

A MONTHLY JOURNAL ON NATIONAL, INTERNATIONAL POLITICS & OTHERS

# Interaction

ISSUE-10

VOLUME-16

MC-1326

Rs.200/-

189

ABC CERTIFIED

MAY 2023

**ENABLING  
BALOCHISTAN'S  
PSYCHO-SOCIAL  
INTEGRATION  
WITH  
PAKISTAN**

**NAZ  
DANA**

ASSISTANT  
RESEARCH  
FELLOW  
(BTTN).



**BOOK REVIEW**  
**DAWN C.  
MURPHY,  
CHINA'S  
RISE IN THE  
GLOBAL SOUTH**

**TARIQUE  
AHMED  
ABRO**

RESEARCH  
OFFICER  
AT CISS



**BOOK REVIEW**  
**GLOBAL  
PAKISTAN:  
PAKISTAN'S  
ROLE IN THE  
INTERNATIONAL  
SYSTEM**

**SAFIA  
MALIK**

RESEARCH  
OFFICER  
AT CISS



**BOOK REVIEW**  
**ASIAN  
GEOPOLITICS  
AND  
THE US - CHINA  
RIVALRY**

**IRAJ  
ABID**

RESEARCH  
OFFICER  
AT CISS



**BOOK REVIEW**  
**JACOB HELBERG**  
**THE WIRES OF  
WAR:  
TECHNOLOGY AND  
GLOBAL STRUGGLE  
FOR POWER**

**AREESHA  
ANWAR**

RESEARCH  
OFFICER  
AT CISS

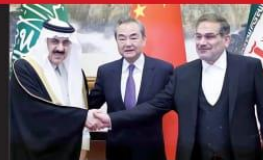


**BTTN RESEARCH PAPER**

## CHAGI NUCLEAR TEST NO HUMAN HEALTH ISSUE AND NO ENVIRONMENT AFFECT



**UKRAINE WAR AND  
UKRAINE GRAIN**



**HOW WILL CHINA-BROKERED  
IRAN-SAUDI PEACE DEAL  
IMPACT GULF, PAKISTAN**



**THE WEST HAS BEEN  
PLANNING TO CRUSH CHINA  
FOR A VERY LONG TIME**



**INDIA ARMS HINDU MILITIAS  
TO COMBAT  
KASHMIRI FIGHTERS**



[www.monthlyinteraction.com](http://www.monthlyinteraction.com)



<https://www.facebook.com/MonthlyInteraction>



<https://twitter.com/Mthinteraction>

# INTERACTION

May 2023

A Monthly Journal on National, International Politics & others

**CHIEF EDITOR:**  
Nusrat Mirza

**EDITOR:**  
Mirza Kashif Baig

**MANAGING EDITOR:**  
Yusuf Rahi

**PRODUCTION MANAGER**  
M. H. Khan

• **LAYOUT DESIGN:** •  
Muhammad Zia Malik

• **CONTRIBUTORS:**

Gen. (R) Mirza Aslam Baig  
Nisar Ul Haq Usmani  
Bismah Mirza

• **BUREAU CHIEF &  
DIRECTOR MARKETING:**

**Islamabad:**  
Prof. Dr. M. Attaullah Khan  
**Karachi:**  
Nayyar Hussain

• **REPRESENTATIVES:**

**UK (London)**  
Tahir Shah  
**Bangladesh**  
Abdul Rahim Khan

*Printed by:*

**NUSRAT MIRZA**

From Ibn-e-Hasan Printing Press, Hockey Club of Pakistan,  
Karachi.

*Published from:*

78/C, 11th Commercial Street, Phase-II, DHA., Karachi.

**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 : [monthlyinteractionpk@gmail.com](mailto:monthlyinteractionpk@gmail.com)  
[www.monthlyinteraction.com](http://www.monthlyinteraction.com)

**One Copy Rs.150/-  
One Year Rs.1700/-**

## Contents

	Editorial	2
News in brief		3
How will China-brokered Iran-Saudi peace deal impact Gulf, Pakistan	Naeem Ahmed	11
Dismantling of the edifice of our democracy		14
Vietnam - Lessons for Pakistan	Saeed A. Malik	15
China's railroad to world domination	Caitlin Mcfall	17
First batch of Pakistanis repatriated from war-torn Sudan		18
Bilawal's plan to attend SCO meeting intact	Iftikhar A. Khan	19
Chagi nuclear test no human health issue and no environment affect enabling Balochistan's psycho - social integration with Pakistan	BTTN Research Paper Naz Dana	21 24
Book review	Tarique Ahmad Abro	25
Book review	Safia Malik	26
Book review	Iraj Abid	27
Book review	Areesha Anwer	31
The west has been planning to crush China for a very long time	Caitlin Johnstone	37
China says it always stands on 'side of peace' over Ukraine crisis		39
Ukraine: Stalemate in an attritional war?	M K Bhadrakumar	41
Russian strikes battered cities across Ukraine on Friday, killing 25		43
The greatest threat to the USA in the world today	Chua Chin Leng	45
'Bjp will never conquer Kerala'	Shobha Warriar	46
India arms Hindu militias to combat Kashmiri fighters		47

## **Editorial**

### **Pakistan Political Crisis Deepens**

A severe political crisis has gripped Pakistan ever since the ouster of the PTI government led by former Prime Minister Imran Khan through a vote of no confidence. This crisis has led to extreme uncertainty in the country which has crippled the economy. According to various statistics, the PDM government has lost the general public's confidence, and Mr. Imran Khan's popularity is growing daily. The most troubling outcome of this turmoil is the public's distrust in the government fueled by false media propaganda. Severe police brutality to curb protests, against the current government, has caused anger and fear in the people of Pakistan. Ever since this crisis started last year there has been a severe brain drain. Most of the top minds of Pakistan have left the country as they don't feel secure in the country of their birth. The economic situation in Pakistan has gone from bad to worst and Pakistan as many industries have shut down due to the increase in the cost of production and lack of raw materials, this has led to a surge in the unemployment rate. Hyperinflation has drastically increased the cost of living; food prices are increasing on a weekly basis and prices of necessities have gone beyond the reach of the ordinary Pakistani. High inflation coupled with unemployment has resulted in a rise in crime, adding to the troubles of the working class. The government, it seems, is concerned with everything and anything except doing what is expected of them. Pakistan is apparently headed towards anarchy as there seems to be an absolute absence of governance. In addition to this, the country's already scarce resources are being squandered to curb any form of opposition with extreme force. Law enforcement agencies have resorted to criminal methods to silence all forms of criticism in the name of restoring the writ of the state. Even the slightest criticism is perceived as being backed by the opposition and is being brutally squashed. The unlawful arrests of civilians and media personnel and the inhumane treatment during custody are nothing short of a violation of basic human rights. The judiciary has also been dragged into this political mess and is being coerced to gain favorable judgments. This measure is extremely dangerous as one by one all institutions of Pakistan are being weakened. The Constitution of Pakistan has apparently been violated and that too by the political forces. The ruling coalition needs to understand that this will not yield any good results for people of Pakistan and even for them. The politician's especially ruling coalition criticism of the military institution's interference will no longer remain justified as they themselves are willing to violate the constitution of Pakistan for their personal gain. Political forces need to understand that they are about to cross a line from where there will be no return. All these extreme measures that are being taken will serve as a precedent to be used against them at the right time. The constitution of Pakistan serves to protect the country from complete anarchy and to safeguard the democratic structure of Pakistan. If Pakistan's political forces are the ones breaking this constitution, then it will be tantamount to digging their own grave and serve to pave the path for non-democratic forces to unwillingly take over.

---

## **Summarized News & Articles**

### **PAKISTANI EX-PRIME MINISTER IMRAN KHAN SETS OUT ECONOMIC RESCUE PLAN AT RALLY**

Former Pakistani Prime Minister Imran Khan led a rally in the eastern city of Lahore in the early hours of Sunday, setting out his ideas to revive the country's spiraling economy and accusing the government of lacking a rescue plan. The International Monetary Fund has delayed a \$6 billion bailout over Pakistan's failure to meet the terms of a 2019 deal. The government blames that failure on Khan, now the opposition leader. Khan spoke to thousands of party supporters on a damp night in Lahore from a bulletproof box perched atop a shipping container. In his address, at the Minar-e-Pakistan landmark, the former cricketer railed against the government and challenged it to come forward with a rescue plan to bring the country out of its many economic difficulties. "We need surgery to correct the governance system of this country, for which ensuring rule of law is a must," he said. "To reduce the current account deficit, we have to encourage our overseas Pakistanis to invest in the country." Khan's plan focuses on boosting revenue through foreign exchange and investment, widening the tax network, and anti-money laundering initiatives. He also outlined steps to promote agriculture, tourism, a housing finance scheme, a health card program, and small- and medium-sized industries. Khan said direct foreign investments from Pakistanis overseas would help the country to avoid going cap in hand to the IMF for help. He told the crowds, who waited hours to hear him speak, that the net worth of 18,000 Pakistani-Americans in the US is \$200 billion and the net worth of the top 10 Pakistani-American businessmen is \$25 billion. "And (still) we are bowing before the IMF to get a \$6 billion deal." He said the main problems plaguing Pakistan's economy are foreign debt, a current account deficit, reduced exports, pressure on the rupee and tax evasion. Local authorities warned Khan not to hold a public rally in view of a possible terrorist attack. The security alert said militants from a banned outfit had reached Lahore and could target the public gathering or the security personnel deployed there. The 70-year-old politician, who was ousted as prime minister in a no-confidence motion last April and is campaigning for early elections, blames the government for being part of a "regime change operation" against him. The government denies the allegation. Prime Minister Shahbaz Sharif is struggling to maintain economic and political stability amid dwindling foreign exchange reserves and the aftermath of last summer's record-breaking floods, which killed 1,739 people and destroyed millions of homes. The floods caused more than \$30 billion in damages. He is also dealing with militant violence, which has increased since November when the Pakistani Taliban ended a cease-fire with government forces. Sharif criticized Khan in a tweet Sunday, saying he has "always been about grandstanding and rhetoric" and that Pakistan's current political, governance, and economic challenges have their roots in his failed policies.

---

## **REMEMBERING YOU IN HEAVEN**

I want to remember your face so that when I meet you in heaven, I can recognize you and thank you once again." When Indian billionaire Ratanji Tata was asked

by the radio presenter in a telephone interview: "Sir, what do you remember when you got the happiest in life"? Ratanji Tata said: "I have gone through four stages of happiness in life, and I finally understood the meaning of true happiness." The first stage was to accumulate wealth and resources. But at this stage I didn't get the happiness I wanted. Then came the second stage of collecting valuables and items. But I realized that the effect of this thing is also temporary and the luster of precious things does not last long. Then came the third phase of getting a big project. That was when I had 95% of the diesel supply in India and Africa. I was also the owner of the largest steel factory in India and Asia. But even here I did not get the happiness that I had imagined. The fourth step was when a friend of mine asked me to buy a wheelchair for some disabled children. About 200 children. At the behest of a friend, I immediately bought a wheelchair. But the friend insisted that I go with him and hand over the wheelchairs to the children. I got ready and went with him. There I gave these children this wheel chair with my own hands. I saw a strange glow of happiness on the faces of these children. I saw them all sitting in wheelchairs, walking and having fun. It was as if they had reached a picnic spot, where they were sharing a winning gift. I felt real happiness inside me. When I decided to leave, one of the kids grabbed my leg. I tried to slowly release my legs, but the child looked at my face and held my legs tight. I leaned over and asked the child: "do you need anything else?" The answer this kid gave me not only shocked me but also completely changed my outlook towards life. This child said: "I want to remember your face so that when I meet you in heaven, I can recognize you and thank you once again."

---

### **UNITED STATES INFLUENCE OVER SA**

The collapse of U.S. influence over Saudi Arabia and the Kingdom's new alliances with China and Iran are painful emblems of the abject failure of the Neocon strategy of maintaining U.S. global hegemony with aggressive projections of military power. China has displaced the American Empire by deftly projecting, instead, economic power. Over the past decade, our country has spent trillions bombing roads, ports, bridges, and airports. China spent the equivalent building the same across the development world. The Ukraine war is the final collapse of the Neocon's short-lived "American Century." The Neocon projects in Iraq and Ukraine have cost \$8.1 trillion, hollowed out our middle class, made a laughingstock of U.S. military power and moral authority, pushed China and Russia into an invincible alliance, destroyed the dollar as the global currency, cost millions of lives and done nothing to advance democracy or win friendships or influence.

---

### **HARVARD UNIVERSITY OFFERING FREE ONLINE COURSES FOR PAKISTANI STUDENTS**

By Amna Malik

Harvard University's free online courses are the best opportunity for students, teachers, professors, mid-career professionals, IT experts, doctors, or any individual

from all over the world to study the Harvard courses for free. This splendid free Harvard program is an outstanding chance for individuals to get a mark of Harvard in their CVs and to make their credentials more appealing and worthy for any existing or upcoming career opportunity. Free Harvard Online courses are designed to push the boundaries of human knowledge and to promote the best level of education for all Pakistani students. The free online courses Pakistani students at Harvard University are diverse when it comes to the fields these courses cover. These short online courses encompass almost every field and every genre of human knowledge whether it is science, humanities, literature, history, or any known subject. So there are high chances for everyone to get a break to study from Harvard for free as one can easily grab the subject of one's own interest from these Harvard short courses. It has been the biggest achievement of Harvard University since its inception and it has remained sincerely devoted to enhancing excellence in teaching, learning, and research. The Harvard faculty's online free lectures are available to individuals worldwide with the collaboration of Edex to make a difference in learning abilities globally. Harvard was established in 1636 and is the oldest higher education institute in the US comprising more than 360,000 Harvard alumni in the world. It has always been a dream for every student to become part of this prestigious institute, however, there are many aspects like financial or territorial which become hindrances in students' quest to come to Harvard for study. These online free courses opportunity presents themselves for the desiring students as a dream come true. Harvard's free online courses open new horizons and vistas of knowledge for the students. Fortunately, no IELTS/TOEFL or any other language proficiency certificate is required for these Harvard University courses. The top-class professors and mentors from Harvard University give lectures in these online free courses. Moreover, the process of getting admission is so simple and so easy that everyone can have access to these Harvard courses without any difficulty. Furthermore, the Harvard courses come up with an opportunity to get a verified course completion certificate from the university in compliance with the student's own choice. In addition to the variety of courses, it has also been made accessible to the students in alignment with their own time of choice. So, this kind of free study opportunity in the USA is not a chance to be missed at any cost.

---

### **LATEST REVELATIONS ABOUT THE PULWAMA ATTACK VINDICATE PAKISTAN**

The latest revelations made by Mr. Satya Pal Malik, the so-called former Governor of the Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK), have once again vindicated Pakistan's stance on the Pulwama Attack of February 2019. His disclosures demonstrate how the Indian leadership has habitually used the bogey of terrorism from Pakistan to advance its sham victimhood narrative and the Hindutva agenda, clearly for domestic political gains. We hope that the international community would take cognizance of the latest revelations and see through India's propaganda campaign against Pakistan driven by selfish political

considerations and based on lies and deceit. India must answer the questions raised in the latest revelations. It is time India be held accountable for the actions that imperiled regional peace in the aftermath of Pulwama attack. Pakistan, for its part, will continue to counter India's false narrative, and act firmly and responsibly in the face of different provocations.

---

## **GOVERNMENT TO DIVERT CHEAP GAS FROM POWER PLANTS TO HOMES**

Syed Irfan Raza

The government has decided to stop the supply of cheap natural gas to power producers who are selling power to the national grid at exorbitant rates, Minister of State for Petroleum Musadik Malik said on Friday. Speaking at a press conference, he said the Cabinet Committee on Energy had decided to end 'exploitation' by some power companies by "stopping supply to the rich and providing cheap gas to the public at large". The policy would encourage competition among companies, which would lead to competitive prices for consumers, he said. "Landlords and building owners would also no longer be able to exploit tenants by forcing them to pay high energy bills for privately supplied energy resources," the minister added. Mr Malik also revealed that Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif had announced the establishment of a refinery that would cost between \$10 and \$14 billion. The minister was hopeful that the new refinery would create jobs and reduce Pakistan's dependence on imported fuel. It will also help boost the country's economy by increasing energy production and reduce the cost of production for industries, he said Mr Malik said the government was actively working on a new energy policy that would focus on creating energy from LPG, LNG, and solar resources.

---

## **PEACE WITH NEIGHBOURS**

Separately, addressing the passing-out parade of cadets at the PAF Academy Asghar Khan in Risalpur, PM Shehbaz said that Pakistan was a peace-loving nation and wished to maintain friendly ties with all countries, especially its neighbours. "However, our desire for peace must not be misunderstood as weakness," he said, adding that there could be no peace in South Asia without a just and fair settlement of the Jammu and Kashmir dispute in line with the UN resolutions and the aspirations of Kashmir people. He praised the role of the armed forces, including the air force, police and intelligence community, in neutralizing threats to national security. Meanwhile, PM Shehbaz will head to the UK to attend the coronation of Britain's King Charles III and Queen Consort Camilla on May 6, the Foreign Office said on Friday. A day earlier, he is expected to participate in an event for Commonwealth leaders in London and will hold bilateral meetings with leaders participating in the celebrations.

Source: Dawn News.

---

## **THREE SOLDIERS MARTYRED, SEVEN 'MILITANTS' KILLED IN KP ATTACK**

By Ghulam Mursalin Marwat & Umer Farooq

- Suicide bomber on bike blows himself up near army compound
- New militant group claims responsibility

The Pakistan Army confirmed on Friday that militants targeted security forces in three overnight attacks in the Lakki Marwat district, triggering shoot-outs in which three soldiers were martyred and seven militants were killed. In the first attack, a suicide bomber on a motorcycle blew himself up near a security forces camp, located in the Government Postgraduate College, the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) said in a statement. The attack was followed by a fierce exchange of fire in which soldiers killed four militants. The two other incidents took place in the district's Amir Kalam and Tajbi Khel areas, during which another three militants, including key militant commander Musa Khan, were gunned down, the military's media wing said, adding that weapons and ammunition were seized from their possession. Tehreek-i-Jihad Pakistan, a militant group that surfaced for the first time, has claimed responsibility for the attacks in a statement issued by the organisation's spokesman, Mulla Mohammad Qasim. Reuters also cited a report by an intelligence agency that identified the new, little-known militant group as being involved in the attacks, though the report couldn't be immediately confirmed. The attacks were reported on Thursday night, but there was no official word from military or security agencies regarding the incidents or the number of casualties then. ISPR said soldiers repulsed all the attacks, which took place within a short span of time. The three martyred soldiers were identified as Naib Subedar Taj Mir, 40, resident of Nowshera district; Havaldar Zakir Ahmed, 38, from Abbottabad; and Sepoy Abid Hussain, 29, from Dera Ismail Khan district. "Sanitisation of the areas is being carried out to eliminate any other terrorists found in the area. Security forces of Pakistan are determined to eliminate the menace of terrorism and such sacrifices of our brave soldiers further strengthen our resolve," the military said. On Friday, Lakki Marwat DPO Ashfaq Khan examined the area of gunfight and directed the police officials to be vigilant and tighten security across the district, particularly at important installations. The bloodshed in Lakki Marwat came after the military declared a new offensive against militants amid a resurgence of attacks in recent months, including a Peshawar mosque bombing that killed scores of 100 people in February. The militant attacks across the country, especially in KP and Balochistan, have been on the rise since the outlawed Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan ended its ceasefire with the government in November. Source: Dawn News.

---

## **INDIA, RUSSIA AGREE TO BOOST DEFENCE TIES**

India and Russia agreed to strengthen their defence partnership in talks between their defence ministers on Friday, the Indian government said, amid worries in New Delhi that the war in Ukraine was hurting its own military supplies from Moscow. Rajnath Singh and Sergei Shoigu held talks on the side-lines of a Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) defence ministers' gathering in New Delhi. "They



acknowledged the unique, long-lasting and time-tested relationship between India and Russia,” the statement said. They “expressed satisfaction over the continued trust and mutual respect between the two countries, particularly in defence and reiterated their commitment towards strengthening the partnership,” it said, without elaborating. India, the world's largest arms importer, depends on Russia for nearly half its military supplies, and has bought fighter jets, tanks, nuclear submarines and an aircraft carrier over the decades. But the war in Ukraine has held up supplies of Russian spares critical for India to maintain its tank and fighter jet fleets and delayed the delivery of Russian air defence systems. India has refused to publicly blame Russia for the war in Ukraine and has increased its trade with Moscow to a record high, driven largely by the import of Russian oil. Several Western leaders have criticised India's proximity to Russia as they try to isolate Moscow since its invasion of Ukraine in February 2022. New Delhi says it is defending its interests in buying Russian oil and has pushed for a diplomatic solution to the conflict. Moscow, which faces an expected counter-offensive by Ukrainian forces in the coming weeks, hosted the defence ministers of Iran, Syria and Türkiye on Tuesday and Shoigu also held talks with China's defence minister on April 18.

---

#### **24 INDIAN CREW ON OIL TANKER SEIZED BY IRAN, SAYS OPERATOR**

A US-bound oil tanker seized by Iran off the coast of Oman was carrying 24 Indian crew, the vessel's operator said on Friday, adding it was working to secure their release. Previous incidents show that crew caught up in similar incidents are in “no danger”, Advantage Tankers said, after the tanker was seized on Thursday. The Marshall Islands-flagged Advantage Sweet was being taken by Iran's navy to an unnamed port because of an “international dispute”, the operator said in a statement. “Advantage Sweet is currently being escorted by the Iranian Navy to a port on the basis of an international dispute,” Advantage Tankers said in the statement. “Similar experiences show that crew members of vessels taken under such circumstances are in no danger,” it said, adding that the company was “in close touch with all the appropriate authorities to obtain the release of the crew and vessel”. Iran said it had crashed into one of its vessels, leaving two Iranian crew members missing and injuring several others. The Islamic republic has yet to issue any details on the status or nationality of any other crew involved. The US Navy demanded the ship's immediate release, slamming Iran's “continued harassment” in Gulf waters.

---

#### **CHINA SLAMS US, S. KOREA FOR MENTIONING TAIWAN IN 'WASHINGTON DECLARATION'**

China and Russia have expressed concern over the “Washington Declaration” signed by the United States and South Korea earlier this week, with Beijing conveying its “strong dissatisfaction” to Seoul over the mention of “need for peace and stability” in the waters around Taiwan. a foreign ministry statement

said on Friday. The Russian foreign ministry said the agreement would destabilise the region and the wider world. Liu Jinsong, director general of the Chinese foreign ministry's Asian affairs department, met South Korean embassy minister Kang Sang-wook in Beijing on Thursday evening to emphasise China's stance on Taiwan and urged Seoul to adhere to the One-China principle, the ministry said. South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol is on a six-day visit to the United States, during which Yoon and President Joe Biden held talks that covered tensions between China and Taiwan and Chinese military activities in the South China Sea. In a joint statement, the two presidents stressed the need for "peace in the Taiwan Strait" and said they opposed "any unilateral attempts to change the status quo in the Indo-Pacific, including through unlawful maritime claims, the militarisation of reclaimed features, and coercive activities". In Moscow, Russia's foreign ministry criticised the mention of cooperation in the nuclear energy sector in the declaration, saying that it would spark an arms race. The United States pledged to give South Korea more insight into its nuclear planning, while Seoul promised not to seek nuclear weapons itself in an agreement both sides said was aimed against North Korea. Russia has repeatedly railed against what it sees as the United States growing military presence across Asia. "This development is clearly destabilising in nature and will have serious negative consequences for regional security, impacting on global stability," Russia's foreign ministry said. Moscow said Washington's and Nato's drive for "decisive military superiority" would "bring nothing but escalating tensions". Washington has accused Moscow of nuclear sabre-rattling over various statements from Russian officials, including President Vladimir Putin, since the start of the Ukraine war that Russia would be prepared to use nuclear weapons to defend its "territorial integrity". At a joint news conference with President Joe Biden after signing the Washington declaration, South Korean leader Yoon Suk Yeol said the agreement was aimed at strengthening his country's defences in the face of Pyongyang's rapidly advancing nuclear weapons programme.

---

### **SPAIN, PORTUGAL SMASH HEAT RECORDS FOR APRIL 29, 2023**

Mainland Spain and Portugal have broken temperature records for April, officials said on Friday, as both nations wilt in an unusually early heatwave that has raised the risk of wildfires. The mercury hit 38.8 degrees Celsius in the airport in Spain's southern city of Cordoba on Thursday, beating a previous record of 38.6C in the eastern city of Elche, national weather office AEMET said. This "provisional data" must still be confirmed, a process that can take several days, a spokesperson for the agency said. The highest temperature for all of Spain in the month of April, however, was recorded in 2013 in the Canary Islands off the northwest coast of Africa when the mercury hit 40.2C. In neighbouring Portugal, temperatures in the central town of Mora reached 36.9C on Thursday, breaking the record of 36C set in April 1945 in the north-eastern town of Pinhao, weather agency IPMA said. While temperatures started dropping in Portugal on Friday, the scorching heat persisted

in much of Spain with the mercury reaching 36C in Cordoba. The unusually early heatwave has been driven by a mass of very hot and dry air coming from Africa. The scorching temperatures have prompted warnings about the high risk of wildfires and worsened drought conditions that have already led some farmers in Spain not to sow seeds this year. The Spanish government said it would launch its forest fire monitoring campaign on Friday, a month and a half earlier than usual due to the early arrival of scorching temperatures.

---

## **CENSUS EXTENDED TILL MAY 15**

By Mubarak Zeb Khan

To address concerns over the exercise of digital census, the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) after a detailed briefing to ministers, lawmakers and leaders of political parties on Friday decided in principle to extend digital census for another 15 days. PBS spokesperson Sarwar Gondal told Dawn the digital census, previously scheduled to conclude on April 30, would be extended till May 15. To work out an operation plan during the extended days, he said, the bureau would hold a meeting with chief secretaries on Saturday (today). "We will present the request of the political parties in a meeting of census monitoring committee," he added. Need for the extension was felt after it emerged during the exercise that Karachi and Lahore populations showed little increase since the 2017 census. The PBS at the briefing requested political parties to identify the areas that had not been covered by census teams. Mr Sarwar said the bureau would need another 15 days to finalise data before submitting it to the Council of Common Interests (CCI) by June. An official announcement issued after the meeting showed that 237.448 million individuals had been counted in all the four provinces, an increase of 29.768 million since 2017 when the tally was 207.68m. So far, 54.138m people have been counted in Sindh, 116.442m in Punjab, 39.315m in KP and 19.713m in Balochistan. Meanwhile, a joint meeting of Balochistan lawmakers and representatives of political parties from Quetta discussed the process of census in Quetta and its preliminary results. The participants demanded that the census be conducted again in the provincial capital and the exercise should be extended for two months. They said that census results had shown that Balochistan's population had increased by more than seven million while that of Quetta had decreased by 500,000, which they claimed was part of a plan. Saleem Shahid in Quetta also contributed to this report.

---

## **EMBASSIES IN RIYADH, TEHRAN TO OPEN 'WITHIN DAYS'**

Saudi Arabia and Iran will open embassies in each other's capitals "within days," Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amirabdollahian said on Friday, as the relationship between the two regional rivals warms up after years of hostility. Speaking at a news conference in the Lebanese capital Beirut, Amirabdollahian did not give specific dates for the reopening of the embassies. The countries agreed to restore

relations in March. The Iranian and Saudi embassies in the respective countries have been closed since 2016. The relationship started deteriorating in 2015 following the intervention of Saudi Arabia and the UAE in the Yemen war, after the Iran-aligned Houthi movement toppled the Saudi-backed government and seized control of the capital Sanaa. Saudi Arabia accused Iran of providing weapons to the Houthis who attacked Saudi cities with armed drones and ballistic missiles. In 2019, Riyadh accused Tehran of being responsible for an attack targeting Aramco oil facilities, which resulted in stopping half of its oil production. Iran denied those accusations. The tension between the two regional rivals has fueled conflicts across the region, including the Syrian civil war. Iran and Saudi Arabia agreed last month to end their diplomatic row and restore diplomatic missions under a deal brokered by China. "During the last phone call between the foreign ministers of Iran and Saudi Arabia on Eidul Fitr, we agreed to work in the next coming days on the reopening of the Iranian and Saudi embassies in Tehran and Riyadh," Amirabdollahian said, according to the official Arabic translation. Amirabdollahian was speaking at the end of his visit to Lebanon in which he met with Lebanese officials including Hezbollah leader Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah. When asked about a visit by Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi to Damascus, Amirabdollahian confirmed it, saying there was a "programme" put in place for "the near future" without indicating a specific timeframe. The visit will be the first by an Iranian president to Syrian President Bashar al-Assad since war broke out in Syria in 2011. With military help and economic support from both Iran and Russia, Assad was able to turn the tide of the conflict and regain control of most of his country.

---

### **FIRST BATCH OF PAKISTANIS REPATRIATED FROM WAR-TORN SUDAN**

The first batch of Pakistanis evacuated from embattled Sudan returned to the homeland on Friday. Foreign Office spokesperson Mumtaz Zahra Baloch, while giving an update on the evacuation of Pakistani nationals in Sudan, said an aircraft carrying 149 Pakistani nationals evacuated from Sudan arrived in Karachi on Friday morning. "Two other flights carrying around 200 Pakistanis are expected to arrive later today. One of them originated from Port Sudan and the other from Jeddah to bring back Pakistanis who had earlier been evacuated there," she said. Ms. Baloch said the evacuation of Pakistanis from a difficult security situation in Sudan had been made possible by a robust inter-agency process led by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

---

### **THE EMPIRE IS IMPLODING**

Reportedly compiled by Sir Agha Khan

1. Raytheon Director dies in plane crash
2. Classified Pentagon Ukraine and ME docs leaked
3. Saudi openly divorces USA and ties nuptials with Iran and China
4. De-dollarization trade agreements signed

5. Taiwan strait controlled by China
6. Yemen war coming to an end
7. Israel overwhelmed by Hezbollah and Hamas
8. Regime change in Pakistan about to be reversed
9. Syria welcomed back into the Arab states
10. Russia almost done in Bakhmut, nearing victory
11. Belarus getting tactical nukes
12. France slowly getting kicked out of African states
13. Honduras breaks ties with Taiwan, adopts one China policy
14. Leaked Jan 6th video shows Biden government lying to American people
15. Iran getting SU-35s, countering Israeli aggression
16. Azerbaijan cucking, unable to war over NK due to Iranian resistance
17. China domestic chip manufacturing advancing rapidly
18. American banking system on brink of collapse
19. UAE considering reducing ties with Israel due to Al-Aqsa violations
20. Mass-protesting in France, Macron struggling to keep control
21. Sy Hersh release another bombshell piece on America's bombing of Nordstreamb
22. Erdogan and Turkey getting more aggressive after US ambassador meets opposition leaders
23. UK engulfed in cost of living crisis, food and fuel becoming inaccessible to many
24. Brazil re-orienting policy to achieve BRICs+ dominance
25. SWIFT system alternative developed by Russia-Iran, increasing being adopted
26. An unusual increase in train derailments, factory explosions, chemical spills, and contamination events across the USA (due to maintenance issues AND foreign state operations)
27. Russian warship docking in SA ports for the first time in many years, indicating Saudi moving towards eastern nations to provide its defenses
28. AMLO in Mexico nationalizing key energy and oil industries despite protests from Washington, this is in the backdrop of increasing anti-American sentiment from Mexico
29. Malaysia in discussion with China to develop a new 'AM Fund', an alternative to the neo-liberal and much criticized IMF potentially allowing many countries to escape America's debt trap
30. Demand for Zimbabwe's gold coins skyrocketing, following calls by African leaders to stop using the USD as a primary currency. Potentially the first of many steps leading to the creation of an African-led financial structure.
31. Iran enriching uranium to a level of 83.7%, bringing them closer to acquiring nuclear weapons and potentially causing key Israeli allies in the region to withdraw support for an Israeli military attack on Iran
32. Vassal states, such as France, begin to speak up against the Empire and its blackmail: Macron says "Europe has become more dependent on the

United States in recent years, but it must strengthen its strategic autonomy and not depend on the extraterritoriality of the dollar."

33. Argentina, Chile, Bolivia and Brazil considering the creation of a 'OPEC for lithium', in order to control market prices and eliminate the role and influence of Western companies in the global lithium market.

---

## ARTICLE

### PAKISTAN

#### **HOW WILL CHINA-BROKERED IRAN-SAUDI PEACE DEAL IMPACT GULF, PAKISTAN**

DEAL WIN-WIN FOR ALL THE PARTICIPANTS AS IT SYMBOLISES SIGNIFICANT DIPLOMATIC VICTORY OF CHINA OVER THE US CONSIDERED MAJOR ALLY OF GULF ARAB COUNTRIES

NAEEM AHMED

Iran and Saudi Arabia, on March 10, signed a historic agreement to restore their diplomatic relations and reopen embassies after years-long tensions. Both countries also agreed to implement security and economic cooperation agreements signed in 2001. Iran-Saudi relations worsened in 2016 when the latter executed a prominent Saudi Shia cleric, Sheikh Baqir al-Nimr, on terrorism-related charges. The Iranian protesters, as a result, ransacked the Saudi Embassy in Tehran. Diplomatic relations between the two countries, since then, have remained suspended. The agreement, brokered by China, has far-reaching impact on the Gulf Arab region, the neighbouring South Asian region, particularly Pakistan, and the world at large, not only in terms of China's assertive role in global politics amid its growing rivalry with the United States but also in terms of the changing regional alliances in the Gulf region as well as countering the common threat of religious extremism and terrorism. Signed in Beijing, the deal is a win-win for all the participants China, Iran and Saudi Arabia. It symbolises a significant diplomatic victory of China over the US, which has been considered a major ally of the Gulf Arab countries. It not only shows the maturity of Chinese diplomacy to work for global peace but also signifies the nation's in-roads in the Gulf region in the wake of a growing perception among the regional Arab countries of a slow withdrawal of the US from the Middle East. Although, the US has welcomed the move by stating it would lead to establishing peace in Yemen, where both Tehran and Riyadh support opposing sides and, as a result, the whole region has witnessed severe devastation and humanitarian crisis; however, at the same time, it has also expressed concerns about the Iranian commitment to honour the deal. Moreover, China's growing influence in the Gulf region's politics would likely transect the US' influence, though not hegemony, in the Middle Eastern region and beyond. Like the US, China is also obsessed with the geo-strategic stability of

the Middle East which is crucial for its economic interests too. Although China may not be in a position to challenge the current status quo in the Gulf Arab region; rather it is more bent on extracting the economic benefits, particularly ensuring safe oil shipments from the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries under the existing regional security paradigm amid its vulnerability of the maritime shipping lanes in the Gulf and Indian Ocean that are mainly dominated by the US Military. However, China's slow and gradual in-roads may put a dent in American interests within the Gulf Arab region and beyond. For instance, for the United States, which is embarked upon isolating Iran, the deal has been a matter of embarrassment as it not only engaged Tehran in regional and international affairs but also provided China with a strong foothold in the region. This was evident when in February this year, China hosted Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi. Chinese President Xi Jinping clearly showed China's support to Iran in "safeguarding national sovereignty" and "resisting unilateralism and bullying." President Xi also reiterated China's 'constructive participation' in the negotiations for the restoration of the 2015 Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCOPA), commonly known as the Iran nuclear deal. The US unilaterally withdrew from the agreement under the Trump Administration in 2018. Since then, the negotiation process has stalled. Similarly, in December last year, President Xi visited Saudi Arabia and signed a comprehensive strategic partnership agreement with the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. He also attended the first 2022 China-Arab States Summit and the China-GCC Summit and signed over 30 energy and investment agreements. Furthermore, the deal will also give a boost to its Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), as there is a possibility of the extension of the project in the Middle East as well. For Iran, the deal will help end its international and regional isolation as Tehran has been facing severe pressure from Israel and the US for ending its nuclear programme. Although Saudi Arabia also has major concerns about the Iranian nuclear programme, however, the Chinese guarantees may address the Saudi apprehensions. Moreover, one of the major impacts of the Saudi-Iran growing diplomatic ties is on the domestic political affairs of Iran where the clerics have been facing staunch criticism of their shariah-based rule. The recent hijab issue is a case in point. The deal would also strengthen the religious scholars' rule in Iran as Saudi interventions in domestic affairs may be lowered as a result of the lessening of the trust deficit between the two countries. Interestingly, one of the common aspects of China, Saudi Arabia and Iran is that they are all authoritarian regimes, so there will be no pressing of promoting democracy in Iran. Similarly, it is also expected that China would invest billions of dollars in Iran, and also help the latter in developing its Chabahar port which would provide the former with the shortest route to Central Asia. In the case of Saudi Arabia, China has been seen as a new strategic partner amid growing mistrust between Riyadh and Washington. It is noted that Saudi-US relations reached the lowest ebb when the latter blamed the Saudi Crown Prince Mohammad bin Salman (MBS) for his direct involvement in the murder of Jamal Khashoggi, a Saudi journalist. Another issue that caused strained relations between the two countries was regarding oil

production in the wake of the Russia-Ukraine war. The American request to increase oil production in order to maintain global oil prices was turned down by Saudi Arabia. Rather, the Saudis cut down oil production by two million barrels per day, justifying the decision purely on economic reasons. Therefore, as a result of the flourishing Saudi-China relations, Riyadh's reliance upon Washington for security matters may be lessened. Moreover, the thaw in relations with Iran would also help MBS carry out his ambitious vision 2030 for which regional peace is a prerequisite. Pakistan is the most-impacted beneficiary of the restored Iran-Saudi diplomatic relations. The country has warmly welcomed the move, and also hoped that it would contribute to peace and stability in the region. Pakistan has been experiencing the brunt of the Tehran-Riyadh ideological rivalry for the last four decades or so. Since the Iranian Revolution in February 1979, the surge of sectarian violence has not only caused thousands of casualties in Pakistan but also sharply divided Pakistani society on sectarian lines. Therefore, it is ascertained that the normalisation of relations between the two regional rivals in the Middle East would have a positive impact on Pakistan, where both the Gulf Arab countries have their respective sectarian proxies that are actively involved in perpetrating sectarian violence. Moreover, the Saudi pressure on Pakistan would be eased as the latter, in recent decades, has been struggling to avoid the perception of being pro-Saudi Arabia and anti-Iran. It must be noted that Pakistan remained neutral in the Yemen War when the Saudi government carried out a military campaign against the pro-Iranian Houthis. Since then, Pakistan has been pursuing a mediatory role between Iran and Saudi Arabia for the de-escalation of tensions in the Persian Gulf region. Furthermore, ease in tensions between Iran and Saudi Arabia in the Gulf region would also give confidence to Pakistan to effectively focus on the homegrown violent extremist and terrorist groups, especially the sectarian ones, as well as the Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan as some of its factions have their links with the self-styled Middle Eastern terrorist group, Daesh. Although the resumption of diplomatic ties between the two arch-rivals Iran and Saudi Arabia is a good omen for the region; nevertheless, this does not mean that the two ideological rivals have struck a solution to their conflicts or have completely ended their differences. The wide gulf of mistrust is still there. Moreover, the regional conflicts, such as Yemen, Syria, Iraq, and Lebanon, in which both the states have been actively involved, have yet to be negotiated. However, the two countries need to realise the value of peace in the changing global scenario and work together for removing misunderstandings and building friendly relations for the improvement of regional security and stability. Dr. Naeem Ahmed is an associate professor and former chairman of KU.

---

## **MILITARY BRASS SEEKS NATIONAL BUY-IN FOR DURABLE PEACE**

MALIK ASAD



The top brass of Pakistan's military, while reviewing its anti-terror strategy on Saturday, called for a collective approach involving the entire nation and the government to eliminate the menace of terrorism from the country. The consensus came as security forces continue intelligence-based operations (IBOs) against militants in areas along the western border. The details of the Corps Commanders Conference, released by the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR), are in line with the briefing given by Chief of the Army Staff Gen Syed Asim Munir on external and internal security to an in-camera sitting of the National Assembly on Friday. The 257th core commander's conference, presided over by Gen Munir at GHQ, reviewed the domestic and regional environment, including external and internal security challenges facing Pakistan. The forum highlighted that while security forces are undertaking IBOs along the western border, there is a need to adopt a "whole-of-the-nation and whole-of-the-government approach to eradicate the menace of terrorism on [a] long-term basis". According to ISPR, this focused counter-terrorism campaign against terrorists as approved by the government, through a whole-of-the-system approach, will lead towards eradicating permissive factors of terrorism, extremism and instability in the country. The forum affirmed that military leadership is cognisant of the full spectrum of the challenges and it resolves to shoulder its constitutionally mandated responsibilities with the support of the resilient people of Pakistan. The forum reiterated the commitment of the armed forces to fully support national responses against internal and external threats. At Friday's in-camera briefing, the army chief had acknowledged that the strategy to negotiate with terrorists had allowed them to regroup in the tribal areas, adding that the armed forces were ready to maintain durable peace in the country and, to that end, intelligence-based operations were being carried out. He had stressed even then that apart from the security agencies, all government departments, whether legal, economic, social or external, would have to join the campaign against anti-state elements. He also declared that there were no longer any 'no-go areas' in Pakistan. The commanders assured the moot to pursue the goals set by the National Security Committee (NSC) to turn the tide against terrorism through the coordinated application of all elements of national power. The NSC the principal decision-making body on national security last week described the policy of civil and military leadership of engaging the terrorists into dialogue as flawed and vowed to launch an all-out comprehensive operation to rid the country of the menace of terrorism. The NSC had concluded that the recent spate of terrorism in the country was a consequence of a "soft corner" for the banned Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan and a "thoughtless policy" towards the terrorist outfit, both of which were "contrary to the public's expectations". Courtesy: Daily Dawn.

---

## **VIETNAM - LESSONS FOR PAKISTAN**

SAEED A. MALIK

By the time the Vietnam War ended, between 2 and 3 million Vietnamese lay dead, while they had killed 58,000 Americans. Yet it was the U.S that had lost the war! This was not the way it was supposed to have happened. The little brown Vietnamese, clad in pyjamas and straw hats, were expected to have laid down dead, or surrendered. But they refused to play it by the rules. Instead of dying and surrendering they decided to fight back. Had the U.S generals read their history they would have known that Vietnamese had been fighting invaders for a better part of the last 2000 years. Had they known this they might have avoided going into Vietnam, or been less surprised at being defeated by them. The huge majority of U.S frontline troops, the draftees called "grunts", were drawn from the dregs of society--the blacks, the poor white, and the unemployed latinos. And though they were semi-literate, nevertheless they had the gumption to ask the one vital question which really mattered i.e what the hell were they doing in Vietnam? The highest ranked officers whom the grunts were in touch with, and of whom they could ask this question, were captains who were as confused as they were, and so could not answer them. So very early on this war became very unpopular with those doing the actual fighting.

#### **But where were the majors and above?**

Short answer: as far away from the action as possible. Why? Because of a new concept of prosecution of war had been resorted to by the U.S high command. This concept envisioned war as running a production facility. Majors and above saw themselves as managers. These managers saw frontline troops as labour. And body count of dead Vietnamese were seen as "production" figures. In this system each higher headquarters, beginning with the Corps, allotted "production quotas" i.e weekly requirement of dead Vietnamese, to the unit below, till it reached the infantry company in the field where the actual "production" took place i.e where the grunts killed the Vietnamese and died doing so in the process themselves. The commander of each unit which met its "production quota" was acknowledged as "efficient". Each such report took him closer to the next promotion. Thus there was incentive for every officer who could do so, to avoid the frontline, live another day, and inch further towards a higher rank. This brought about an end to a U.S army tradition of officers taking pride in leading their troops in battle and suffering and dying with them. But it did not stop there. It bred hatred among the grunts for their officers egging them on to engagements in order to fulfill the "kill quotas" allocated to them, smoothening their way to promotions, with the grunts dying in the process. By 1969 the grunts began "fragging" the seniors they most despised. "Fragging" was the term which came into use to describe the killing of seniors by grunts using fragmentation grenades. And just as "fragging" began, so did the efforts of the army to cover up these incidents, and the outright denial of their existence. This also increased the distance, both physical and moral, between the fighting men and their officers. The U.S ultimately lost the war in Vietnam because the bond between officers and their men broke. Increasingly the officers refused to lead their men, and the men were no longer willing to fight and die for senior officers whom they seldom saw. The army had been successfully

reduced to resemble a production unit. Pakistan today is again being threatened by terrorism. This war is likely to escalate at a rate faster than the last such outbreak. Burgeoning poverty and an all-embracing domain of social injustice may be increased the ranks of potential recruits willing to join the terrorists. The common man's stake in the state has fallen. Increasingly the state has come to represent the enemy. (The factor of religion of Islam may become to let these terrorist go against the Islamic state). The last time round the performance of our army during anti-terrorist operations was very good, and often heroic. But that performance is least likely to be repeated today. It took the Vietnam War a couple of years for it to become unpopular, and for "fragging" to begin. In our case the very thought of operations has become unpopular even before real shooting has begun. The reasons for this are that the our behavior has lost much by way of respect and support among the people, while within the people there is much disquiet among the people of Pakistan. The denial of existence of these sentiments by the latter ensures that there is no chance of corrective action being taken to mend the situation. The root cause of this ailment lies in the regime change brought about by some authorities. Public anger against this lies not so much on account of any erstwhile popularity of the PTI, but in the hatred which the people have for sitting government. Instead of acknowledging the root cause of the ailment, the supporter of the government denying its existence. Instead of a substantive course correction they have sought instead only a correction "by narrative". This narrative is a spate of lies so naked that they are spotted immediately as they issue from a forked tongue. A lie which is immediately spotted loses any value that its speaker may expect to derive from it, and serves only heap discredit on the speaker, and an insult on the audience expected to believe it. What the authorities needs to acknowledge is that no one has ever won an unpopular war in politics or otherwise. All struggles of politics which are unpopular at the level of the people, are also unpopular at the level of the ranks of files of organizations. To meet the challenge which lies ahead, the concerned must affect an immediate course correction; acknowledge the unforgivable blunders into which they have snared the country; and withdraw it from the quagmire into which they have driven it. Denial of truth is not the solution. It never was. And denial of obvious truth serves only as an insult to those who are expected to believe the lie masquerading as the truth.

---

## **CHINA'S RAILROAD TO WORLD DOMINATION \$58 BILLION RAIL LINK WITH PAKISTAN WILL REDUCE RELIANCE ON WEST**

CHINESE RAIL REVIEW BOARD SAYS SYSTEM CONNECTING PAKISTAN TO CHINA WILL CHANGE TRADE AND GEOPOLITICS

CAITLIN MCFALL

China has proposed its most expensive Belt and Road Initiative to date with a \$58 billion railway system that would connect Pakistan to western China in a move to further reduce Western trade dependence, a report said Thursday. The \$57.7

billion plan was reviewed by analysts from the state-owned China Railway First Survey and Design Institute Group Co Ltd., which has determined that despite its hefty price tag the investment is worth it, reported the South China Morning Post. The 1,860-mile rail system will connect Pakistan's port of Gwadar to the Chinese city of Kashgar in the Xinjiang Uygur autonomous region and has the potential to reshape not only trade but geopolitics, according to the proposal's review board. "The government and financial institutions should provide strong support, increase coordination and collaboration among relevant domestic departments, strive for the injection of support funds and provide strong policy support and guarantees for the construction of this project," the Chinese team of analysts said in a report published earlier this month in the Chinese journal, Railway Transport and Economy. Though the railway connecting China to Pakistan would be China's biggest transport project yet, this is not the first major international rail system the Institute has been involved in, having helped with Jakarta-Bandung high-speed rail line in Indonesia Asia's first high-speed rail system which is slated to open in June. The latest rail system to get the green light in China will connect the world's top manufacturer with the Arabian Sea, opening it up to more direct trade routes. It is also expected to encourage additional train systems that could connect China to Turkey and Iran significantly opening up direct access to the regions, reported the South China Morning Post. The trade routes are just one component of Beijing's broader Belt and Road Initiative that looks to solidify China as a world superpower and encourage global domination in the trade sector. The initiative is also looking to shift focus away from historical trade routes dominated by Western nations to better improve China's economic goals and encourage a "multipolar world" to diminish Western power a move that top autocratic nations like Russia and Iran have also been eager to encourage as geopolitical tensions with the West continue to escalate.

---

## **THE EXTRACT OF THE REPORT OF CLIMATE CHANGE**

Interaction Desk

In developing countries, such as Pakistan, climate change poses a serious challenge to social, environmental and economic development, and lead to migration within and across national borders of Pakistan. The effects of global climate change in Pakistan are already evident in the form of growing frequency of droughts, flooding, increasingly erratic weather behavior, and changes in agricultural patterns, reduction in fresh water supply and the loss of biodiversity. Mitigating and adapting actions are the two keyways of combating climate change. The more immediate and pressing task for the country is to prepare itself for adaptation to climate change. These policy measures are addressing issues in various sectors such as water, agriculture, forestry, coastal areas, biodiversity and other vulnerable ecosystems. Notwithstanding the fact that Pakistan's contribution to global greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions is small, its role as a

responsible member of the global community in combating climate change is dedicated by giving due importance to mitigation efforts in sectors such as energy, transport, forestry and agriculture. The Policy mentions its Updating after every five years span of time. Therefore, it has been updated in collaboration with UNDP, relevant Federal Ministries/Divisions and Provincial Departments. The implementation of National Climate Change Policy has been assessed, which shows landmark achievements gained by Ministry of Climate Change, Provincial line Departments in various development sectors i.e., agriculture, transport, energy, industries, forestry and biodiversity through adaptation and mitigation measures. Hundreds of Projects have been initiated by the federal government and provincial departments i.e., Ten Billion Tree Tsunami, Clean Green Pakistan Index, Ecosystem Restoration, Wash, Climate resilient Urban Development and Green Building Code are one of the major initiatives in addressing climate change in the country. Furthermore, the updated Policy document has been designed in accordance with the requirements of the Paris Agreement on climate change, Sustainable Development Goals and Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction. Hence, appropriate measures relating to disaster preparedness, capacity building, institutional strengthening; technology transfer and international cooperation have also been incorporated as important components of the policy. Most recently the Prime Minister in his speech at the 'UN Climate Ambition Summit' in December 2020 has set the direction of Pakistan's pathway to decarbonizing the country's economy. He declared that 60 percent of all energy produced in the country by 2030 will be 'clean and through renewable resources, thirty percent of all the country's passenger and heavy-duty vehicles will be electric vehicles and that Pakistan will no longer pursue imported coal power plants. These broad pronouncements in addition to a "Ten Billion Tree Tsunami Forestation Initiative" can provide the country's roadmap for the achievement of NDCs emission reduction goals. The updated National Climate Change Policy 2021's goal is to steer Pakistan towards climate resilient and low carbon development. Thus, it would provide a comprehensive framework for addressing the issues that Pakistan faces and will face in future due to changing climate. This policy document is a 'living' document and will be reviewed and updated regularly to address emerging concepts and issues in the ever-evolving science of climate change power plants. These broad pronouncements in addition to a "Ten Billion Tree Tsunami Forestation Initiative" can provide the country's roadmap for the achievement of NDCs emission reduction goals. The updated National Climate Change Policy 2021's goal is to steer Pakistan towards climate resilient and low carbon development. Thus, it would provide a comprehensive framework for addressing the issues that Pakistan faces and will face in future due to changing climate. This policy document is a 'living' document and will be reviewed and updated regularly to address emerging concepts and issues in the ever-evolving science of climate change.

---

## **BILAWAL'S PLAN TO ATTEND SCO MEETING INTACT**

IFTIKHAR A. KHAN

Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari's plan to visit India next week to attend Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) meeting is intact despite irresponsible statements emanating from New Delhi, the Foreign Office spokesperson said on Friday. "Foreign minister plans to travel to Goa on May 4 to attend the meeting of SCO Council of Foreign Ministers. Our decision to participate reflects our engagement with SCO in a positive and constructive spirit. We expect other SCO member states to demonstrate a similarly constructive approach," Ms Mumtaz Zahra Baloch told journalists at a press briefing. She was responding to a question about the possibility of reconsidering the decision after Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari's Indian counterpart Subrahmanyam Jaishankar's accusation that Pakistan was behind a terrorist attack in occupied Kashmir. About statements of Indian officials including the former RAW chief, Ms Baloch stressed that Pakistan was itself a victim of terrorism. "We have suffered as a result of terrorism for the last several decades. In this context, we have presented to the international community undeniable evidence of Indian involvement in terrorist incidents inside Pakistani territory. We reject any insinuations that link Pakistan to terrorist incidents anywhere, including by Indian authorities, as these comments are unwarranted and have no basis," she said. The FO spokesperson recalled that in the announcement of the visit of Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari to Goa, it had been made very clear that this visit was taking place in the context of a mandatory meeting of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation. "Pakistan is an active member of SCO, and we believe Pakistan's voice must be heard in the meeting of the foreign ministers of SCO. I reiterate that this visit is taking place in the context of SCO and any other noise that accompanies the visit of the foreign minister must be ignored, because that's just noise and it has no bearing on the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation and its proceedings," she added. Ms Baloch said that such negative statements and negative developments cannot dissuade Pakistan from playing its part in an organisation of which it was an equal member and to which Pakistan was strongly committed. "We hope that all members of SCO would see the positive spirit with which Pakistan is participating in this meeting," she said. Answering another question about chances of good relations between Pakistan and India, she said Pakistan has had a consistent position, adding that Pakistan wishes to have peace in the region and it would like to have peace and amity with all its neighbours, including India. She said that Pakistan believed that following the events of 2019 and India's belligerent posture in the region the situation for peace and dialogue had been compromised. "We now expect India to take steps to create an environment which facilitates peace and dialogue, including on outstanding disputes, especially the core dispute of Jammu and Kashmir," she said. About the army chief's visit to China, she said that this was an important visit and it will contribute to further strengthening of decades-old, robust defence ties between Pakistan and China. In reply to a question, she said that both Saudi

Arabia and Iran were important partners and friends of Pakistan and Pakistan was very encouraged with the dialogue that was taking place between them. "Now that the two countries have established a direct contact, we encourage them to continue to engage with each other for further normalisation of bilateral relations and for the regional peace and stability," she noted. About reports accusing Pakistan of supplying ammunition to Ukraine, she reiterated that Pakistan maintains a policy of strict neutrality in the dispute between Ukraine and Russia and in that context does not provide any ammunition to them. She, however, pointed out that in the past, Pakistan had strong defence ties with Ukraine. She said that Pakistan's defence exports were always accompanied with strict end-user requirements and hoped that those requirements would be fully respected by recipients.

---

### **ENABLING BALOCHISTAN'S PSYCHO - SOCIAL INTEGRATION WITH PAKISTAN**

NAZ DANA ASSISTANT RESEARCH FELLOW (BTTN).

There have been three Balochistans with different political maps whose existence is generally unknown and thus creates wrong perceptions today, giving birth to expressions like; Deprivation, Neglect, and Left behind in Pakistan. "Balochistan is an integral part of Pakistan and whatever importance it has and its significance for major or small powers due to its geographical location equally applies to Pakistan." Psycho-social integration is a process of bringing together individuals or groups with different cultural, social, and psychological backgrounds into a shared social environment that promotes a sense of interconnectedness or unity. It encompasses forming a community in which individuals can participate with equal opportunities and respect for diversity. Psycho-social integration goes beyond merely providing economic or political rights to individuals and seeks to craft conditions in which they can live together in harmony and mutual respect. For instance, in the context of refugees or immigrants, psycho-social integration would involve helping them adjust to a new culture, language, and society while also addressing mental and emotional challenges that may arise from displacement or trauma. It can include creating innocuous spaces for dialogue, offering counseling services, language training, and access to education and employment opportunities. Balochistan is the largest province of Pakistan, covering around 43.6% of the country's land area. Due to its location at the intersection of Central Asia, South Asia, and the Middle East, Balochistan has long been regarded as a strategically significant region. The province is home to a number of important ports, including the port of Gwadar, which is being built into a significant regional hub for trade and commerce. Balochistan is a significant source of energy for Pakistan and the surrounding nations due to its abundance of natural resources like oil, gas, and minerals. Balochistan is home to diverse ethnic groups, languages, and cultures. Balochistan has been neglected in terms of socio-economic development, leading to the feeling of marginalization

among the people of Balochistan. And there has been a long-standing insurgency in some parts of Balochistan. The insurgency has led to the breakdown of trust and communication between the people of Balochistan and the Pakistani state. Balochistan's psycho-social integration with the rest of Pakistan is crucial for achieving long-term stability and socio-economic development in the region. The federal government has always sided with Balochistan in terms of decisions and the distribution of resources. There are ways through which psycho-social integration can be achieved. Pakistan, being a country with diverse cultures and traditions, can promote cultural exchange and mutual respect. Encouraging cultural exchange and promoting respect for all cultures can help strengthen the province's cultural identity while fostering a sense of unity and belonging. Investing in infrastructure is of paramount importance in Balochistan as the province's existing infrastructure is in dire need of improvement. And there is a pressing need to develop new infrastructure to support the province's growing population and economy. The development of roads, highways, and airports will further help connect Balochistan with the rest of the country, which can facilitate trade, tourism, and other economic activities. To enhance socio-economic growth and promote sustainable development, empowering local communities and engaging them in decision-making processes are essential strategies. Local empowerment provides them with the capacity to take ownership of their own development, aligning the growth with the unique cultural, economic, and environmental needs of the region. Addressing security concerns is imperative in promoting socio-economic development, as these concerns have been a major obstacle to the progress and prosperity of many areas. The security issue also feeds into the broader social, economic, and political landscape of the region, and it is critical to work toward sustainable, long-term solutions that ensure security and stability for the area's inhabitants. Encouraging socio-economic progress alongside cultural integration can promote a profound sense of unity among individuals, communities, and even nations. It can foster cross-cultural communication, enhance social and cultural understanding, and bring people together by celebrating their cultural differences and commonalities. The views and opinions expressed in this article are those of the author. Naz Dana, The author is an Assistant Research Fellow at the (BTTN).

---

#### BOOK REVIEW

#### **DAWN C. MURPHY, CHINA'S RISE IN THE GLOBAL SOUTH**

THE MIDDLE EAST, AFRICA, AND BEIJING'S ALTERNATIVE WORLD ORDER, (CALIFORNIA: STANFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS, 2022), 408.

TARIQUE AHMAD ABRO RESEARCH OFFICER AT CISS.

The exponential economic growth of China over the last couple of decades has triggered a potential great power competition between the two leading economies of the world the United States (US) and People's Republic of China (PRC). Resultantly, the US has designated China's global competing power as top



US national security concern. The book *China's Rise in the Global South: The Middle East, Africa, and Beijing's Alternative World Order* by Dawn C. Murphy, Associate Professor of National Security Strategy at the US National War College, looks at China's foreign policy behaviour as a rising global power in two strategically important regions in the Global South resource-rich Middle East, and Sub-Saharan Africa. The book comprising ten chapters provides an in-depth analysis of China's foreign policy interaction with these regions (p. 4). The author provides an overview about the structure of the book in the first chapter, Introduction, and argues that the world is in the midst of a potential great power transition between the US and PRC, and observes China's meteoric rise as the critical economic, political, and military phenomena of the twenty-first century (p. 1). She adds that in spite of China's increasing global stature, it does not seek to alter the internationally accepted geographical composition of the Middle East and Sub-Saharan Africa (p. 2). However, in order to facilitate interactions and increase its influence in these regions, it is trying to shape up an alternative international order by challenging the rules of the current international system. The author posits that if the current liberal economic order unravels or isolates China, then Beijing's alternative economic order cooperation over competition, investment over conflict, geoeconomics over geopolitics could serve as the foundation of China's economic, political, and military relations with the Middle East and Sub-Saharan Africa, as well as much of the developing world (p. 2). The second chapter, *The Analytical Approach*, presents various theoretical and empirical standpoints on the topic. The author suggests that according to the Offensive Realism Theory, put forward by John Mearsheimer and substantiated by Robert Gilpin, a rising power such as China, while competing with the US, will strive to make changes to the norms of the current international system to better suit its interests (p. 13). Meanwhile, the scholars of Liberalist and Constructivist schools of thought envision China cooperating with the US and Western states across broader geopolitical and economic spectrum by adapting itself to international norms (p. 13). However, some Constructivist and Liberal scholars argue that the US and the West are trying to socialize China into the current liberal international political and economic order to maximize integration (p. 18). According to Mearsheimer's theoretical assertion that all great powers: (i) seek to maximize their power; (ii) establish hegemony; and (iii) prevent others from becoming regional hegemons (p. 14). Resultantly, lack of cooperation between the US and China and the divergence between China's policies and the liberal norms of the current international system could potentially lead to tensions and may affect their bilateral relations (p. 21). In the third chapter, *What Does China Want in the Middle East and Sub-Saharan Africa?*, the author enlists China's post-Cold War interests in the said regions which include: (i) promoting its domestic economic growth through access to resources and markets; (ii) fostering support for it in the international arena; (iii) ensuring its domestic stability; (iv) advocating the issues pertaining to the developing countries; (v) safeguarding its citizens and businesses abroad; and (vi) protecting its territorial integrity and sovereignty from the US (p.

26). The fourth chapter, *Competing with Cooperation Forums? The China-Arab States Cooperation Forum and the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation*, discusses how these two forums are China's primary multilateral mechanisms to coordinate economic, political, and security relations with the Middle East and Africa (p. 56). The author argues that China's political behaviour is competitive and encouraging South-South cooperation, in contrast to the so-called developed world which focuses on competition over cooperation. Furthermore, China's advocacy for the "Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence" is different from the Western liberal political order. It includes: (i) mutual respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity; (ii) mutual non-aggression; (iii) non-interference in each other's internal affairs; (iv) equality and mutual benefit; and (v) peaceful coexistence (p. 59). In the fifth chapter, *A Responsible Power? How China Portrays Itself as a Great Power through Special Envoys for the Middle East, Syria, and Africa*, the author discusses how China created its diplomatic posts of special envoys for the Middle East, Syria, and Africa to address challenges pertaining to peace and security in these regions. According to her, the scope of the mandate of the envoys has expanded in the aftermath of so-called Arab Awakening, and the introduction of the Belt and Road Initiative (p. 119). The sixth chapter, *Competing for Influence? Economic Relations*, discusses China's economic engagement with the aforementioned regions and underscores that notwithstanding China's relatively lower investment in the two regions, as compared to other parts of the world, it is heavily involved in trade, services, and aid provision. The Author remarks that the said regions are crucial for China in terms of access to natural resources and markets for goods and services. The author points out that China's imports, despite showing a decline, exceeded US imports from these regions. For instance, China's imports in 2019 stood at USD 166 billion from the Middle East and USD 87 billion from sub-Saharan Africa. Whereas, the US imports from the Middle East and sub-Saharan Africa were merely USD 71 billion and USD 21 billion, respectively (p. 145). In the seventh chapter, *Making Friends and Building Influence? Political Relations*, the author discusses China's United Nations Security Council (UNSC) voting pattern and strategic partnerships in the Middle East and Sub-Saharan Africa. China differs from the US and other Western permanent members of the Security Council because of its emphasis on the sovereignty and territorial of the sovereign states including the Palestinians, discouraging sanctions, and its opposition to the interference into the internal affairs of the sovereign states (p. 193). The eighth chapter, *Cooperating for Peace and Security? Military Relations*, examines China's contribution to United Nations Peacekeeping Operations (UNPKO), conventional arms sales, anti-piracy activities, and its military base in Djibouti (p. 231). The author notes that China's base in Djibouti is norm-neutral and in lined with the practice of great powers establishing military bases abroad for power projection and to protect their regional interests (p. 261). In the ninth chapter, "Belt and Road and China's Relations with the Middle East and Sub-Saharan Africa", the author explores what the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) is and how it relates to China's approach in the said regions. According to the author,

through BRI and the foreign policy tools used for supporting the initiative, China is trying to build an alternative world order that reflects its core values and to portray itself as a driver of connectivity, development, trade, and globalization (p. 264). The tenth chapter, Conclusion, summarises the concepts introduced in the preceding chapters and underscores that there are significant gaps in the existing studies about China's foreign policy beyond the Asia Pacific region. The book attempts to fill such gaps in the scholarly literature on China's regional relations and its rise in the developing world by giving a comparative analysis of the investments made by the US and China in the said regions. The author points out that, in contrast to the US, China's foreign policy of cooperation over competition, investment over conflict, geoeconomics over geopolitics has contributed significantly in making China a respected world player. Thus, it could be concluded that China's approach of inclusive and shared prosperity and its presence across most regional and international forums has made it a country of choice for its partners in the developing world. Tarique Ahmed Abro is Research Officer at (CISS).

---

#### BOOK REVIEW

#### **GLOBAL PAKISTAN: PAKISTAN'S ROLE IN THE INTERNATIONAL SYSTEM**

JOCHEN HIPPLER AND VAQAR AHMED (EDITORS), (PAKISTAN, FRIEDRICH EBERT STIFTUNG, 2022) 292 PAGES.

SAFIA MALIK RESEARCH OFFICER AT CISS.

Globalization is a complex and multi-dimensional phenomenon. The advancement in the means of communication and technology has played the role of a catalyst in intensifying international economic, social and political integration thus accelerating the process of globalization. Pakistan, a member of the global community, competes economically and on cultural, geo-political and diplomatic fronts. Jochen Hippler and Vaqar Ahmed's book, *Global Pakistan: Pakistan's Role in the International System*, explores Pakistan's role in the international system and the challenges posed to it due to globalization. The book comprises eleven chapters including an introduction by Jochen Hippler, former Country Director Friedrich Ebert Stiftung (FES), Pakistan. The book in a broader context addresses three themes: (i) political, cultural, religious and geo-strategic impact of globalization on Pakistan; (ii) changing global geo-political landscape; and (iii) integration of state economy with the global economy. The book assesses the religious, political and cultural impact of globalization on Pakistan including challenges of globalization faced by the country. This theme contains three chapters: (i) *Nation States in the Era of Globalization: What Pakistan can learn from others?* By Hassan Jalil Shah and Aamir Khattak; (ii) *Globalization, Islam and Culture; Lessons from Pakistan's Occluded Histories* by Feriyal Amal Aslam and Ayesha Rasheed Dar; and (iii) *Risks, Challenges and Opportunities in Globalization: Carving a Role for Pakistan* by Mustafa Hyder Sayed. They assess

that in a globalized environment, several countries in the world including South Korea, Vietnam and Bangladesh have a close resemblance to the challenges faced by Pakistan. Islamabad should learn from those who have successfully traversed the difficult path and surmounted the ostensibly insurmountable challenges identical to those being faced by Pakistan (pg. 34). Feriyal Amal Aslam and Ayesha Rasheed Dar applied Jan Naderveen Pieterse's model of hybridity and its premises that the "Muslims world is a fertile area of hybridization" for interrogating the impact of globalization on Pakistani society and culture. The authors argue that Pakistan on one hand aspires to remain a modern Islamic democracy with the commitment to modern democratic freedom and on the other hand, a theocratic tendency, inherent in the freedom movement and later co-opted in its constitutional and legal provisions by successive governments, requires a manifest adherence to Islamic laws and morality. Mustafa Hyder Sayed points out that the Foreign Office of Pakistan should have "Targeted Diplomacy" by engaging civil society, think tanks, pressure groups and media of the host countries in shaping public opinion in the interest of Pakistan (pg. 225). In curbing the economic crisis of Pakistan, there is a need for the "Islamabad Consensus" to make a 15-20-year economic policy that is adhered to regardless of which party is in power (pg. 229). The following two chapters discussed changing global geopolitical landscape and its impact on Pakistan's foreign policy-making process: (i) Global Geo-Political Changes, International Political System and Pakistan by Zahid Shahab Ahmed; and (ii) A Rearticulation of Pakistan's Foreign Policy in the Wake of the Twenty-First Century Challenges by Huma Naz Siddiqui Baqai. Both authors suggest that Pakistan should try to maintain a balanced relationship with the US and China. The authors recommend that Pakistan should remain committed to "connectivity" and try to exploit CPEC and New Quad signed in May 2021 by the US, Uzbekistan, Pakistan and Afghanistan for regional support to Afghan peace process as golden opportunities. The following two chapters are dedicated to the impact of the global economy on Pakistan including (i) High-quality Education to Survive in the Global Economy Pakistan's Perspective by Fareeha Adil, Rabia Tabassum, and Nudrat Fatima; (ii) Supporting Export Competitiveness in Pakistan's Industrial Sector Amid Covid-19 by Syed Shujaat Ahmed and Vaqar Ahmed. According to international practices, several international study programme and internships can help in transforming market orientation and required skills for the students that includes the Japanese professional development method of Lesson Study, real-world learning, use of technology, role play and video-based reflections. Syed Shujaat Ahmed and Vaqar Ahmed analyze that the pandemic has led to changes in the production, cost of trade, and quality standards demanded by international buyers. Therefore, it is important to develop rapid evidence-use systems including trade portals and commodity-wise dashboards which inform both buyers and sellers in case of disruption (pg. 269). Apart from this, some chapters comprise miscellaneous themes including climate change, emigration from Pakistan and Pakistan's role in the UN. The chapter on The Effects of the Global Changes in

Climate on Pakistan by Fahad Saeed and Kashif Majid Salik, traces Pakistan's various initiatives to mitigate the climate change impact including, the "ten billion Trees Afforestation Project". Shafqat Munir Ahmed's chapter, Emigration from Pakistan How influential is the Diaspora? Notes that Pakistani emigrants are five cents of its population, 95.70% of whom reside in Gulf countries and the remaining 4.30% are in the West, enjoying a very limited role in the decision-making process of host countries. The author suggests that the Information Ministry, Foreign Affairs and Ministries of Overseas Pakistani should come up with a comprehensive plan to use emigrants for the promotion of the best interest of the country. Nausheen Wasi in her chapter The Place and Role of Pakistan in International United Nations Organizations assesses Pakistan's relations with the UN in political and developmental domains. The author underscores Pakistan's concerns about India's bid to get a permanent seat in Security Council are genuine. India's continued propaganda for placing Pakistan on FATF grey list and recently as the president of UNSC its denial to invite Pakistan to the meeting of Afghanistan, testify to Pakistan's concerns (pg. 134). Pakistan is also establishing the balance of power in South Asia by proposing a large number of nuclear nonproliferation and disarmament-related initiatives through the forum of UN. (pg. 134). The author recommends that the government needs to have digital and physical infrastructure capacity and fool-proof systems for fund utilization, coordination between the center, the provincial government and UN agencies to implement agreed proposals and promotion of research culture through the US-Pakistan partnership. The book is an interesting read with a comprehensive and balanced compilation by editors. The contributions are well-researched. Keeping in view the significance of Pakistan's geographical location, contributors recommend that the country need shift from a geo-strategic to a geo-economic one. Furthermore, they argue that Pakistan is an inward-looking country that generally focuses on the country itself or on its relationships with its immediate neighbors, needs to adopt the global approach. The authors have also pointed out the foreign policy challenges the country is facing in maintaining balance between the US and China and suggested that Islamabad should focus on geo-economic model to maximize its foreign policy objectives. Safia Malik is a Research Officer at Center for International Strategic Studies Sindh (CISSS). The Book Review was first published in Journal of Contemporary Studies, Vol XI, No 2, Winter (2022).

---

### **BOOK REVIEW ASIAN GEOPOLITICS AND THE US - CHINA RIVALRY**

FELIX HEIDUK (NEW YORK, NY: ROUTLEDGE, 2022, 225 PAGES)

IRAJ ABID RESEARCH OFFICER AT CISSS.

Sino-American competition dominates contemporary international politics. The intensifying rivalry between the two big powers has merited the attention of scholars from various fields such as international relations, foreign policy, strategic studies and economics. Many experts are writing to explain the nature of Sino-US

contestation which is impacting almost every aspect of the international system in an increasingly globalised world. The contestation is unique as the two great powers remain entangled in complex interdependence and are unable to decouple relations particularly in the economic domain. Asia is predominantly witnessing rising tensions between the US and China and is viewed by many experts as the battleground for the new Cold War. In this context, regional states face stark choices amidst great power competition and struggle to keep balance between a US-centric and a Sino-centric regional order. The volume edited by Felix Heiduk comprises twelve essays by distinguished scholars who analyse foreign policy responses of regional states in the face of growing Sino-US rivalry. The first five chapters in the book provide an overview of the US-China competition in the Asia-Pacific. In the first chapter, Felix Heiduk conceptualises the causes of US-China contestation and its manifestations in the form of Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP) and BRI strategies. The chapter provides a brief theoretical account on middle and small power strategies including neutrality, hedging, bandwagoning and alignment. In the second chapter, Rosemary Foot explains factors contributing to relative peace and stability in the region over the past forty years. She identifies that phenomena such as globalisation and regionalism have ensured stability and economic development and have avoided inter-state wars in the region. Nevertheless, regionalism is weakening because of changing geopolitical dynamics and may deteriorate in the coming years which might endanger peace and security in the region. In the third chapter, Rory Medcalf explores the concept of Indo-Pacific and how different states perceive it. He underlines that Indo-Pacific as a term represents multipolarity and inclusiveness as opposed to the US-centric or Sino-centric interpretations. Fourth chapter is contributed by Joo Hee Kim who analyses the significance and relevance of multilateralism and argues that middle powers can promote a rules-based multilateral order as an alternative to the waning US-led international order to meet global challenges. In chapter five, Lee Jones presents a critique of the traditional conceptualisation of Asian security based on realist and quasi-realist assumptions and explains the implications of narrowing down the security debate to military security only. He writes, "For scholars of Asian security who uncritically adopt realist or quasi-realist understandings, there is a real danger of fuelling the very conflictual dynamics that their frameworks are supposed only to analyse." [Page 76] The remaining seven chapters of the volume present case studies of Asian middle powers amidst the developing major power competition. In chapter six, Ganeshan Wignaraja has discussed the foreign relations of Sri Lanka with the US and China in the post-civil conflict years through the lens of international political economy with a focus on domestic and international factors. The author highlights the geostrategic significance of Sri Lanka for the great powers and their support to the country in terms of foreign trade, investment development assistance and security aid. The chapter provides data-driven comparison of the engagement of US and China with Sri Lanka over the period 2009-2020. He notes, "China has been a visible security partner and

the US has upped its efforts to build Sri Lanka's defence capacity in the Indian Ocean maritime domain." [Page 94] The author also outlines important lessons for managing small power-great power relations amid rising geopolitical tensions in a post-COVID world. These include: (i) building economic and social resilience; (ii) escaping middle income trap; (iii) decoupling economic and security ties; and (iv) non-alignment. In chapter seven, Jagannath Panda reflects on changing India's China policy particularly after the Galwan valley standoff of June 2020. He argues that Indian security thinking is undergoing significant transformation regarding China driving New Delhi to join the US-led frameworks such as Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (QUAD) to contain Beijing's influence in the region. The chapter explores various bilateral and multilateral security arrangements against China such as LEMOA, COMCASA, BECA and ACSA, and several joint military exercises. In conclusion, India is urged to deepen economic and defence ties with the US and other regional states in order to counter China. However, little account is provided of India's economic ties with China and the challenges faced by New Delhi due to its dependence on Beijing's markets and its role in the global supply chains. Chapter eight is contributed by Alice Ba who explores institutional strategies adopted by middle and small powers in Southeast Asia with particular reference to the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) as the foremost response to manage Sino-US competition. She writes, "For Southeast Asia's small and medium powers, ASEAN, since its founding in 1967, has been especially central in their historical efforts to manage major powers and major power competition." [Page 138] In chapter nine, Renato Cruz De Castro talks about Philippines-China relations in the context of conflicting claims of the two states over the South China Sea. It is argued that President Rodrigo Duterte gradually steered the country from its policy of appeasement to soft balancing against China through strengthening ties with the US, Japan, and ASEAN. In chapter ten, Hong Liu uses the Constructivist approach to explain Mahathir's China policy by analysing complex domestic economic and political interests. The author contends that it is important to study the policies of smaller countries like Malaysia beyond traditional strategies of rebalancing or hedging. In chapter eleven, Thi Thi Soe San discusses dynamics of the US-China competition in Myanmar. She writes that great power rivalry is nothing new to Myanmar. However, post COVID-19 political and economic disruptions in the region have made a new Cold War inevitable. The author identifies that Myanmar's problems are of domestic origin and have little to do with foreign influences. [Page 189] In the final chapter, Seo-Hyun Park illustrates the case of South Korea and explains that domestic socio-political factors and international influences determine the political choices of leaders. The author recommends that the politicians must take "socially shared discourse" which is "embedded within a historical and cultural context" into account while making foreign policy choices. [Page 194] In contrast to most of contemporary writings on the subject focusing mainly on the behaviour of great powers, the book bridges the gap by providing insights on responses of middle and small powers to the unfolding great power competition.

A major shortcoming in the work is the absence of a chapter on Pakistan a country with history of close strategic and economic ties with both US and China. A chapter on Pakistan would have made the book comprehensive and balanced. Iraj Abid is Research Officer at Centre for International Strategic Studies Sindh (CISSS). The Book Review was first published in CISS Insight Journal of Strategic Studies Vol 10, No 2 (2022).

---

**BOOK REVIEW JACOB HELBERG, THE WIRES OF WAR: TECHNOLOGY AND GLOBAL STRUGGLE FOR POWER (AVID READER PRESS/ SIMON & SCHUSTER, 2021) 384**

AREESHA ANWER RESEARCH OFFICER AT CISSS.

The nature of warfare in modern times has evolved. Emerging technologies have transformed the essence of war. Cyberspace has become the new battlefield. The use of cyberattacks to sabotage a state's critical infrastructure, employing cyber espionage to spy over state government and institutions and the use of the Internet for firehosing or flooding for propaganda and misinformation have posed several novel challenges to states. Moreover, the grave threat of increasing ransomware has stirred major concerns around the globe. This is evident in the case of the US where ransomware attacks on Colonial Gas Pipeline and JBS Meat and software supply chain attacks such as hacking of SolarWinds reinforced cybersecurity across the US critical infrastructure. These attacks also led President Biden to issue a National Security Memorandum to improve cybersecurity for national security. In his book 'The Wires of War: Technology and Global Struggle for Power', Jacob Helberg discusses the use of technology-driven instruments by states in their struggle for power. He terms Internet as the new theatre of geopolitical conflict. According to Helberg, the 21st century wireless war is being fought between autocracies and democracies, where he refers to China and Russia as major autocratic actors. In 2016, Jacob Helberg was appointed as Google's global lead for news policy. During his time there, Helberg fought against propaganda, disinformation and foreign interference in the US elections. The Wires of War is a detailed account of Helberg's personal experiences and insight while serving in Silicon Valley. The book also provides an understanding of the nuanced issues that only a few are aware of. The Wires of War explains emerging warfare in the context of 'gray war' and how it is shaping the 21st century. The author argues that the algorithms that govern our online lives "may be one of the most powerful radicalizing instruments of the 21st century." He reminds his readers that experts predicted that the Internet's buoyant freedom of expression would have an adverse impact on autocracies. However, that is not the case per se. Instead, the Internet has accelerated misinformation where a single click displays thousands of bizarre ideas, assumptions, opinions and stories. Ironically these false stories spread six times faster than the actual news. The author defines flooding or firehosing as the process where the Internet is flooded with misinformation so that it becomes difficult to separate authentic from fake information. Helberg



points out how the culture of skimming through the first few google results to verify a truth claim has widely prevailed in the digital age. Moreover, Helberg explains how the over dependence of users on the Internet and their online behavior expose their personal information. He exemplifies his argument with a research conducted by Michael Kosinski who found that it takes only 68 Facebook likes to easily predict a person's race, sexual orientation and political affiliation. Going forward, Helberg recalls the US claims of Russian meddling in the 2016 US elections, especially the Russian penetration of the computer network of the Democratic National Committee DNC. He further focuses on the spread of fake news by Russia's Internet Research Agency IRA and explains how advances in artificial intelligence, data gathering and synthetic media such as deepfakes could replicate propaganda and disinformation campaigns that will have greater consequences in the near future. The author also expresses concerns over China's technological advancements. However, he completely ignores the use of propaganda and cyberattacks by the US, while keeping the reader's focus entirely on Russia and China. Readers also get a recap of the debates about: (i) NATO's mutual defence treaty and whether taking down Internet infrastructure constitutes an "attack" under Article 5 of its charter; (ii) the advances in Chinese technological infrastructure, from Huawei's communications devices to Apple's Chinese-made iPhones; and (iii) the threat of hackers shutting down massive power sectors of major cities. Helberg explains that cyber aggression or cyber war would not relate to which country controls more territory or enjoys greater military strength in contemporary times. Instead, he views ownership of the channels that spread information to billions of people, as well as Internet cables and data as significant for states in the 21st century. He proceeds to trace how modern-day warfare will potentially subjugate infrastructure, economies, privacy, innovation, cultures and norms. In relation to that, Helberg gives example of an Iranian cyberattack on Aramco Oil Company that melted down 35,000 hard drives and forced the company to buy 50,000 new computers. As a result, the global price for hard drives drove up for half a year. To counter the threat of cyberattacks, propaganda, disinformation, espionage or foreign interference, the author suggests that the US should respond by vitally rebuilding its national strength. He proposes that there should be appropriate investments in areas of innovation and technology so that the US government and the private sector could build new high-tech manufacturing centers while securing the back-end and enhancing competitiveness. In the gray war, according to Helberg, the best offence boils down to a strong defence. Areesha Anwer is Research Officer at the Center for International Strategic Studies Sindh (CISSS). The book review was first published in CISS Insight Journal of Strategic Studies Vol 10, No 2 (2022).

---

## **CHINA**

## **THE WEST HAS BEEN PLANNING TO CRUSH CHINA FOR A VERY LONG TIME**

CAITLIN JOHNSTONE

“China is preparing to kill Americans and we've got to prepare to defend ourselves,” empire propagandist Gordon Chang told Fox Business during an interview on Monday. Chang, who has famously spent more than two decades incorrectly predicting the imminent collapse of China, bizarrely made these comments while discussing a future attack on Taiwan. Taiwan is of course not the United States and any potential war between Taiwan and the mainland would be an inter-Chinese conflict that needn't involve a single American, and Chang is most assuredly not part of any “we” who will ever be engaged in combat with the Chinese military under any circumstances. Chang frames his narrative as though China is menacing Americans in their homes, when in reality only the exact opposite is true: the US has been militarily encircling China for many years, and is rapidly accelerating its efforts to do so. Just the other day the Philippines announced the locations of four military bases the US will now have access to in its ongoing encirclement operation, most of them in the Northern provinces closest to China. Antiwar's Dave DeCamp writes: “Three of the Philippine bases will be located in northern Philippine provinces, a move that angers China since they can be used as staging grounds for a fight over Taiwan. The US will be granted access to the Lal-lo Airport and the Naval Base Camilo Osias, which are both located in the northern Cagayan province. In the neighboring Isabela province, the US will gain access to Camp Melchor Dela Cruz. The US military will also be able to expand to Palawan, an island province in the South China Sea, disputed waters that are a major source of tensions between the US and China. The US will be granted access to Balabac Island, the southernmost island of Palawan. The new locations are on top of five bases the US currently has access to, bringing the total number of bases the US can rotate forces through in the Philippines to nine. The expansion in the Philippines is a significant step in the US effort to build up its military assets in the region to prepare for a future war with China.” So it's very clear who the aggressor is here and who is preparing to attack whom. Imperial spinmeisters like Gordon Chang are just lying when they frame China's militarizing to defend itself against undisguised US encirclement as China militarizing to attack Americans. Fun fact: US officials used to pretend China was crazy and paranoid for saying this encirclement was happening. In the 1995 book “Killing Hope: U.S. Military and CIA Interventions since World War II,” William Blum wrote the following: “In March 1966, Secretary of State Dean Rusk spoke before a congressional committee about American policy toward China. Mr. Rusk, it seems, was perplexed that “At times the Communist Chinese leaders seem to be obsessed with the notion that they are being threatened and encircled.” He spoke of China's “imaginary, almost pathological, notion that the United States and other countries around its borders are seeking an opportunity to invade mainland China and destroy the Peiping Peking regime”. The Secretary then added: “How much Peiping's 'fear' of the United States is genuine and how much it is artificially induced for domestic political purposes only the Chinese Communist

leaders themselves know. I am convinced, however, that their desire to expel our influence and activity from the western Pacific and Southeast Asia is not motivated by fears that we are threatening them." Another fun fact: thanks to a 2021 revelation by Daniel Ellsberg, we now know that the secretary of state's comments about how crazy and paranoid China was for thinking the US wanted to attack it came just eight years after the US had seriously considered acting on plans it had drawn up to launch a nuclear strike on the Chinese mainland. Mainstream western imperialists of all stripes have long recognized that a hard conflict with China will be necessary at some point in the future if they're to continue their domination of the world. In his 2005 book "Super patriot", Michael Parenti wrote that the unipolarist neoconservative "PNAC" (Project for the New American Century) ideology that had by that point taken over US foreign policy was ultimately geared toward a future conflict with China: "The PNAC plan envisions a strategic confrontation with China, and a still greater permanent military presence in every corner of the world. The objective is not just power for its own sake but power to control the world's natural resources and markets, power to privatize and deregulate the economies of every nation in the world, and power to hoist upon the backs of peoples everywhere including North America the blessings of an untrammelled global 'free market.' The end goal is to ensure not merely the supremacy of global capitalism as such, but the supremacy of American global capitalism by preventing the emergence of any other potentially competing superpower." But you can see the twinkle of this looming conflict in the eyes of western imperialists long before any of this. In a 1902 interview (which was not published until 1966 a year after Churchill's death), Churchill candidly voiced his support for partitioning China at some point in the future in order to preserve the dominance of the "Aryan stock" over "barbaric nations": "The East is interesting, and to no one can it be more valuable and interesting than to anyone who comes from the West. I think we shall have to take the Chinese in hand and regulate them. I believe that as civilized nations become more powerful they will get more ruthless, and the time will come when the world will impatiently bear the existence of great barbaric nations who may at any time arm themselves and menace civilized nations. I believe in the ultimate partition of China I mean ultimate. I hope we shall not have to do it in our day. The Aryan stock is bound to triumph." The word "partition" here means breaking a nation up into smaller nations, i.e. balkanization. To this day we see western imperialists pushing for the partitioning of disobedient nations like Russia and Syria, and we still see this with China in the push to permanently amputate regions like Xinjiang, Hong Kong and Taiwan from Beijing. China's sheer size, social cohesion and geostrategic location have long been recognized as a potential problem in the future for western imperialists who wish to ensure their ability to dominate and control, and now we're seeing that all come to a head. Churchill said of a future confrontation with China "I hope we shall not have to do it in our day" because that confrontation has always been certain to be horrific, and today in the Atomic Age this is far more true than it was in 1902. And in fact we do not have to do it in

our day, either. We don't have to do it in any day. The only reason we're being pushed toward a profoundly dangerous conflict with China is because it's the only way for western imperialists to maintain their hegemonic control of this planet, but their hegemonic control of this planet has brought us to a point of endlessly escalating nuclear brinkmanship and looming ecosystemic collapse. It hasn't exactly been working out great, is what I am saying. There's no reason the west can't simply accept the existence of other powers and stop trying to dominate everyone on earth. We have long been ruled by tyrants who continually push our world toward suffering and death in the name of securing more power and control, but we don't need to accept their rule. They do not have a healthy vision for our species, and there are a whole lot more of us than there are of them. Their rule is done as soon as enough of us decide it is.

---

### **CHINA SAYS IT ALWAYS STANDS ON 'SIDE OF PEACE' OVER UKRAINE CRISIS**

China's commitment to standing on the side of peace over the Ukraine crisis has been proved, once again. During a phone call with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, Chinese President Xi Jinping on Wednesday said that dialogue and negotiations are "the only viable way out" for the Ukraine crisis, and that no one wins a nuclear war. China will send a special representative of the Chinese government on Eurasian affairs to visit Ukraine and other countries to conduct in-depth communication with all parties on the political settlement of the crisis, Xi said.

#### **China's core stance peace**

During the call, the Chinese president stressed that on the Ukraine crisis, China's core stance is to facilitate talks for peace. China did not create the crisis, nor is it a party to it, he said. "As a permanent member of the UN Security Council and a responsible major country, China would not sit idly by, nor would it add oil to the fire, still less exploit the situation for self-gains," he pledged. China released a 12-point paper stating its position on the political settlement of the Ukraine crisis on February 24, 2023, the first anniversary of the start of the Russia-Ukraine conflict. On Wednesday, Xi also said, on the nuclear issue, all relevant parties must stay calm and exercise restraint, truly act in the interests of their own future and that of humanity, and jointly manage the crisis. With rational thinking and voices now on the rise, it is important to seize the opportunity and build up favorable conditions for the political settlement of the Ukraine crisis, he urged. It is hoped that all parties would seriously reflect on the Ukraine crisis and jointly explore ways to bring lasting peace and security to Europe through dialogue, said Xi. China will continue to facilitate talks for peace and make its efforts for an early ceasefire and restoration of peace, he vowed. For his part, Zelenskyy thanked China for providing humanitarian assistance to Ukraine and welcomed China's important role in restoring peace and seeking a diplomatic solution to the crisis. He also said, China upholds the purposes and principles of the UN Charter in international

affairs and has significant influence on the international stage. Wang Yiwei, director of the Institute of International Affairs at Renmin University of China, described the phone call between the two leaders as "long-awaited" and "much-anticipated." "All the parties were looking forward to the conversation," Wang told CGTN. "It shows China's responsibility as a major country." When briefing reporters about the call, the Chinese Foreign Ministry said Li Hui will be the special envoy. Li served as Chinese ambassador to Russia from 2009 to 2019. In a statement, the Russian Foreign Ministry said it has noted the Chinese side's readiness to make efforts to establish the negotiation process. "By sending the special envoy, China is further implementing its position paper with actions," said Wang. That will make the international community look forward to China's playing of a bigger role, he said.

### **China and Ukraine: strategic partners**

During Wednesday's conversation with his Ukrainian counterpart, Xi also pointed out that China-Ukraine relations, after 31 years of development, have reached a level of strategic partnership, boosting the development and revitalization of the two countries. Mutual respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity is the political foundation of China-Ukraine relations, said the Chinese president. "The two sides need to look to the future, view and handle the bilateral relations from a long-term perspective, carry forward the tradition of mutual respect and sincerity, and take the China-Ukraine strategic partnership forward," Xi urged. He added that no matter how the international situation evolves, China will work with Ukraine to advance mutually beneficial cooperation. Zelenskyy said the Ukrainian side is committed to the one-China policy, and hopes to advance all-round bilateral cooperation with China. He also expressed hope to open up a new chapter in Ukraine-China relations and jointly safeguard world peace and stability. Following the call with Xi, Zelenskyy announced the appointment of Pavlo Ryabikin, a former minister of strategic industries, as Ukraine's new ambassador to China.

---

## **RUSSIA**

### **UKRAINE: STALEMATE IN AN ATTRITIONAL WAR?**

M K BHADRAKUMAR

What neocons in the US are yet to grasp is that they failed to subjugate Russia despite the humiliations poured on its national honor, history and enviously rich culture. Why would Russia normalize with states that appropriated its sovereign wealth and imposed such draconian sanctions to bleed and weaken its economy? The Russian President Vladimir Putin travelled to the country's "new territories" of Lugansk and Kherson/Zaporozhye Regions on Monday to assess the military situation. The countdown has begun for the Ukrainian "counterattack." The arrival of Patriot missile system in Ukraine testifies to the scale of mobilization to impose heavy losses on Russia. NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg paid

a surprise visit to Kiev, his first since the war began. The leaked Pentagon documents are skeptical about the success of the Ukrainian counter-offensive, but Moscow makes its own assessments. Primarily, the neocons are not going to pull the plug on the Zelensky regime, since that means opening the Pandora's box when President Biden is about to announce his bid for a second term as president and cannot accept that Ukraine is losing the war. In reality, Ukraine is hemorrhaging. It is in the nature of attritional wars that at some point, the weaker side breaks and thereupon, the end comes very fast. This was how in Syria where once the five-year old Battle of Aleppo was won in December 2016, the government forces swept through the country in a string of military victories bringing the curtain down on the conflict. The attritional war in Ukraine may look "stalemated" but the clincher will be which side is inflicting the greater casualties. There is no question that the massive military, intelligence, financial and economic assistance by the West notwithstanding, Russian forces have ground down the Ukrainian side all along the line of contact. The Russian ambassador to the UK recently said the ratio of losses in the attrition war is roughly seven Ukrainian soldiers to every Russian soldier. To put things in perspective, Western media reports estimate that around 35,000 Ukrainian soldiers will be involved in the upcoming counter-offensive along the 950-km frontline while Putin is on record that the Russian reserve forces on the frontline come to 160,000 soldiers! The Ukrainian air defense system is in a critical state. Russians have a predominance of artillery and Russians have heavily fortified the frontline in the recent 5-6 months in multiple layers of defense such as mines, earthworks and bollards to impede advancing tanks, etc.

### **Russia's fortification line**

This is a desperate gambit for Ukraine, which has lost a large share of its most experienced soldiers (estimated 120,000 casualties), to take on the Russians who are having air superiority and missile superiority, air defense superiority and artillery superiority, and trained manpower superiority, above all. The areas that Putin chose to visit Kherson / Zaporozhya and Lugansk are where the Ukrainian counteroffensive is most expected. Putin heard from the commanders the military situation and, of course, most certainly, that will be inputs for his decisions on Russian counter-strategies, both defensive and offensive. Despite the Pentagon leaks and the ensuing disarray and confusion in Washington and European capitals (and Kiev), the Ukrainian counterattack will go ahead to gain back at least some of the lost territory. This is a desperate throw of the dice. However, delusional thinking still prevails in Washington. This is apparent from a recent article in the Foreign Affairs co-authored by two veterans of the US establishment former State Department official Richard Haass and Charles Kupchan, senior fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations titled The West Needs a New Strategy in Ukraine: A plan for getting from the battlefield to the negotiating table. The article largely sticks to the myths spawned by the neocons that Russia's special military operations failed and the war has "turned out far better for Ukraine than most predicted" but has occasional flashes of realism. It builds on the refrain currently

in vogue in Washington that “the most likely outcome of the conflict is not a complete Ukrainian victory but a bloody stalemate.” Haas and Kupchan wrote that “By the time Ukraine's anticipated offensive is over, Kyiv may also warm up to the idea of a negotiated settlement, having given its best shot on the battlefield and facing growing constraints on both its own manpower and help from abroad.” The authors take note en passe that Russia's leadership has options and calculations too, as Western sanctions have failed to cripple Russian economy, popular support for the war remains high (above 70%) and Moscow senses that time is on its side as the staying power of Ukraine and its Western supporters and their resolve will wane and Russia should be able to expand its territorial gains substantially. Fundamentally, Haas and Kupchan hail from another planet. They cannot comprehend that Russia will never accept a scenario where the conflict ends with a ceasefire but NATO will continue to beef up Ukraine's military capabilities and steadily integrate Kiev into the alliance. Why would Russia want to play another game of musical chairs while the West formalizes Ukraine's NATO membership that is, acquiesce in a replay of the grotesque interregnum between Minsk Agreements of 2015 and Russia's special military operations? Putin's visit to the new territories at this crucial juncture with the attritional war at a tipping point conveys a powerful signal that Russia too has an offensive plan and it is not up to Biden to blow the whistle and call off the proxy war out of sheer fatigue or pressing distractions in the Asia-Pacific or due to cracks in the western unity or whatever else. Equally, it is improbable that Russia can ever reconcile with the Zelensky regime, which Moscow sees as a puppet of the Biden administration. But how can Biden possibly dump or lose sight of Zelensky while the skeletons are rattling in the family cupboard? Most importantly, the Russian public opinion expects Putin to redeem the pledge he made while ordering the special military operations. Anything short of that will mean tens of thousands of Russian lives perished in vain. It is not in the grain of Putin's political personality to ignore the groundswell of Russian opinion or overlook the wounded national psyche as images are playing out of forced eviction of hundreds of monks of Pechersk Lavra, the 11th-century Orthodox cave monastery complex in the heart of Kiev, branded as Russian fifth columnists. It was a calculated political move by Zelensky with tacit western encouragement. What the neocons in the US are yet to grasp is that they failed to subjugate Russia despite all the humiliations poured on its national honor, proud history and enviously rich culture. Why would Russia normalize with states that appropriated its sovereign wealth and imposed such draconian sanctions to bleed and weaken its economy? US Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen has admitted on CNN that sanctions may ultimately risk hegemony of the US dollar. But her remarks do not go far enough. Meanwhile, Russia-China strategic partnership has strengthened, the signal this week being Moscow's willingness to coordinate with Beijing to counter military challenges in the Far East. (See my blog China, Russia circle wagons in Asia-Pacific) Russia is far from isolated and enjoys strategic depth in the international community. Whereas, through the past one-year period, the systemic decline of the West and the US' waning global

influence has become an inexorable historical process. M K Bhadrakumar is a former diplomat. He was India's ambassador to Uzbekistan and Turkey. The views are personal.

---

### **RUSSIAN STRIKES BATTERED CITIES ACROSS UKRAINE ON FRIDAY, KILLING 25**

Russian strikes battered cities across Ukraine on Friday, killing 25 people including five children, as Kyiv said preparations for a counter-offensive against Moscow's forces were nearly complete. The deadly new attacks included a strike on a residential block in the historic city of Uman in central Ukraine, journalists saw rescue workers extracting victims' remains from destroyed buildings. The barrage of almost two dozen missiles overnight ended a weeks-long pause following the repeated Russian strikes that had aimed to paralyse Ukraine's energy grid during the winter months. On Friday evening, workers in Uman, the site of an annual Hasidic pilgrimage, pulled the body of another child from under the rubble. Authorities said Russian cruise missiles killed 23 people including four children in Uman. "I want to see my children, they are under the rubble," Dmitry, a 33-year-old local from Lugansk, an eastern city under Russian control, said earlier in the day. Rescuers were using cranes to search for survivors among the remains of the multi-storey housing block in the central city of 80,000 inhabitants. "I've seen a lot but I haven't lost my children before. Now I want to see my children alive or dead," Dmitry said. Russian missiles also hit the central city of Dnipro, already grief-stricken after a January strike on a tower block that killed more than 40 people. "A young woman and a three-year-old child died," the city's mayor Borys Filatov said on Friday. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky condemned the latest barrage and vowed a response to "Russian terror". His advisor Mykhaylo Podolyak tweeted: "If you don't want this spread around the world, then give us weapons. Lots of weapons. And add sanctions." Moscow said it had targeted reserve units of the Ukrainian military and that "all assigned objects were hit."

#### **'We are ready'**

There were no reported casualties in Kyiv, which was among the cities targeted on Friday. The capital had not been hit by missiles in more than 50 days, although last week it was attacked by 12 Iranian-made drones, eight of which were shot down without causing any casualties. Ukraine said overall it had downed 21 of 23 Russian missiles and two attack drones. The country's air defence system has been bolstered in recent months by the delivery of Western equipment crucial to the country's war effort. The new strikes came as Ukrainian Defence Minister Oleksiy Reznikov said his country's preparations to push back against entrenched Russian positions were almost complete. NATO allies and partners have provided Ukraine with 1,550 armoured vehicles and 230 tanks to form units and help it retake territory from Russian forces, NATO chief Jens Stoltenberg said on Thursday. "Equipment has been promised, prepared and partially delivered. In a global sense, we're ready," Reznikov said. Kyiv has said throughout the war launched by



Russia in February 2022 that it is intent on repelling Moscow's forces from territory they control in eastern and southern Ukraine. "Preparations are coming to an end," Reznikov added of the planned offensive. "As soon as there is God's will, the weather and the decision of the commanders we will do it." Most of the fighting is focused on the eastern Donbas region, particularly the city of Bakhmut, which has been almost completely destroyed.

---

## **AMERICA**

### **THE GREATEST THREAT TO THE USA IN THE WORLD TODAY**

CHUA CHIN LENG

The greatest threat to the USA is not China, but Peace. Peace in the world would bring an end to the evil American Empire that is built around war and a war economy. When there is Peace in the world, the Americans would be lost. They would not know what to do, many employed just to agitate for wars would be jobless. The whole Military Industrial Complex would be out of business. All the American military bases in the world would be redundant, so would all the aircraft carriers, military aircraft, ICBMs, weapons of mass destruction and all the supporting war industries. Employment would become the number one problem in the USA when the American war machine is crippled due to its irrelevance. All the CIA operators would be out of work. All the fake news about threats and enemies would become jokes. The nearly US\$1 trillion military budget would be totally extravagant without wars, without enemies. When there is Peace in the world, the Americans would have to create jobs for themselves, to make themselves useful again as responsible people, not warmongers and murderers, not merchants of war. There will be no one to buy their expensive war machine, no more needs for military gangs aka allies. The latest peace deal between Iran and Saudi Arabia brokered by China is being condemned by the Americans, calling it a threat to American interests. The Americans are all out to break this Peace deal. This is how evil the Americans are, all set to create war and against Peace. Peace is against the interests of the Americans, an evil Empire thriving on wars and instability and selling weapons to kill and destruct in wars. China's proposal for a ceasefire in Ukraine and to start Peace negotiation is condemned by the Americans and the Americans also said there cannot be ceasefire. The people of the world have woken up to the evilness of the Americans. Everyone wants Peace except the Americans. Only the blind and idiotic are still supporting the evil Americans in their warmongering and evil ways.

---

## **INDIA**

### **'BJP WILL NEVER CONQUER KERALA'**

'Secularism is the life of Kerala, and the BJP is trying to poison this atmosphere'

SHOBHA WARRIER

In 2022 M V Govindan popularly known as Govindan Master took over as the secretary of the Communist Party of India-Marxist. Becoming the CPI-M's state secretary is considered a very powerful assignment as the party is in power only in Kerala. "The political situation in Kerala is very different from what you see in the north Indian states. No other state has the three religious communities in this ratio -- Hindu (54.73%), Christian (18.38%) and Muslim (26.56%). This is the specialty of Kerala," Govindan Master tells in an exclusive interview at the party office, the AKG Centre.

The first of a two-part interview:

**After the BJP's win in the North East, Narendra Modi's call to his party cadres was the next is Target Kerala.**

After an undemocratic win in Tripura in 2018, the BJP had declared that their next target was Kerala. What happened afterwards? Even today, the BJP has not actually managed a win in the North Eastern states. Even where they have won just a couple of seats, they joined hands with the local parties so that they could rule the states. The so-called North East win cannot be termed as a BJP victory as they are worse off than a minority party there. In fact, they have been doing the same undemocratic practice in other states also, like in Goa, Maharashtra, Karnataka... So, you should realise that though the BJP has managed to rule the North Eastern states, it is not because they are accepted by the people of the region but through undemocratic means.

Still, Modi has set Kerala as the BJP's next target...

That's what I said, they have been talking about Target Kerala for quite a few years. The RSS has been trying to adopt villages in Kerala for many years. Do you know from the time I joined politics, the RSS has tried to adopt Kannur district? But it was in Kannur that they got below average vote percentage.

**Do you think the BJP will not make inroads in Kerala like what they have achieved in other states?**

The BJP will never be able to conquer Kerala. Secularism is very important to the people of Kerala, and it has been like that from time immemorial. The political situation in Kerala is very different from what you see in the north Indian states. No other state has the three religious communities in this ratio - Hindu (54.73%), Christian (18.38%) and Muslim (26.56%). This is the specialty of Kerala. Secularism is the life of Kerala, and the BJP is trying to poison this atmosphere. According to the BJP, what we follow is pseudo secularism. From their perspective, the state faces internal threats from three Ms.: Muslims, Missionaries and Marxists.

**But the BJP, especially Modi on his visit, is doing a lot of outreach towards the minorities.**

It is true that they are trying to woo the Christians. We all know that the BJP secured only 37% votes to rule the country. The only state where the BJP has 50% votes is Gujarat. The BJP grew in Gujarat because of the weakness of the Congress. They cannot even dream about winning the confidence of the minorities of Kerala. What did they say before the last assembly elections? That they would win more

than 30 seats in Kerala! That they would rule Kerala after winning 30 seats! Imagine they were making such claims when they had just one seat. When the results came, they lost that seat also to close their account. They cannot fool the people of Kerala as people of this state are politically more aware.

---

## **INDIA ARMS HINDU MILITIAS TO COMBAT KASHMIRI FIGHTERS**

Brandishing a bolt-action rifle, civil servant Sanjeet Kumar is one of 5,000 Kashmiri villagers who have joined all-Hindu militia units armed and trained by Indian forces to fight off attacks. Delhi has more than half a million soldiers permanently stationed in parts of held Kashmir, as the Hindu nationalist government presses a bid to crush anti-India fighters. Authorities announced the new militias last year, and a deadly assault in Kumar's village in January prompted him to sign up. "We were totally terrorised by the attack," the 32-year-old municipal worker in the electricity department said. Wearing a saffron-coloured tilak on his forehead to mark himself as a member of the Hindu faithful, Kumar said he was ready and able to defend his home. "Anyone who turns a traitor to our nation is my target," he added.

### **'Only one community'**

India has fought against the freedom groups demanding the Muslim-majority territory's independence, or merger with Pakistan, in a fight that has claimed tens of thousands of lives. The new militia units, known as Village Defence Guards, were unveiled last year in the wake of a string of murders targeting police officers and Hindu residents of India-held Kashmir. The scheme has been broadly popular among the region's Hindu residents, but Muslim villagers are concerned the militia will only exacerbate occupied Kashmir's woes. "My worry is about the way weapons are now being distributed among only one community," said one elderly Muslim living in Dhangri, who asked not to be named. "Now weapons are being brandished around by young ones. This is not good for any one of us. I sense a growing tension," he added.

### **Constant state of alert**

Many residents of Dhangri, the remote hamlet where Kumar lives, are still grief-stricken by the attack that claimed the lives of seven of their neighbours. "With or without the weapons, we're terrorised," said farmer Murari Lal Sharma, 55, as he cradled his loaded 303 calibre rifle. "But now I will fight back." One Indian paramilitary officer said the newly armed villagers were on such a constant state of alert that his unit informed them beforehand of their night patrol, so that they were not accidentally mistaken for the Kashmiri fighters and fired upon. "The purpose is to create a line of defence, not a line of attack," Kanchan Gupta of India's information ministry said. India first created a civil militia force in held Kashmir in mid-1990s as a first line of defence when the armed resistance against Indian rule was at its peak. About 25,000 men and women, including teenagers, were given weapons and organised into village defence committees in Jammu

region. Rights groups accused members of these committees of committing atrocities against civilians. At least 210 cases of murder, rape and extortion blamed on the militias were prosecuted, official records show though less than two per cent of defendants were convicted. Gupta said that these cases were individual acts and there was no record of organised crime by the militias. "There is always a chance that a few may turn rogue," he said. "It's not possible to control everyone." Most of the committees became dormant as Indian troops gradually throttled the resistance and the security situation improved.

### **'Now there are guns'**

This time around, militia members are warned by trainers from the paramilitary Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) that they would be punished for misusing their rifles. "Alongside training them in firing, maintenance and cleaning of the weapons we also tell them what legal action will be taken for misuse," CRPF spokesman Shivanandan Singh said. Three people have nonetheless been killed since the new Village Defence Guards were established, including two who died by suicide using weapons issued to the militias. The wife of another member was killed in January when her husband's rifle accidentally discharged. But the reservations of some neighbours have not stopped men in the villages around Dhangri from clamouring to get their own arms. "Now there are guns in houses all around mine," said Ajay Kumar, a flour miller and ex-serviceman, pointing out the homes of neighbours who had been given arms.

---