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PAKISTAN'S SUCCESSFUL TEST-FIRE OF SMASH A SHIP-LAUNCHED BALLISTIC MISSILE



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Interaction



December 2024

CHIEF EDITOR

Nusrat Mirza

EXECUTIVE EDITOR

Bismah Mirza

EDITOR

Mirza Kashif Baig

ASSOCIATE EDITOR

Syed Samiullah

MANAGING EDITOR

Yusuf Rahi

PRODUCTION MANAGER

M. H. Khan

LAYOUT DESIGNER

Malik Zia Muhammad

• **CONTRIBUTORS**

Dr. Bushra Batool
Wajeeha Najam

• **BUREAU CHIEF & DIRECTOR MARKETING**

Islamabad

Prof. Dr. M. Attaullah Khan

• **REPRESENTATIVES**

UK (London)

Tahir Shah

Bangladesh

Abdul Rahim Khan

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NUSRAT MIRZA

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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

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EDITORIAL

GLOBAL CLIMATE CHANGE: IMPACT ON PAKISTAN



A child sits by a shrinking water source, a stark symbol of drought

The world continues to experience the profound effects of climate change, from devastating wildfires in Europe to prolonged droughts in Africa. However, few countries are as vulnerable to this crisis as Pakistan, which finds itself among the most affected despite its minimal carbon emissions. The recent COP29 climate summit, held in Baku, Azerbaijan, provided a fresh opportunity for the world to hear the plea of countries like Pakistan, which suffer the consequences of emissions they did not create. Prime Minister of Pakistan, addressing the summit, delivered a heartfelt message highlighting the injustices his country faces due to climate change and called for global solidarity and action.

Pakistan contributes less than 1% of global greenhouse gas emissions, yet it is consistently ranked among the most vulnerable nations to climate change. The country's geographical diversity, including high mountain ranges, expansive river systems, and an extensive coastline, makes it particularly susceptible to

climate-related disasters. Just last year, Pakistan experienced devastating floods that submerged a third of the country, left millions displaced, and resulted in economic damages estimated at over \$30 billion. This catastrophe was a painful reminder that Pakistan is not immune to the consequences of rising global temperatures, even though it has done little to contribute to them.

At COP29, the Prime Minister of Pakistan used this platform to remind the global community of their moral obligations to help countries like his. He reiterated Pakistan's dire situation in his impassioned speech and called for climate justice. He emphasized that Pakistan's vulnerability is not just a national concern but a shared consequence of a global failure to reduce carbon emissions. The Prime Minister outlined the disproportionate impact on developing countries, specifically focusing on how climate-induced disasters are reversing years of hard-earned economic and social progress.

Despite numerous promises made by world powers in the past, the financial support required to help Pakistan adapt and recover from climate shocks has been insufficient. The Prime Minister underscored that at the Glasgow COP26 and Sharm El-Sheikh COP27, developed nations pledged climate finance to support vulnerable countries. Still, much of that assistance has either not materialized or been delayed. Pakistan's needs are urgent from building resilient infrastructure to supporting agricultural

adaptation, which is crucial for the livelihoods of millions. The world's wealthiest nations, historically responsible for the majority of greenhouse gas emissions, must honor their financial commitments to support those facing the brunt of climate change.

The outcome of COP29 offered some hope but also highlighted familiar challenges. During the summit, there was a renewed push for increasing climate finance for developing nations, with significant development banks pledging to increase funding to \$120 billion by 2030. However, it is high time that the promises made need to be converted into actionable steps immediately, not merely pledged for the future.

Pakistan requires urgent investments in climate adaptation, mitigation measures, and support for rebuilding communities devastated by natural disasters. Pakistan has undertaken several initiatives to combat climate change domestically, including the ambitious 10 Billion Tree Tsunami project, which aims to restore forests and enhance carbon sequestration. Yet, Pakistan cannot bear the burden alone.

He urged developed nations to support these efforts, not just as an act of charity but as a shared responsibility to address the collective challenge of climate change. A key point made by the Prime Minister at COP29

was the urgency of loss and damage funding, a mechanism climate-vulnerable nations have long advocated. He expressed disappointment at the slow pace of operationalizing the loss and damage fund, which was agreed upon during COP27. This fund is essential for countries like Pakistan, which face losses that are beyond adaptation homes lost, lives disrupted, and ecosystems destroyed. He urged the international community to expedite the creation of this fund and ensure that it is well-resourced to help countries recover from climate-induced disasters. The reality is that Pakistan is at the frontline of the climate crisis, and without adequate international support, its future remains precarious.

The Prime Minister's address was a stark reminder to the world that climate change is not just an environmental issue but a matter of human rights, economic justice, and global solidarity. Wealthy nations must fulfill their moral and financial commitments to support those least responsible but most affected by this crisis. The pledges made at COP29 must translate into tangible actions that will help Pakistan and other vulnerable nations secure a more sustainable future.

Pakistan's story is one of resilience and injustice. It is time for the world to step up and support countries like Pakistan through words and meaningful action. The upcoming years will be critical, and it is incumbent upon the developed world to ensure that climate finance is not just a promise but a reality. Supporting Pakistan is not merely about aid it is about righting the wrongs of a global system that has failed to protect the most vulnerable. The world cannot afford to look away any longer, and COP29 must be remembered as the turning point where promises became actions, and actions led to hope for those most affected by the climate crisis.



Rising temperatures highlight the intensifying impact of global warming

PAKISTAN NUCLEAR SOCIETY (PNS) VISITS RFI

■ On November 11, 2024, a delegation from the Pakistan Nuclear Society (PNS), including its President, Dr. Muhammad Tahir Khaleeq, Executive Member Mr. Waqar Ahmad Butt, and Scientific Advisory Board Member Mr. Anwar Habib, visited Rabita Forum International (RFI) and participated in an interview with RFI Digital TV, hosted by Chairman Nusrat Mirza. The PNS representatives described their organization as a non-governmental, non-profit body comprising over 1,000 life members, including scientists, engineers, doctors, and technologists, with a focus on nuclear science and its applications.

■ Based in Islamabad, the PNS is dedicated to advancing nuclear science for socio-economic development through collaboration



with professional societies, think tanks, and organizations. Its key objectives include public education on nuclear energy, safe radiation practices, and the applications of radioisotope technologies in sectors like health, agriculture, industry, and the environment. Additionally, it strives to foster a vibrant scientific community committed to sustainable development on both national and international levels.



NUSRAT MIRZA INAUGURATES 'ROZGAR SCHEME' AT ORANGI TOWN



The Bihar Welfare Foundation, in collaboration with the Salman Younus Trust, launched the 'Rozgar Scheme' in Orangi Town, with Nusrat Mirza, Chairman of Rabita Forum International (RFI), as the chief guest for the inauguration ceremony. In his address, Mr.



Mirza commended both organizations for their efforts and emphasized the benefits the initiative would bring to the local community. He highlighted the importance of such programs in addressing the societal challenges of the current times.

CHAIRMAN RFI VISITS FUUAST

To mark United Nations Day, the Department of International Relations at the Federal Urdu University of Arts, Sciences and Technology (FUUAST) held its 4th Undergraduate Poster Conference at the Molvi Abdul Haq Campus in Karachi. Mr. Nusrat Mirza, Chairman of Rabita Forum International (RFI), served as the Chief Guest

and inaugurated the event. The conference aimed to promote awareness of peace, human rights, and sustainable development among students. Mr. Mirza, along with Dr. Shahid Iqbal and Dr. Hina Mudassir, highlighted the significance of the United Nations and its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).



CONDOLENCE CEREMONY

PAYS TRIBUTE TO BIHAR MARTYRS OF 1946



A condolence ceremony organized by the Mohibban Pakistan Foundation (MPF) honored the sacrifices of Bihar's martyrs during the Pakistan Movement at Orangi Town, Karachi. Chairman of Rabita Forum International, Nusrat Mirza, highlighted the pivotal role of Bihar Muslims in creating Pakistan and emphasized renewed hope despite unfulfilled promises.

Imtiaz Alam, a relative of MM Alam, stated the martyrs' blood fueled the Pakistan Movement. Mukhtar Hussain Ansari, Chairman MPF, and Naeem Iqbal, General Secretary MPF, stressed the importance of

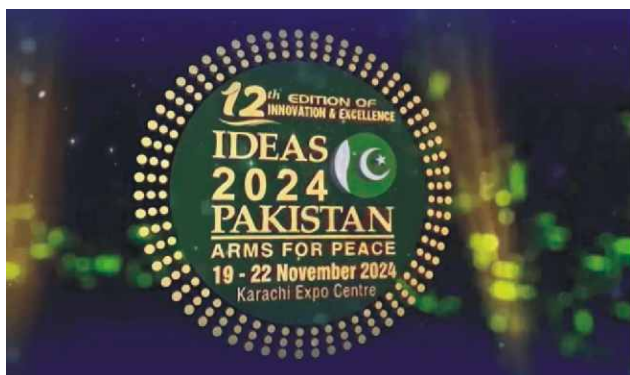


preserving this history for future generations. The annual ceremony reflects the enduring legacy of those who laid the foundation for Pakistan.



IDEAS 2024

12TH INTERNATIONAL DEFENSE EXHIBITION AND SEMINAR (IDEAS) 2024



IDEAS 2024: Showcasing innovation and excellence in defense at Karachi Expo Centre

The 12th International Defense Exhibition and Seminar (IDEAS) 2024, held from November 19 to 22 at the Karachi Expo Centre, concluded with remarkable achievements, reinforcing its status as a premier defense industry event. Organized by the Ministry of Defense and the Defense Export Promotion Organization (DEPO), the four-day exhibition highlighted Pakistan's technological progress and its role in fostering international cooperation in the defense sector.

EVENT HIGHLIGHTS AND PARTICIPATION

IDEAS 2024 drew participation from over 55 countries, including 17 new entrants including Iran, Italy, and the United Kingdom, etc. A total of 557 exhibitors, including 224 local and 333 international companies, showcased cutting-edge defense technologies and equipment. Notable exhibits included Pakistan's domestically developed Haider tank and Shahpar-3 drone, signifying advancements in the nation's self-reliance in

defense. The exhibition also featured a dedicated hall for defense start-ups, where innovative solutions attracted significant interest from industry experts and potential collaborators. The event provided an expansive and efficient platform for networking, knowledge sharing, and collaboration by spanning six halls and three additional marquees.

KEY OUTCOMES AND AGREEMENTS

The event facilitated strategic alliances and trade discussions, with the signing of 82 Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) across various defense categories. Major public sector entities such as Heavy Industries Taxila (HIT), Pakistan Ordnance Factory (POF) Wah, Pakistan Aeronautical Complex (PAC) Kamra, and the National Radio & Telecommunication Corporation (NRTC) were at the forefront of these agreements. A landmark MoU was signed between Turkiye and POF Wah for the establishment of a manufacturing plant, while NRTC secured



Defense Minister, Khawaja Muhammad Asif, addresses after inaugurating IDEAS-2024



IDEAS 2024: Showcasing advanced defense technologies at Expo Centre, Karachi, Pakistan

agreements with Middle Eastern and African countries, including a letter of intent (LOI) for air defense radars. A private Pakistani firm also signed a significant MoU worth Rs. 10 billion with Switzerland.

Technology-driven defense start-ups, supported by Pakistan's armed forces, secured 15 MoUs to establish technology parks, signaling promising growth in defense innovation. Five new export destinations in Africa and East Asia emerged during IDEAS, expanding Pakistan's defense export horizons in technology, surveillance, electronic warfare, and radar systems.

FINANCIAL IMPACT AND EXPORT POTENTIAL

Speaking at the closing ceremony, Secretary of Defence Production Lt. Gen. (Retd) Chiragh Haider highlighted Pakistan's ongoing negotiations for MoUs worth approximately \$36 billion, with the potential to translate into export orders over the coming



JF-17 Thunder displayed at IDEAS 2024

years. He noted that Pakistan had achieved defense exports worth \$1.3 billion in the past three years, averaging \$450 million annually. DEPO Director General Major General Asad Nawaz Khan emphasized the encouraging progress made through these agreements, noting their potential to contribute significantly to Pakistan's defense export growth.

CONCLUSION

IDEAS 2024 was a resounding success, showcasing Pakistan's advancements in defense technology and reinforcing its global partnerships. With its impressive turnout, innovative exhibits, and strategic agreements, the event not only strengthened Pakistan's defense export potential but also positioned the country as a key player in the global defense industry. The achievements of IDEAS 2024 underline its critical role in promoting international cooperation and technological innovation in defense.



General Asim Munir NI(M) HI(M), Chief of Army Staff in Ideas 2024 at Expo Centre

PAKISTAN'S NAVAL DEFENCE BOOST:

LAUNCHING FIRST INDIGENOUSLY DESIGNED FRIGATES



Jinnah Class Frigates design

Pakistan is set to enhance its maritime defence capabilities with the development of its first indigenously designed warships, the Jinnah Class Frigates. These multi-role ships, ranging from 100-150 meters in length and weighing 2,000-4,000 tons, will be armed with advanced weapons, including guns, missiles, torpedoes, and anti-submarine rockets.

Admiral Naveed Ashraf, Pakistan's Chief of Naval Staff, while receiving briefing at the International Defense Exhibition and Seminar "IDEAS 2024" in Karachi on November 20, 2024, emphasized that these frigates aim to counter modern naval threats such as surface warfare, anti-submarine operations, and air defence. Inspired by the construction of MILGEM Class Ships, the Jinnah Class Frigates mark a pivotal step in reducing reliance on foreign platforms and strengthening the country's indigenization efforts.

Pakistan's navy has been modernizing its fleet to address regional maritime challenges. Recent acquisitions include the PNS Babur and PNS

Hunain, along with Chinese Type 054 A/P frigates, Romanian offshore patrol vessels, and Turkish MILGEM Class Corvettes. Notably, two MILGEM class ships are under construction at Karachi Shipyard and Engineering Works (KS&EW).

Admiral Ashraf outlined a forward-looking naval strategy focused on "progressive capability enhancement," prioritizing indigenous solutions and force multipliers to build a balanced and combat-ready fleet capable of responding to evolving threats.



Pakistan Navy Fleet

PAKISTAN INTRODUCES JF-17 PFX FIGHTER



JF-17 PFX, an improved version with its arsenal

The Pakistan Air Force (PAF) has unveiled the next-generation model of its JF-17 'Thunder' fighter aircraft, developed jointly by Pakistan Aeronautical Complex (PAC) and Chengdu Aircraft Corporation (CAC). The new variant, designated as the JF-17 PFX (Pakistan Fighter Experimental), was showcased for the first time at the International Defence Exhibition and Seminar (IDEAS) 2024 in Karachi, which concluded on November 22.

PAF officials at the event described the JF-17 PFX as a 4.5-plus generation fighter jet, with development expected to be finalized by the end of the decade. Senior government representatives revealed plans for the aircraft to feature advanced air-to-air missiles (AAMs) with

greater range compared to earlier models. Additionally, Pakistan aims to domestically produce the radar system for the PFX.

The aircraft will likely integrate long-range AAMs such as China's PL-15, which Pakistan began receiving in 2022 for its JF-17C Block III variant. The Block III, rolled out in 2023 at PAC's Kamra production facility, offers significant advancements over the Block II version, including better maneuverability, extended range, and enhanced combat capabilities. Notable improvements in the Block III include a reduced radar cross-section due to increased use of composite materials and upgraded avionics, ensuring superior performance in modern combat scenarios.

HOW TO AVOID NUCLEAR WAR?

NUSRAT MIRZA

The world seems to be galloping towards a nuclear World War III. Ukraine has launched American missiles at Russia, and its president is proudly stating that the effects will be seen later. While the US has not officially included Ukraine in NATO, it has effectively been treated as part of the alliance, receiving destructive missiles and other military assistance from NATO, Britain, and other countries. In response, Russia has warned that if it is attacked, it will retaliate against NATO countries. If this occurs, the war would spiral out of control, potentially engulfing the world in an unprecedented conflict.

Russia, which has acquired drones from Iran, has long-range weapons primarily designed to target the US and Europe. It never anticipated finding itself in conflict with Ukraine. However, if the situation escalates, the very existence of the world could be at risk, as the use of nuclear weapons by the United States, Russia, China, or North Korea cannot be ruled out. In a joint article in the renowned American magazine *Foreign Affairs* on November 20, 2024, Madeleine Crandon and Franklin Miller wrote that if the United States wants to avoid the threat of war, it must abandon or at least review its policy of modernizing its nuclear weapons.

By doing so, the United States could reduce the fears of Russia, China, and North Korea, which feel increasingly threatened. On the other hand, Pentagon officials argue that

abandoning modernization would make America more vulnerable and compromise its security. This debate underscores that, for the first time in three decades, America's security is genuinely under threat.

Russian President Vladimir Putin and other leaders, such as Nizhny Novgorod, have stated that nuclear weapons would be used if Russia's security is endangered. Meanwhile, Chinese President Xi Jinping has showcased an extensive stockpile of nuclear weapons, which a retired American military general described as "terrifying." Adding to the complexity, China and Russia have signed an agreement of unlimited friendship, and the North Korean president has declared his practical participation in the Ukrainian war. North Korea also claims it can strike its neighbors and even US territory with its missiles, a claim it reinforced by testing a ballistic missile on October 31, 2024.



Ukraine deploys American missiles in its ongoing conflict with Russia

The mounting resistance against the United States globally is seen as a challenge to its hegemony. This situation also threatens its ability to interfere in global affairs a role it seems unwilling to relinquish. For the US to avoid escalating tensions further, it must abandon its policy of worldwide hegemony and refrain from interfering in the affairs of other nations. It must also project an image of having no aggressive intentions toward other countries. Contrarily, the Biden administration has pursued a doctrine centered on modernizing American weapons, organizing them, and accelerating the production of advanced armaments. This approach risks mutual destruction and the loss of millions of innocent lives. The United States is using Ukraine as a proxy against Russia while simultaneously encircling China through alliances with Taiwan, India, and other countries. Although China does not intend to engage in military conflicts before 2030, it is preparing to secure itself in the interim.

The US is also developing new missile technologies for faster and more precise attacks, creating modern platforms and weapons systems. It is worth noting that the United States possesses nuclear weapons comparable to or slightly better than those

used in Hiroshima, and it is spending millions of dollars to modernize them. However, this modernization faces challenges due to limited industrial capacity, lack of materials, trained manpower, and insufficient funds.

In such a situation, the Trump administration is left with two options: either continue with Joe Biden's policy or reevaluate it to adopt a more peaceful "live and let live" approach. The choice boils down to perpetuating the policy of nuclear deterrence or developing a new framework for global stability. What is required is a modernized and balanced policy that seeks to fix escalating tensions rather than exacerbate them.

While some American columnists and intellectuals highlight the difficulties in implementing Biden's policy, particularly in light of America's \$43 trillion debt and an unemployment rate of 40%, others believe the US can overcome these challenges. The Trump administration has already initiated efforts to reduce unemployment by establishing factories domestically, focusing on producing essential goods and limiting imports of Chinese products. Although this process will take time, it demonstrates a shift towards economic independence.

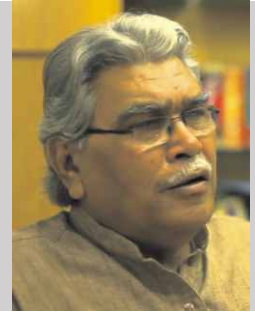
American officials, however, have a history of deception. They may claim to halt nuclear modernization efforts while covertly continuing them, much like the United States' environmental strategies in the 1970s. Despite pledges to address climate change as a threat to humanity, the US developed technologies like HAARP, which could manipulate environmental conditions. This capability, described as a strategic weapon, allows the US to create floods, tsunamis, and earthquakes further extending its global dominance.



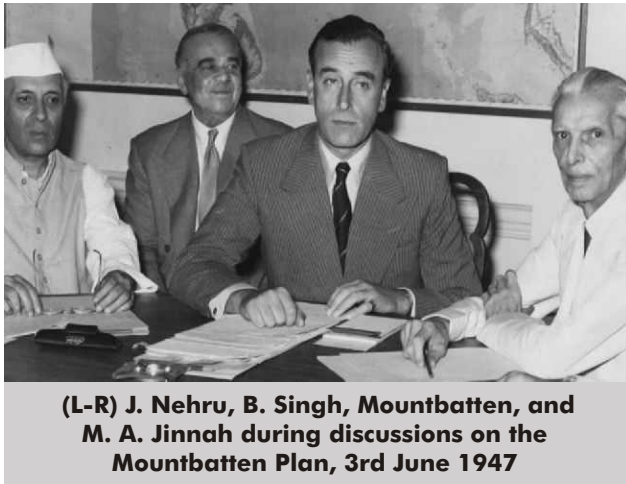
DF-15B ballistic missiles showcased during a military parade

Continued on page 18

QUAID-E-AZAM AND THE MOUNTBATTEN PLAN



KHWAJA RAZI HAIDER



(L-R) J. Nehru, B. Singh, Mountbatten, and M. A. Jinnah during discussions on the Mountbatten Plan, 3rd June 1947

In the context of the Pakistan movement, 3 June 1947 has almost the same significance as 23rd March 1940. On March 23, 1940, the Islamic Hind demanded the formation of a separate Muslim state under the leadership of its beloved Quaid-e-Azam, Muhammad Ali Jinnah, and on June 3, 1947, this demand was officially accepted. These two dates span a period of about seven years, two months, and ten days and span the history of the Pakistan Movement and the struggle that turned the impossible into possible.

The story of this battle is long and sad. In this story where there are enviable events of the maturation of the will there are also fascinating tales of loyalty and gallantry. It was this struggle that finally gave an objective shape to an idea and a dispersed workforce became a stable nation. If 23rd March 1940 was the beginning of this struggle, 3 June

1947 was the peak of this struggle. Government-level consultations were held to find a solution to India's problem.

Although the Cabinet Mission Plan is of great importance in this regard, the Mountbatten Plan is more notable because it divided India into two parts and reaffirmed the practical status of the demand for Pakistan. Lord Mountbatten was a close friend of Jawaharlal Nehru. He came to India as a Viceroy on 22 March 1947.

He was not only aware of the political situation in India. Rather, he came to India with the intention that he would try to make India even stronger. As Lord Mountbatten himself later admitted in an interview, "I was a firm believer in a united India" and I thought I would do my best to keep India united. Lord Mountbatten's statement shows that Mountbatten was against the creation of Pakistan until he took over as a Viceroy.

It was for this reason that he first met Jawaharlal Nehru after taking charge of his office and held talks with Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah on April 5, 1947, about twelve days after that meeting. Initially, Mountbatten tried to push for a united government under the "Cabinet Mission Plan," but within the first two weeks of negotiations with Congress and Muslim League leaders, he was convinced that continuing the siege on the Cabinet Mission Plan was futile and that belief led him to an alternative plan.

Mountbatten developed an alternative plan during talks with Indian leaders. Chaudhry Muhammad Ali, in his book *The Emergence of Pakistan*, says that on April 26, Mountbatten decided to send his chief of staff, Lord Ismay and George Abel to London. They had to carry with them the initial draft of the said plan. So that the details of this project can be discussed with the government of Britain and the concerned authorities. Under this plan, "the islanders were to be divided into two free and independent kingdoms" One was called India and the other was called Pakistan.

A study of the Mountbatten Papers and other documents of that period, besides the works of Latif Ahmed Sherwani and the Lire Colenza and Domani Colapier, published during the two eras regarding Mountbatten, makes it clear that there was a great deal of communication between Mountbatten and the Congress to save India from partition and they continued their efforts in this regard till the last moment.

He was the fiercest opponent of the creation of Pakistan, but it was undoubtedly the charisma of Quaid e Azam's skill,

efficiency and extraordinary political insight that forced all the opposing forces to accept the demand of Pakistan as the rightful government. In particular, Mountbatten was defeated in negotiations with Quaid e Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah. Perhaps this was the reason why Mountbatten, acting in a vindictive spirit, decided that if he was forced to partition India, he would also divide Bengal and Punjab. He believed that the partition of Punjab and Bengal would end the influence of the Quaid e Azam not only on the Muslims of these provinces but also on the Muslims of Bengal. Rather, a Pakistan will come into existence which will be unworkable.

Quaid e Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah strongly opposed this partition, he was not at all willing to accept "Karam Khurdah" (Compassion's Residue) or "Kattapatta" (shredded) Pakistan. He also issued very strong statements in this regard, but despite this, he was ready to accept the plan of partition of India. He believed that he would eventually be able to convince Mountbatten or the British government that justice and reasonableness required that the two provinces should not be divided.

It is completely part of Pakistan. But they were successful in their efforts only to the extent of protest because at one stage the British government also stubbornly rejected the proposal of the Quaid e Azam to hold a referendum on the question of division in these provinces. They were also threatened in this regard. Mountbatten even said that 'if you do not approve this plan, you will also lose the Pakistan for which you have been struggling for years.'

In these circumstances, the Quaid e Azam had no other option but to conditionally approve the project. He met Mountbatten on the evening of June 2, 1947. "I personally



**Lord Mountbatten announces
India's Independence**

assure you that I will try to get the plan approved by the Muslim League council," he said. In his letters and reports, Mountbatten expressed surprise at the self-confidence of the Quaid-e-Azam and his struggle to keep his position intact in this most critical phase of the Partition of India. Even on June 3, 1947, when Mountbatten, Jawaharlal Nehru, Sardar Baldev Singh, and Quaid e Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah announced the approval of the plan on All India Radio, Quaid e Azam was the only leader who announced the recognition of the plan with unhappiness. In his speech, he said:

'It is clear that the plan does not align with our approach on some key issues. We can neither say nor feel that we are satisfied with the way certain issues have been dealt with in the plan. We agree with them. Now, we have to examine whether this plan, presented to us by the government of Johor Majesty, should be accepted or not. However, the final decision will be taken by the All-India Muslim League in the meeting to be held on June 9.'

Although Quaid e Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah partially expressed confidence in the contents of the plan in his speech, at this stage it was as clear as day that the demand for the creation of "Pakistan" had been finally conceded. And it was this that made the eight crore Muslims of India feel proud. At the end of his speech, Quaid e Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah raised the slogan "Pakistan Zindabad," which gave a new meaning to the Muslims of India but created a wave of anger among the Hindus who could not even imagine the partition of India and the creation of Pakistan.

So at a point, when things were heading towards their ultimate destiny and perhaps for the first time in the history of India, Hindus began to compare the strategy of Muhammad Ali Jinnah and the Congress leaders on the scene. At this stage, they not only became

disillusioned with the Congress leadership but also began to explicitly acknowledge Muhammad Ali Jinnah's superior political qualities and his loyalty to the national cause of the Muslims.

Mohibullah Arifi, a senior officer of the Military Accounts and a poet of a particular style, has written in an article about this speech of Quaid e Azam, "I heard this speech of Quaid e Azam in Delhi with some of my office colleagues. On hearing the decision of the partition of India, one of the Congressmen who was a Hindu trembled with anger and started abusing the big Congress leaders. What is the meaning of a phrase that has come out of his tongue?" "I wish Jinnah was born a Hindu." After the final phase of the partition of India and the announcement of the principled decision to establish Pakistan, this type of analysis was commonly heard in the political atmosphere of united India.

One of these analyses was that if there had been one Jinnah in the Congress and a hundred Gandhis and Nehrus in the Muslim League, India would never have been partitioned. Muslims, on the other hand, accepted Jinnah's speech as a final success and sent thousands of letters and telegrams to the office of the All-India Muslim League and the Quaid e Azam, expressing their joy at the decision to establish Pakistan and assuring the League leaders of their full support. The '3rd June Plan' is commonly known as the Mountbatten Plan. To get Pakistan, especially after talks and discussions with those forces which were at that time a wall of iron against the Muslims' demand for a separate homeland was undoubtedly a huge and historic achievement of Quaid-e-Azam that every Pakistani will always be proud of.

The author is the former Director of Quaid-e-Azam Academy, Karachi.

RUSSIA-UKRAINE CONFLICT: GLOBAL IMPLICATIONS

**MIRZA KASHIF BAIG**

The ongoing conflict between Ukraine and Russia has taken a dramatic turn, following President Joe Biden's decision to authorize Ukraine to use American missiles on Russian soil. This development has not only escalated tensions between Russia and the West but has also stirred concerns across the globe, raising questions about the far-reaching consequences of such an action. As Russia formulates its response, the ramifications are being felt beyond Europe, rippling across the global stage and affecting nations like Pakistan, which find themselves navigating the unpredictable waters of great power competition.

THE WEST'S CALCULATED GAMBLE

In a controversial move, President Biden has approved the use of American-made missiles for Ukrainian strikes into Russian territory. This decision is a significant shift in

U.S. policy, which had, until recently, carefully avoided direct provocation of Russia to prevent further escalation of the conflict. By allowing Ukraine to target Russian territories with these advanced weapons, the United States is making a statement of its unwavering support for Kyiv in a bid to intensify pressure on Moscow. However, such a decision is not without risks. The Biden administration is taking a calculated gamble that Russia, despite its bluster and threats of retaliation, will hesitate to escalate the conflict into a full-scale war involving NATO. The West's hope seems to be that by raising the stakes, it might force Russia into negotiations or at least deter it from continuing its advances. Yet, history has shown that Moscow is unlikely to back down from what it perceives as an existential threat.

RUSSIA'S RESPONSE: RED LINES CROSSED

Predictably, Russia has reacted to this decision with firm rhetoric, signaling that the use of American missiles in its territory constitutes a "red line." The Russian government has promised a harsh and "unforeseen" response, hinting at possible retaliatory measures that could further escalate the conflict. President Vladimir Putin, during a recent address, stressed that Russia would not allow such provocations to go unanswered and would use "all available means" to safeguard its sovereignty.

In response, Russia has already mobilized



Armed soldiers in the backdrop of the ongoing Russia-Ukraine conflict

additional forces along its western borders, conducted a series of large-scale military drills, and, reportedly, increased its readiness to deploy tactical nuclear weapons. The Kremlin's primary objective appears to be to send a clear message to both Ukraine and its Western allies: the conflict's escalation will have catastrophic consequences for all involved. This show of force is intended not only to deter further Western involvement but also to rally domestic support by portraying Russia as being under siege from foreign adversaries.

GLOBAL IMPLICATIONS: A WORLD ON EDGE

The decision to use American missiles in Russian territory has ignited fears of a broader conflict. If Russia perceives that NATO is directly supporting attacks on its homeland, it could justify retaliatory actions against Western interests, potentially sparking a direct confrontation between NATO and Russia. Such a scenario could lead to an unintended spiral of military actions that risk plunging Europe and possibly the world into a devastating conflict.

Moreover, the situation has significant implications for global security and stability. It has put additional strain on the already fragile international arms control frameworks. Russia's potential withdrawal from key arms treaties, in retaliation to what it sees as Western provocation, could lead to a new nuclear arms race, with disastrous consequences for global security.

The economic implications are also profound. Any further escalation could lead to heightened economic sanctions, impacting global energy markets and contributing to the volatility of essential commodities. As winter approaches, Europe faces the daunting prospect of a further reduction in gas supplies,

which would strain already stretched resources and drive energy prices even higher.

IMPLICATIONS FOR PAKISTAN: NAVIGATING A TIGHTROPE

For Pakistan, the escalating confrontation between the West and Russia poses unique challenges and potential opportunities. Islamabad has traditionally maintained a delicate balance between the major global powers, seeking to avoid taking sides openly in conflicts involving the United States and Russia. However, the current situation forces Pakistan to navigate an increasingly polarized international landscape, where remaining neutral becomes ever more challenging.

One of the key concerns for Pakistan is the impact on its economic stability. The conflict's effect on global energy supplies could exacerbate the energy crisis in Pakistan, leading to rising fuel costs and increased inflation. As a country already grappling with economic challenges, Pakistan cannot afford further disruptions to its energy imports, which are vital for both its economy and domestic stability.

On the diplomatic front, the intensification of the Ukraine conflict places pressure on Pakistan to align more clearly with either the



**Ukraine launches US-made missiles
authorized by President Joe Biden
into Russian territory**

Western bloc or Russia-China axis. The recent visits of Russian officials to Islamabad and growing defense cooperation between Pakistan and Russia have signaled a warming of ties. However, Pakistan must tread carefully, as aligning too closely with Russia could jeopardize its relations with the West, especially at a time when it needs international financial support to stabilize its economy.

On the other hand, the shifting global power dynamics could present Pakistan with opportunities to play a mediating role, leveraging its good relations with both Russia and the West. By offering to facilitate dialogue or support peace initiatives, Pakistan could bolster its image as a responsible regional player committed to global stability. Such diplomatic efforts could also help Islamabad gain international goodwill, potentially leading to economic and political benefits.

CONCLUSION: A PRECARIOUS PATH AHEAD

The authorization of American missile use

Continued from page 12

HOW TO AVOID NUCLEAR WAR?

Globally, the fear instilled by the US remains unabated, prompting nations to arm themselves with modern weaponry. In this arms race, emerging technologies, particularly artificial intelligence, play a critical role. China has made significant strides in AI, with President Xi Jinping claiming that while the first century of mechanical engineering belonged to Britain, and the next two centuries of electrical and information technology belonged to America, the fourth century might belong to China.

The US, however, challenges this assertion, citing its 159 companies actively working on AI compared to China's 29 universities. China and Russia, meanwhile, are actively

in Russian territory by Ukraine has undoubtedly escalated tensions, bringing the world closer to a major conflict. The West's gamble, combined with Russia's predictable and firm response, has created a volatile situation with unpredictable consequences. For countries like Pakistan, the current crisis presents both challenges and opportunities. Islamabad must carefully navigate this fraught environment, balancing its diplomatic ties, managing its economic vulnerabilities, and potentially playing a role in defusing tensions.

As the situation continues to unfold, the world watches with bated breath. The stakes are higher than ever, and any misstep could have dire consequences for global peace and stability. In such uncertain times, Pakistan's leadership will need to demonstrate both prudence and foresight to safeguard the country's national interests while contributing to the broader cause of international stability.

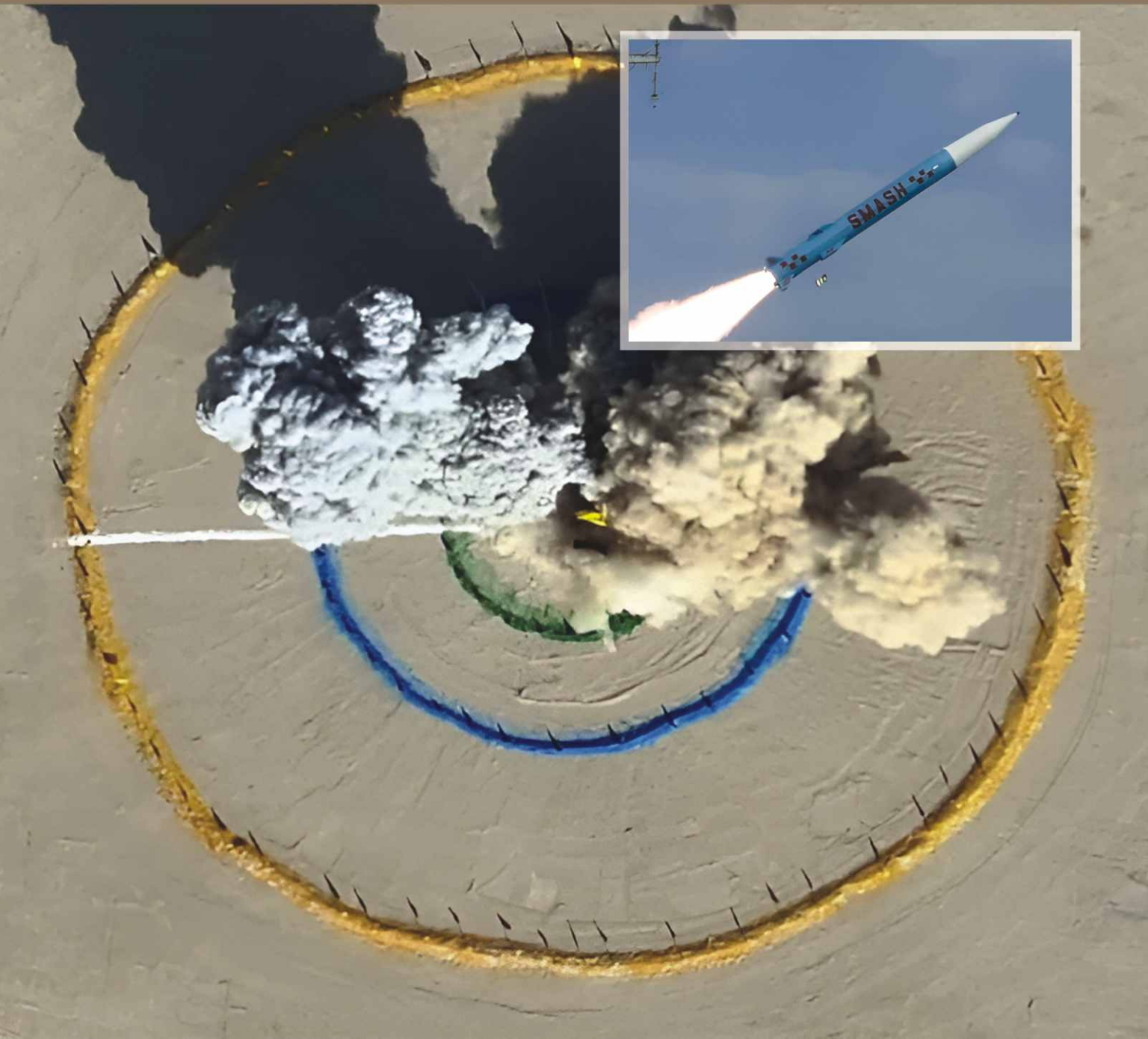
The author is the Editor of the Monthly Interaction.

countering American influence. They are weakening the dollar's status as the global reserve currency, strengthening ties with the Global South, and expanding trade in regions like Latin America. Initiatives like China's Belt and Road Initiative promote development through collective unity, further challenging US hegemony.

The critical question remains: will the United States alter its aggressive policies and allow the world to avoid the catastrophe of a third world war? The answer depends on America's willingness to adapt its behavior, abandon hegemonic ambitions, and embrace a more cooperative global approach. The stakes are high, and the decisions made today will shape the future of humanity.

The author is the Chief Editor of the monthly Interaction.

SMASH BALLISTIC MISSILE

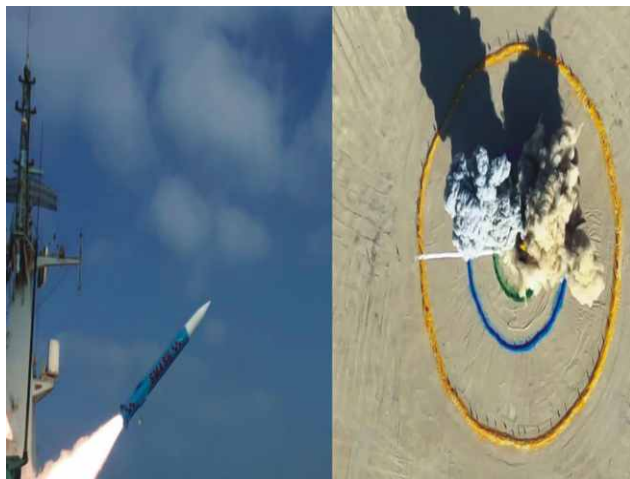


PAKISTAN'S SUCCESSFUL TEST-FIRE OF SMASH, A SHIP-LAUNCHED BALLISTIC MISSILE



SYED SAMIULLAH

In a groundbreaking achievement, the Pakistan Navy successfully test-fired its indigenously developed ship-launched ballistic missile (SLBM), named SMASH, on November 4, 2024. This event marked a significant step forward in Pakistan's maritime defense capabilities, enhancing its strategic reach and reinforcing its commitment to safeguarding its territorial waters. The successful test was observed by the Chief of Naval Staff, senior naval officers, and a dedicated team of scientists and engineers, all of whom played an integral role in the missile's design and execution. Meanwhile, President Asif Ali Zardari, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee, and other service chiefs congratulated the naval units and scientific teams involved, reinforcing the importance of Indigenous defense technology for Pakistan's military capabilities.



Launch of the SMASH missile from the frigate and its impact on the target

FEATURES AND CAPABILITIES

The SMASH missile, internally designated as P-282, represents a significant leap in Pakistan's missile technology. Key features of the missile include:

● RANGE AND TARGET VERSATILITY:

With a range of 350 kilometers, SMASH extends the Pakistan Navy's reach, allowing it to strike both stationary and moving targets on land and at sea. Its versatility makes it a critical component in countering diverse threats.

● NAVIGATION AND MANEUVERABILITY:

Equipped with an advanced navigation system, the missile is capable of altering its trajectory and speed during flight. This adaptability ensures precision even in dynamic combat scenarios.

● TECHNOLOGICAL SOPHISTICATION:

The missile is controlled by jet vanes during the boost phase, complemented by clipped delta flight control surfaces for enhanced steering. Its fuselage, featuring external ridges, houses antenna arrays for seamless communication with propulsion and steering systems.

● LAUNCH PLATFORM:

The missile was launched from a Zulfikar-class frigate, one of four multi-role warships in Pakistan's fleet. These frigates are equipped with inclined launchers initially intended for C-802 anti-ship missiles, highlighting the adaptability of Pakistan's

naval platforms to advanced systems.

● **LENGTH AND DIAMETER**

The white and blue livery with the word “SMASH” prominently displayed missile has a diameter of 8590 cm and a length of approximately 9 meters.

COMPARISON TO GLOBAL ASBM SYSTEMS

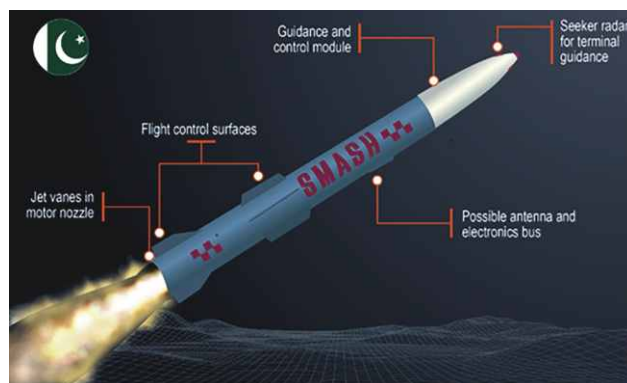
The SMASH missile aligns with global advancements in Anti-Ship Ballistic Missiles (ASBMs), a class of weapons renowned for their destructive potential and strategic significance. Comparable systems include China's CM-401, which features supersonic speed and complex maneuverability, enabling it to target large ships and harbor installations effectively; Iran's ASBM developments, which focus on integrating terminal maneuverability into existing ballistic missile designs; and the United States' PrSM Increment 2, equipped with a tri-mode seeker for enhanced precision and adaptability. While details about SMASH's warhead capacity remain classified, it's demonstrated performance positions it among the leading global ASBM systems, with notable penetration advantages against sophisticated naval defenses.

HISTORICAL EVOLUTION OF PAKISTAN NAVY'S MISSILE ARSENAL

The test-firing of the SMASH missile is part of a broader narrative of modernization within the Pakistan Navy. Over the past decade, the Navy has significantly expanded its missile



Pakistan Navy team poses after successfully firing the Smash missile



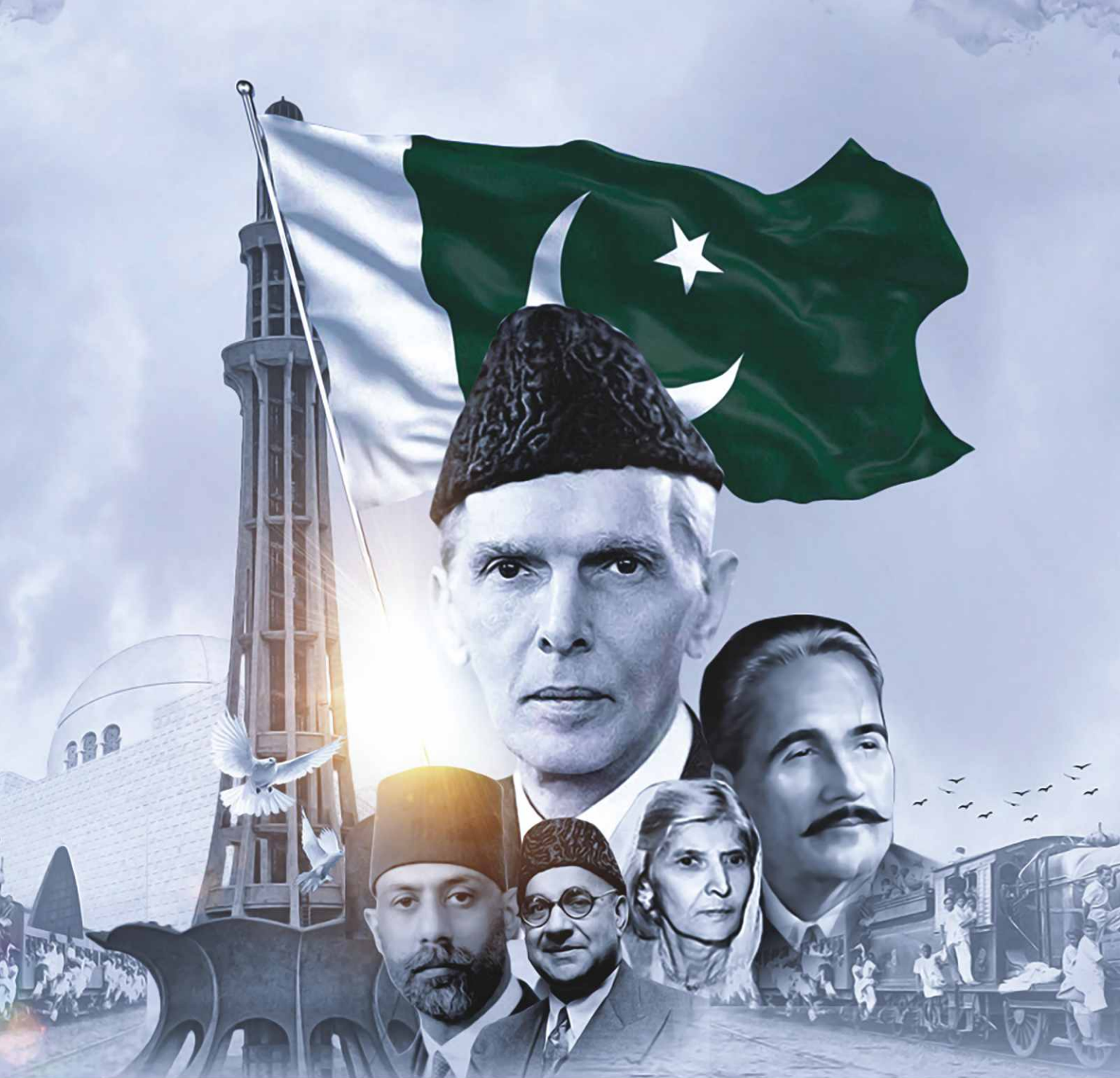
Different parts of Smash missile

capabilities, transitioning from reliance on imported systems to the development of indigenous solutions. In 2016, Pakistan introduced the Zarb, a shore-based subsonic anti-ship missile. This was followed by the Babur-3, a submarine-launched cruise missile, in 2017, which marked a significant milestone in Pakistan's undersea warfare capabilities. In 2018, the Navy deployed the Harbah, a dual-role missile capable of targeting both land and sea. The SMASH missile, with its enhanced range and precision, is the latest addition to this arsenal, reflecting a consistent trajectory of advancement.

CONCLUSION

The SMASH missile enhances Pakistan's Anti-access/area denial (A2/AD) capabilities, providing precise long-range strike potential to neutralize naval and terrestrial threats. Its successful test highlights Pakistan's commitment to military innovation and modernization. Amid regional competition in the Indian Ocean, SMASH strengthens Pakistan's deterrence posture and underscores its strategic role in ensuring security through indigenous development and international collaboration.

The author is the head of the Research Department at RFI and Associate Editor of the monthly Interaction.



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.

PAKISTAN CORNER

PAKISTAN'S EARLY YEARS (1953-56)

INTERACTION TEAM

M. A. Boga in a conversation with J. Nehru

The dismissal of Prime Minister Khwaja Nazimuddin in April 1953 by Ghulam Muhammad lingered as a contentious issue. It exemplified the growing interference of the Governor-General in the affairs of the executive and the weakening of parliamentary democracy. Mohammad Ali Bogra, the newly appointed Prime Minister, introduced efforts to stabilize the political system, including the infamous "Bogra Formula," which attempted to address the issue of federal representation by balancing power between East and West Pakistan.

THE BOGRA FORMULA (1953-1954)

The Bogra Formula, unveiled in October 1953, sought to resolve the contentious issue of power distribution between the two wings of Pakistan. It proposed equal representation for East and West Pakistan in the National

Assembly, regardless of population differences, and envisioned a bicameral legislature with 300 members equally divided between the two regions.

The formula also aimed to grant significant autonomy to provinces, leaving only defense, foreign affairs, and currency under federal control. Initially welcomed as a pragmatic solution, the Bogra Formula soon faced resistance from politicians who viewed it as a temporary fix rather than a comprehensive resolution to structural inequalities between the two regions.

DISSOLUTION OF THE CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY (1954)

In 1954, the fragile political balance was disrupted when Governor-General Ghulam Muhammad dissolved the Constituent Assembly. This drastic move followed the Assembly's attempts to limit the Governor-



**Sir Malik Ghulam Muhammad
alongside Jawaharlal Nehru**

General's powers through legislation. The dissolution led to the famous Tamizuddin Case, where Maulvi Tamizuddin Khan, the Speaker of the Constituent Assembly, challenged the decision in court. The Federal Court, led by Chief Justice Muhammad Munir, ruled in favor of the Governor-General, invoking the controversial "doctrine of necessity." This ruling set a dangerous precedent, legitimizing authoritarian intervention and undermining democratic principles.

THE ONE UNIT SCHEME (1955)

A significant administrative shift followed in October 1955 with the implementation of the One Unit Scheme, merging the four provinces of West Pakistan (Punjab, Sindh, Balochistan, and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa) into a single administrative entity. The policy aimed to create parity between East and West Pakistan in political representation but was met with widespread criticism.

Critics argued that it ignored the ethnic and cultural diversity of West Pakistan and centralized power in the hands of a select elite. Smaller provinces, such as Sindh and



Maulvi Tamizuddin Khan in conversation with Mountbatten

Balochistan, strongly opposed the scheme, perceiving it as an erosion of their identities and rights. In East Pakistan, the One Unit Scheme exacerbated existing grievances, as it was seen as a strategy to dilute their numerical majority and reinforce West Pakistan's dominance.

CONSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENTS AND THE FIRST CONSTITUTION (1956)

The promulgation of Pakistan's first constitution in 1956 marked a significant milestone in the country's constitutional and political development. However, the journey to this achievement was fraught with delays, political instability, and compromises.

Following the dissolution of the Constituent Assembly in 1954, Pakistan faced years of governance under the Government of India Act, 1935, with amendments to suit the emerging nation's needs. Mounting public and political pressure finally led to the drafting and adoption of the 1956 Constitution, formally declaring Pakistan an Islamic Republic.

KEY FEATURES OF THE 1956 CONSTITUTION:

1. ISLAMIC REPUBLIC STATUS:

- Pakistan was officially declared an Islamic Republic, with the Constitution affirming that no law would be enacted against the principles of Islam.
- The document sought to integrate Islamic values into governance while respecting the diverse religious demographics of the country.

2. FEDERAL PARLIAMENTARY SYSTEM:

- A federal structure was introduced with a unicameral legislature (National Assembly), which served as the sole legislative body.
- This system aimed to balance authority

between the federal government and the provinces, providing limited autonomy to the latter.

3. PARITY PRINCIPLE:

- To address the growing tensions between East and West Pakistan, the Constitution introduced the parity principle, granting equal representation to both wings in the National Assembly, despite the population disparity.
- This measure was intended to maintain political stability but remained a contentious issue, especially in East Pakistan.

4. FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS:

- The Constitution guaranteed key fundamental rights, including freedom of speech, religion, assembly, and association.
- These rights were aimed at fostering democracy and ensuring individual liberties.

5. HEAD OF STATE:

- The position of Governor-General was abolished and replaced with a President, who would serve as the ceremonial head of state.
- The President was to be elected by members of the National Assembly and hold limited powers within the parliamentary framework.

6. OFFICIAL LANGUAGE DEBATE:

- The Constitution declared Urdu and Bengali as the national languages, reflecting the linguistic diversity of East and West Pakistan.
- This decision sought to address the linguistic tensions that had previously led to political unrest, particularly in East Pakistan.

7. JUDICIARY AND RULE OF LAW:

- The judiciary was tasked with upholding the Constitution and protecting

fundamental rights.

- However, the separation of powers between the judiciary, executive, and legislature remained a work in progress.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE 1956 CONSTITUTION:

The Constitution of 1956 was a landmark achievement, as it provided Pakistan with its first formal legal framework after nearly a decade of political uncertainty. It institutionalized the idea of federalism and attempted to balance the interests of the two geographically and culturally distinct wings of the country.

Declaring Pakistan an Islamic Republic resonated with its ideological foundations, while the emphasis on fundamental rights reflected aspirations for democracy and progress.

CHALLENGES AND CRITICISM:

Despite its significance as Pakistan's first constitution, the 1956 Constitution faced several challenges that hindered its success. Political instability and frequent power struggles hampered its effective implementation, undermining its potential to establish a stable governance framework.

The parity principle, which granted equal representation to East and West Pakistan in the National Assembly, was particularly contentious, as many in East Pakistan viewed it as a denial of their numerical majority. Additionally, the Constitution's centralized authority limited provincial autonomy, fueling dissatisfaction among smaller provinces and exacerbating tensions with East Pakistan.

Furthermore, the Constitution failed to garner universal support from political actors, many of whom regarded it as a temporary compromise rather than a sustainable solution to the country's structural and political issues.

THE INCA CIVILIZATION



THE INCA CIVILIZATION

INTERACTION TEAM

The ruins of Machu Picchu remain amazingly well-preserved to this day

The Inca (EENG-kah) Civilization, one of the most extraordinary empires in human history, flourished in ancient Peru (a country in western South America) from c. 1400 to 1533 CE. Rising from the Andean (Mountain range in South America) highlands, the Incas built the largest empire ever seen in the Americas, extending across western South America from Quito in the north to Santiago in the south. At its peak, the empire bragged unprecedented achievements in governance, architecture, agriculture, and culture, adapting to some of the most challenging terrains on Earth. Their legacy, though short-lived, continues to captivate the modern world, symbolized by iconic sites such as Machu Picchu.

MYTHS AND REALITIES OF INCA ORIGINS

The origins of the Incas are steeped in rich

mythology intertwined with historical fragments. According to Inca lore, their creation stemmed from the god Viracocha, who emerged from the Pacific Ocean and created the sun and ethnic groups at Lake Titicaca. Another legend speaks of Manco Capac and Mama Oqllu, a brother-sister pair sent by the sun god Inti to establish a civilization in the fertile Cuzco Valley. It was here, after defeating the Chanca people with the help of stone warriors, that Manco Capac established the city of Cuzco, the empire's eventual capital.

Beyond the myths, archaeological evidence reveals that the Cuzco Valley was settled as early as 4500 BCE, with its significance as a cultural and political hub growing during the Late Intermediate Period (1000-1400 CE). The rise of the Inca Empire began in earnest with the leadership of Pachacuti Inca Yupanqui in 1438 CE, following the decisive defeat of the Chanca people. From this point forward, the Incas embarked on an ambitious campaign of territorial expansion.

THE RAPID EXPANSION OF AN EMPIRE

Under Pachacuti's visionary leadership, the Incas transformed from a small highland community into an empire known as Tawantinsuyu, or the "Land of the Four Quarters." Stretching an impressive 5,500 km (3,400 miles), the empire incorporated territories of modern-day Ecuador, Peru,

northern Chile, Bolivia, Argentina, and Colombia. Pachacuti's successor, Thupa Inca Yupanqui (1471-1493 CE), further expanded the empire by 4,000 km (2,500 miles), conquering diverse civilizations like the Lupaka, Colla, Chimor, and Wanka. At its peak, the empire governed a population of 10 million, speaking over 30 languages. Central to their administration was the Quechua language, which served as a unifying tool for governance and culture.

The empire's impressive road network, spanning over 40,000 km, facilitated the movement of armies, administrators, and



Inca Empire - Expansion and Roads



Inca's cultural reflection

goods. Roads were equipped with rest stations and a chasqui relay system, where messengers covered up to 240 km per day. This infrastructure not only unified the empire but also symbolized its power and reach.

GOVERNANCE AND ADMINISTRATION

The Inca administrative system was a masterpiece of organization. At its helm was the Sapa Inca, an absolute ruler revered as a divine figure. Notable emperors include Pachacuti Inca Yupanqui, Thupa Inca Yupanqui, and the final pre-Hispanic leader, Wayna Qhapaq (1493-1525 CE). The Sapa Inca lived a life of unparalleled luxury, drinking from gold cups, wearing silver shoes, and being attended to even in death, as the Incas famously mummified their rulers.

The empire was divided into four regions, or suyus, each governed by a regional leader who reported to Cuzco. A complex hierarchy ensured efficient administration, with kurakas (local leaders) overseeing communities known as ayllus. The mit'a labor system required subjects to contribute labor for state projects, from constructing roads to working on agricultural terraces. Taxes, such as foodstuffs, precious metals, textiles, and exotic goods, were paid in kind.

The Incas maintained meticulous records using quipus, a system of knotted cords

capable of recording population data, agricultural yields, and labor contributions. This innovative system allowed the empire to function without a written language.

RELIGION

Religion was the cornerstone of Inca society, deeply intertwined with their governance and culture. The Incas worshipped Inti, the sun god, and revered Mama Kilya, the moon goddess. The Coricancha, or "Temple of the Sun," located in Cuzco, was the spiritual heart of the empire, adorned with sheets of gold and silver. Sacred sites, or huacas, dotted the empire, often aligned with astronomical phenomena. Religious ceremonies followed the solar calendar, marking agricultural cycles and ensuring harmony with nature. Sacrifices, including human offerings, were conducted to appease the gods and avert disasters.

The Incas also revered their ancestors, preserving their rulers as mummies (mallquis), which were paraded during festivals and consulted on important decisions. This practice symbolized their cyclical view of time, embodied in the concept of pachakutia period of upheaval and renewal.

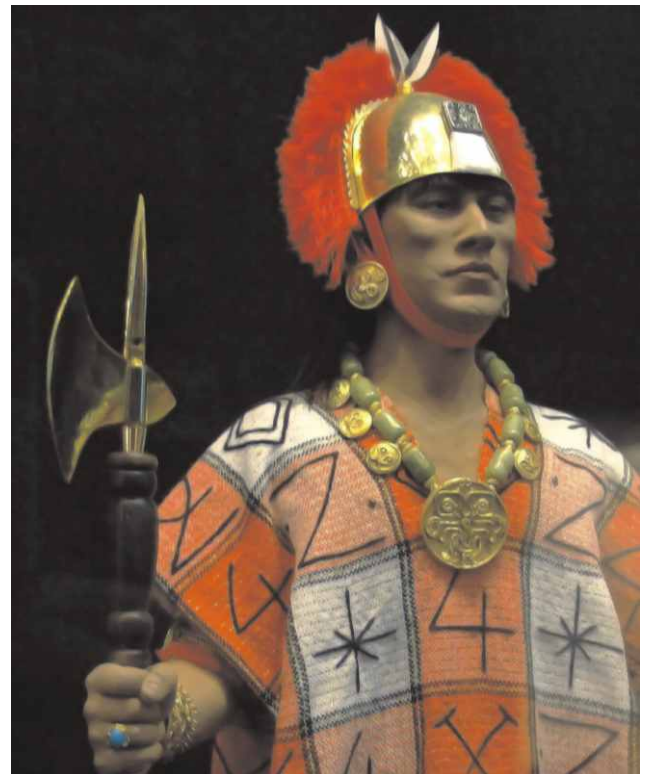
CULTURAL ACHIEVEMENTS

The Incas were unparalleled in their architectural and artistic innovations. Their buildings, characterized by trapezoidal shapes and precisely fitted stones, remain earthquake-resistant to this day. Structures like qollqas (storage warehouses) and kallankas (community halls) reflect their pragmatic yet aesthetic approach to construction. The road network and agricultural terraces were engineering marvels, showcasing their ability to adapt to diverse terrains. Terraces not only expanded arable land but also included advanced irrigation systems. Inca art, particularly in textiles, ceramics, and

metalwork, was both functional and symbolic. Textiles made from vicuña wool were reserved for the elite, while gold and silver artifacts highlighted their metallurgical prowess. Standardized designs reflected state control but allowed local communities to retain their unique styles.

THE CITY OF CUZCO

Cuzco, the "navel of the world," served as the empire's political, religious, and cultural hub. With a population of up to 150,000, it featured monumental architecture, including the Coricancha (Temple of the Sun) and the fortress of Sacsayhuaman. The city's layout, resembling a puma, symbolized strength and imperial order. Though much of its grandeur was lost to Spanish conquest, accounts from early European visitors describe its astonishing wealth and sophistication.



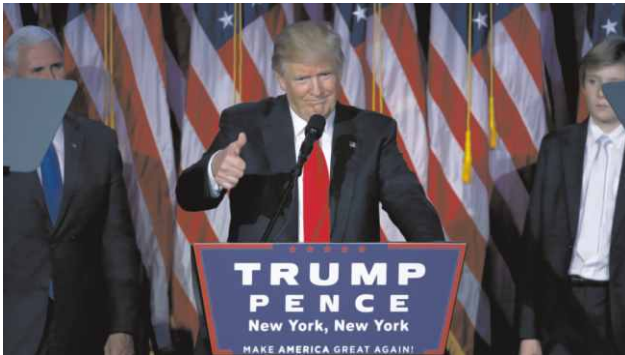
Inca Ruler Atahualpa

Continued on page 34

TRUMPS EDGE OVER HARRIS: MUSLIM VOTE MATTERS IN U.S. ELECTIONS 2024



BISMA MIRZA



Donald J. Trump, the 45th President of the United States, delivers his victory speech

Donald J. Trump, the 45th elected U.S. president with the slogan, 'America's comeback starts now!' made his comeback to The White House for a second term on November 5, 2024! A lot has been attributed to his win and to the loss of the democrats, their campaigns and their strategies with the conclusion that Trump had all the trump cards in his election campaigns unifying Americans; Economy, Immigration & border issues, overseas War, above all despite projecting the love for Israel his campaign office appealed to the Muslims & Arab American and also to the Khan followers.

For two decades, Muslim and Arab Americans have voted for Democrats, but the lack of seriousness and callous behaviors of the Biden administration's policy and the weak Harris campaign on safeguarding and protecting Muslim interests played a crucial role in the 2024 elections and the election of

LET'S UNDERSTAND HOW CRUCIAL MUSLIM VOTES WERE!

The noise in the Muslim camp has become one VOICE of Force and Resilience, which can be heard loud and clear that Muslims causes cannot be ignored, their votes have to be earned.

Donald J. Trump. Despite both the presidential candidates fighting for who loves Israel most, it was Trump's campaigners who realized early on that despite all the unifying issues, without a Muslim vote bank shift, they cannot win the elections by a significant margin. They gave Muslims a reason to vote for something rather than against it.

They cashed on Former Vice President Kamla Harris's response to whether she would have done something different from the Biden Administration, and she said nothing different. The Republicans, in their campaigns and slogans, directly and indirectly, assured the Muslim vote banks that they would serve well than the Democrats. The Muslim & Arab vote bank shift is the most significant blow to democrats, and they have buried their 20-year-old Muslim Arab loyalty over Gaza.

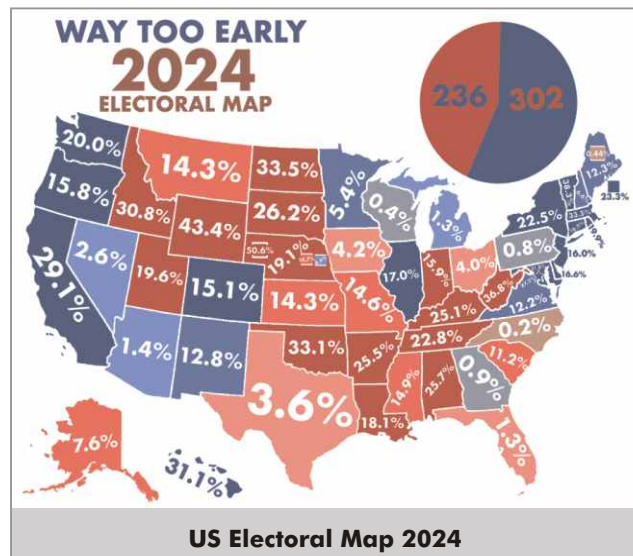
The Council on American Islamic Relations (CAIR) conducted a nationwide exit poll of more than 1,300 voters in the United States and found that significantly less than 50% of Muslim voters backed Harris. That compares

with an estimated 65% to 70% of those who reportedly voted for President Joe Biden in 2020.

James Zogby, president of the Arab American Institute, stated in an interview with Voice of America that "Gaza took a toll and caused a great deal of dissatisfaction among demographic groups in the community that I wouldn't have expected to have that degree of impact; what they saw happening in Gaza impacted them quite profoundly."

But the voter revolt among Arab and Muslim Americans in Michigan was unmistakable, especially in Dearborn, Dearborn Heights, and Hamtramck. In Dearborn, where more than 55% of the residents are of Middle Eastern descent, Trump won more than 42% of the vote, up from 30% four years ago. Harris received just 36% from a community that gave Biden nearly 70% of its vote. In nearby Hamtramck, the first majority-Muslim city in the U.S., Trump picked up 43% of the vote, up from just 13% in 2020. Harris secured just 46%, down from the 85% that Biden notched four years ago.

The lost Muslim and Arab votes hurt Harris's bid to win Michigan and its 15 electoral votes. The Muslim voting rights



United States presidential election

group estimates there are more than 200,000 registered Muslim voters in Michigan; Trump won the state by a margin of about 84,000 votes, according to the latest results.

In the final days of the campaign, Trump courted Michigan's Arab and Muslim voters, promising to end the Gaza conflict and other foreign wars, a message that resonated with many. Last week before the election campaign, he traveled to Hamtramck, where Mayor Amer Ghalib, who is of Yemeni descent, had endorsed him. Trump's outreach did not go unnoticed among the Muslim voters. Not just Muslims, Pakistani Americans have voted for Trump for Imran Khan as a Republican, leaving no stone unturned.

Donald Trump is not the messiah of American Muslims, and they are aware of that. Still, for the very first time, the noise in the Muslim camp has become one collective voice of force and resilience, which can be heard loud and clear that Muslims' causes cannot be ignored; their votes have to be earned. How beneficial newly elected President will be for American & Arab Muslims. Decent time will tell, but just like Israel has presented itself as a solid financial power, so have American Muslim & Arab voters.

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

DPRK-RUSSIA

COMPREHENSIVE STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP



DR. S BUSHRA BATOOL

As the North Korea and Russia ratify the landmark mutual defence treaty, the security concerns of many countries grow over increasing military cooperation between Moscow and Pyongyang. With the signing of the DPRK-Russia Comprehensive Strategic Partnership, the evolving relationship between the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) and Russia, has entered into a new phase since Russia's invasion of Ukraine in 2022. The this partnership encompasses military, economic, and technological cooperation, challenging US-ROK (Republic of Korea) alliance strategies and potentially intensifying regional arms races and provocations.

This partnership; as declared as an alliance by DPRK's Premier Un, was formalized during Putin's 2024 visit to Pyongyang, has

now been ratified by Russia on 6 November hence entering into force, seems to be a beneficial alliance for both Russia and DPRK. The arrangement was finalized amid months of growing security cooperation with North Korea including the reported transfer of weapons to Russia and the deployment of thousands of North Korean soldiers to support Russia's war in Ukraine.

The visit of Putin was reciprocated by DPRK premier Kim Jong Un's visit to Russia in September 2023. Whereas the country had largely remained isolated from the outside world, the DPRK's selective engagement strategy underscores its prioritization of relationships with Russia that bolster its security and economic interests amidst global tensions. Having followed isolation for decades, the DPRK appears to be gradually pursuing re-engagement, albeit highly selectively in maintaining control over granting access to the country only to "trusted" diplomatic counterparts.

Whereas for Russia, North Korea is a strategic partner a trusted friend that Russia can rely on. This is particularly true provided that North Korea was among the five nations that opposed the UN resolution in early March 2022, condemning Russia's invasion. Additionally, North Korea was one of the initial three countries to acknowledge the independence of the Donetsk People's Republic and Luhansk People's Republic, the



Vladimir Putin, President of Russia, meets with Kim Jong Un, Supreme Leader of North Korea

two regions in eastern Ukraine under Russian occupation.

Reportedly, the DPRK delivered infantry rockets and missiles to the Wagner Private Military Company, one of Russia's military arms, as of the end of 2022, and DPRK has previously been accused of covertly supplying a significant amount of artillery shells to Moscow in November 2022, in exchange for coal, oil, and other goods from Russia. Putin during his visit to DPRK also reiterated Russia's commitment to openly aid the DPRK.

Since Russia's invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, there has been a gradual yet quite evident shift in many of the world's geopolitical hotspots. The changing geopolitical realities are the motivating forces for such regional alliances in making. From a regional perspective, the DPRK-Russia treaty completes the array of agreements, the China-DPRK agreement for instance; necessary to ensure a response to US-led initiatives in Northeast Asia and the broader Indo-Pacific region, like the AUKUS and Quad initiatives.

Similarly, Republic of Korea and Japan are also opting to increase their own military spending, strengthen bilateral and trilateral relations with the United States. As former Russian Premier Dmitry Medvedev openly stated that were the DPRK and Russia to be lacking nuclear weapons, the West would have already attacked them. Furthermore, Russia has been secretly shielding and aiding the DPRK in its quest to pursue more advanced nuclear and conventional military capabilities, supporting, for instance, missile launches as well as space industry initiatives.

The profound acknowledgment of the DPRK's ambitious engagements with Russia can be a reminiscent of the 1961 Soviet-DPRK treaty of Friendship, Cooperation and Mutual



**Ammunition delivered by DPRK
(North Korea) to Russia**

Assistance. Putin's letter published in the Rodong Sinmun ahead of the visit, for instance, highlighted the 70-year robust relationship built on equality and mutual respect, thanked Pyongyang for supporting Russia's actions in Ukraine, and pledged to support the DPRK against US pressures and to build new security architecture in Eurasia with alternative trade mechanisms to resist Western restrictions. Article 4 of DPRK-Russia Comprehensive Strategic Partnership ratified recently expanded the mutual defense clause. The 5th clause encompasses long-term cooperation across military, economic, sociocultural, and political spheres, potentially resulting in substantial impacts on regional and global stability.

Article 6 polices the actions of Moscow and Pyongyang, requiring each side to avoid agreements or actions with third countries that undermine the other's sovereignty, security, or core interests. This understanding was earlier reflected with the opposition of DPRK to the UN resolution against Russia in March 2022, as mentioned earlier. Articles 8 to 14 enshrine a long-term perspective within the relationship, encompassing military cooperation (Article 8), broad economic cooperation (Articles 9 and 10), and specific

interactions in various fields (Articles 11 to 14) as objectives and possibilities.

This partnership would not only serve defence partnership, but has economic imperatives as well. In addition to supplying artillery shells to Moscow in November 2022, in exchange for coal, oil, it is reported that, as of April 2024 several North Korean oil tankers, that allegedly violated UNSC resolutions, visited a far eastern Russian port and were apparently loaded with refined petroleum products that were shipped back to North Korea.

Further, the return of the Lady K freighter in early May and the Angara cargo ship to the port of Rason in conjunction with Putin's visit indicates the continuation of trade between the two. Additionally, the undeterred arms trade and technological transfer between Moscow and Pyongyang and the looming possibility of joint naval drills will likely have a detrimental impact on regional stability giving flight to the arms race and the ensuing heightened threat perceptions.

Russia has also been offering financial support to DPRK, as indicated by the release of \$9 million from the \$30 million DPRK assets

frozen in a Russian bank. Russia has been stipulating agreements and pursuing collaborative trade initiatives with the DPRK in order to instigate long-term economic cooperation, in wake of the loss of European markets, and establish a well-trying and tested channel of sanctions' circumvention.

For South Korea, still technically at war with its northern neighbour, the cooperation with Russia by its primary foe has raised fears Pyongyang could receive advanced nuclear technology from Moscow in return for its support in Ukraine. South Korean President Yoon Suk-yeol has already warned:

"If North Korea dispatches Special Forces to the Ukraine war as part of Russia-North Korea cooperation, we will support Ukraine in stages and also review and implement measures necessary for security on the Korean Peninsula," This might prompt a faster and more diverse military build-up in the US-ROK alliance that would sense new challenges, especially in the Korean peninsula, the European continent and Asia at large, leading to an unimaginable chaos in the world.

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

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THE INCA CIVILIZATION

THE DECLINE OF THE INCA EMPIRE

Despite its grandeur, the Inca Empire's collapse was swift and devastating. The empire was already fragile due to internal conflicts when European diseases, such as smallpox, arrived ahead of the conquistadors, wiping out 65-90% of the population. The death of Wayna Qhapaq in 1528 CE triggered a civil war between his sons, Waskar and Atahualpa, further weakening the state.

In 1532 CE, Francisco Pizarro and his small force of Spanish conquistadors

exploited these vulnerabilities. With superior weaponry and strategic alliances with discontented local populations, they captured Atahualpa and dismantled the empire. By 1533 CE, the once-mighty Inca civilization had fallen.

LEGACY OF THE INCAS

Although the Inca Empire lasted barely a century at its peak, its influence endures. The Quechua language is still spoken by over 8 million people, and remnants of Inca roads, terraces, and temples continue to inspire awe. Their achievements in governance, engineering, and art serve as a testament to their ingenuity and resilience.

THE DOUBLE STANDARDS OF 'NEVER AGAIN'

WAJEEHA NAJAM



The current conflict between Israel and Palestine, especially in Gaza, needs to be examined in terms of genocide, US intervention, and the influence of international law. A historical reflection on the *Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide (1948)* offers a compelling framework to analyze the competing claims and the apparent contradictions in how genocide is addressed or overlooked in this case.

The Genocide Convention emerged from the ashes of World War II, driven by the world's collective horror at the Holocaust. Its drafters, led by figures like Raphael Lemkin, envisioned a binding commitment to prevent and punish acts intended to destroy groups based on race, religion, ethnicity, or nationality. History, however, reveals the fragility of this commitment. From Rwanda to Bosnia, and now, arguably, in Gaza, the convention's principles often strike with geopolitical realities, especially when powerful states exercise their influence to shield allies. Gaza presents a blunt test of this tension.

Under the Genocide Convention, genocide involves acts such as killing members of a group, causing serious harm, or creating conditions designed to destroy the group. Critics argue that Israeli actions in Gaza repeated military campaigns causing mass casualties, the blockade that cripples essential services, and provocative speech by



United States vetoes Gaza ceasefire resolution at Security Council

some Israeli leaders fit this definition. Military campaigns in Gaza have disproportionately affected civilians. Entire neighborhoods have been flattened, families annihilated, and essential infrastructure destroyed. Proponents of the genocide claim argue that this is not mere collateral damage but part of a systematic effort to decimate the Palestinian population in Gaza.

The blockade imposed since 2007 has led to dire living conditions, limiting access to food, medicine, and essential goods. While Israel justifies this as a security measure, critics see it as an intentional act to make life unlivable for Palestinians, fulfilling the criteria of 'deliberately imposing conditions of life calculated to bring about the group's destruction.'

Statements by certain Israeli political figures, which associate Palestinians to 'animals' or suggest erasing Gaza, echo the

rhetoric that historically precedes genocides. Such language fosters a permissive environment for violence and heightens the parallels with earlier atrocities. Yet, others strongly reject these claims, arguing that labeling the situation as genocide diminishes the term's gravitas and legal precision.

The convention is clear: genocide requires specific intent to destroy a group. Israel and its supporters argue that no such intent exists in Gaza. Instead, they assert that Israeli actions are defensive measures against Hamas, a group designated as a terrorist organization by Israel, the US, and others. Israel claims its military operations target Hamas's infrastructure, not civilians, and that civilian casualties are the tragic but inevitable consequence of urban warfare.

The use of human shields by Hamas, they argue, complicates compliance with international humanitarian law. Critics of the genocide argument contend that the devastation in Gaza, while severe, is not evidence of genocidal intent but of disproportionate force in an asymmetrical conflict. The absence of explicit state policies aimed at exterminating Palestinians, they argue, separates this from historical genocides like the Holocaust or the Rwandan genocide.

The US's unwavering support for Israel

complicates any effort to apply the Genocide Convention to Gaza. This support, manifested through vetoes in the UN Security Council and billions in military aid, raises questions about American complicity in potential violations of international law. The US has consistently vetoed resolutions critical of Israel, including calls for investigations into military actions in Gaza.

This undermines the international community's ability to determine whether genocide is occurring and creates a perception that some nations are above international law. The US has invoked the Genocide Convention in other contexts such as Darfur and Myanmar but remains silent on Gaza. This double standard weakens the global consensus on genocide prevention and exposes the selective enforcement of international law. By providing military aid without conditions, the US risks being seen as enabling actions that may constitute genocide or war crimes. Under international norms, aiding a state engaged in atrocities could render the supporter legally and morally complicit.

The history of the Genocide Convention is marred by selective enforcement. In Bosnia, despite clear evidence of genocidal acts, geopolitical concerns delayed intervention. In Rwanda, the world's inaction allowed genocide to unfold unimpeded. Gaza reflects a similar failure to act decisively when allegations of genocide arise. What separates Gaza from other historical cases is the consistent shielding of one party-Israel-from international scrutiny. While the world condemned Serbian leaders for Srebrenica and sanctioned Sudan over Darfur, similar actions against Israel are politically unthinkable due to US influence.



Israel is carrying out genocide in Gaza, causing thousands of casualties and widespread destruction of civilian infrastructure

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MIDDLE EAST IN TRANSITION:

GULF STATES' ROLE IN THE ISRAEL-HAMAS CONFLICT AND REGIONAL CHANGES

**SANAULLAH**

In a private conversation with US Secretary of State Antony Blinken, Saudi Crown Prince Mohammad bin Salman stated that he doesn't care about the Palestinian issue, according to a feature article on the conflict in Gaza published in *The Atlantic*. However, the 39-year-old prince emphasized that the Palestinian issue is important for regional stability, noting that 70% of the population, which is younger than he is, does not know much about it.

This current conflict is introducing them to the topic for the first time, which he considers significant. The Saudi authorities later deemed his remarks to be incorrect. According to the article's author, Franklin Foer, these comments were made during Blinken's visit to Al-Ula in Madina province in January of this year.

The recent escalation of the Israel-Palestine conflict began in early October 2023 when Hamas executed Operation Al-Aqsa Flood, targeting southern Israeli cities. This operation, conceived by Yahiya Sinwar, involved launching more than a hundred rockets across the Gaza Strip in a surprise attack, resulting in numerous casualties and hundreds of Israeli hostages.

One day after the October 7 attack, the Israeli cabinet formally announced Operation Swords of Iron, aimed specifically at destroying Hamas and freeing the hostages. Following directives from the Ministry of Defense, the Israeli defense forces initiated a



The widespread destruction in Gaza caused by Israeli airstrikes during the ongoing conflict

complete siege of Gaza. This marked a significant escalation in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in several decades.

It is estimated that since last October, Israel has dropped 70,000 tons of explosives on 365 square kilometers of the Gaza Strip, surpassing World War II bombings in Dresden, Hamburg, and London combined, according to Euro-Med Human Rights Monitor. Israel's retaliation has resulted in over 42,000 deaths in Gaza within a year, creating a severe humanitarian crisis. By the end of this escalation, Israel expanded its war objectives to Lebanon and entered a new phase, launching targeted offensives in Lebanon, Syria, Iran, and Yemen to dismantle the so-called axis of resistance.

Reactions from Middle Eastern governments, particularly in the Gulf, have



Israeli airstrikes on Gaza result in massive civilian casualties

varied significantly depending on their specific relationships with Israel. Nonetheless, popular sentiment among Muslim communities has largely been in support of the Palestinians. The United Arab Emirates criticized Hamas' aggression, while Saudi Arabia adopted a neutral posture, emphasizing the importance of resolving conflicts through dialogue.

Qatar, on the other hand, took a more pro-Palestinian stance and publicly blamed Israeli bombardments on Gaza, reflecting its close ties with Hamas. Qatar's foreign office is also attempting a mediation strategy between Israel and Hamas. However, it has suspended its work as a mediator in ceasefire and hostage release talks between Israel and Hamas after the US presidential election.

The reactions from the Middle East are part of a complex, multi-pronged response shaped by various events from the decade of the Arab Spring. During this era, Middle Eastern geopolitics transformed from a system organized around traditional Sunni-Shia and oil-based security architectures into a multipolar system characterized by a lack of norms, institutions, or balancing mechanisms to constrain conflicts and the use of force.

The conventional dynamics of Arab power

politics, characterized by an oil-driven economy, a focus on Israel, and an ethno-religious societal structure during the Cold War, featuring three dominant hubs in Cairo, Damascus, and Baghdad, have fractured into arenas of internal and regional conflicts. This decline stems less from a lack of capabilities than from policy choices and an inability to translate those capabilities into meaningful outcomes. The legitimacy crisis in Iraq, the instability in Libya following Gaddafi's fall, and the devastating civil war in Syria have all contributed to a fundamental transformation of the region's strategic and security frameworks.

The Syrian civil war, in particular, became a focal point for regional struggles and global conflicts. The war eroded the Assad regime's strength against rebel forces and saw jihadist organizations enter the fray. Arab Gulf monarchies provided arms and financial support to select rebel factions, leading to complicated alliances among global powers, regional states, and non-state actors.

Similarly, the pro-Assad alliance in the Syrian war consisted mainly of Assad's forces, supported by Russia, Iran, and Hezbollah. This phenomenon has characterized the region as multipolar in every sense military, economic, ideological highlighting a distinct lack of balance of power. This shift has outlined changing national security and strategic trends in the Middle East, where Gulf countries (Saudi Arab, Oman, Bahrain, UAE, Kuwait, and Qatar) have emerged as central power brokers.

In this context, the vibrant leadership of Riyadh, under Mohammad Bin Salman, has crafted a unique strategic security framework. This landscape features the prominent involvement of Asian actors, including China, India, and Israel, in the Persian Gulf, aiming to

establish a new security regime that reduces overwhelming dependency on Western military support.

The regime's priorities focus on protecting airspace and maritime zones, engaging in transnational defense collaborations, and investing in drones and surveillance technologies. To realize this evolving security regime, the Gulf region is pursuing diplomatic rapprochement with Iran, establishing a loose regional security framework that includes Israel, and fostering new political and economic ties with India and China.

However, the recent development of exclusive security ties with Israel extending its influence to the Persian Gulf, strategically expanding the regional outline to address potential threats from Iran and its proxies. The Abraham Accords, signed in September 2020, normalized relations between the UAE, Bahrain, and Israel with Saudi Arabia's facilitation.

This accord is particularly significant as it followed the near-collapse of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) after the US withdrew in May 2018. It opened a window of opportunity for the signatory Gulf countries to enhance their military capabilities, intelligence sharing, and defense infrastructures. After the US withdrew its backing from the Saudi-led military operation in Yemen, Operation Restoring Hope, in February 2021, the Gulf States sought to engage other actors in strategic partnerships.

Saudi Arabia signed a strategic cooperation deal with Russia in August 2021, followed by a rare visit from Russian President Putin to Riyadh and Abu Dhabi in December 2023. Furthermore, Saudi Arabia welcomed China's mediation efforts for reconciliation with Iran, coupled with plans for a Chinese military base in the UAE, signaling enhanced

Sino-Gulf relations. Saudi Arabia's Communications and Electronics Systems Company also inked an agreement with a Chinese tech company for joint drone design and manufacturing. The UAE signed an agreement with China to acquire a fleet of L-15 advanced jet trainers, while both Saudi Arabia and the UAE are considering purchases of French Rafale fighter aircraft.

India's strategic investments in the Middle East have deepened through a diverse regional diplomacy, exemplified by the I2U2 (India, Israel, the US, and the UAE), which has emerged in the context of the Abraham Accords. Additionally, Indo-Gulf relations have found new common ground in strategic partnerships and intelligence sharing, particularly regarding the security of economic sea routes in the Red Sea and the Persian Gulf.

Evidently, the Gulf States have a growing appetite to integrate regional and extra-regional strategic interests into their socio-economic paradigm. They are shifting from fossil fuel based economy to tourism, ethno-religious society into an open and modern society. They have also recalibrated their strategic priorities to enhance their capabilities as regional powers in a multipolar environment, characterized as a nexus for peaceful socio-economic and strategic interactions among global actors.

This determined quest for a new security landscape necessitates conflict-averse behavior in both regional and international arenas. In the current Israel-Hamas conflict, the Gulf States generally maintain a cautious and largely impartial stance.

However, significant roadblocks remain in achieving the desired security landscape. The Saudi-led Gulf States must develop a viable political roadmap to address the Palestinian

issue, potential threats from Iran-Israel skirmishes, the vulnerability of the Red Sea due to ongoing Houthi attacks, political discord between Qatar and Saudi Arabia, and the persistent influence of terrorist organizations in Iraq, Syria, and Lebanon.

Furthermore, newly elected President Donald Trump is expected to have a considerable impact on the region, as his previous administration persuaded its bizarre role in the changing security precedence in addressing long-standing conflicts. Currently, Israel is carrying out unrestricted military

operations in neighboring nations, anticipating significant backing from the forthcoming Trump administration in the long term. Meanwhile, Arab nations are hopeful that the US will play a positive role in resolving conflicts to promote their vision for modernization in the region. In both scenarios, the aspect of aiding militant groups in the area to attain their objectives becomes irrelevant.

The author is a freelance researcher and a graduate of International Relations from the University of Karachi.

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THE DOUBLE STANDARDS OF 'NEVER AGAIN'

Recent developments have further tested the efficacy of international mechanisms. The International Criminal Court (ICC) has issued arrest warrants for individuals suspected of involvement in crimes under its jurisdiction. This raises the possibility of investigations into actions in Gaza, which could bring greater clarity and accountability. However, the ICC faces immense political pressure, particularly from powerful states like the US, which has historically opposed its jurisdiction over allies such as Israel. This dynamic complicates the court's ability to act independently and effectively.

The Genocide Convention was meant to stand as a protection against impunity. Yet Gaza underscores its limitations. When powerful states use their geopolitical clout to protect allies, they erode the convention's legitimacy. For Palestinians in Gaza, this means that international law offers little protection against overwhelming force. To honor the Genocide Convention's legacy, the international community must address its

failures in Gaza. The United Nations Security Council's ability to act should not be paralyzed by a single state's veto.

Reforming this system, especially in cases involving potential genocide, is essential for restoring credibility to international law. States providing military aid to Israel must ensure compliance with international humanitarian norms. Aid should not fund actions that disproportionately harm civilians or violate international law. The ICC or another independent body should investigate allegations of genocide and war crimes in Gaza. Accountability is critical for justice and for deterring future violations.

Gaza challenges the global community to confront uncomfortable truths about its commitment to preventing genocide. While debate rages over whether Israeli actions meet the legal threshold, the inability or unwillingness of the US and international bodies to apply the Genocide Convention equitably undermines its promise. As the shadow of inaction looms, Gaza risks becoming another tragic chapter in the history of the world's failure to uphold 'never again.'

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

ISRAEL-PALESTINE WAR: A CRISIS OF HUMANITY AND HUMAN RIGHTS



YASIR ALI

The ongoing Israel-Palestine war has once again brought the decades-old conflict into sharp focus, highlighting the devastating toll on human lives and the gross violations of human rights. What began as a territorial and ideological struggle has evolved into one of the most enduring conflicts of modern history, with severe implications for regional and global peace. The current escalation has seen an alarming rise in civilian casualties, destruction of infrastructure, and allegations of war crimes, underscoring the urgent need for international intervention.

The latest outbreak of violence in Gaza and the West Bank can be traced back to a series of flashpoints that escalated tensions between Israelis and Palestinians. These include the storming of the Al-Aqsa Mosque by Israeli forces, ongoing Israeli settlement expansion in the West Bank, and increased

military raids in Palestinian territories. These events fueled widespread unrest, prompting retaliatory rocket attacks by Hamas and other militant groups. In response, Israel launched a large-scale military offensive on Gaza, citing the need to dismantle Hamas' military capabilities. However, the intensity and scale of the offensive have drawn international condemnation for disproportionately targeting civilian areas. The result is a catastrophic humanitarian crisis, with thousands of deaths, mass displacement, and the destruction of critical infrastructure.

One of the most concerning aspects of the current war is the staggering civilian death toll. According to reports from international humanitarian organizations, a significant proportion of those killed in Gaza are women, children, and the elderly. Airstrikes have targeted residential buildings, hospitals, and schools, leading to accusations of collective punishment against the Palestinian population.

The 17-year blockade of Gaza has left its residents in dire conditions, with limited access to essential supplies such as food, water, and medicine. The current war has exacerbated this crisis, with Israel imposing a "complete siege" on Gaza, cutting off electricity, fuel, and humanitarian aid. This tactic has been widely condemned as a form of collective punishment, contravening international laws on the treatment of civilians during armed



Chaos unfolds after Israeli airstrikes in Gaza, leaving destruction and despair in their wake



Relatives mourn and identify their loved ones killed in Israeli airstrikes on Gaza

conflict.

The ongoing conflict has destroyed hospitals, schools, and vital infrastructure in Gaza. The inability to access medical care due to the bombardment has led to countless preventable deaths. These actions are seen as a gross violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention, which calls for protecting civilian infrastructure during wartime. The current escalation has displaced hundreds of thousands of Palestinians, many of whom have nowhere to go due to the restricted movement within Gaza and the surrounding borders. This displacement crisis is a continuation of decades of forced evictions and demolitions in Palestinian territories, deepening the humanitarian emergency.

Moreover, Israel's settlement expansions, the annexation of Palestinian land, and policies that critics describe as apartheid have been cited as root causes of the conflict. These actions have drawn condemnation from human rights organizations such as Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch, which accuse Israel of systemic oppression and violation of Palestinian rights.

The Israeli military's actions in Gaza, often resulting in significant civilian casualties and widespread destruction, have drawn

widespread criticism as violations of international human rights laws and humanitarian principles. In response to these attacks, Hamas has launched thousands of rockets into Israeli territory. While these actions are framed as acts of retaliation, they reflect the desperation and resistance of a population subjected to ongoing occupation and blockades.

Hamas' strategy of operating within densely populated areas is a consequence of the realities in Gaza, where years of Israeli-imposed restrictions have left little room for maneuver or safety. To many Palestinians, Hamas represents a steadfast opposition to Israeli oppression, embodying a resistance to decades of systemic marginalization and violence. This context underscores the complexity of the conflict, where acts of resistance are deeply rooted in the struggle against occupation and collective punishment.

The scale of the humanitarian crisis unfolding in Gaza is unprecedented. Hospitals are overwhelmed with casualties, operating with dwindling medical supplies and no electricity. The United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) has warned of a total collapse of humanitarian services, with



Martyrs' families wait anxiously for their loved ones outside a hospital

displaced families living in overcrowded shelters without access to food, clean water, or sanitation. The psychological toll on Palestinians, with entire generations growing up in the shadow of war and trauma. Children in Gaza, in particular, bear the brunt of the conflict, with many losing their homes, families, and futures.

The response of the international community to the current Israel-Palestine war has been divided. While countries like the United States have reaffirmed their support for Israel's right to self-defense, others, including some European states and Turkey, Iran, and Qatar, have condemned Israel's actions as war crimes. The United Nations has called for immediate ceasefires and humanitarian corridors, but efforts to broker peace have been unsuccessful.

The Arab world remains deeply divided, with some nations normalizing relations with Israel under the Abraham Accords while others call for renewed solidarity with Palestine. This fragmentation has weakened the collective voice of the Muslim world, allowing the conflict to persist without meaningful resolution.

The first step towards de-escalation is an immediate and unconditional ceasefire, which would allow for the delivery of humanitarian aid and the evacuation of injured civilians. A return to peace negotiations is essential to addressing the underlying causes of the conflict. These talks must involve key stakeholders, including representatives of Israel and Palestine, and be mediated by impartial international actors. The lifting of the Gaza blockade is crucial to improving living conditions for Palestinians and fostering an environment conducive to long-term peace.

Israelis must be held accountable for violations of international law as per the

International Law and its decisions. Independent investigations should be conducted to ensure justice for victims. Based on pre-1967 borders, an independent solution remains the most viable path to lasting peace. International efforts must focus on creating a sovereign Palestinian state alongside Israel, ensuring security and dignity for both peoples.

The current Israel-Palestine war is a stark reminder of the fragility of peace in one of the world's most volatile regions. The gross violations of human rights, including the targeting of civilians and the destruction of critical infrastructure, underscore the urgent need for global action. While the road to peace is fraught with challenges, a just and equitable resolution is essential not only for the people of Israel and Palestine but for the stability of the entire region. It is the moral responsibility of the international community to act decisively, prioritizing humanity over geopolitics and ensuring that future generations are spared the horrors of war.

The author is a Research Officer at Shaheed Muhtarma Benazir Bhutto Chair and Teaching Associate at the Department of IR, University of Karachi.



Israeli troops detain a Palestinian civilian during escalating tensions in Gaza, Palestine

NAVIGATING A MULTIPOLAR WORLD: THE RISE OF NEW ALLIANCES AND THE WANING U.S. HEGEMONY



KANWAR KHALID ALI KHAN

As we stand on the threshold of a new world order, the certainties of the past are fading, replaced by bold realignments and a power struggle between established major powers and emerging players. For much of the 20th century, the United States enjoyed unchallenged supremacy, steering global politics, economics, and security. But today, that dominance faces new threats as a host of emerging powers, led by BRICS nations and strategic alliances, step into the ring, ready to shape the future.

THE DECLINE OF AMERICAN DOMINANCE

For decades, American influence was almost a given. From the Marshall Plan's support of post-war Europe to the imposition of the dollar as the global reserve currency, the U.S. constructed a world in which its values, economy, and military power held uncontested sway. But now, cracks in that system are undeniable. Internally, the U.S. grapples with intense political polarization, economic pressures, and the weight of costly military interventions in Iraq, Afghanistan, and beyond.

Externally, its influence is waning as it contends with mounting debt and a public weariness toward international engagement. Allies are beginning to hedge their bets, and adversaries are gaining ground. As the balance tips, we see the beginnings of a multipolar world where the U.S. is no



The United States remains the most influential player in global politics

longer the lone conductor of the global orchestra.

Around the world, this decline is more than a mere backdrop; it is a seismic shift that challenges the established order, a change as momentous as the fall of past empires. For nations like Pakistan, this emerging order presents both risks and opportunities. Where once we were compelled to align with the U.S., we now glimpse the possibility of a more balanced path, choosing our alliances based not on dependency but on mutual benefit and shared strategic interests.

THE EMERGENCE OF BRICS AS A GLOBAL POWER BLOC

One of the most telling signs of a multipolar world is the rise of BRICS. Comprising Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa, BRICS has transformed from a loose economic grouping into a formidable

alliance, united in its challenge to the U.S.-centric world order. BRICS nations, representing a significant portion of the world's population and GDP, have begun challenging not just the dollar's dominance but also the systems, norms, and policies imposed by Western powers.

The BRICS coalition seeks to break free from the petrodollar, a system established in the 1970s that requires oil sales to be conducted in U.S. dollars. This petrodollar arrangement has long been a cornerstone of American power, reinforcing demand for the dollar and maintaining its status as the global reserve currency.

But BRICS, led by economic giants like China and resource-rich Russia, is challenging that status quo. China and Russia, in particular, have taken bold steps, promoting their currencies for international trade and establishing frameworks that bypass the dollar entirely. These moves are not just about currency; they represent a shift in allegiance, a realignment that cuts across economic, strategic, and cultural lines.

For countries like Pakistan, BRICS offers a tantalizing glimpse of an alternative escape from the dollar's grip, a chance for economic sovereignty, and the promise of partnerships that aren't bound by historical ties or dependencies. In this new landscape, Pakistan stands poised to redefine its economic ties, embracing new opportunities in a world where the U.S. no longer holds all the cards.

THE SHADOW OF A NEW COLD WAR

Within this emerging multipolar landscape, a new Cold War is brewing, but this one is not confined to nuclear arsenals or ideological battles. Instead, it spans a vast spectrum of economic rivalry, technological competition, and regional alliances. At the center of this tension is China's nation that has

grown from a modest economy into a global powerhouse, challenging the U.S. on fronts that include trade, technology, and even space exploration.

The U.S., determined to retain its dominant position, has responded aggressively, instituting tariffs, imposing sanctions on Chinese tech companies, and flexing its military muscle in the South China Sea. But China, unfazed, has deepened its alliances, particularly with Russia, to counterbalance American influence. Together, China and Russia are pushing for a new kind of order, one that limits Western dominance and empowers regional blocs. For Pakistan, this U.S.-China rivalry poses a unique challenge. Our geographical position places us directly in the crosshairs of these competing powers. The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), part of China's determined Belt and Road Initiative, offers Pakistan significant infrastructure investment, while our historical ties with the U.S. add a layer of complexity. In this multipolar world, Pakistan must balance these relationships carefully, steering clear of the pitfalls of dependency while securing its economic and strategic interests.

A PATH FORWARD: EMBRACING A BALANCED FOREIGN POLICY

As the tectonic plates of global power shift, Pakistan faces a rare opportunity to carve out



Chinese President Xi Jinping and Russian President Vladimir Putin during the BRICS 2024 Summit

an independent foreign policy that serves its interests rather than the agendas of foreign powers. While the BRICS alliance and the China-Pakistan partnership offer promising avenues, the road ahead requires nuance, wisdom, and the ability to engage with both East and West.

The allure of BRICS lies in its promise of a diversified economy, an economy that isn't subject to the whims of Western sanctions or currency fluctuations. However, such a path is not without its own set of challenges. The relationships within BRICS are complex, and each member brings its own set of ambitions and limitations. Pakistan, therefore, must approach BRICS not as a replacement for the U.S. alliance but as a complementary avenue a way to expand its economic horizons while maintaining a balanced approach in its foreign policy.

REGIONAL DYNAMICS: NAVIGATING ALLIANCES IN THE ISLAMIC WORLD

In addition to its relationships with the U.S. and China, Pakistan has a significant role to play within the broader Islamic world. As the only nuclear-armed Islamic state, Pakistan's influence extends beyond its borders, making it a key player in the Middle East and South Asia. Our relationships with Gulf nations, Turkey, and other Islamic countries offer strategic advantages that can be leveraged in a multipolar world.

Saudi Arabia and the UAE, once deeply aligned with U.S. interests, have begun exploring partnerships with China and Russia, signaling a shift in their foreign policies. This new alignment presents Pakistan with opportunities to foster deeper ties with these countries, particularly in areas like energy, trade, and defense. By strengthening these alliances, Pakistan can bolster its position as a

bridge between East and West, fostering stability and mutual benefit across the region.

A VISION FOR THE FUTURE: ASSERTING PAKISTAN'S PLACE IN THE MULTIPOLAR WORLD

In this rapidly changing global order, Pakistan has a choice: to remain a pawn in the games of major powers or to step forward as an independent player. The multipolar world offers unprecedented opportunities for nations that are willing to redefine their alliances and assert their sovereignty. For Pakistan, this means embracing an agile foreign policy, one that balances relationships with both traditional allies and emerging partners.

Our journey forward must be guided by a clear vision, a vision that prioritizes economic growth, regional stability, and national sovereignty. By leveraging partnerships with BRICS, deepening ties within the Islamic world, and maintaining a cautious relationship with the U.S., Pakistan can secure a future that is both prosperous and secure. This is not merely a diplomatic balancing act; it is a call for Pakistan to become a proactive architect of its destiny.

In this multipolar world, where old alliances are fading and new ones are forming, Pakistan has the potential to emerge as a regional leader, a country that commands respect not through dependency but through the strength of its vision and the resilience of its people. As we navigate the complexities of this new global landscape, let us remember that Pakistan's true power lies not in alliances alone but in its capacity to stand firm, engage wisely, and pursue a path that aligns with our deepest values and aspirations. The future beckons, and with it comes the chance to reshape not only our alliances but our destiny.

The author is a freelance writer and a retired government officer.

COP29 ENDS WITH \$300BN A YEAR DEAL BUT IS IT ENOUGH?

5 KEY TAKEAWAYS FROM BAKU

FROM THE FINAL DEAL TO WHAT HAPPENS NEXT, HERE'S WHAT YOU MIGHT HAVE MISSED AT COP29

RUTH WRIGHT

In the early hours of Sunday morning it was finally agreed that rich countries will pay developing countries \$300 billion a year by 2035 to help them cope with the effects of the climate crisis. Earlier in the climate talks, held in Azerbaijan, it had been agreed that the most vulnerable countries need \$1.3 trillion a year to adapt to and combat the consequences of climate change. So the final figure has been criticised by many. India accused the COP presidency of agreeing the "paltry sum" without hearing the country's opposition to it. Nigeria called the figure a "joke". And Malawi said that for the least developed countries it was "not ambitious". Others say that any deal is better than no deal, considering it had looked like negotiations could collapse after developing countries walked out of the room when \$300bn was proposed, saying their "needs are known" and "they are being ignored".

1. COP29 DEAL: NOW COUNTRIES NEED TO PAY UP

Experts have already come out and said that the COP deal means nothing if countries don't stump up the cash. The deal states that the \$300 billion will come from "all public and private sources". Under a framework established by the UN in 1992, 23 developed countries - plus the European Union - who are historically responsible for the most planet-heating emissions are obliged to contribute to climate finance.

Alongside governments there is an expectation that international mega-banks, like the World Bank, will help foot the bill. And it means, hopefully, that companies and private investors will follow suit on channelling cash toward climate action. As Simon Stiell, executive secretary of UN Climate Change, put it: "This new finance goal is an insurance policy for humanity, amid worsening climate impacts hitting every country. But like any insurance policy it only works if premiums are paid in full, and on time. Promises must be kept, to protect billions of lives."

2. WHAT WILL THE COP29 CLIMATE FINANCE BE USED FOR?

Developing countries are most and earliest impacted by climate change, yet they are the least well-equipped to deal with it. The money they'll (hopefully) receive is likely to be used for two main buckets: preparing for the impacts of climate change and transitioning away from emissions-producing fossil fuels. Preparation, or adaptation as it is often called, means projects like building homes and roads that are more resilient in the face of extreme weather such as flooding. Or building new dams for when drought hits, such as that which has ravaged southern Africa for most of this year. This part is also about making critical industries like farming more sustainable. Then to produce less emissions they'll spend the money on installing solar and

wind power and other renewables, as well as making industries less polluting. While it's widely acknowledged that transitioning energy production away from fossil fuels is critical, it's very difficult for developing countries to find the money to do so.

3. A NEW CARBON MARKET: 'NOT SOME BIT OF ARCAINE UN BUREAUCRACY'

Although this was dubbed the 'finance COP', there were other issues on the table. Among these was a new set of rules that was agreed on a global carbon market, a deal that has been nearly a decade in the making. It establishes a global market for countries to buy and sell carbon credits. As Simon Stiell, UN Climate Change Executive Secretary, put it carbon markets are "not some bit of arcane UN bureaucracy." Instead they "help countries implement their climate plans faster and cheaper, driving down emissions."

Carbon credits are created through projects such as planting trees or building wind farms in a poorer country that receive one credit for every metric ton in emissions that they reduce or suck out of the atmosphere. Countries and companies can then buy those credits to help reach their climate goals. The newly adopted rules create two different types of markets. The first known as Article 6.2 regulates bilateral carbon trading between countries, while Article 6.4 creates a global crediting mechanism for countries to sell emissions reductions. As Stiell said, "We are a long way from halving emissions this decade, but wins on carbon markets here at COP29 will help us get back in that race."

4. NEXT YEAR'S NDCS WILL BE CRITICAL

By February 2025 all countries have to submit new plans for how they will reduce their emissions and adapt to the effects of climate change, known as Nationally Determined



A demonstrator displays hands that reads "pay up" during a protest for climate finance at the COP29 UN Climate Summit

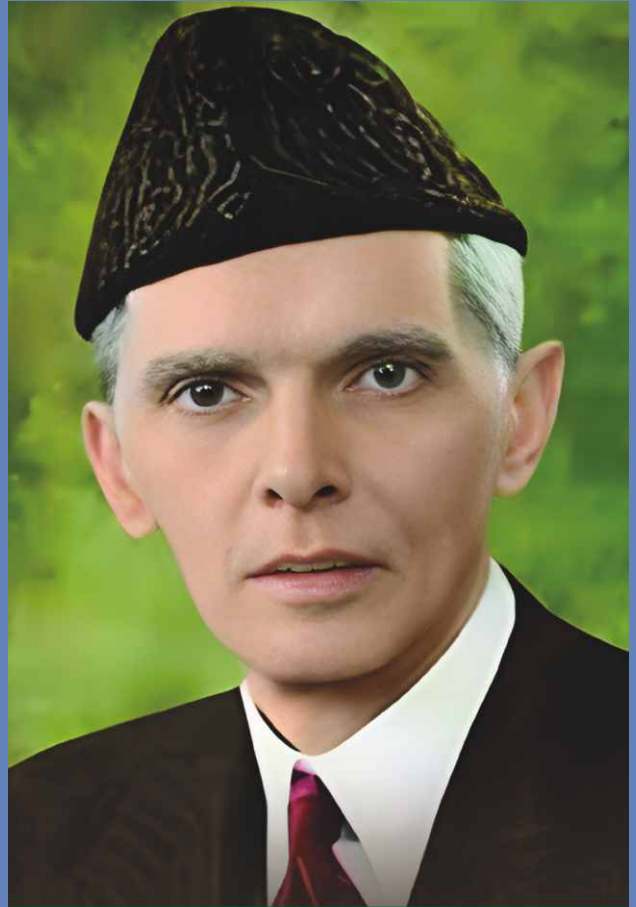
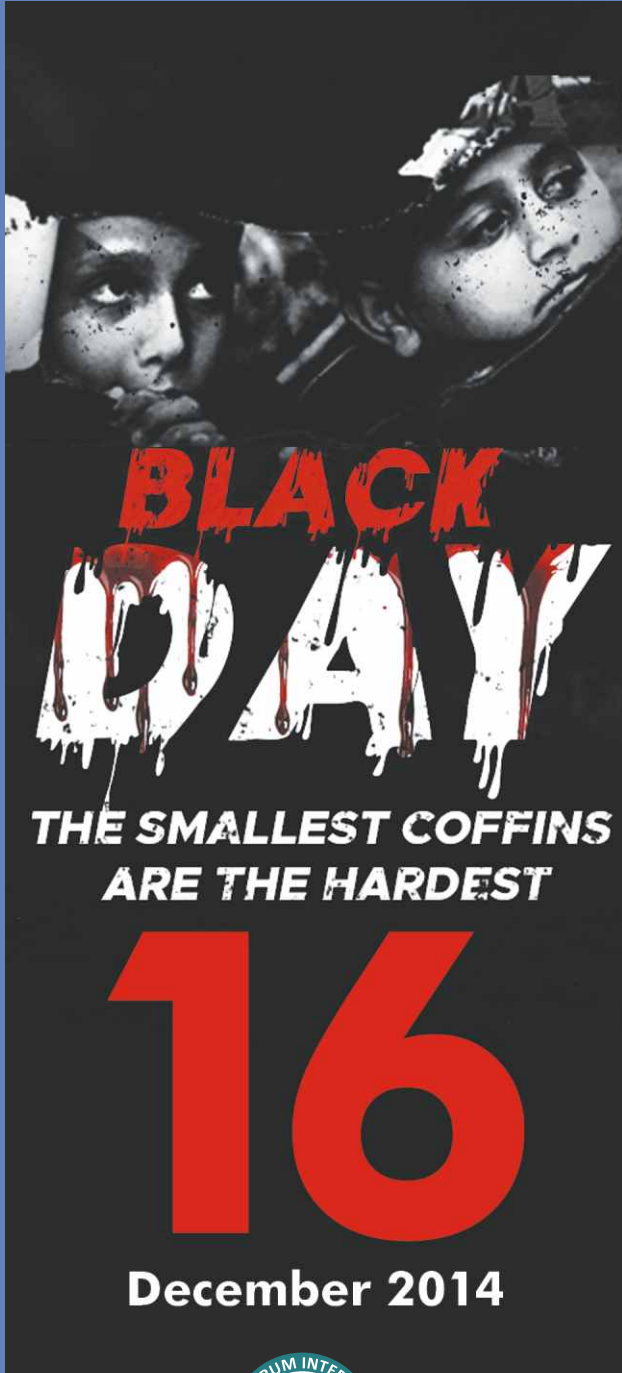
Contributions (NDCs). These will be the next big marker after COP of how we're doing on the path to net zero. Some countries submitted their plans during COP29, with the UK, Brazil and the UAE being praised for their ambitious targets.

UN Secretary-General António Guterres, a strong advocate for rapid climate action, called on the G20 countries to lead with their plans. He said everyone's NDCs must: "cover all emissions and the whole economy, accelerate fossil fuel phase out, and contribute to the energy transition goals agreed at COP28 seizing the benefits of cheap, clean renewables. The end of the fossil fuel age is an economic inevitability. New national plans must accelerate the shift, and help to ensure it comes with justice."

5. COP30 IN BELEM WILL BE THE 'COP OF COPS' SAYS BRAZIL

The next COP will be a year from now in Belem, Brazil. What can we expect? The country's climate envoy, Ana Toni, told AFP that they will not "shy away" from calling for "a just transition on stopping fossil fuels". To the dismay of many campaigners, COP30 will be the third consecutive year the climate talks have been held in a country that plans to expand domestic production of fossil fuels. Marina Silva, the Brazilian minister of the environment and climate change, told COP29 that the talks will be the "COP of COPs" with "no more time to lose". "At COP30, our objective will be to do what is needed to keep 1.5C in reach" she said.

Courtesy: Euronews.com.



25 DECEMBER

**Quaid-e-Azam
Day**

Paying tribute to Quaid-e-Azam
Muhammad Ali Jinnah
the founder of Pakistan



Interaction



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RABITA FORUM INTERNATIONAL

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

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

www.rfipakistan.com

YouTube Channel

<http://www.youtube.com/@rabitaforuminternational>