local languages, traditions, and practices, while also embracing modernity in a balanced manner. Educational reforms that incorporate

Pakistan's history and values can instill a sense of pride and identity in the younger generation.

Combatting corruption and nepotism through transparent and accountable governance is vital. Strengthening institutions and enforcing the rule of law can restore public trust and ensure fair distribution of resources. Initiatives such as judicial reforms, anti-corruption measures, and public awareness campaigns can play a significant role in this process. Creating an environment that values and rewards genuine expertise is essential. This involves reforming the education system to prioritize critical thinking and innovation, and providing platforms for talented individuals to thrive. Encouraging research and development, supporting startups, and facilitating access to resources can help harness the nation's intellectual potential.

Encouraging a sense of unity and shared purpose can bridge social divides. National initiatives that promote inclusivity and celebrate diversity can strengthen the social fabric. Efforts to reduce regional disparities, promote interfaith harmony, and foster a sense of national pride can contribute to a more cohesive society. Investing in leadership development programs that emphasize ethical conduct and public service can nurture a new generation of leaders committed to Pakistan's progress. These programs should focus on developing leadership skills, ethical decision-making, and a deep understanding of national issues. Encouraging youth participation in politics and civic activities can also help identify and groom future leaders.

Creating opportunities for economic growth and professional development within Pakistan can encourage talented individuals to stay and contribute to the nation's development. This requires strategic



investments in education, healthcare, and infrastructure. Policies that support innovation, entrepreneurship, and job creation can make Pakistan an attractive destination for skilled professionals.

CONCLUSION

Ibn Khaldun's observations, though centuries old, offer valuable lessons for contemporary Pakistan. By understanding and addressing the pitfalls of subjugation, Pakistan can chart a path towards a stronger, more self-reliant future. Embracing indigenous values, fostering ethical governance, promoting genuine talent, cultivating national unity, developing true leaders, and reversing brain drain are critical steps in this journey. The vision of a prosperous, united, and resilient Pakistan is within reach if the nation collectively commits to these principles.

By reflecting on the current state of Pakistan and aligning it with Ibn Khaldun's insights, it becomes clear that the path to national strength lies in self-reliance, ethical governance, and a unified society. These principles can guide Pakistan towards a future where it not only withstands external influences but also thrives as a sovereign and proud nation.

Courtesy: Brig. (R) Agha Ahmad Gul, Consultant BTTN.

English Translation By: Mirza Kashif Baig, Editor of the Monthly Interaction.

GEOSTRATEGIC IMPORTANCE MAKES PAKISTAN A HARD COUNTRY

TAYYABA TEHSEEN



The geostrategic importance makes Pakistan a hard country. It plays a complex role in regional and international politics. This state is directly connected with five major regions. In the South West, Pakistan bordered Iran which is in the Middle East. North West, bordered Afghanistan which is semi Central Asian country. On the North, it bordered China which is in East Asia. In the east, Pakistan bordered India which is in South Asia. On the South is the Arabian Sea where Pakistan ends sea with Iran and Oman. Alfred Thayer Mahan, a wellknown American naval officer and geopolitical theorist once stated that "Asia is under the authority of whoever rules the Indian Ocean. The seven seas can be accessed through this ocean. The course of the globe would be determined by its seas in the twenty-first century".

After the Second World War, the partition of India and Pakistan occurred, changing the dynamics of South Asia both geographically and geopolitically. However, America considered the defense of this region to be the responsibility of the British. At the beginning of the Cold War era, America did not fully recognize the geopolitical and geographical importance and potential of Pakistan, nor did they prioritize diplomatic relations with this country, which is situated in a strategically significant position in the South Asian region.

Pakistan's geopolitical situation was

complex from its independence, especially before the partition of East Pakistan, as it comprised two separate wings sharing borders with India, a hostile neighbor. This unique positioning made Pakistan a significant zone on the global stage. The Western world viewed Pakistan differently in every era, often to achieve its short-term objectives in the region.

Strategically, West Pakistan's geographical position connected it to Middle Eastern countries, while East Pakistan was near Southeast Asia. The western side of Pakistan shared borders with Afghanistan, Iran, Chinese Turkistan, and the Soviet Union. The distance between West Pakistan and the Soviet Union was less than 100 miles. In Soviet Central Asia, the city of Tashkent, about 500 miles from Peshawar and 1,000 miles from Karachi, held regional significance.

Geopolitics of the region is very





fascinating. East Pakistan, located in Southeast Asia, shared three of its borders with the antagonistic neighbor India and one with Burma. Its coastline opened onto waters that separated the Pacific Ocean from the Indian Ocean. Both parts of Pakistan held vital strategic importance. West Pakistan's border with Afghanistan, historically a traditional invasion route into the Indo-Pak subcontinent, meant no one could enter Indian Territory by land without first passing through Pakistan. This geostrategic environment raised significant defense concerns for Pakistan, finding itself in a hostile situation due to its relationships with India and Afghanistan, stemming from the unresolved issues of Kashmir and the Durand Line, legacies of British colonialism.

Pakistan faced serious security concerns and, having not received its fair share of ammunition and equipment from the old British Indian Army at the time of partition, recognized the crucial need to establish a well-equipped, trained, and strong army to secure its eastern and western borders.

The Indo-Pak War of 1965 was a significant regional conflict between India and Pakistan. The war had two main triggers: the border clashes in the Rann of Kutch in April 1965, where Indian troops crossed into Pakistani territory, and the launch of Operation Gibraltar in August 1965 to

support the liberation movement in Indian-controlled Kashmir. Instead of confining the conflict to Kashmir, India opened up the international border at Lahore and Sialkot, leading to a full-scale war between the two nations. By September 22, 1965, both parties agreed to a ceasefire ordered by the United Nations.

On September 20, the United Nations Security Council passed a resolution demanding an end to the hostilities. On January 10, 1966, Indian Prime Minister Lal Bahadur Shastri and Pakistani President Ayub Khan signed the Tashkent Agreement in Uzbekistan, pledging to withdraw to pre-August lines.

Similarly, in March 1971, a civil war erupted in East Pakistan, now known as Bangladesh. The conflict was triggered by the oppressive actions of the autocrats in West Pakistan. General Yahya Khan, the supreme commander of Pakistan's armed forces, ordered action against the alleged Bengali separatists. India intervened in the civil war, providing substantial assistance to the Bengali secessionists who sought independence from West Pakistan. Consequently, India became deeply involved in the conflict, launching land, air, and sea assaults on East Pakistan. The operation lasted only thirteen days but led to the separation of East Pakistan. Tensions between India and Pakistan persisted until July 1972, when both nations signed the Shimla Agreement, committing to resolve their disputes through peaceful means. Since then, on broader level, India and Pakistan have maintained peace with each other.

Now, if we look into the Pak-America relations, they began after Pakistan emerged as a sovereign state. America welcomed Pakistan as a partner, and the two countries collaborated in various sectors. America

provided assistance to Pakistan in economic, social, and military areas. Both the nations signed several agreements, including CENTO and SEATO, to strengthen their relationship. However, during critical times, such as the 1965 conflict and the 1971 war when Pakistan lost its Eastern part, America did not offer any military assistance.

In 1990, America imposed several sanctions on Pakistan and cut off military aid under the Pressler Amendment due to Pakistan's nuclear tests in 1998, which were a response to India's nuclear program. These sanctions damaged America's trustworthiness in Pakistan's eyes.

Former President of Pakistan Zia-ul-Haq once stated, "It was generally believed that the United States had deceived a friend and ally at crucial junctures in history, particularly in 1965 and 1971." This led to widespread skepticism about the reliability and durability of American guarantees.

The two wars in the South Asian region between neighboring countries created harsh circumstances for Pakistan's geostrategic environment, causing serious defense concerns. With the collapse of colonialism, the world order shifted to a bipolar structure, dividing into two prominent blocs: the

capitalist bloc led by the United States and the communist bloc led by the Soviet Union. When the Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan in 1979, the region became a focal point of bipolar politics, and Afghanistan became a battleground for the proxy war between the USA and the Soviet Union.

Pakistan's participation in this proxy war was seen as a strategic necessity. One perspective holds that during the 1971 war, India allied with Russia, which contributed to the independence of Bangladesh and Pakistan's territorial loss. Therefore, Pakistan's frontline role in the Soviet-Afghan conflict was viewed as a countermeasure to India's previous actions.

Before aligning with the communist bloc, India was considered a pioneer of the Non-Aligned Movement. However, India later adopted a foreign policy based on its interests, supporting states that aligned with its goals while avoiding interference in others' internal affairs. Additionally, Pakistan's relations with Iran changed after Iran joined the communist bloc following the fall of Reza Shah Pahlavi's dynasty, which had a neutral approach and supported American interests.

At that time, Pakistan was the only country in the South Asian region supporting the capitalist bloc. Pakistan's decision to participate in the proxy war was crucial for deterring potential threats to its territory and securing its national interests. Without this strategic move, the Soviet Union might have attacked Pakistan, aiming to control its coastal areas, including the 770 km coastline in Baluchistan and 300 km in Sindh.

Pakistan played a major role in the Afghan proxy war led by America, gaining prominence in global politics due to its geographical position. One perspective is that Pakistan sought revenge on the Soviet Union



through this proxy war, contributing significantly to the Soviet Union's collapse. The impact of the Soviet-Afghan war on Pakistan was severe, affecting its social, economic, and political landscapes.

America adopted a counter-strategy against the Soviet Union, transforming bipolar politics into unipolar politics with the help of Pakistan, a Third World country. After the Soviet Union's breakdown, the era of unipolar politics began, establishing America as the superpower. The new world order, based on unipolar politics, was applied globally, with the U.S. striving to establish pro-American states in every region.

Despite numerous challenges and an unequal partnership, Pakistan has contributed more than any other coalition partner of America in the global war on terror. Simultaneously, it has faced significant domestic and regional challenges, and the constant pressure from America to "do more" was highly condemnable.

Pakistan has always aimed to develop balanced and peaceful diplomatic relations on both regional and international scales, guided by the coherent foreign policy envisioned by its founding father after independence: "peace with all and enmity with none." This message resonates with the nation.

Since the September 11, 2001 attacks, America has considered Pakistan an important state due to its geographical location and diplomatic recognition of the Taliban regime in Afghanistan. Pakistan, hence, became a frontline ally of America in the Global War on Terror (GWOT).

As an independent country, Pakistan faced a difficult choice in joining the U.S.-led war against terrorism in Afghanistan. Despite having no involvement in the 9/11 attacks,



Pakistan has borne significant costs for American interests.

Here, I argue that war is not a solution for creating peace and highlight the enormous sacrifices Pakistan has made. According to the Director General of Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR), Pakistan has lost 83,000 lives in the war on terror, with the conflict costing the country approximately \$126 billion.

As a sovereign state, Pakistan has taken significant security measures to eliminate these harsh elements that have caused unbearable terrorist activities. Pakistan's positive and crucial role in regional connectivity is recognized internationally. Historically and from a forward-looking perspective, Pakistan's geostrategic position in South Asia and its vital role in regional and international politics, in the context of regional and global peace, have been highly notable and appreciable in world affairs. This contribution remains valuable and significant today and always.

In summary, Pakistan's resilience as a nation can be attributed to its geostrategic location, which has constantly placed it in the midst of various multidimensional challenges.

The author is a freelance researcher and holds an M. Phil. Degree from the University of Karachi.

BALUCHISTAN IN MEDIA'S LIMELIGHT FOR TWO DAYS



MUHAMMAD USAMA KHALID

Who says Quetta is backward? If somebody still thinks so, they should listen to the guest speakers of the Pakistan Literary Festival (PLF) Quetta Chapter. The PLF Quetta was organized by the President Art Council of Pakistan Syed Ahmed Shah and his esteemed team on 15 and 16 May 2024 in the Balochistan University of Information Technology, Engineering and Management Sciences (BUIEMS) Quetta.

Such events are infrequent to happen in Quetta due to the prevailing security threats, but this time, efforts were made by the provincial government and police department to ensure foolproof security, which is one of the primary reasons why this successful event ended peacefully without any unforeseen incident. Overall, the event was quite engaging for the people of Balochistan, especially for youth. It allowed them to listen to real stakeholders from different walks of life. The speakers include prominent local politicians, journalists from different Media

groups, national celebrities, and contemporary poets.

It was a crowded event and to attend every session could not be possible, but still I managed to attend some of the very important sessions. The first session on the first day I attended was titled, 'Mehr Garh: Historical and Cultural Heritage of Balochistan,' and the panelists were Nawabzada Haji Lashkari Raisani, Kaleem Ullah Lashari, Amna Ibrahim and Farooq Baloch. The session was very informative as the speakers linked Mehr Garh's historical and cultural links with the structural formation of Baloch society and emphasized that it can not be delinked at any cost.

The second session was of the young Urdu poet Ali Zaryoon, who is also known as the port of juveniles, refreshed the youth with his lively poetry that revolves around love, betrayal and life experience. The last session of the first day was slotted for the local poets of Balochistan from different ethnicities, but predominantly they were Baloch. Though the number of audiences was a bit less than that of the other sessions, it was my personal favorite in the sense that it provided space for the local talent to come up to the public level.

However, the thing that bitterly bothered me was the lack of interest of our youth in books, which is alarming, keeping in mind the future of our generation. As the prominent American women's rights advocate, journalist, and critic Margaret Fuller said about book





readers, "Today a reader, tomorrow a leader" is pertinently relatable. Looking at the world's leaders and successful people, they all give massive importance to the readings.

The book's sales were ostensibly poor as compared to the food items that were sold adjacent to the bookstall area. Even one bookseller from Karachi told us that he came to Quetta in 2022 also when the Quetta Literature Festival (QLF) was held, but hardly anybody bought a book from them then. One of the reasons for the lack of reading culture is, no doubt, the massive role of social media in our lives, but quality books are inaccessible due to the high prices of the rupee devaluation and import ban. The second and the last day of the festival held more constructive sessions. 'Session On Visual & Performing Arts' was on the theme of the lost essence of the role of visual media in the accurate representation of societal issues from the mainstream entertainment media. The panelists were Jamal Shah, Noor-Ul-Huda Shah, Zafar Mairaj, and Ayub Khoso. The panelists also shed light on the diminishing role of Balochistan in the national entertainment media and how it could be revived.

The next session was the continuation of the previous session, but focused more on the news media. The theme of this session was 'Role of National Media on Balochistan'; panelists for this session were comprised of Mazhar Abbas, Shahzeb Jilani, Saleem

Shahid, Shahid Rind and Rafat Saeed. This session proved to be a confessional session, as all the panelists, who were all senior journalists from big media houses, said that Balochistan is being neglected by the national media in one way or another, either because of political pressures or financial gains. The point raised by Rafat Saeed was concerning. He told the audience that at numerous occasions, whenever there was a story on the local issues of Balochistan, he never faced any backlash from the locals; instead, it was always the government that threw pebbles on the road.

Summing up, the whole event was a good initiative not only for the youth of this soil but, more broadly, for Balochistan as well. Unless and until national stakeholders visit Balochistan, their misperceptions and misconceptions about this neglected province of Pakistan will not be addressed. As far as the impact of such events is concerned, such festivities must be conducted quite frequently. Though there are security sensitivities, the government must take responsibility to ensure that such events go smoothly, as they have done this time. Similarly, such events will also help change the locals' perception that the Federation of Pakistan is actually interested in the national integration of Balochistan and its people.

Muhammad Usama Khalid is an Associate Research Fellow at Balochistan Think Tank Network (BTTN), Quetta.



PUTIN'S NUCLEAR THREATS:

A SERIOUS WARNING TO THE WEST

CE

President Vladimir Putin's warnings regarding the potential use of nuclear weapons should be taken with the utmost seriousness. Putin, facing significant pressure due to the ongoing war with Ukraine, has repeatedly issued stark warnings about the consequences of Western involvement in the conflict. These warnings suggest a deliberate effort either to pressure the West or to reflect his own strategic considerations.

On February 29, as reported by Reuters, President Putin explicitly warned Western countries about the risks of provoking a nuclear war if they deployed troops to fight in Ukraine. He emphasized that Moscow possessed the capability to strike targets in the West, marking one of his most direct threats in the context of the ongoing crisis. The conflict in Ukraine has resulted in the most severe deterioration in Moscow's relations with the West since the Cuban Missile Crisis of 1962.

On March 13, according to another Reuters report, Putin reiterated that Russia was

technically prepared for nuclear warfare. He stated that the deployment of U.S. troops to Ukraine would be perceived as a significant escalation, underscoring the gravity of the situation.

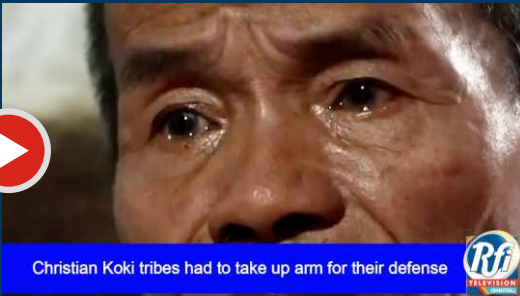
Furthermore, on June 5, as reported by Al Jazeera, President Putin reaffirmed that Russia would not exclude the use of nuclear weapons if its sovereignty or territorial integrity were threatened. During his first in-person meeting with senior editors from international news agencies since the full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022, Putin addressed questions about the threat of nuclear war and the potential repercussions for countries supporting Ukraine. He pointed to Russia's 2020 nuclear doctrine, which permits the use of nuclear options if a weapon of mass destruction is used against Russia or if the state's very existence is threatened.

Putin's statements highlight a consistent and grave stance on the use of nuclear weapons. He stressed that the West's apparent disbelief in Russia's willingness to use its nuclear arsenal is misguided. The president reiterated that Russia's nuclear doctrine allows for the use of all available means to protect the country's sovereignty and territorial integrity. This doctrine serves as a stern reminder that these threats should not be dismissed or taken lightly.

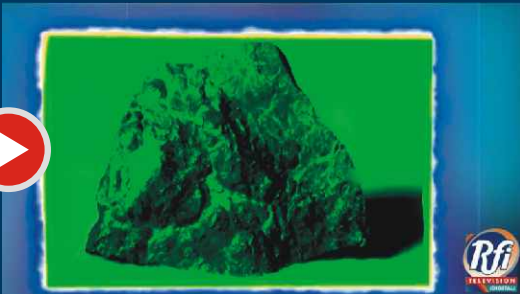




STORIES / SHORT DOCUMENTARIES PRODUCED BY RFI DIGITAL TV



Christian Koki tribes had to take up arm for their defense



Interaction



ماہنامہ
زاویہ نگاہ

RABITA FORUM INTERNATIONAL

Plot No.F8/3, Block-4, Old Clifton, Karachi, Pakistan.

+92 21 358 619 35 - 36 rfi@rfipakistan.com www.rfipakistan.com

www.instagram.com/rfi.pakistan/ www.facebook.com/rfipakistan

YouTube Channel http://www.youtube.com/@rabitaforuminternational